'GLOBAL' AND 'LOCAL' ENCOUNTERS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

RESPONSES FROM THE LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT AGAINST POVERTY **(LEAP)** PROGRAMME IN GHANA

By

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# Brief Overview of My PhD Project

QUESTION: How are global social protection ideas produced and translated to work on poverty? And how does this resonate with people in benficiary communities?

This question is explored using the **'WPR' Approach** (Carol Bacchi) with a focus on the **LEAP** programme in Ghana.

The LEAP allows the government to support extremely poor households with cash + complementary services in health and education. It is similar to the *Bolsa Familia (Brazil) and Progressa (Mexico)*

Target Population in the programme are:

1. Carers of OVCs (e.g CABAs)

2. Severely Disabled Persons

3. Elderly Persons (65+ years)

4. Chronically ill persons

5. Pregnant Women (esp. HIV/AIDS affected)

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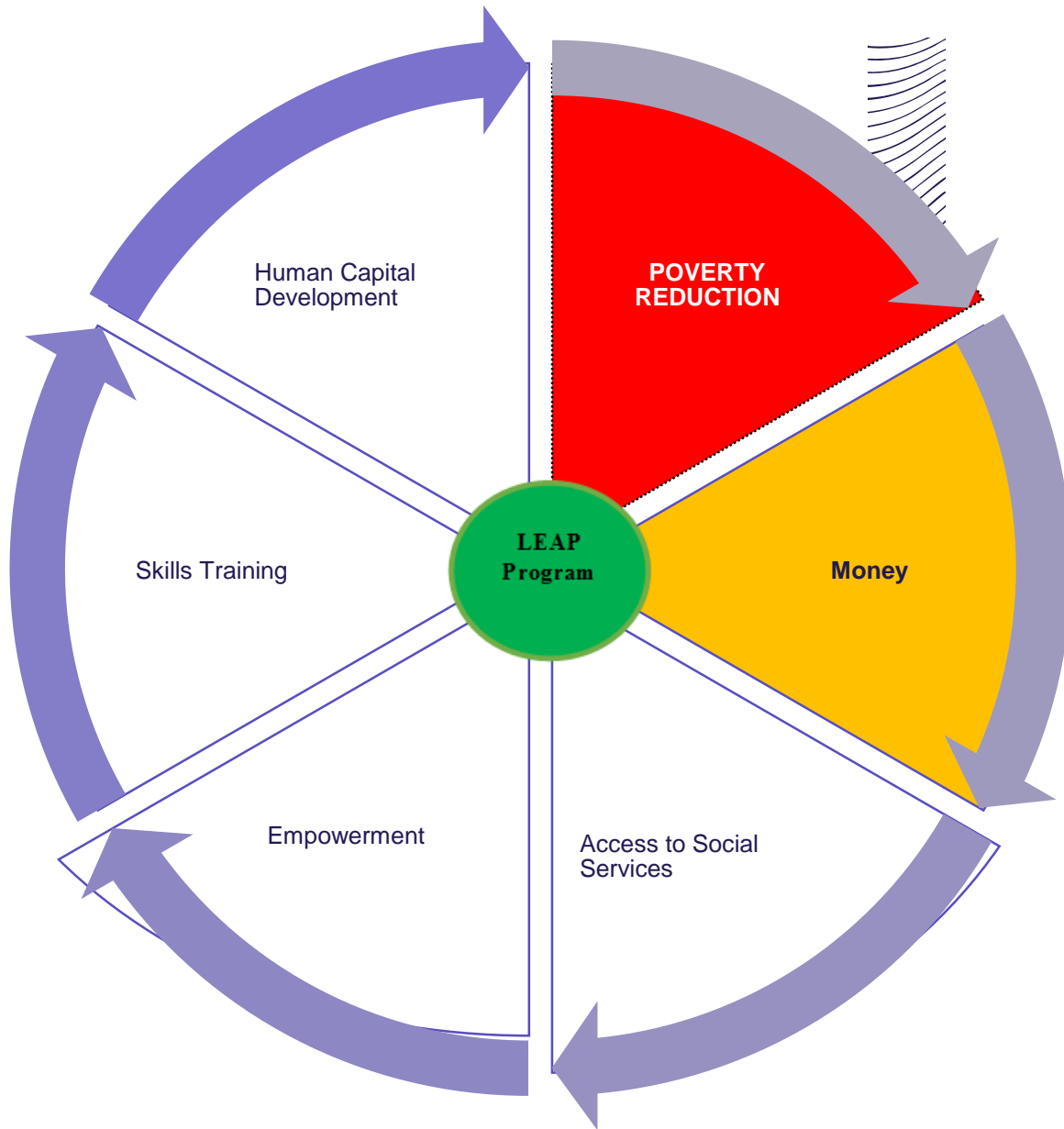
INTERVIEWS

- With policy-relevant groups in 2 LEAP Communities (Tadieso and Tunsuase):
  - DSW Officers and CLIC members (local implementers),
  - Traditional rulers (Chiefs),
  - Leaders of Settler Groups,
  - Local Government Representative (Assembly men + Unit Committee Chairmen), and,
  - Beneficiary Households

I refer to each of these groups in the LEAP programme as a *'Community of meaning'* . They
- ✓ represent different interests in the communities in terms of local development and decision making.
- ✓ share 'common understanding' on policy (LEAP) issues relative to their interest (so they **'think alike')**
- ✓ operate at different level of power and influence in the community spaces

- **This presentation focuses on what local implementers do to socialize policies into local environments and how/why the rest of the local population respond to the meanings in what they do or say, especially during the community sensitization meetings.**

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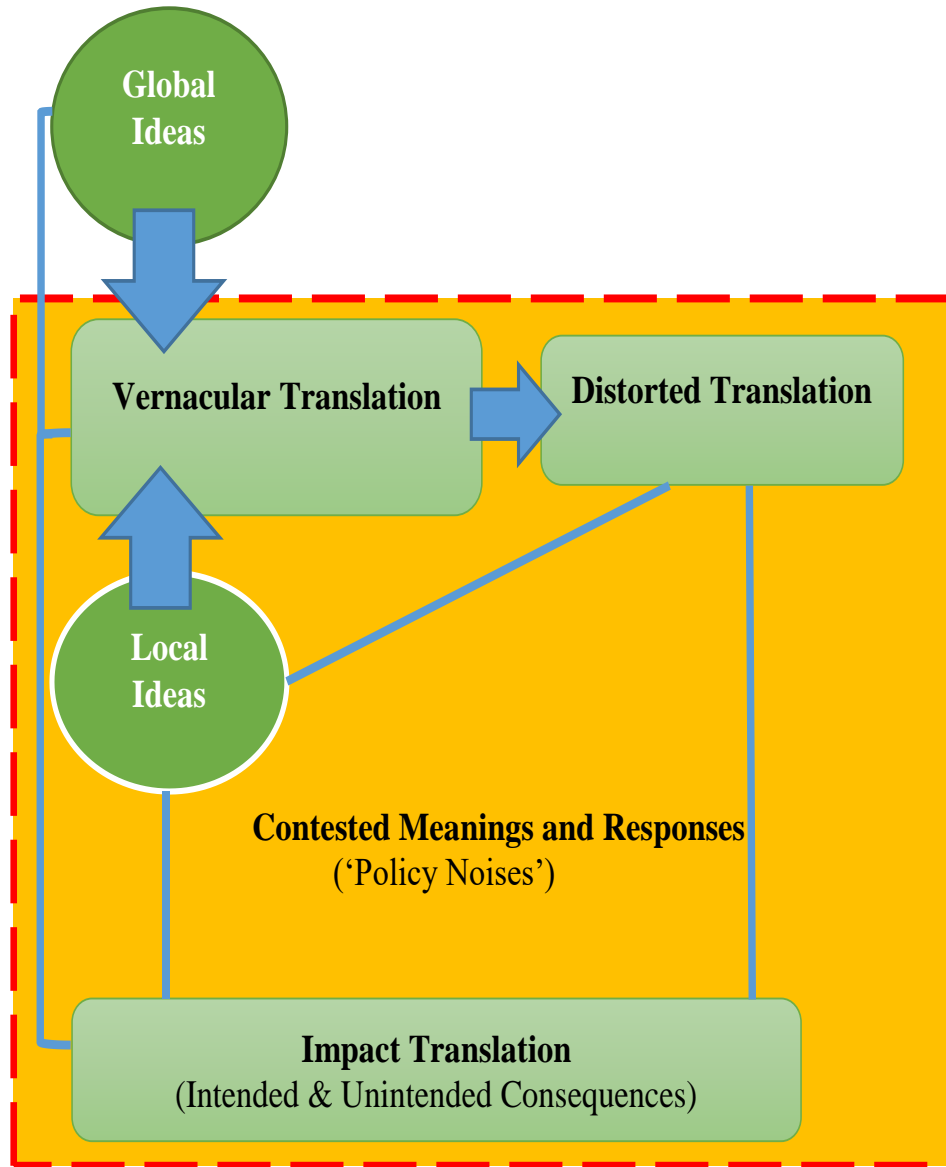
COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION MEETINGS AS AN ENCOUNTER OF IDEAS

The concept of Vernacularization:

- captures the important role that local agents play in making international norms and ideas applicable in the local context in order to challenge existing practices and work on them (Levitt et al., 2013; Cheng, 2011; Levitt and Merry, 2009; Merry 2006).

- describes a process in which the 'global becomes localized, (and) infused with the meanings, signs, and practices of local places' (Merry, 1996: 80).

- involves creating meaning by connecting, in various ways, the discourse of the global with local ideologies, within the context of a particular organizational style and ethos (Levitt et al, 2013).

*An important effect of vernacularization is that it causes '**global meanings**' to SHIFT in multiple ways in the '**local context**'*

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- **Vernacularization** occurs in a continuum between REPLICATION and HYBRIZATION (Merry, 2006)

  - Replication (a prototype): ideas/institutions are largely unchanged

  - Hybridization: a merger between imported ideas, institutions and symbols with local ones (sometimes in an uneasy manner)

  3 Types of Vernacularization (Levitt et.al.,2013)

  - an imaginative space based on the aspirational possibilities created by words, concepts or terminologies used in policy language;

  - a way to expand the repertoire of what could and should be done or fought for (using English words and linking them to local 'narratives'

  - involve using the core concepts of global norms, articulating them in locally appropriate ways, and putting them into practice. It goes beyond the realm of ideas to the domain of practice (Levitt et al., 2013).

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VERNACULARIZING MEANINGS IN THE LEAP PROGRAMME

1. **'Poverty'** (ahia, ahuch3r3, onibi, amanihunu, obr3)

❖ '*ahia*' which is literally translated to mean a 'need' (to be in need) or 'want' (a desire to have)

❖ '*Ahuchɛrɛ*' ('body pain' or 'bodily feelings'),

❖ '*Onibi'* (nothingness, emptiness)

❖ '*Amanihunu*' ('trouble-seeing') and

❖ '*Obrɛ*' ('struggles' or 'suffering') associated with hardwork or toils.

To personify these concepts the suffix '-ni' (singular) or '-fuo' is normally used, e.g ahiani=poor person and ahiafuo=poor people

These concepts literally give us a sense of poverty and those who deserve to be recipients of the LEAP cash grant. As the LEAP is interested in helping people to leap out of extreme and intergeneration poverty. These categories are vernacularized as **onibifuo** (extremely poor people) and **amanihunufuo** (people experiencing intergenerational or 'prolonged' poverty). The vernacular implications of these local terms were found not to be resonating with many people. They are '**distasteful'**

2. **'Deservedness'** (target group): orphans (nyanka), elderly (akukura/ abr3wa), widows (akunafuo), disabled/chronically ill persons (nipa wadid3m). This led to a certain sense of entitlement ('right'): ***The understanding that when a household has a member belonging to these categories, then the household is entitled to the grant***

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Cognitive-value maps & responses

based on; 1) mental images, impressions, convictions, orientations, etc about the self or the other

2) they can be imaginary (perceptive) or real (concrete) but drive actions

3)they are representations of the external (policy) world in a person or group

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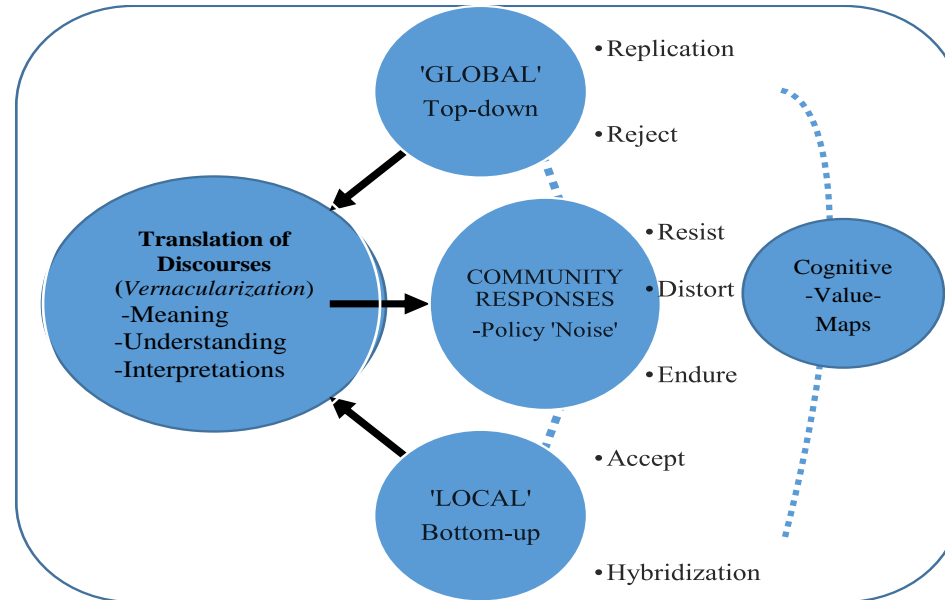
1. **'Cognitive-value maps' and access to social grants**
   - **Poverty and deservedness:** a beneficiary has to belong to oninbifuo/amanihunufuo as well as the categories of those explained to be deserving *(see above).* Some people understood qualification for the cash to mean mere belongness to the demographic categories targeted under the programme.
   - **Cash and Dignity:** some people refused to be registered because they thought that they would lose their 'dignity'
   - **Inclusive and Exclusive Support:** People are losing the traditional informal support due to the understanding that the government has assumed 'full responsibility'. This makes recipients of the LEAP cash grants excluded from the existing informal care and social support systems.
   - **Politicization of the Intervention:** *Too much intrusion of the 'political hand'. This should be removed if the policy can work for the better.*

2. **Native Appraisals and 'Objections' to Social Grants**
   - A good recognition and favour by government: *it means the government knows we exist; Of all the poor communities, government has chosen us.*
   - Cash support is not for us, give it to the settler families: *we have land and natural resources, the migrants came here because they are poor, they need it most*

   A native in Tadieso remarked: *as for poverty, I think everybody is poor. We all need the money but I think that it is okay to give to the settlers because it is because of too much suffering in their homeland that is why they run to come a settle her. If we accept it, they will think we are wicked. We have given them land to farm and get food and they pay us rent for our land. As for this one too, the government should take.*

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3. The 'False Images' of Elected Community Representatives

- Allegations of corruption: citizens in the local communities are accusing elected representatives of using their name and conditions for personal benefits e.g *they take our names promising us LEAP cash BUT we never get to hear from them again, I believe they collect and use the money on our name*

- Mistrust: e.g *the people no more trust us becuase of all sorts of allegations. They think we are not seeking their interest…***says an UC Chairman***

- Exclusion from programme information: The social welfare office and the CLIC members deny elected with information on the programme e.g the number of households in the electoral areas. The Assemby men and UC members feel alienated by this behaviour

4.Endorsements and Resistances from the Beneficiary LEAP Programme

- Endorsements: e.g *now I also feel like a human being; the money is helpful but small, it will be nice if government can increase it*

- Resistance: eg. I don't want to be categorised as '***onibi' or 'amanihunu'.*** *It is derogatory!!*

The ways in which people are responding to the intervention is found to be influenced in 2 main ways

1. *how the national discourses framed from the global perspective was initiated and deployed, and ,*

2. *how meanings in the policy language were vernacularized to the appeal of the people.*

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THANK YOU!!