MPUNTUO: A KEYWORD APPROACH

EXPLORING INDIGENOUS DISCOURSES ON DEVELOPMENT IN AKROFUOM, GHANA

This is a sign outside of the old Akrofuom sleeper train station.

Taken by Benita Abenaa Nyarko Uttenthal on 5th June 2014

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‘I thank whatever gods may be for my unconquerable soul’ - *Invictus*, William Earnest Henley

First and foremost, I thank God for fortifying me and endowing me with a patient, committed and focused mind. Seeking this Master’s degree has been a journey full of various revelations, adventures and trials that, at points, made me feel that I wouldn’t see it through. Through an emergency surgery, malaria and a near fatal car accident, I managed to complete this program. I thank God for helping me every step of the way.

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I extend this thanks to my dear children, especially Ohwofasa, for supporting and encouraging me to finish this. He, and now Naja and Viggo too, have always been my inspiration. Appreciation is also due to all of the women inspiring me to achieve this goal, especially my mother, Mama Lu.

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ABSTRACT

In *Mpuntuo: A Keyword Approach*, Malmö University Communication for Development Master’s Degree candidate, Benita Uttenthal presents research exploring indigenous knowledge of the term development using an extended case study method of the critical case of the Ghanaian Ashanti community of Akrofuom, from which her family originates. Inspired by Raymond Williams’ classic work, *Keywords*, which was uniquely applied in Andrew Kipnis’ *Suzhi: A Keyword Approach*, Uttenthal embarks on a keyword study of the Ashanti term *Mpuntuo*, which is commonly translated in English as *Development*.

The primary purpose of this investigation is to determine a working definition of development from the indigenous perspective of the citizens of Akrofuom. The research is intended to ignite discourse on the stagnation and seeming regression of development processes in the Akrofuom society. The guiding questions for this research are:

- What does *Mpuntuo* mean both denotatively and connotatively?
- With what do the people of Akrofuom associate the concept of *Mpuntuo*?
- Does *Mpuntuo* transport meanings that are implicit and that you have to be a native speaker to understand?
- How is the word used in everyday speech and other contexts?
- What wider conclusions about ‘development’ can be drawn from a social, cultural and political analysis of the *Mpuntuo* concept?

This qualitative study, which employs semi-structured interviews, group discussions and discourse analysis, allows for in-depth and reflexive engagement with the research environment.

Ultimately, the research revealed that lack of participation in change processes in the Akrofuom case are having an adverse and depressing impact on the society leading to regression or under development.

**Keywords**: *Mpuntuo*, development, extended case study, keyword approach, participation, representation, agency
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Development, as exhaustively addressed in Communication for Development discourse, is in an apparent state of crisis. One aspect of this crisis is the global challenge to the theories driving its practice. With high ambitions, such as ending global poverty, eradicating diseases and educating all, the development industry has intervened in all manner and scope of global affairs. Through all of these interventions, theorists and practitioners alike are debating the specific reasons why so many development interventions fail to deliver the results they seek. In the quest to overcome some of the contributing challenges to the shortcomings of development, intentional engagement with people for whom development interventions are aimed may serve well as an enabling platform.

*Development*, as is the case with other keywords, is loaded with the weight of interpretation, regulation and expectation. This is simply because words have power. They make things happen. They inspire societies to take action. Assessing the full potency of this keyword begins with establishing its working definition. Indeed, this can be an enormous task when studied through the lens of a globalized world where the operational definition of the word *development* has been determined by theorists and practitioners, but rarely ever by those who are said to be developing. Communication for Development perspectives would advocate defining development as a locally constructed concept, rather than as the universalized global principle which purports holding the same significance and carrying the same connotations to all.
Development certainly means many things to many people, but which meanings drive its processes? A critical problematic in this regard is the standing contentious relationship between development and postcolonial theories over the term development. On the one hand, development theorists have associated the term with modernization for which all indicators of that modernization point to people going through processes to become more Western, hence the notion of Westernization. On the other hand, however, postcolonialists have thrown up the red flag on this approach, challenging that the necessary end of development processes should not be Westernization. Rather, development should reflect the values, cultures and expectations of those who engage in the process. Development’s long history has been scrutinized and its meanings are regularly changing over space and time. The question that springs forth when considering the dynamism of the term is to what is development changing? Which definitions are actually going to guide development into a more successful and sustainable future? Seeking indigenous knowledge on the deeper meanings of development to different groups of people seems to be a good starting point toward addressing these questions.

Sylvester (1999), as cited by McEwan (2009), pointed out that ‘development studies do not tend to listen to the subalterns and postcolonial studies do not tend to concern itself with whether the subaltern is eating.’ (p. 77). These admonitions of both development and postcolonial studies have inspired this investigation into the subaltern interpretations of development. Without ‘listening to those people in the South who are subject to development interventions,’ there will be little possibility of a proper understanding of why development interventions succeed or fail. (ibid.). This project work begins at this point of departure, seeking a deeper and clearer picture of
how development is defined, understood and practiced from the perspective of its most significant stakeholders, the common everyday person in the Global South.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of this degree project is to research, in-depth, the meanings of development a local context, blending the qualitative methodologies of Keyword Approach and Extended Case Method. In order to apply the Keyword Approach to a critical case for extended case study, translating development to the language of a critical case was the first step. The critical case for the extended case study is rural community of Akrofuom, a community within the well-known Asante kingdom, located in the Ashanti region of Ghana. In the Asante language, Twi, *Mpuntuo* is the popularly translated term for ‘development’. This paper investigates the shared meanings and significance of this word to the people of Akrofuom through the lens of a postcolonial critique of and convergence with development, in hopes of concluding on a working definition to inform and possibly offer some support to Akrofuom’s development processes. The questions guiding this research are:

- What does *Mpuntuo* mean both denotatively and connotatively?
- With what do the people of Akrofuom associate the concept of *Mpuntuo*?
- Does *Mpuntuo* transport meanings that are implicit and that you have to be a native speaker to understand?
- How is the word used in everyday speech and other contexts?
● What wider conclusions about 'development' can be drawn from a social, cultural and political analysis of the *Mpuntuo* concept?

The key issues to explore are the local meanings of the term *Mpuntuo*. This paper will also consider the transferability of the English term ‘development’ to this Akan word. As the project uncovers *Mpuntuo*, it will also be unpacking the histories guiding the term development with special consideration to how, if at all, the changes in the term development have influenced the connotations and associations made with regard to the term *Mpuntuo*. Ultimately, the outcomes of this project will be an indigenously derived working definition for development work in Akrofuom.

**RESEARCH INSPIRATION**

Motivating the theme of this study are the problematic results associated with the universalization of words throughout development discourses. Taking the key discursive term, *development*, translating it and studying it through the lens of people who have been engaged in the global discourse over the term may offer transformative meanings. The term *Mpuntuo*, is regularly used in discussions about Ghana’s development processes, whether in everyday conversation or through mass media. The choices of methodology, being the Keyword Approach and Extended Case Method, are inspired by the reality that little is written and understood about local understandings and perspectives on development. This, coupled with the seeming stagnation of development in the Akrofuom context, has inspired the methodology. As the
researcher in this study hails from Akrofuom, the town as the choice for case study fulfils a long-standing interest in understanding the state of development in this community.

THESIS OUTLINE

The degree project thesis will lay out frame by frame the theoretical basis for the study of Mpuntuo. Section Two presents the research methodology in detail by first discussing the epistemology and ontology behind the study. It deeply considers the theory of knowledge of indigenous knowledge systems as relates to this work. Section Two continues by detailing the two primary methodological approaches, namely the Keyword Approach and the Extended Case Method. Respectively, these two subsections will include a justification for the use of Mpuntuo and the choice of Akrofuom as a critical case to study in the African development context. The paper will then delve into an extensive study of development and relevant areas of Communication for Development discourse, being Representation and Participation, in Section Three. This section will lay out the history of post-World War II development theories and practice. This section will include a discussion on the relationship between culture and development as well as the convergence between postcolonialism and development. This section, which also serves as the literature review, is intended to establish the foundation of the study and discursively engages with various development and communication for development thinkers.

Section Four will explain the applied research methods in this study: in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These research methods will be connected to the methodological framework and rationalized within the conceptual frame which will be laid out in
Section Three. Section Four will describe how these methods were applied in the field. It will also attempt to exhaust the major ethical considerations and describe the coding method used in studying the data.

Section Five will be a delivery of the results of the study, as well as an analysis of the research findings. All of this will be rounded off with a conclusion in Section Six, which will sum up the entire degree project work and offers possible ideas for further research.

SECTION 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY

In line with Communication for Development theory is the notion that amplifying the voices of the subaltern, who have yet to be adequately engaged in a meaningful way about their own development, should lead to more sustainable development. In order to unearth the perspectives of the subaltern, heavy emphasis needs to be placed on retrieving narratives from marginalized group about their own experiences, attitudes and interactions with development. This process of sourcing local knowledge establishes new narratives from which to understand development challenges. Qualitative research methods offer opportunities to accomplish just that. This study
of the term *Mpuntuo* through the lens of the people of one rural Ghanaian community, Akrofuom, allows an in-depth view of development in a local context.

In terms of the ontology and epistemology driving this work, this research takes on the perspective of Stanley and Wise (1993), as cited by Song and Parker (1995), that there should be a symbiotic relationship between the two. These two philosophical realms will not work in binary opposition to each other. Rather, the collaboration of reason and emotion, subjectivity and objectivity seen in the context of the researchers personal reflexivity will work together to strengthen this research. (p. 241). Throughout this investigation, what will serve as reality are the natural observations of the researcher, the responses of interview and group discussion participants, and discourses on development. Whatever the ontological avenues toward answers to the research question at the beginning of the process, this research is open to other possibilities for sourcing reality which will require re-evaluation of the ontology throughout the research process. Clearly conveyed in the Communication for Development discourse is the perspective that knowledge is socially constructed, thus understandings are likely to experience change through human interactions. As a result, the abductive approach to methodology and the openness to revisit theory will be critical to understanding and conducting this study.

Determining the methodological approach has rested on the complexity of the question. The seemingly subjective question of what *Mpuntuo* means provokes debate on development that can be applied generally throughout Ghana and possibly even extend to discussions on the development of the continent. This research accepts the point that the use of generalizations is the ‘acknowledgement of the limitations of interpretation,’ and thus will rely on triangulation as the analytical point of departure. (Williams, 2002, p. 125) Additionally, the nature of the

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research question can potentially be problematic in a pilot qualitative research as it can reveal many outcomes that cannot easily be correlated without further and varied methodological applications. Such complexity cannot be addressed with traditional scientific methods. Thus, the Keyword Approach after Raymond Williams (1983) and the Extended Case Method will merge to form the backbone of the methodology and will employ the qualitative methods of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and discourse analysis to interpret its findings.

Furthermore, due to the fact that questions of indigenous knowledge and representation are of central importance in the research and bear cultural significance, it is important to understand the relationship between cultural studies and the methodological choices of this work. Traditionally, cultural studies has had what Pickering (2008) refers to as a ‘renegade’ past, which has reflected a lack of deeper consideration to questions of ‘methodological limits, effectiveness and scope of cultural inquiry and analysis.’ (p. 2). For the researcher, a richer, in-depth and comprehensive set of results is ideal. Thus the pluralist philosophy supports the researcher in this aim by not ‘confining research activity to any single avenue of investigation.’ (ibid., p. 4)

Other epistemological considerations include the experiences of the researcher. In this study, as with any work of cultural studies, the experiences of the researched are not the only ones of importance. Those of the researcher are also significant and must be attended to deliberately. Throughout the development of cultural studies, the need to make space for the otherwise marginalized and voiceless has led to a more participant-centered approach to research methodology. (ibid., p. 19) By building relationships through the sharing of lived experiences, the researcher is no longer seen as a fly on the wall nor a scientist with controlled specimens in a laboratory. The researcher comes into the research environment with a cultural framework and
enters a cultural situation that is dynamic and constantly changing due to all manner of influences.

**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS**

Indigenous Knowledge Systems can be defined as ‘local knowledge(s) that is unique to a given culture or society,’ particularly the ways of knowing that have ‘survived the test of time and history,’ according to African thinker, Munyaradzi Mawere (2014). (p. 5). Throughout development’s history, Western scientific thinking on development has dominated and has been understood in opposition to indigenous ways of knowing. Within development, theorist and practitioners alike have assumed and relied on the ‘universal applicability and superiority of scientific knowledge and ‘developmentalism’. (Escobar (1995) as cited by Briggs and Sharp (2004) p. 661). Meanwhile, local and traditional knowledges have been viewed as threats or roadblocks to development. This attitude persists despite what postcolonial theorists argue as a failure of development to achieve its ‘claim of drawing together all nations into a realm of development,’ but rather realizing the outcome of ‘ever increasing levels of poverty’. (Briggs and Sharp, 2004, p. 662). Postcolonial theorists, responding to the failure of Western development approaches to materialize their desired development outcomes, have challenged notions of universality and Western superiority, positioning Western knowledge as one of many local, traditional or indigenous knowledges. Notable postcolonial thinker, Arturo Escobar (1995, as cited by Briggs and Sharp, 2004), posits that Western knowledge on development has dominated as a singular theory of knowledge ‘not through a privileged proximity to the truth, but
as a set of historico-geographical conditions tied up with the geopolitics of power.’ (p. 661). It is against this backdrop that ‘indigenous knowledge’ gains its currency as a theory of knowledge.

In his article *Negotiating Difference: Discourses of Indigenous Knowledge and Development in Ghana*, Thomas Yarrow (2008) cites Blunt and Warren (1996) who explain that indigenous knowledges are often ‘presented as a way of bringing about development while remaining sensitive to cultural differences and the specific wishes of particular ‘local communities’. (p. 224). George Sefa Dei (2014) goes further to insist that indigenous knowledge systems, as anti-colonial discursive practice, must be seen as ‘resistance to the historic and continuing...wounding or damage that dominant...narratives and practice of development have and continue to foster on the African human condition. (p. 16). As Mawere (2012) further elucidates, two major paradigms, namely colonialism and globalization, have and continue to threaten ‘to mangle and absorb [indigenous knowledge systems] into the global system controlled by supranational and transnational institutions that are foreign to the ‘local’ or ‘indigenous’ communities.’ (p. XV). The epistemology underlying indigenous knowledge systems is ‘explicitly related to the ‘participatory’ approach, in which development interventions are imagined as a response to the needs of particular communities’. (Yarrow, p. 224). Thus, a rejection of Western ways of knowing as superior and right must necessarily be established in order to effectively and productively engage with indigenous discourses on development.

Legitimizing the epistemology of indigenous knowledges is central to balancing communicative practice. Anders Breidlid (2013) introduces the impact of the hegemony of Western knowledge as one that ‘denied diversity, epistemic diversity, and created instead inferiority.’ (p. 7) Breidlid (2013) further expounds that this hegemony had a great adverse effect on indigenous knowledge
systems as it denied local people the agency to define ‘what kind of development to pursue in the reconstruction of the South after the demise of colonialism.’ (ibid.) This outcome is in line with postcolonial admonitions about the challenges facing indigenous knowledge systems. Gayatri Spivak (1988), as cited by Briggs and Sharpe (2004), cautions that the subaltern, in other words local marginalized communities or indigenous, cannot speak as the ‘epistemic violence’ against them has established a seemingly fixed scenario in which their ways of knowing both the world and the self are ‘trivialized and invalidated’ (p. 664). Thus, local communities, the subaltern, must always be ‘caught in translation, never truly herself, but always already interpreted.’ Indeed this poses a philosophical dilemma for the insider researcher inquiring on issues of local and global significance. (ibid.).

A challenge to this research is that its aims of raising the voices of the subaltern and validating their ways of knowing are all at once diminished by the institutional demands of academic requirements, a realm emerging from Western ways of knowing. Questions of whether the voices of the local people of Akrofuom, the indigenous and indeed subaltern, would ever be heard without a member of the community translating and validating by associating those voices with other knowledge systems are raised and considered throughout this work. In this light, this project ‘rejects the politics of inside and outside’ and instead takes advantage of the ‘hybridised indigenous knowledge which…offers a unique and important perspective undistorted by the power and prejudices of the centre.’ (Briggs and Sharp, 2004, p. 664). This project emphasises indigenous discourses, or ‘a way of telling the African narrative about, [in this case], development in diverse African cultural voices in ways that decolonize the minds. (Shizha and
Abdi, 2014, p. 1). It is against this backdrop that ‘indigenous knowledge’ gains its currency as a theory of knowledge.

The research in this degree project work operates being guided by the perspective that indigenous knowledge systems are the best fit theory of knowledge for this type of inquiry. As little is documented about the keyword being studied, Mpuntuo, and the critical case of Akrofuom’s Mpuntuo, sourcing knowledge from the local community should garner more relevant and substantive content than other knowledge bases.

KEYWORD APPROACH

Words are always in motion. They change meaning across time and space, depending on who is using the word, when, how and why they are using that word. (Gluck, 2009, p. 3) Loaded words, like development, can become problematic as they are presented as terms with universal significance. However, language, due to its communicative nature, is inherently social. It then follows that the significance of a word, even one of universal proportion such as development, is subject to the society decoding that word. Of further concern is the transferability of such a word from one language, English in this case (considering the many contested meanings), to another, Twi in this case.

The Keyword Approach has its roots in Raymond Williams’ (1988) landmark work, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, which he describes as ‘an inquiry into a vocabulary: a shared body of words and meanings in our most general discussions…of the practices and institutions we group as Culture and Society.’ (p. 15). From this approach, keywords are
understood beyond their basic dictionary definitions; they are unraveled to reveal their socio-cultural representations. Andrew Kipnis (2006) expounds upon the notion of keywords in his own keyword study by noting that keywords ‘develop a multiplicity of meanings that both reflect and influence the processes of contention,’ as they become ‘central to contention over ideas and values in a given era.’ (p. 295).

In other words, keywords can be seen as words in motion which have the power to change and be change, as illustrated by Gluck and Tsing (2009) in their collection of essays, *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon*. In the introductory chapter, editor Carol Gluck emphasises the ‘power of words to change worlds’ as well as the world’s ‘power to change words.’ (p. 3). In line with Williams’ (1988) perspective that words are more than their denotation, Gluck and Tsing (2009) also treat the words they study within a social and political context. The work of Gluck and Tsing (2009) ‘considers the relations between words and worlds by tracing the social and political life of words…with an eye to their practical and public effect.’ (ibid.) Likewise, this study traces the words *Development* and *Mpuntuo* with specific attention drawn to the practical and public effects they have on the people of Akrofuom in the Ashanti region of Ghana.

In Kipnis’ (2006) study of the Chinese keyword *Suzhi*, the keyword approach included the following modes of examination of the term: laying out a linguistic history of the term, providing a genealogy of the discourses associated with the term, and analysing the contemporary socio-political context of the term. These will characterize the keyword approach in this degree project work. This paper will lay out the etymology of both the English term, *development*, and the Twi term, *Mpuntuo*. It will provide a genealogy of the academic discourses associated with both *Development* and expose the indigenous discourses of one community on *Mpuntuo*. To complete
the keyword study, analysis of the contemporary socio-political significance of both
Development and Mpuntuo will be conducted. This paper is expressly interested in breaking
down the etymological roots of the term Mpuntuo and considering how understanding the term
can inform development planning toward the possibility of changing the worlds of the people of
Akofuom for the better.

As studies currently do not exist of the term Mpuntuo, nor its relationship to the English term,
Development, it will be prudent to engage in a study that will source qualitative data which
should offer deeper insight into the term. Thus, the Extended Case Method will serve as a
necessary methodological companion to the Keyword Approach.

KEYWORD: MPUNTUO

There are two major linguistic subfamilies that exist in Niger-Congo language family of West
Africa - the Kwa and the Gur. In Ghana, Kwa languages are spoken south of the Volta River,
reflected in the Akan, Ga-Adangbe and Ewe, while north of the Volta, Gur languages including
Gurma, Grusi and Mole-Dagbane. (Ethnic Groups, Ghanaweb.com, viewed on 05 August 2014).
Forty-seven percent of the Ghanaian population is classified members of one of the many Akan
or Twi-speaking groups, including Fante, Asante, Nzema, Akuapim, Akyem, Wassa, etc.,
according to the World Factbook. (CIA, viewed on 05 August 2014). However, it is necessary to
clarify that when writing the first dictionary on Twi, Johannes Christaller (1881) distinguished
Akan from Twi, as in his view, Akan signified ethnicity and Twi signified the linguistic
classification. Thus, according to Christaller, the Akan was a more exclusive classification.
(www.akan.org, viewed on 05 August 2014). Yet in modern times, Akan has taken on a more inclusive significance, representing all of the Akan-speaking groups of West Africa, not simply signifying ethnic affiliation. (ibid.). This is quite significant to point out, as Akans are also well represented in several other regions and in the areas aforementioned, the Akans maintain notable cultural and socio-political influence. In linguistically linking the Ghanaian socio-political situation to global phenomenon, studying the most widely spoken local language seems most appropriate. Furthermore, the Akan language, Twi, is used and understood by the majority of Ghana’s inhabitants and by Ghanaians the world over.

As described by several of the elders interviewed for this research, there are no words used in the Akan language without purpose. Reflecting on Raymond Williams’ description of keywords (Williams, 1983, as cited by Kipnis, 2006), *Mpuntuo*, as with other keywords, has developed a ‘multiplicity of meanings that both reflect and influence the processes of contention’ in the post-colonial era. (Kipnis, p. 295). Denotatively, *Mpuntuo*, a Twi word, is popularly translated to mean ‘development’ in English. Although commonly applied in socio-political discussions on development, the term may indeed connote many different meanings to different people, even in the most remote communities.

Linguistically, *Mpuntuo* is a compound deriving from two Twi words - *tuo* and *mpono*. *Tu* is a verb which has many meanings; according to the second edition of Johannes Christaller’s Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language *Tschee (Twi)* (1933), it has almost fifty different denotations. It can be translated as ‘*to pull or draw, move or remove* with a short and quick motion,’ among a host of other English translations (p. 586). Dr. Appah of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Ghana explains that the verb *tu* can be understood as *engaging*
with something, considering the range of definitions including to question, to cause, to pluck, to fall out, etc., which makes it difficult to pin the term down to a single meaning. (Personal Communication, 24 April, 2014). Mpono is semantically vacuous and is never mentioned independent of Tu. When presented as the verb phrase, tuo mpono, these two words mean to move ahead with something. In this early stage of the investigation, Mpono is understood as ahead or forward, as in Christaller’s example watu m’asem mpono which means he has gone right ahead with my cause [notice tu (to go, as in to engage) and mpono (ahead)]. There is another Twi word, pono, which is translated as both table and door that may share some etymological history with mpono. The inversion of the verb phrase forming the compound mpuntuo expands the significance of the word, giving it deeper meaning on a connotative level.

I was first introduced to the word Mpuntuo by my mother. She, along with several friends and family in the United States at the time, formed a small associations known as Akrofuom Mpuntuo Kuo (what I was told meant the Akrofuom Development Association). The purpose of the group was obviously to consider ways to support Akrofuom’s development. Each meeting was opened with a call of ‘Akrofuom’, which consistently won the response, ‘Mpuntuo’. Emigrants of Akrofuom carried the concept of Mpuntuo at the forefront of their collective minds, reflecting the community members sense of commitment to the town despite their. The term has been central to discourse in contemporary Akrofuom society. References to Mpuntuo have inspired the community in the past, have motivated social and political action there, and have the potential to transform the community.

What does Mpuntuo mean to people in Ghana? The term, Mpuntuo, will be understood through the critical case of Akrofuom which will be understood through the extended case method.
EXTENDED CASE METHOD

Michael Burawoy (2009) presents an alternative approach to positivist [ethnographic] research approaches ‘in which every effort is made to suspend [ethnographers’] participation with the world [they] study.’ (p. 5). Using what he calls a reflexive model of science, Burawoy (2009) embraces engagement, rather than detachment, ‘as the road to knowledge.’ (ibid.). This model requires the researcher to be constantly rooted in ‘theory that guides [the researcher’s] dialogue with participants.’ (ibid.). Burawoy (2009) goes further to clarify that ‘reflexive science starts out from dialogue, virtual or real, between observer and participants, embeds such dialogue with a second dialogue between local processes and extra local forces, that in turn can only be comprehended through a third, expanding dialogue of theory itself.’ (ibid.).

CRITICAL CASE STUDY

The Case Study method is an approach that offers an opportunity to study a phenomenon in-depth. (SAGE Encyclopedia, 2008, p. 68). A key strength of the case study is that it emphasizes descriptive and interpretive aspects of the study more than the experimental do. Development, as a field/industry, does not provide sufficient understanding of what the concept of development means to the everyday person in a developing country. The case study has the best chance of revealing some of the notions, considering that it works well with specific qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which are employed in this study. (ibid., p. 69)
Ontologically, the case study allows for a constructivist perspective in that it does not claim one single objective reality. The paper does not claim one definition of the term \textit{Mpuntuo}. Rather, it challenges the prevailing translation of the term as ‘development’ and explores the term subjectively with a skeptical position on this definition.

Akrofuom serves as a crucial case to study because of the community’s position within the larger Ghanaian context. It is a rural community, populated by a mixture of native-born and migrants. Akrofuom faces many, if not most, of the realities facing rural communities in Ghana. Obstacles with infrastructural and social needs, including adequate transportation, health, food security, education, communication, water and sanitation, have all been and continue to be at the top of the community’s priority list. In this way, this paper argues that Akrofuom is a ‘crucial case’ and thus intend its finding to be read as legitimate theoretical generalizations. (ibid.)

\textit{Extended Case Method}

One method that exemplifies the reflexive model is the Extended Case Method. The extended case method (ECM) is an ethnographic research method that focuses on a detailed study of concrete empirical cases with a view to “extract” general principles from specific observations. (Barata, 2010, p. 375) The application of this reflexive scientific method to ethnography is intended to ‘extract the general from the unique, to move from the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro,’ and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building preexisting theory.’ (Burawoy, 2009, p. 5).
Typically, in the extended case method, a researcher would participate in and observe a number of related events and actions of individuals and groups over an extended period of time. The researcher would then construct his or her (ethnographic) narrative and theorize about a social phenomenon, rather than start with a theory to explain an empirical reality. ECM is at once a method of data collection, analysis, and theory building. Both the conceptualization and the application of the ECM have changed over time. This entry describes the emergence and development of ECM, its insights, and limitations and its potential areas of application to this particular case. (Barata, 2010, p. 375)

This research work is a culmination of three decades of natural observations of one community’s development processes. Personal reflections upon childhood, adolescent and adult perspectives have been applied to frame an insider understanding of development. The Extended Case Method, or what Max Gluckman of the Manchester School of Social Anthropology referred to as situational analysis, forms the analytical frame that is being used to understand Mpuntuo and development in relation to Akrofuom. Through this analytical experience, general principles and conclusions should be able to be ‘extracted’ from the Akrofuom case and used to offer potential insights into Ghanaian, and possibly continental, perspectives on development, considering the similarities in both development challenges and trajectories across board.

Following Gluckman and his students, this research plans to remain open ‘to the messy actualities of social life and thus ventured into the possibility of discovering unforeseen insights on social processes.’ (ibid.) Through this methodological approach, the findings should ‘[shed] light on the micro ramifications of...postcolonial practices and global forces...and how these affect local cultures.’ (ibid.)

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Applying ECM, as part and parcel of the reflexive process, heightens the awareness of the effects of power on the research context and raises the question of who sets the research agenda and whose interest research serves. In the conventional anthropological research context, where the researcher is generally a white (often male) and the subjects are generally non-Western natives, the need to be aware of the effect of power on the research is very acute. However, power, and the balance of it, is both still relevant in this study.

The application of ECM entails mapping out these ‘power-laden interactions’. Barata (2010) stresses, and the results of this study should demonstrate, that ‘while there should not be any illusion about the power disparity between actors differentially situated in the local-global gradient, every actor is imbued with agency—the ability to influence to a lesser or greater extent what actually happens on the ground.’ (p. 376)
CRITICAL CASE: AKROFUOM

Including Akrofuom in this study pulls the discussion of Mpuntuo, and indeed development, from academic spaces into personal. The context under which this study has been taken can only be fully appreciated when an understanding of the relationship between the researcher, the researched and the course Communication for Development is made clear. In order to build the context, deviation into a narrative of my heritage is necessary and prudent. Indulgence for this should offer added value to framing this project’s discussions.

Some 300 years ago, prior to the founding of the Asante kingdom, two chiefs established the town of Akrofuom, which is also known as Amankyem. These chiefs emerged from two nomadic families. According to the elders of Akrofuom, these two families who founded the
town, or ‘brought a stool to that land’, also established two royal factions, Akrofuom Banhu and Y3ntr3so. It is only out of these two factions that a chief can be chosen for the town. In those days, the citizens of the town made drums. They would press together a material from the trees as part of the process; the pressing together is translated in Twi as kyem. Aman translates to mean ‘town’; thus, the name Amankym literally means the town that presses things together.

Between the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, cocoa farming had become the dominant agricultural work in the Gold Coast. Many people began to flock to Amankym Akrofuom to settle and farm cocoa. In those days, my paternal great-grandfather served as the town’s Asafohene - the leader of those who fight. The Asafo, most commonly known as the warriors of the Akan people, served many purposes, including the role of law enforcement agents. The Asafo not only defended the community, but worked to ensure that the aims of the community, as mandated by the chief, were coordinated and carried out to fruition; in other words, they were the leading development agents in the town. (Kwabena Appiah-Pinkrah, personal communication, 23 July 2014). In my family house, the Asafo would meet to strategize the implementation of Akrofuom’s community agenda. The perpetuity and prosperity of Akrofuom were a primary concern to my family, and the community expected the development of the town to be my paternal family’s focus.
My Mother’s Side

Regardless of where one is born or what people say they are, according to Akan tradition, you are from where your mother is from and you are what your mother is. My mother was born in Akrofuom. Akan has a matrilineal social structure, which for me means that, in the traditional sense, I am a citizen of Akrofuom, though I was not born there and have never lived there. Throughout my life, I have been told that my maternal great-grandmother moved to the town in hopes of becoming fertile. She struggled for years without success in her original home in Akyem Swedru in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Once in Akrofuom, she delivered her one and only child. My great-grandmother married her teenage daughter off to a school teacher about ten years her senior, because she deeply believed that something good would come out of colonial

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education. My grandmother insisted on grandchildren and within the first five years of marriage, my grandmother delivered five children. She was so eager to grow her family that she would nurse the children and send my grandmother back to her marital home to make more. People used to joke that my grandmother was a baby-making factory. My great-grandmother’s understanding of development was modernization. She chose the path of growth and westernization to realize development for her family, leaving a legacy as my family’s last cocoa farmer and the last resident of Akrofuom to date. My mother, however, has not been able to leave Akrofuom in the past and regularly returns to make her contributions to the town’s development. Her passion for her community has kept Akrofuom real to me.

**My Father’s Side**

Conveniently, my father was also born in Akrofuom, as was his mother and at least two generations before her. My paternal grandmother was a farmer and one of several wives to a chief from another Adansi community. As the eldest boy among his mother’s children, he was granted the opportunity to attend school. He excelled, and vowed to use all that he had gained to give back to the town.

Both of my parents are passionate about working for the development of Akrofuom. All I ever heard from my mother growing up was how difficult it was to live far away from home, and how she longed to be back in Ghana, especially Akrofuom. Visions of American farms ran through my mind when I would think of Akrofuom. I had no idea what to expect of town. As a young adolescent, I was disappointed to find out that Akrofuom was a town with no running water, no electricity, trash-filled gutters, old dilapidated buildings, and no flushable toilets.
My aunts and my mom would reminisce about bathing in the nearby river and the overwhelming feelings of wonder every time the train would come in. The picture they painted did not include people living in abject poverty, falling sick to illnesses associated with unclean water, and suffering over a 10-kilometer shard-filled road before being able to leave the town.

Using the rural community of Akrofuom as the critical case, the study seeks the indigenous knowledge of the local leadership, the elderly, the youth and the citizens at large to determine the deeper connotations of the term *Mpuntuo* to that town. It will then examine the implications of this meaning from the perspective of the postcolonial convergence with development

SECTION 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

DEVELOPMENT

Development thinking, as it exists today, has its origins in the rationale of the European Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Williams (1988), the term *development* emerged in the English language in the mid-eighteenth century, stemming from the then century-old advent, *develop*, which meant to unfold or unroll. By the time of the emergence of *development, develop* had evolved to include metaphoric notions of *developing*, for example the ‘faculties…of the human mind.’ (p. 102). *Development*, as it was used in its early years, was used in like manner to another keyword, *Evolution*, which had gained popularity in the same era. *Development* changed over time in its associations, shifting connotations from
economic development to national development and so on. In those contexts, development was understood in opposition to the term *undeveloped*.

However, Williams points out that the most significant change in the meaning of development happened after 1945, when the word was used in terms of another opposing word, *underdeveloped*. (ibid., p. 103). The post-World War Two discourse on the ‘underdeveloped’ has shaped the praxis of Development in this era. (McEwan, 2009, 92). Escobar (1995) explains that US President Harry S. Truman’s belief that Western nations could develop the rest of the world, was one that was ‘universally embraced by those in power’ within years after the Second World War. (p. 4). Williams (1988) further stresses that *development* has been applied in order to simplify rather complex political and economic issues. As Williams (1988) concludes, the term *development* cannot be fully grasped by any ‘generalizing descriptions;’ rather, he posits, ‘it is in analysis of the real practices subsumed by development that more specific recognitions are necessary and possible.’ (p. 104).

Development has grown into a school of thought and a discursive space. The origins of this school of thought play heavily on the connotative understandings of the concept. Cheryl McEwan (2009) cites Hettne (1995) when laying out the three main elements of development thinking:

- Development theories – ideas and conjecture about the structure of the world which position development within some time/space continuum. The past informs the present situation and allow us to predict or project future outcomes.
• Development strategies – from local to global spaces, actors and agents adopt strategies to meet development agendas.

• Development ideologies – These strategic activities are rooted in some ideological perspective.

Though these elements characterize development, they do not actually define it. One of the key challenges facing the field of development is the lack of a clear and agreed upon definition of the term development. The notion of translating or transferring the term to a local context in a different language seems nearly preposterous when considering this fact. An in-depth exploration of development theories will guide this study toward a working definition.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse, as cited by McEwan (2009), defines development as the notion of ‘organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement.’ (p. 92). Who intervenes, about what collective affairs based on whose standards, becomes the definitive discourse driving postcolonial thought. Postcolonial theorist, Arturo Escobar (1995), describes development as a ‘dream’ which was visioned ‘to bring about the conditions necessary to replicating the world over the features that characterized the advanced societies of the time.’ (p. 4).

Escobar (1995) further elucidates how the ‘discourse and strategy of development produced [the very] opposite’ of what Mpuntuo describes. Instead of engagement with progress, as Mpuntuo connotes, development, with its many noble efforts, has produced ‘massive underdevelopment and impoverishment,’ and adding insult to injury, ‘untold exploitation and oppression.’ (ibid.) This nightmare reality for most of the world’s population, including those on the continent of Africa, reflected the antithesis of every communicated intention of development. Development,
in this sense, certainly did not relate in any way to the local understandings of Mpuntuo as the process of exercising agency to move a cause forward, as described in Johannes Christaller’s Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language Twi (1933).

A significant distinction between Mpuntuo and development can be found in their points of departure. The latter term, development, has not been characterized by an engagement with progress by those for whom the progressive acts are intended. The concept of development has, rather, always been an external notion designed in a manner that has left local people marginalized and voiceless. Raymond Williams (1988) even analyses that throughout its history, ‘generous idea’ development aid has been conflated with ‘wholly ungenerous practices of cancellation of the identities of others…and of imposed processes of development for a world market controlled by others.’ (p.104). Development has often been characterized by the taking of agency from local people in order to further global development agendas. In contrast, Mpuntuo functions through agency not imperialism; that is, by individuals and collectives being agents of their own progress.

In the 1950’s, the early years of Development, the term was used to describe growth and, as described by Pieterse (2010), the process toward political and social modernization (i.e. nation building, entrepreneurship, etc.). (p. 7) During this era of modernization thinking, to develop basically meant to increase or become more wealthy in terms of resources within the nation-state model, following the example of Western nations in the post-WWII period. The modernization or growth theorists saw development as a ‘unilinear, evolutionary process and define[d] the state of underdevelopment in terms of observable quantitative differences’ between countries.
classified as poor/traditional, on the one hand, and rich/modern on the other. (Servaes and Malikhao, Hemer and Tufte, 2005, p. 92).

The 1960’s ushered in dependency theorization in the field of Development. Development during this paradigm simply meant capital accumulation. (Pieterse, 2010, p. 7) Global meanings of the concept of Development continued to evolve into the 1970’s, when alternative theories began to question the condition of human beings in Development. Moving into the 1970’s, the focus of development shifted from economic growth theories to a more basic needs approach, which fused economic increase with the distribution of that increase. (Escobar, 1995, p. 5) This formed a new conception of development - one that led to a redefining of the term as capacitiation during the 1980’s. (Pieterse, 2010, p. 7). Alternative development theories continue to emerge as the failure of both modernization and dependency recognize the merging of the ‘Worlds’ through globalization, as well as the importance of engaging with the cultural impact of this merger, persists. Servaes and Malikhao (2005) advise that there is a need for a new concept of development which emphasized cultural identity and multidimensionality). (p. 93).

Postcolonial thinkers stress the importance of noting that, through all of development’s paradigms, the perspectives of governments and citizens of the so-labeled Third World were seldom, if ever, taken into consideration when theorizing or practicing development. Local agency have rarely factored heavily into development praxis; rather, including local ideas, interests and perspectives has often been seen as hampering the efficiency of development work. Despite the marginalization of those said to be developing, the notion of development ‘had achieved the status of a certainty in the social imaginary,’ worldwide. (Escobar, 1995, p. 5) In essence, most of the world’s population, particularly and ironically those who were expected to
develop, were not involved in any meaningful level in development planning and were not even aware of what development meant or would mean to their lives. Escobar likened the representation of development as the ‘colonization of reality.’

This project work will draw upon the discourse on the convergence of postcolonial and development studies. Acknowledging that ‘European models of development and modernity cannot easily be universalized’ is critical to understanding the premise of this study. What matters most are the connotations of the term, development, to the specific communities that engage with them. This study attempts to ‘recover the voices of marginalized...peoples in the South, particularly through an understanding of their potential and actual agency and resistance in development theory and practice.’ (McEwan, p. 107). Simply put, the people who are trying to develop have to articulate their theories and understandings of development in order to guide development practice for more effective outcomes. A better understanding of this will emerge first through synthesizing the various definitions of development presented in several key Communication for Development literature, followed by an in-depth investigation into what the term means to the people of Akrofuom in this case.

Jan Nederveen Pieterson (2001), as cited by McEwan (2009) defines ‘development as the notion of ‘organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement.’ (p. 92). It follows that development theory, as described by Li (2007) cited by McEwan (2009), partly concerns itself with what constitutes ‘improvement’, among other issues including the identification of appropriate interventions and power relations underlying the will to improve. Ultimately to neoliberalists, whose theoretical framework has dominated contemporary development practice, ‘attaining the affluent lifestyle of high mass consumption for the majority

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of the world’s population,’ in other words having and consuming more stuff, correlates to development. (McEwan, 102). However this model is not necessarily motivating the greater social change that the field is seeking. Thus the question of what constitutes ‘improvement’ in at the epicenter of this current project work.

Bridging the gap between development and culture is key in redefining development under from an alternative perspective. Schech and Haggis’s (2000) trace the relationship between the two concepts – culture and development. It considers the histories and debates over the two and ultimately argues that the ‘notion of culture as bounded coming apart at the seams,’ and that development as discourse and praxis is in crisis. The relationship between culture and development has been problematic with regard to modernization approaches to development, as culture has been viewed as a ‘hindrance to modernization.’ (p. 50) Modernization theory is the driving discourse of development praxis. Essentially development is a pseudonym for modernization and modernization as one for westernization. This perspective is in crisis, Schech and Haggis (2000) suggest, because of the poor links between the theory and praxis. For this reason, the very credibility and, for that matter, the survival of development is being scrutinized.

COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

In similar manner, the Development Communications sprung out of the post-World War II transition period as an apparent foreign aid strategy, as explained by Karin Wilkins (2008), with the purpose of promoting modernization, thus westernization. Scholars, including Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm championed the notion of media toward modernization, through individual
and structural changes, respectively addressed. (Development Communications, the International Encyclopedia). No doubt, this conception of a developed world being a westernized world was driven by Western scholars, primarily from the United States. However, by the 1970’s, Latin American and Asian scholars began to chime in to offer their own perspectives and interpretations of the concept of Communication for Development. (ibid.)

In 1971, when the concept of Development Communications was first fully articulated and a DevCom program first existed at University of the Philippines as Los Baños School of Agriculture symposium, Communication for Development was defined as

‘The art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential.’ (Quebral, 2011, p. 4)

The academic field was then recognizable by six major traits as laid out by the Los Baños, including the following descriptors of the ComDev discipline:

- An emphasis on human interchanges as communication media rather than the reigning focus on mechanical media, particularly the popular mass media;
- An inherent confluence of both development and communications processes, thus establishing a discipline with its own distinct character;
- An understood end user, being the vulnerable and disadvantaged within a developing society;
- Grounding in the notion of planned change for the better, beginning with taking care of the basics;
- Unit of study or analysis was community over individual; and
- Intended as non-formal education for out-of-school-learners

(ibid., p. 5)

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Emerging from all of these new voices from the Global South, then understood as the Third World, was an intense drive for the participation of the marginalized and most vulnerable of the developing world. Hence, participatory approaches, which ‘center their attention on the people engaged in and affected by social change interventions’ dominate the field of Communication for Development. (Wilkins, 2008).

Beyond the disciplinary traits of the Communication for Development are the characteristics that bridge its theory and practice. According to Silvio Waisbord (2005), the five key ideas guiding ComDev praxis are ‘the centrality of power, the integration of top-down and bottom-up approaches, the need to use a communication ‘tool-kit’ approach, the articulation of interpersonal and mass communication, and the incorporation of personal and contextual factors.’ (Hemer and Tufte (eds.), p. 78). Development, then, seemingly depends on the nature and outcomes of human communications. Engaging in processes that will help to reach common ground on what is significant to a people who desire or require change, and being able to measure change with respect to this common ground reflect the essence of Communication for Development. Understanding representation and how it lends itself to the concept of participation are central to this study.

**REPRESENTATION**

Linguistically, ‘neither signifiers (words) nor signifieds (concepts) are referents (things).’ (Leitch (ed.), 2010, p. 6) Things are read or interpreted differently by different people. At the point where people gain a shared language to explain their shared meanings of referents, there is
culture. Social constructionist theory thus separates language from reality, arguing that language has an unstable relationship with reality. (ibid) Language, being the communication of shared meanings, cannot be permanently fixed; it will change depending on who is reading the referents. It is important to note that power dynamics play a major role in determining which cultural understandings dominate. The particular case reflects this instability and the role power play in determining meaning. Johannes Christaller (1881), in *A Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language Called Tshi (Chwee, Twi)* which is the first written lexicon of the language, does not mention the compound word, *Mpuntuo*. This subject-auxiliary inversion is only documented in the form of a verb phrase, *tuo mpono*, as mentioned earlier in the section on the keyword approach. What is already known about the Akan language - Akan being the overarching ethnic group to which the Asante and Fante belong - is that their words do not emerge from nothing. Each word necessarily goes through the process of meaning production.

Representation is the production of meaning. This, Ferdinand de Saussure believed, depended on language as a system of signs. Signs are words, sounds, and images which trigger an idea in the mind; the form itself being the signifier and the idea it triggers being the signified. (Hall, 1997, p. 18, 31) Both are vital to representation. When a group shares the same ideas about a form, they are considered as sharing a culture. The extension of this shared culture is in the similar ways in which they communicate their ideas about the form. This is the shared language that is critical to sustaining systems of representation. Hall (1997) stresses that representation is complex in that ‘it engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilizes fears and anxieties in the viewer, at deeper levels than we can explain in a simple, common-sense way.’ (p. 226)
It is revealed through the study that the word M puntuo, or even its apparent English translation, development, serves as the sign, whose signifieds includes progress, achievement, moving forward, advancement, novelty, improvement and accomplishment. Through preliminary discussions with the research team, it is already clear that M puntuo’s referents, at first glance, manifest as projects such as the advent of electricity to the town, road works, bore holes, and building projects such as the community center, marketplace and school houses in Akrofuom. From the inception of the investigation and throughout the study, the people of Akrofuom seem to have little to no involvement or connection to any of these development projects other than as recipients. In line with participatory development theory, most of the development projects in the town are deteriorating or struggling to sustain or, in some cases, survive. The question that it raises for the research participants is related to the role of agency in M puntuo. How, if at all, is participation significant to M puntuo? Another line of inquiry relates to going deeper than the project-based assessments of M puntuo into a more holistic definition of the term. There have been many projects in Akrofuom, has Akrofuom realized M puntuo? This particular question must be followed up with explanations.

PARTICIPATION

It should the right of every human being to participate. As human beings are born into communal existence, participation can also be seen as a human need, a natural expectation of anyone regardless of socio-economic or historic position. Participation is the ‘point at which an individual’s knowledge, or capacity to act, is transformed into communicative action.’ (Lievrouw, 2001 as cited by Lievrouw, 2011: 14) The degree to which an individual participates Communication for Development One-year master 15 Credits Submitted: January 2015* Supervisor: [Ronald Stade]*
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knowledge systems, as it goes beyond making the distribution of material resources more efficient and effective; it is about ‘the sharing of knowledge and the transformation of the process of learning itself in the service of people’s self-development.’ (ibid., p. 250). This point matters greatly as partial participation will not suffice. Pateman (1970), as cited by Bailey, Cammaerts, and Carpentier (2008), defines partial participation as ‘a process in which two or more parties influence each other in the making of decisions but the final power to decide rests with one party only.’ (p. 13). The effect of this power structure has proven to be disempowering and at the very least resulting in frustrations on both local communities and their global change agents, who ultimately have the decision making power. Such ‘power relationships reproduce themselves...unless a conscious, sustained effort is undertaken to alter them.’ (Connell, 1997, p. 251-2).

As Connell (1997) discovered through the Irian Jaya Project, otherwise and more commonly remembered as the 100 to 1 Cow Project, understanding local understandings of development is essential to the success of development aims. This premise underscores the motivation driving the investigation of Mpuntuo. An in-depth interaction with this one local community, that has made Mpuntuo its mantra, will attempt to offer hints that should guide future development work in Akrofuom, whether initiated locally, nationally or globally.

Determining and employing research methodology is not an option for social scientist. Methodology is particularly crucial in social science as it is needed ‘to keep [social scientists] erect, while [navigating] a terrain that moves and shifts even as we attempt to traverse it.’ (Burawoy, 1998, p. 4). Pinpointing and merging epistemology and ontology with the appropriate methodology and methodological approaches lays the foundation for credible social science
research. In executing this research work, it seemed prudent to apply the participatory perspective into all aspects of the research. Bowd, Özerdem and Kassa (2010) highlight that participatory research methodologies have been use for four decades as ‘a tool through which the voices of the most marginalized, impoverished and excluded of society can be heard.’ (p. 2) As this methodology promotes participation, teamwork, flexibility and triangulation in the research process, it affords the possibility of greater access to local communities, which enhances understanding of these communities for more effective development planning of sustainable interventions.

As with all methodologies, the participatory approach also comes with its challenges. Some challenges including accessing populations, security, and ethical concerns. Yet as Bowd, Özerdem and Kassa (2010) stress, ‘participatory techniques are designed to enable the disadvantaged and the poor to critically reflect upon their living conditions, learn the causes of their powerlessness and deprivation, and help them act to redress this power imbalance for meaningful outcomes.’ (p. 2). This makes participation a vital addition to academia, if for no other reason than to reassure the otherwise marginalized that their voices do matter.

SECTION 4: APPLIED RESEARCH METHODS

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
‘Pretensions to total objectivity impede reflection on the ethics of both the means and ends of social research by leaving the author completely out of the context.’ (Abashin, S. as cited by Zavisca, p. 128). In order to ensure good research practice, and contribute to the field in a manner that is ethically responsible, a review of some of the ethical issues involved is in order. Regardless of the researcher’s peculiar circumstances, establishing a sound ethical foundation for study matters. In the case of this research, major ethical considerations must be made.

REMAINS APOLITICAL

First on the list of ethical considerations in this fieldwork is distancing myself from the political sphere of Akrofuom, bearing in mind that people would automatically associate me with my father’s party. The local coordinator of these group discussions will not participate as a facilitator, as he expressed concerns that the research will be interpreted as somehow politically motivated. Distancing the research team from political affiliation is a crucial ethical consideration that will impact the quality of the data being collected.

INFORMED CONSENT

Another ethical matter to consider is that of negotiating informed consent. Asante’s formality needs to be managed in order to enable the average citizens contribute to the discussion on development. This necessitates the exclusion of the MP and community elders from the planning and preparation aspects of the research. Amplifying the voice of the subaltern requires breaking down some of the power structures that indirectly keep their voices muted. Once leadership gets
involved, the views perspectives of the common everyday person will be limited. Thus, a casual and familial approach has to be taken in order to facilitate the interviews and focus group discussions. That being understood, the research coordinator will simply invite respective interview and discussion participants to think and talk over Akrofuom’s *mpuntuo*. Food and/or drinks will be served to further relax the interview environment.

**INSIDER-OUTSIDER RESEARCHER**

‘Insider-researchers are those who choose to study a group to which they belong, while outsider-researchers do not belong to the group under study’ (Breen, 2007 as cited by Unluer, 2012, p. 1). However, it is important to point out that ‘in a world made up of complex interrelationships and dependencies, to talk of coherent communities, within which some are members and others are outsiders, is simplistic and misleading.’ (Briggs and Sharp, 2004, p. 671).

According to Bonner and Tolhurst (2002, as cited by Unluer, 2012), the insider researcher has three major advantages in the research field, namely ‘(a) having a greater understanding of the culture being studied; (b) not altering the flow of social interaction unnaturally; and (c) having an established intimacy which promotes both the telling and the judging of truth.’ (p. 1).

The insider researcher benefits from the prior knowledge of those studied. The insider understands what a studied group presents, but is also familiar with the political subtext or as Unluer (2012) puts it, how things really work. This prior knowledge removes a layer from the research process that every outsider must tackle in the field.
Some obvious benefits to conducting my research in Akrofuom are the connection and understanding of the local context. These benefits are rooted in the regular direct and intimate contact with people, have spent time in the town intermittently over the course of years, and the free and informal access to most private and public spaces in the town.

However, as this research process certainly reveals, despite the clear advantages, insider research has its fair share of disadvantages which threaten the quality of the research. One disadvantage is the loss of objectivity in the face of familiarity. Although qualitative researchers recognize the fallacy of total objectivity, the insider researcher will by all means have a more challenging time mitigating the expected biases gained from their prior knowledge.

Other notable disadvantages include balancing the insider role with the researcher role (DeLyser, 2001; Gerrish, 1997, as cited by Unluer, 2012), managing access gained to sensitive information, addressing the effects of bias on data collection and analysis, and monitor ethical issues particularly as it relates to power in the research field. (Unluer, 2012, p. 2).

**Fair Return**

Fair return for assistance is particularly important with regard to the assistance received from the research team. Though due compensation has been offered, the Twi transcriber, Twi translator, participant organizer, focus group facilitator, and focus group note taker alike, all refused to accept money for their work. Each communicated a sense of responsibility to participate due to their assessment of the greater potential of the research. None of these people want to take official payment for the work. Each of them points to the benefit for all that the work is being...
done at all. Yet after consultation, culturally, it would be acceptable to thank the members of the research team with a monetary gift. As far as fair return for assistance is concerned, consultation with community members on the appropriate manner to handle this in order to ensure that no economic exploitation occurs at any point with any helpers, service providers or interview participants through the research process.

**IN-DEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Both interviews and group discussions ‘can produce in-depth, detailed and complex data on attitudes, practices and experiences of cultural consumers, as well as the discourses and motivations of their meaning making processes.’ (Pickering, 2008, p. 73). This research will employ both qualitative methods as a means to achieve insight into the socio-political and cultural relevance of the keyword, *Mpuntuo*.

These two methods of data collection are viewed as best-suited for this population, as it permits respondents to assert, hypothesize, propagandize, restate and retract views. (Birch, et. al., 1996, p. 13) The indigenous communicative practice is typified by its discursive construct, exemplified by open reflection and reflexivity, debate, and opinion sharing. As a matter of course, the facilitator will encourage respondents to elaborate their points, while offering occasional paralinguistic prompts and clarifications to questions. The idea is to gather as much data as possible from these conversations as the body of knowledge on indigenous discourses on development general, let alone those in Ghanaian social discourse, is still limited.
As I began the coordination of the field research, one major challenge that came up was related to my father, who happens to be the MP of the town. How do I go to Akrofuom without everyone expecting me to be on a political mission for the New Patriotic Party? If I tell him I am going, he will want to come along. If I don’t tell him, he could be offended and people may wonder if we are estranged. I took my chances with the latter and chose not to tell him, and instead called on his brother, my uncle Samuel Obuba to help me organize the field work. I made the first 6-hour road trip to Akrofuom, through monsoonal rains and long stretches of muddy road construction sites, only to explain my intentions. During that meeting, after discussing the
degree project, key research question and my ideas for executing the interviews and group discussions, he advised on how he thought the research would best be conducted. We ultimately decided that he would not accompany me to the session, but would rather link me with one of his colleagues who could serve as the research facilitator. He further stressed the importance of informality by insisting on not making any broad announcement about the work. He explained that it could turn people off if they began to feel that this was a formal activity, and could encourage local government authorities to scrutinize the exercise. I appreciated that local knowledge, but this did become tricky because it meant that I would have to get there before I would know if I had any willing participants.

The interviews, as well as the group discussions, were be facilitated by a primary school teacher, named DK Adonteng, from DA Primary School in Akrofuom was a pleasure to work with throughout my fieldwork. He joined the research team at the request of my uncle, the local coordinator, who is a colleague in the Ghana Education Service. Securing a teacher as the facilitator was necessary to ensuring fluency in both English and Asante Twi and ability to engage with the nuances of both formal/academic and colloquial/everyday language. Teacher DK, as he is affectionately known, was assigned to Akrofuom from Kumasi. After one intense conversation, he was rooted in my research aims, and used the interview platform to engage people in a discussion about vulnerable youths and parent engagement. Working with him was humbling. His commitment to the town undeniable. His eloquence and confidence apparent in the first moment of meeting. I sat along with him and joined in the conversations that he led. In line with my ethical concerns over fair return, I ended the fieldwork by privately presenting him
with a monetary gift of an amount determined to be appropriate through consultation with Mr. Obuba.

Instead of a scribe, the discussions will be documented by the assistive communication technologies of two voice recorders and an iPad, which will be managed by the researcher. Unfortunately, power outages dominated the days spent, thus making it difficult to use electronic devices for all discussions. Logistically, sourcing a Twi scribe who could keep up with the pace of a natural flow of conversation proved to be a daunting experience. To recover the data collected in the interviews and group discussions, a Twi teacher, who community radio Twi transcriber and presenter, was engaged to take up the responsibility of transcribing and translating after all of the data is collected and converted to mp3 or mp4 files. Consequently, after one attempt to transcribe the interview with Kwabena Appiah-Pinkrah, she did not continue with the work. Transcription of any video files was managed on the iPad and a camera as a matter of logistical practicality.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The in-depth interviews will be conducted with the following people/groups of people:

**Kwabena Appiah-Pinkrah.** Member of Parliament for Akrofuom Constituency, is a 65 year old man. He is my father and thus I had easy access to him. He is the first to receive formal education in his family, and completed his education in Germany and the United States. He returned to Akrofuom after earning his Master’s Degree to farm for 5 years, before formally
entering the field of development. He is a dominant personality who is often not questioned by anyone. Yet his commitment to the development of Akrofuom is undeniable.

**Nana Kɔkɔ**, queen mother from one of the two Akrofuom royal families, Banhu. She lives in a storied building in the middle of town. Her family is the family of the late Nana Okai Ababio, the last sitting chief of Akrofuom. She is an elderly woman, about 70 years old. She holds a responsibility to know all of the traditions, histories and practices of the people.

**Auntie Afua** is my great-aunt, the direct sister of my late grandmother, Nana Yaa Kraa. She sells roasted corn on the roadside opposite the Akrofuom Rural Bank.

**Mr. Akowuah** is a retired teacher and sports coach. He is one of the people to establish the first Akrofuom Mpuntuo Kuo in 1965. He was among the group that drew up the first urban plans for the town, plans which were destroyed by the chieftancy when his group presented it the palace of the chief.

**Okyeame Yaw** is a royal spokesperson. His role is to be the voice of the chief. I met him as labourers were working on extending his family house. He and his wife are the guardians to their granddaughter, whom they feared was spoiling her life by avoiding school and staying out all night. (One of the consequences of electricity coming to the town 15 years ago was that it brought everyone to the streets, but especially the youth.)
These one-on-one, face to face interactions will ‘seek to build the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual self-disclosure’ between the interviewer and the respondent. (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012, p. 99) The in-depth interview with Akrofuom’s MP will be conducted in English at his private residence in Accra; while the others will be conducted in Twi in Akrofuom. The interview respondents will be sourced from the elderly population, based specifically on the fact that they have lived in Akrofuom long enough to remember the colonial era and all of the experiences in development that the town has encountered. Notably, plans to organize a group discussion with the elderly were abandoned on the basis of the ambulatory challenges of most of the participants.

As with any in-depth interview, these will strive to create as mutually supportive and balanced an interview environment as possible. Because in-depth interviews develop and build upon intimacy, they come along with various potential ethical hazards. It is important not to understate that, unlike other intimate conversations; the in-depth interview gives distinct roles to the participants and is strategically designed for the interviewer to collect data from the informant for a specific purpose. In the case of these in-depth interviews, it is also important to acknowledge the standpoint and place in the community from which the interviewer is located. This will no doubt directly impact the ways in which the researcher will make sense of and interpret what is seen and heard in the research context.

‘In most literature about ethnographic research, the researcher is seen as an outsider to the group studied.’ (Song and Parker, 1995, p. 243) The identities of both the researcher and researched in this study challenge the traditionally over-simplified dichotomies discussed by Song and Parker.
This research will exemplify the ‘diversity of experiences and viewpoints between and within various groups as well as the diversity of experiences which can occur between the researcher and the researched.’ (ibid.) As with the work of Song and Parker, the researcher in this work is neither a total insider nor outsider with respect to the interviewee. Thus entering the interview environment, the interviewer’s position is not ‘readily apparent or defined.’ (ibid.) Additionally, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the power dynamics and organizational control associated with standing in the position of interviewer. The interviewer ultimately decides the agenda, the schedule, questions, and the content of the final report - not to mention focuses the responses in a particular direction. (Birch, et. al., 1996)

More candidly, the respondents will all likely view the interviewer as a grandchild or daughter. As Akrofuom is a small town, most of the respondents have some relationship or other with my family. Everyone in the town knows my father, who, as Member of Parliament for the greater Akrofuom Constituency, also and necessarily participates as an interview respondent. It is expected that respondents will be warm, familial and forthcoming as early on, the locally-based research team communicated that the interviews were part of a project work required for completion of a Master’s degree. Later, during the interviews themselves, the facilitator would open each meeting explaining that I could have chosen any topic. He would stress that despite this, I chose to study about Akrofuom, which was a choice that reflected an interest, on my part, of remaining connected to my roots and desiring to find a way to assist in developing the community.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Additionally, there will be three group discussions on the topic of Akrofiom’s *Mpunto*, all of which will be conducted in either the local Ashanti dialect of Twi or English or a mixture of the two, which is not uncommon.

The group discussions will be conducted with a group of local youth leaders and market sellers. Group discussions are a practical and deliberate data collection method that allows the researcher to retrieve the opinions of several likeminded people, concentrating on their shared understandings of the research inquiry. (Payne and Payne, 2004, p. 103). As Payne and Payne (2004) detail in SAGE’s Key Concepts in Social Research, group discussions are intentionally designed to benefit from the social interactions of the participants. Thus this method builds upon the existing relationships of the participants.

Group discussions, being designed specifically by the researcher, create an artificial situation for the research. However, the familiarity of participants allows the researcher to glean not only ‘the ideas, opinions, etc. [of the participants] as they are communicated’ in these groups, but also ‘the underlying opinions, feeling, etc. that members already have, and which are expressed, amplified and possibly modified through the collective interaction in the group.’ (ibid, 104). Tapping into the shared meanings of *Mpunto* from the migrant workers, market women and youth will help in building theory in an inductive manner, drawing upon empirical data to refine the theoretical premise of the study. These group discussions will strive to be as informal as possible, bearing in mind the embedded formalities present in almost all Asante interactions.

**Group 1**
I was able to successfully conduct two group discussion, the youth and the market women. The youth were represented by the executive board of an Akrofuom youth association. They comprised on one young woman and three young men. One of the young men struggled with a bad reputation as he owned the local gaming center which was keeping young people out all night. One of them studied at the University of Cape Coast and returned to Akrofuom because that is home.

**Group 2**

The other group discussion was a fiery discussion with ten market women, one of which began an argument at the very beginning of the talk because she felt left out. These women received a new market place in a different part of town two years ago. Unfortunately, the market place is already falling apart and people are not frequenting the market as they used to, leaving the market sellers struggling to make ends meet.
Vendors at the Akrofuom Market sit and debate over Mpuntuo

**FACILITATOR GUIDE**

| Context: | This research is an investigation of the Akan word Mpuntuo, using the Keyword Approach. Akrofuom has experienced many development activities and interventions, but cannot claim notable social change as a result of these developments. |

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Benita Abenaa Nyarko Uttenthal

Word Count 16,799
**Premise, Study Rationale:**
Understanding the concept of development from the perspective of previously ignored and generally marginalized people is at the heart of communication for development thinking. Communities are empowered through their inclusion in social change processes. Participatory communication helps local communities activate their agency to consider and address their issues for more positive and sustainable outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Questions:</th>
<th>What does Mpuntuo? How is the concept represented in Akrofuom? Has Akrofuom experienced Mpuntuo? Are power, agency and participation considered in Mpuntuo, in the way that postcolonial thinkers argue they should be in Development praxis?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Strategy:</td>
<td>Ask participants to react to these points and questions. Engage in a discussion in a relaxed and intimate environment, building upon quickly established bonds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This interview guide was originally developed during the early stages of preparation of the degree project, but it was refined after consultation with Mr. Obuba, as he is most commonly referred to, even within the family. He advised that we take interviews one at a time and reflect after each in order to determine the approach to the next. Teacher DK led most of the interviews and both of the group discussions. He took an open discussion approach and engaged in discussions about a host of relevant topics, including local history, community challenges, youth vulnerability and parent engagement. The discussions began by Teacher DK leading in with the question of Mpuntuo and veering off into the natural flow of conversation. Through the
transcription process I was able to extract the relevant content, but the discussions were free to flow in their own directions.

CODING

In order to organize, retrieve and interpret the data collected and to make drawing conclusions possible, employing a system of coding the data is vital. (Lockyer, 2004, p. 138). Establishing a system of coding is crucial in validating qualitative data analysis as, without some system, the analysis presents more like conjecture than grounded theory. Coding serves as a critical step in developing theory, which Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) define as ‘a description of a pattern that you find in the data’ collected through the qualitative methods applied. (p. 31). This section lays out the coding of the in-depth semi-structured interviews and group discussions in this research work on three levels: open, axial and selective.

On the open level, the data will be broken down, compared and categorized. Following this process, the data at the axial level will be connected across the interviews and group discussions in alignment with the categories determined in the open level. Finally, at the selective level, the core category will be pinpointed, relationships will be made between it and the other categories and through this coding up process, and the data should inform theory. (Fields (1993) as cited by Lockyer, 2004, p. 138)

At this stage in the data analysis process, concluding on one way to determine the data can prove challenging. Regardless of the way the data will be interpreted, all efforts will be made to ensure
that all theories are at the very least data-driven. It is also important to bear in mind that the coding and clustering processes will certainly be impacted by the knowledge of the research context, the deep-rooted autobiographical roots of the researcher as well as the extensive disciplinary literature informing this study. The validity and reliability of the data collected is of utmost importance to this project work; as such, transparency in this regard is paramount.

The data collected was coded for four purposes:

1. To determine the denotation of the term *Mpuntuo* as well as the denotation of the individual parts of the compound, *Mpono* and *Tu*.
2. To determine the connotations of the term *Mpuntuo*.
3. To analyze for the characteristics of theory based development.
4. To identify any gaps in definition between *Development* and *Mpuntuo*.

**SECTION 5: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

This research revealed that *Mpuntuo* and development are two different concepts to the participants due to the history between Akrofuom and development. Between 300 and 100 years ago, according to Mr. Akowuah, the lands around the town (which were full of gold) were sold by local leadership for Schnapps in the name of development with no consultation with the citizens.

Citizen participation has also not been encouraged with respect to strategic matters. There were several examples of citizen efforts to engage being penalized or sabotaged. According to Honorable Appiah-Pinkrah, the 1960’s saw rapid growth in the town because of a high level of
citizen engagement; but Mr. Akowuah laid out a few incidences that can offer insight into the
loss of agency among citizens as well as the indifferent attitude toward reclaiming agency which
many observe as a key impediment to realizing Mpuntuo.

In 1965, after establishing the first Akrofuom Mpuntuo Kuo, young citizens got together and
took the initiative of drawing up an urban plan for the town. They proudly presented the finished
plan to the chief who scolded them for not seeking permission and subsequently destroyed the
plans in their faces.

In 1969, the gold mining company gave the town a plant that generated enough electricity to
power street lights. Within days, the small plant was stolen, leaving the town’s people depressed
and demoralized. The town did not get electricity again until 1998.

Around the same time 45 years ago, some people in the town were planning to take advantage of
national funds for rural development to construct a road from the remote village into the nearby
bustling mining town of Obuasi. One man, whose name Mr. Akowuah intentionally kept out of
his narrative, swore that the road would only be constructed over his dead body. Indeed the old
man died before the road broke ground in 2003, 34 years later.

Nana Koko points out that this common phenomenon of pulling people back as they try to move
forward is the thorn in the side of the town’s development. She elaborated that the problem
All has to do with the people not having a common mindset pertaining to how things should be done. We’ve got some people in this town who naturally will not like to see others succeed. They are caught in all sorts of conspiracy acts, while others follow blindly. Once they know they are definitely going to benefit, they will do their best to work against the nation.

Power struggles have built mistrust and tension among the chieftancy for example leaving the town without its core leadership. Almost everyone interviewed pointed to the missing head of the society as the reason behind the stagnation. No one started their response identifying what they have yet to do, but stressed the need overcome the power struggles in order to get a necessary leadership.

The central government, again leadership, has also added a component to the disillusionment of those interviewed. For example, in the first discussion with Honorable Appiah-Pinkrah, I asked:

So if the people of Akrofuom lay down a vision for the community, what should happen? What if the District Assembly is not interested?

*KAP: The District Assembly cannot say it is not interested. Before they designed this development plan for the whole assembly, all the communities are consulted, and that framed the District Development Plan.

Researcher: The Local Development Plans are based on the communities expressed needs?

*KAP: The national development plan is designed from a pyramid perspective, raised from below to the top...It was initiated in 1988 but the strategic management has become a problem.

Researcher: Why?

*KAP: The reason is that the officials in the center do not want to lose the control they have on the development agenda; that’s where they make their money.
It seems that the agency to contribute to the development of Akrofuom has systematically been stripped from the people according to the histories shared, leaving the people in a state of learned helplessness. If the knowledge gained from this study reflects a general picture, there would be a desperate need to undo this helplessness in order for the town to ‘proceed to advance’ or *tumpono* to resolve its issues.

**OPEN LEVEL**

During the Open level of the coding process, respondent comments were broken down, compared and categorized. The following themes were present in all of the discussions, and data was extracted from the interviews and discussions to reflect an emphasis on the following: collaboration, planning, action, responsibility (agency), and change. These five elements frame the indigenous knowledge of *Mpuntuo* from the perspective of the research participants. The following are a couple of excerpts from some of the interviews reflecting a relationship between *Mpuntuo* and these five elements.

**Collaboration**

**Interview with OKYEAME YAW** (Translated text)

*F: So Nana, all you are saying is that, people preparing themselves to move something forward.*

*R: No not exactly that, but people sacrificing and dedicating themselves to projects that will bring about some positive change in the community.*

**Interview with NANA AFUA** (Translated text)

Communication for Development
One-year master
15 Credits
Submitted: January 2015*
Supervisor: [Ronald Stade]*

Benita Abenaa Nyarko Uttenthal
Word Count 16,799
F: So when we take the MP out, what else can you say about the town’s development?

R: As I said, people have to cooperate with each other to make things work.

F: We talked about Mpuntuo, this word is in two parts. Can you explain the mpono and the tu part?

R: The mpono has to do with thinking about something and the tu is putting those things into action.

F: Are you referring to both good and bad things?

R: The good ideas we can come up with together.

Planning

Group Discussion with MARKET WOMEN (Translated text)

R: When we talk about Mpuntuo, I think it’s when you put an effort in something for it to succeed; for instance someone investing money into a project so it could prosper.

F: What about you, young lady?

R: I think Mpontuo is all about planning. You check to see if your community lacks some basic necessities such as water, light, limited produce, schools, etc. in order to work on them.

F: Can you explain the meaning of the words mpono and tu?

R: Well the mpono has to do with the planning and the tu is about taking action.

F: In this town of ours, have you seen any kind of development?

R: I don’t think there’s anything like that. If there was, you would have seen it here in this market.

F: You mean since you’ve been here, you haven’t seen any sort of development in this town.
R: Not really.

Action

Group discussion with YOUTH GROUP

F: The elders say that Mpuntuo is a compound word, mpono and tu. Have you ever thought of it that way?

R: Yes, I have considered that. Mpuntuo is actually two words: mpono is that you advance, and tu it to proceed. So if you don’t proceed...

F: Stop there. Let me ask you this. So are you saying that mpono is advancing?

R: Yes

F: So can you advance without proceeding?

R: That is the reason why I am saying that you proceed in order to advance. So that is Mpuntuo: you proceed to advance. Tu is the process and mpono is getting to where you planned to be.

Responsibility (Agency)

Interview with NANA K5K5 (Translated text)

F (Uttenthal): Let say for instance, an NGO or a benefactor is moving you forward, they say, “I am coming to build you a church, build you a school and construct some roads” but don’t involve you in all that project. Do you still call it “mpuntuo”?

R: Well, I would not call it mpuntuo, but if all that is going to be done is in favor of me, then I ought to put in an effort to see the success of all the promised projects.
F (Teacher DK): So you are saying that, if you don’t contribute your quota then you can’t call it your “mpuntuo”?

R: Exactly, it always better to be a part of it. Taking the social amenities project for instance, if we don’t contribute towards it, it becomes hard for people to maintain and preserve it for generation to benefit from.

F (Teacher DK): Nana, please let me asks this, in this small village of ours, who are the main people responsible for development?

R: Our chiefs are really responsible for that.

F (Teacher DK): So, what’s their role?

R: As I said earlier on, their job is to initiate communal labor, calling upon all individuals who are both inside and outside of the village to come together, make some financial contribution towards the town’s development.

F (Teacher DK): The chiefs can do their part, which other people do you think can also see to the development of the town?

R: The teachers too have a role to play in the town’s development. There’s an Akan adage that say, if a visitor is to be happy at a new surroundings, then it all lays in the hand of the town’s elite. The teachers do help us a lot, with the kids. The queen mothers too have a role to play. Times have changed a lot. You can’t even discipline a child. During our time, we were called to help out with most of the community work but now it’s not like that anymore.

F (Teacher DK): So what you are saying is that, we all have to help at our own ability level to bring about development, right?

Social Change

Interview 1 of 2 with KWABENA APPIAH-PINKRAH (Conducted in English)
R: “Mpuntuo”, from my point of view works to the extent that we need new things. We have to get things done in a better way, if we can bring about progressive change, we’ll have “mpuntuo”.

F (UTTENTHAL): And how do you decide what is progressive?

R: Progressive in a sense that it brings about a change that is recognized by the people to be new, innovative and creative, that will enhance the capabilities of man. Creativity is a new idea that we bring to life. All that am saying is that, it should bring a change in the life of the community and the individual.

F: I understand you, so if for example you eradicate a disease?

R: Its mpuntuo.

F: If, you build a school?

R: It is mpuntuo.

F: If you build a house or make a road?

R: It is mpuntuo.

F: Does it really matter if the change benefits the collective in this process?

R: It does matter. Every creative thing must have that effort of transforming the minds of the people. For example, if you build a public toilet in a particular place, it is going to change their mind because of the utilization process.

The elements of development expressed by the interview and group discussion participants seem to raise issues of communication and participation in line with to Paolo Freire (1970), who guides on the essential components of dialogue within the context of participatory communication in development. Implicit in the following characteristics is the notion that without these processes, development aims will inevitably struggle or even fail to be realized.
According to Freire (1970), as cited by Cadiz (2005), development outcomes can be realized when:

- The communication is between equals; in this case, equality is the foundation of the relationship between change agents and development partners;
- The dialogue is problem-posing; in this case, the development processes spring from the challenges are expressed by those requiring change in their lives, thus empowering them to drive the processes;
- The communication relies on Praxis, the constant relationship between action and reflection; this aspect necessarily requires regular engagement between change agents and development partners;
- Through Praxis, people become conscientized about the scope of the problem they pose and their potential to affect change, thus supporting greater risk-taking and stakeholder engagement; and
- The communication is rooted in five core values: love, humility, hope, faith (in the capabilities of the development partner), and critical thinking. Though these are often shunned as vague and subjective, Freire (1970) insist on their crucial role in participatory communication for development processes. (pp. 147-149)

The respondents also emphasize the need to communicate with the aim of solving problems with the support of the community.

**AXIAL LEVEL**

As the ultimate aim of the research is to come up with a working definition of development based on an in-depth understanding of the term *Mpuntuo*, the thematic categories determined during the open level naturally led to the second stage of coding, the axial level. Coding at this
level was handled according to the explicit definitions that each respondent gave regarding the term *Mpuntuo*. This was done in order to connect the knowledge derived from these different sources under more strict categories to aid in coding up a theoretical position. There are four headings in the axial coding chart corresponding with three terms being investigated in the research: *Mpuntuo* (first response), *Mpono*, *Tuo*, and *Mpuntuo* (the follow-up response). During the interview and discussion processes, respondents, at times, refined, clarified or rearticulated their definitions of *Mpuntuo* based on their reflections on the discussions that took place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participant</th>
<th>Mpuntuo (first response)</th>
<th>Mpono</th>
<th>Tuo</th>
<th>Mpuntuo (follow up response)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okyeame</td>
<td>Progress; sacrifice and dedication to projects</td>
<td>something you can lift</td>
<td>raises itself</td>
<td>when something is raised and moved forward, there is some kind of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Afua</td>
<td>Coming together to brainstorm Ideas that will bring progress; To make sure things are put In place</td>
<td>thinking about something (the good ideas we can come up with together)</td>
<td>putting those things into action</td>
<td>people have to cooperate with each other to make things work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana K5k5</td>
<td>Moving forward, that is to say progressing in whatever thing you set out to do; In another sense, working together collectively</td>
<td>Come let us live together as one</td>
<td>the collective work they did to ensure they had a better live</td>
<td>Bringing people together to plan and do something that moves them forward positively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena Appiah-Pinkrah</td>
<td>We have to get things done in a better way; if we can bring about progressive change that is “mpontuo.”</td>
<td>means getting ahead</td>
<td>moving together to get there</td>
<td>the relationship between getting ahead and how to go about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth 1</td>
<td>development is all about wanting something and getting help in achieving that thing</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth 3</td>
<td>moving forward or progressing in something</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>to a point where one can leave the town and be willing to come back and invest in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth 4</td>
<td>Improving</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>to work collectively as a community and also for people to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth 2</td>
<td>Things being different for the better (paraphrased)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>to maintain the peace in this community so people feel happy about staying here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Woman 1</td>
<td>someone comes around to help for a particular project to prosper</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Woman 2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Emphasize the importance of togetherness; it that can bring about development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Woman 3</td>
<td>Organize [people] to do something</td>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Woman 4</td>
<td>when you put an effort in something for it to succeed, investing into something so that it can prosper</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>the importance of togetherness and how that can bring about development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on these findings, development, in the form of the term *Mpuntuo*, seems to be understood by these people in Akrofuom as a process which involves a person or group identifying issues affecting them, collaborating with other change agents to plan an approach to address the issues, then taking action to realize sustained positive change in their lives as a result of this collective effort.

In other words, it can be defined from the perspective of the representative group as **strategic collaborative efforts intended to change specified conditions for the benefit of society**. This understanding seemingly lines up with the definition of participatory development communication, which Bessette (2004), as cited by Cadiz (2005), explains as “a planned activity, based on the one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates a dialogue among different stakeholders, around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realization, and which supports and accompanies this initiative”. (p. 146).

A key challenge to understanding *Mpuntuo*, and ultimately ‘development’ in the Akrofuom context, is the conflation of the terms as both ends and means. It is assumed that if *Mpuntuo*, as a development outcome, is realized, then *Mpuntuo*, and its associated development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Woman 5</th>
<th>Planning (checking to see what you lack in order to work on them)</th>
<th>planning</th>
<th>taking action</th>
<th>---</th>
</tr>
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</table>

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processes as means, were followed. This study reveals that according to the representatives of the community of Akrofuom, development outcomes are to be realized through participatory development communications approaches. For participants, development only truly exists in a space where the ones who need to see change in their lives are involved in creating that change, at all stages of the process.

SELECTIVE LEVEL

A salient red thread throughout all of the interviews and discussions is the point that none of the research participants, including the researcher and the facilitator, sensed that development was not taking place in the Akrofuom context. Though people referenced many projects and initiatives, none really felt the presence of a process that would realize overall positive change for the community. Among the five elements identified at the axial level, this research selects Responsibility (agency) as the problematic element impeding Mpuntuo in Akrofuom.

Based on the sample which participated in the research, it seems that the people generally identify agents of change as elected officials, chieftains and external benefactors. The perspective seems to be that these identified agents are those with the primary responsibility of changing the condition of the town. Though, after probing further, all participants were able to acknowledge some role the individual citizen would also need to play in the process, they all also pointed out that people are generally not thinking or acting in this way.

Coding up, building the theory from below, the lack of participation by the people of Akrofuom in development presents as the primary factor stagnating and even regressing the communities.
change processes, leaving the people seemingly trapped in underdevelopment. Akrofuom could potentially benefit from some of the approaches inspired by and grounded in Freire’s model, including Community Organizing (CO), Action Research, Participatory Action Research (PAR) or Participatory Research (PR) and Social Mobilization (socmob) which exists with its key components advocacy and networking. (Cadiz, 2005, p. 152). Something needs to happen towards this end in Akrofuom.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

The struggle to extract responses related to an understanding of the need for personal responsibility and citizen engagement contradicts the fact that all research participants agreed that *Mpuntuo* (development) begins and should be maintained by the people for whom it is intended. This, seemingly, speaks to the point that the people do not feel empowered to lead or even be included in the processes associated with changing in their own lives. For the people of Akrofuom, and in line with Postcolonial thought, participation is an indispensable component of realizing sustainable development.

Again, as Postcolonial theories would support, this research has shown, in the case of Akrofuom, that abandoning local or indigenous knowledge on issues of vital significance to a people can have catalytic consequences. The research showed that implicit in the indigenous understanding of *Mpuntuo* is responsibility, engagement, participation, accountability, strategic planning and cooperation. All of these are principles stemming from a collective sense of empowerment.
However, the research also reveals that these are the very concepts that the community continues to struggle to embed in their ways of doing. It is the conclusion of this stage of the research that exploring avenues for including citizens in change processes at all stages of change could be the first step toward realizing active participation which will lead to social transformation.
SECTION 7: LITERATURE LIST

Research Methods


Coding


Ethics


Ghana

Qualitative Interviews and Group Discussions


5. Song and Parker (1995) ‘Commonality, difference and the dynamics of disclosure in in-depth interviewing’ in *Sociology* 29(2) 241-256

Indigenous Knowledge


Extended Case Method


Keyword Approach


Development

Communication for Development


Participation


Representation

APPENDIX A – SAMPLE INTERVIEW FOOTAGE

Final Mpuntuo Presentation.wmv

APPENDIX B – SAMPLE INTERVIEW EXCERPT

RESPONDENT: Group of Market women at the Akrofuom market
DATE: 5th June 2014
DURATION: 45 mins.
FACILITATOR: Teacher DK Adonteng with Benita Uttenthal
TRANSLATION/TRANSCRIPTION: Alice Oppong

F: When we talk about “mpuntuo”, what do we mean?
R: When someone comes around to help for a particular project to prosper, I believe it is development

F: Madam, what about you; what can you say about “mpuntuo”?
R: The first lady has said all that there is to say.

F: What about you?
R: As a country, we could organize our girls to do something meaningful and that will lead to progress.

F: Young lady what do you think of “mpuntuo”?
R: When we talk about “mpuntuo” I think it’s when you put an effort in something for it to succeed, for instance someone investing money into a project so it could prosper.

F: What about you, young lady?
R: I think “mpuntuo” is all about planning. You check to see if your country lacks some basic necessities as water, light, limited produce, schools, etc. in order to work on them.
F: Can you explain the meaning of the words “mpono” and “tuo”?
R: Well the “mpono” has to do with the planning and the “tuo” is about taking action.

F: In this town of ours, have you seen any kind of development?
R: I don't think there’s anything like that. If there was, you would have seen it here in this market.

F: You mean since you've been here, you haven't seen any sort of development in this town.
R: Not really.

F: What about you?
R: Well, the only development I have seen so far are the once the MP help initiate. He has built the children’s park, the community center, schools, the roads, etc. The only problem is our market is collapsing we need some back up.

F: What about you too?
R: My problem is that, the mines promised to provide water for us but failed to do that, making life very difficult for us.

F: Okay, I think enough has been said concerning the kind of development you’ve seen so far in this town. Now, who do you all think is responsible for development of this town?
R: I think the MP.

F: What should the MP do?
R: He will lead most of the important project here.

F: What about you, who do you think so be responsible for the development of the town?
R: First of all it’s the MP, then the chiefs and the assembly men. A lot is happening in our secondary school here, when you pay your child's fees they don't get the learning materials they paid for, my child is a victim. That is why it is important for the leaders come together to help us.
F: Aside the assemblymen and the other leaders who can help to bring about development in the town, don’t we also have a part to play as well?

R: We also have a part to play as citizens of this town. If we take it upon ourselves to do certain things, the leaders in this town will be encouraged to help us along the line. What we need most is cooperation and love. In short, we need to help ourselves for others to give a helping hand; it’s even in the bible. Even communal labor has become a problem.

F: Why has communal labor stopped?

R: It has come to a halt because we don’t have chief.

F: So, if there’s no chief around, how long is it going to take for us to realize we need to help ourselves?

R: If we make up our mind to do something useful, we really can.

F: How long has those available infrastructure been around?

R: It’s been ten years now.

F: All these infrastructure was way back in 2006-2007, why hasn’t there been anything like that

R: It’s because of the kind of leadership we have. There are no rightful leaders to put the town under control.

F: What else can you say about it?

R: The MP started this pipe project, but since the mines came around, the pipes barely work.

F: Why do you think it didn’t work?

R: The mines gave us a time when they will provide the water for free. What we should have done was to take care of it, but during the time we did not do the maintenance, the water project spoilt. We just didn’t take that responsibility.
F: So the water from the mines stopped working because you all couldn't maintain it and you were being charged as well for using the water, but with that of the MP, it’s free, then that is the problem.

R: Well, now it’s not free anymore, we have to pay a little something for the water.

F: So why couldn't we maintain the water project from the mines?

R: I blame these citizens who were around when the project started, they couldn't maintain it after sometime. Also sometimes people don't use quality materials. Again, some people don't like to see good things happening to everybody, people are too selfish.

F: Why do you think people don't want to see others progress?

R: People just do that with no reason, it also has to do with jealousy.

F: Let me ask this, what kind of development are you looking for to see in this town?

R: I hope to see more elites in this town.

F: What about you my lady? Imagine you travel abroad for a while, what will be your expectations when you return?

R: I will be expecting to see more industries, which will not only reduce the unemployment situation but also help our young once stay forced in life.

F: What else do you also have to say, concerning what you want to see in this town?

R: I also hope to see more industries that will employ our children someday. My child completed school recently but unfortunately, he’s doing “galamsey work.”

F: What of you. How would you like the town to be?

R: I wish to see our roads constructed well, and our schools well established. People go to an extent of building houses on street which is not good.

F: The kids in this town are out of control, how can their behaviors be monitored to ensure development in this town?
R: We need to sit our kids down and have a serious talk with them, we really need to advise them on how to live a happy but responsible life. They need to know the kind of behaviors they have adopted will not help them in life. We as parent have to learn how to talk to our kids in a way that will earn their respect.

F: What of you, can you contribute something to it?

R: What I have to say is that, the elders are not helpful at all, I use to have a plot in front of the palace, I had all the document on the land intact, but due to some misunderstandings here and there, the land was taken away from me by these elders and sown to someone else. The kids are also not helping.

F: Can you please tell us the kind of development you’ve seen so far during your stay in Amankyem community

R: Well, I can say since the MP came to power he has done a lot to improve the standard of living by providing certain basic needs such as water and light. The assemblyman is also doing so well, which ever complaint you bring fourth to him, he makes sure he addresses it making the MP’s work very easy. These two people have exhibited good leadership skills.

F: Why is it that when someone takes a steps to better their lives others do all they can to draw them backward, why does it happen that way?

R: I think it happens that way because of jealousy, apathy and politics. I have a borehole in my house, most of the time people come around to fetch almost everything making it hard to even get just a cup full. If others really care about you, it will never happen.

F: Let me ask you Mama, what kind of development would you like to see in Amankyem?

R: I will like to see our market restructured and good transportation system.

F: That’s not the question I am asking please. I am not asking about a single activity: do the market, let’s make a school etc. I want to know if you have an idea of what the whole Akrofuom village should look like.

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R: What I want to see is a lot of knowledgeable citizens around.

F: What about you, let’s assume you travelled to abroad for some time how would you like the place to look like when you return?

R: I will like to see more industries that will help reduce the issue of unemployment and rate of child crimes here in Amankyem village.

F: What about you, how will you like to see the village?

R: Just as my sister said, I will like more jobs opening for our young ones. My child completed school and since there were no jobs around, he took to galamsey.

F: Why do you think the kids are going in for the galamsey work and not any other?

R: It’s all happening due to the lack of jobs which is as a result of the town being less developed.

F: What of you, how would you like to see Amankyem town?

R: I will like to see our streets develop and more jobs created.

F: So what do you think about our young ones who fail to be responsible in any way? If I recall earlier on, you said development will come to light if there are more learned people, but if all the young ones are neglecting their responsibilities in school and at home and going to bed as late as 3:00pm in the morning, how will the development we talk about come to pass and also what do you think is making them behave in that manner?

R: What you are saying about our young ones is very true. Some even get pregnant as early as 13 years and blame it on the parent for not taking good care of them. I have one of such children in my household. My first born dropped out of high school purposefully during her third year. I did my best to convince her to go back even if it will mean she has to repeat a class. She listened and went back to school but later dropped out again, until now she’s just in and about life; she doesn’t even want to do anything productive.

F: So what really should we do about such kids to help them proper in life?
R: We need to raise these kids in the love of God and have patience for them. With time, I believe everything will be alright.

F: So what do you really want to be done? Imagine you’ve been asked to advise the whole town, what will you say?

R: I will advise them on the importance of togetherness and how that can bring about development on our town.

F: Okay. What will you also say if you were asked to advise the town?

R: I will also beseech them to embrace love in whatever they do. I will also ask the parents in this town to keep a close eye on their kids, communicate with them, and advise them on certain conducts and bad life style instead of keeping quite. The manner in which we talk to the kids is also very important because it can determine how well or poorly a child response to your advice.

F: Okay. What you said is very important. Sometimes your appearance alone can make people judge you wrongly. It not something in Ghana alone but it’s all over the world. I always tell my son the way you dress, cut your hair, the way you speak and the way people see you is what they’re going to decide on whether to respect you or not. Some people even go for interviews they can’t even speak, but just because they look like they respect they get the job. Auntie Koko, what about you? How will you advise the town?

R: I will advise that those who are capable of helping the needy should help one another. The more we love and help ourselves will lead to the kind of development we are looking for.

F: On that, I will like to thank you all for your cooperation.