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ARTICLE

Journalism Aid: Country of Origin and Influences on Beneficiary Perceptions and Practices

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ABSTRACT

A sub-text in the discourse on international development assistance is the argument that aid is not necessarily a beneficent, or sustainable, solution to the development needs of African countries. This argument raises a conceptual conundrum with respect to the many training programmes and fellowships designed to address the skills deficits of journalists and media in Africa. While the necessity and value of such interventions may be taken for granted, a counterintuitive question arises about the extent to which beneficiaries are able nonetheless to act independently. This study sought to find out the extent to which capacity-building assistance to journalists in Ghana may have fostered or inhibited their independent practice. Individual interviews were conducted with 24 journalists to ascertain their experiences with such programmes and their subsequent dispositions towards the host country or agency. The findings showed that underlying the manifest objectives of building the capacities of beneficiaries was the implicit intent of the aid country of origin to use the media as agents of economic and cultural diplomacy. The consequent prospect of compromising the journalistic autonomy of beneficiaries of training aid brings into question their capacity to contribute to sustainable development in Ghana.

Keywords: journalism aid; training; dependency; watchdog; sustainable development; Ghana; Africa

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Introduction

On November 15, 2017, Ken Ofori-Atta, finance minister of Ghana, presented the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the 2018 fiscal year. A striking sub-theme of the Budget was the proposition of a development trajectory towards upper middle-income status, the pivot of which was to be a "Ghana beyond aid," in which "our engagement with our external partners transitions from one based on aid to one increasingly based on trade and strategic political cooperation" (MoF 2017, 159). The minister was echoing a recent mantra of President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of "an Africa beyond aid," first uttered on September 18, 2017, at the fifth International Conference on Sustainable Development at Columbia University (Sackey 2017). The declaration was repeated three days later in the president's address to the UN General Assembly on September 21, in which he added the following caveat: "We are not disclaiming aid, but we do want to discard a mind-set of dependency and living on handouts." The semantic cadence of these conditional renunciations of foreign aid is a ringing metaphor of the enduring debate about the imperative of aid for sustainable development in Africa. That debate is most poignantly illustrated in the institutions of the media in Africa, both as beneficiaries of development aid, and as bearers of news on official development assistance.

While the premises and practices of aid for development have spawned an impressive raft of scholarly research output, this has generally pertained to official economic assistance, whose net utility, the literature suggests, is still an equivocal verdict (Aryeetey and Cox 1997; Gibson, Hoffman, and Jablonski 2015). In this paper, we argue that the real obstacle to sustainable development is not aid qua economic assistance, it is the attendant "in-the-head socio-psychological factors" (Melkote and Steeves 2015, 54) and influences that produce and perpetuate the "mind-set of dependency." And yet, these influences are also so intangible and insidious that they have tended to elude scholarly attention. One of such influencers is the media, which as journalist and social critic Walter Lippmann reminds us, are the most important purveyors of opinion and "the manufacture of consent" (1991, 248). If Lippmann is right, then we can learn about the public "mindset" and attitude to official development assistance by finding out whether and how aid to journalists in Ghana informs the conduct and content of their work. We do this by asking and answering two related questions:

1. What is the nature of foreign training and capacity-building assistance to media practitioners in Ghana?
2. How does journalism aid affect the attitudes of beneficiaries towards the country of origin or agency of disbursement?

Before adducing the empirical evidence that helps answer these questions, and by way of outline, we first briefly review the literature in order to illustrate the ongoing scholarly conversations and contentions about the beneficence of aid for development in

Africa. Next, we draw out of this review strings of theoretical concord with the critical school that suggest the countervailing consequences of dependency on sustainable development. Third, we briefly describe and justify the research method employed in assembling and analysing the findings in relation to the stated objectives of the paper.

The Aid-for-Development Dilemma

The title of a publication on the subject of aid, edited by Karikari (2002), poses a reflective question that provides a useful starting point for examining the empirical and theoretical literature on aid: *Where Has Aid Taken Africa?* The literature suggests little scholarly consensus on the answer to this enduring question. While some scholars (notably, Burnside and Dollar 2000; Guillaumont and Wagner 2014; McGillivray and Morrissey 2001; Sachs 2005) are inclined towards a verdict of aid effectiveness, others (such as Bauer 2000; Easterly 2006; Elayah 2016; Moyo 2009) are much less ebullient about the net benefits of foreign aid.

Proponents of the aid for development thesis insist, as Shleifer (2009) explains on their behalf, that "[t]o the extent that foreign aid supplies investment capital, it jump starts economic growth, and initiates a virtuous cycle whereby investment generates income and thus raises the economic return to further investment" (2009, 381). A prominent voice in this refrain is development economist Jeffrey Sachs, who saw in the new foreign assistance policy for Ghana, the Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS) programme, potentially the best prospects for the country to exit the vicious cycle of poverty (Sachs 2005). Sachs and scholars of his stripe insist that what developing countries need is a donor-driven stimulus "for scaling up the investments that will end poverty" (2005, 243). On the flip side, the voices representing the antithesis have been adamantly critical. Perhaps the most trenchant of these voices is that of development economist Peter Bauer, who argues that **"**[d]evelopment aid is … not necessary to rescue poor societies from a vicious circle of poverty. Indeed it is far more likely to keep them in that state. It promotes dependence on others. It encourages the idea that emergence from poverty depends on external donations rather than on people's own efforts, motivation, arrangements, and institutions" (Bauer 2000, 46). Similarly, Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo (2009, 28) maintains that aid "perpetuates the cycle of poverty and derails sustainable economic development." Even less forgiving is her conclusion that "the problem is that aid is not benign—it's malignant. No longer part of the potential solution, it's part of the problem—in fact aid is the problem" (Moyo 2009, 47).

While the scholarly debate persists, policy and practice continue to invest hopes in foreign aid as a means to achieving sustainable development in Africa. For instance, the UN predicates the effective realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on the successful mobilisation and delivery of aid funds. In the Declaration on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, high-income donor countries renewed

their commitment "to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 per cent to 0.2 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries" (UN 2015, par 43). Ironically, at the time that Ghana's president and his finance minister were professing an African and a Ghana without aid, the latest available OECD (2017) statistics on development aid were showing that Africa received a net disbursement of USD 51,036 billion in ODA in 2015. Ghana ranked 8th among the top 10 ODA recipients in Africa, with net receipts of USD 1,768 billion.

It seems, then, that rather than repudiate completely the general principle of assistance, the more pragmatic path would be to re-engineer the aid architecture in ways that are more directly responsive to the social realities and cultural climate of beneficiary countries and peoples. To that extent, while the 17 SDGs "are inevitably internationalised" (Tietaah 2016, 23), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stresses the need for local ownership and operationalisation of the 169 targets that benchmark their deployment. Extending the logic of ownership to the context of journalism, we argue that the developing country contexts of Ghana and Africa present sufficiently unique realities and requirements to justify an Africentric approach to training and practice. Tietaah (2015) notes, for example, that traditional social and political communication in Ghana are characterised by animated abasement gestures and vocatives of decorum, particularly towards elders and persons in positions of authority. Thus, even when contesting a claim or challenging a conduct, interlocutors would tend to punctuate their statements with such phatic expressions as *sebi* (Akan), *taflatse* (Ga), *medekuku* (Ewe)—meaning "excuse me/I beg your pardon." Journalism principles inspired by Western norms and values will, however, tend to disavow such language as sycophantic, and celebrate, instead, the adversarial posture and practice. And yet, as Parmar (1994) reminds us, no communication can take place fully and effectively in a cultural vacuum. Landes (2000, 2) expresses essentially the same thought, though in the domain of development economics, when he points out that, "[i]f we learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes almost all the difference."

Similarly, there is arguable merit to the appropriation and application of development journalism as a particularly Africentric paradigm. This proposition is based on the central role of the media in reporting public interest issues on account, primarily, of their importance or implications for the realities and needs of socially and economically disadvantaged members of society. To that extent, development journalism is arguably the best example of the metaphorical watchdog mandate of the media.

Dependency and Sustainable Development

Since the early post-colonial years, the motives of aid donors towards Africa have been hardly wholly altruistic. In an admittedly ideologically driven analysis of what

he saw as a centre–periphery relationship, Kwame Nkrumah described foreign aid as "merely a revolving credit, paid by the neo-colonial master, passing through the neo-colonial State and returning to the neo-colonial master in the form of increased profits" (Nkrumah 1965, xv). More than 50 years on, this worldview would still ring true within dependency scholarly circles. Dependency theorists attribute the problems of developing countries to the political and economic factors that produce and perpetrate a dependency syndrome. Aryeetey and Cox (1997) cite conditions and factors such as strategic foreign policy agendas, geopolitical spheres of influence, cultural diplomacy, and economic opportunism as some of the reasons why rich countries extend aid to Africa. As we argue, however, the more consequential, but hardly addressed, corollary conditions are the partly conscious, partly unconscious, narratives of justification that make aid "beneficiaries" prefer, depend on, and uncritically accept, the commercial and cultural products of the developed global North by the developing global South. In other words, the conditions created by donor aid are part of the problem, rather than the solution. Applied to journalism and the potential to affect public opinion and attitudes, the attendant consequence of forming and fostering a dependency mindset is conceivable.

The implicit insight is that journalism aid that is driven by Western norms and delivered by foreign actors would be unlikely to effectively support sustainable development efforts in Ghana and Africa, given their peculiar social and cultural milieus. This argument raises a conceptual conundrum with respect to the many development assistance programmes and fellowships designed to address the skills deficits and logistical needs of journalists and media in Africa. In Ghana, for instance, training and capacity-building support to journalists has been provided by agencies in countries such as Germany (International Institute of Journalists [IIJ]), the US (National Endowment for Democracy [NED]), the UK (Thomson Media Foundation), and lately, China (China Radio International [CRI]).

It is easy to understand the inspiration behind such initiatives. Aid donors are entitled to expect and exact probity and accountability for the assistance they extend. This should explain the assurances that Finance Minister Ofori-Atta sought to give in his "Ghana beyond aid" statement (presumably with donor audiences also in mind), of a new partnership framework in which "there is resolute efficiency and accountability in the use of all public resources by government, including resources from external partners" (MoF 2017, 159). Donor countries and agencies often see the media as allies for securing such accountability outcomes. They seek, therefore, to strengthen the watchdog role of the media by providing capacity-building support; at least that is what we read on the lines. But what implicit intent could we read between the lines about this publicly professed motive? And herein lies the paradox: The watchdog would tend, intuitively, to wag its tail, not bare its teeth, at the one who has nurtured it. In that case, might not the nature and outcome of foreign journalism aid produce the inverse effect of disabling beneficiaries from being critical of their benefactors? Might not such a scenario deepen the status quo, rather than enable Akufo-Addo's hopes for a Ghana

and Africa that discard the dependency mindset? Are development and dependency conceptually isomorphic? The next section discusses the methodology employed in seeking answers to these questions.

Objective and Methodology

The objective of this paper was to find out, from the perspective of recipients of journalism aid and capacity-building assistance, the content and consequences of such support. A qualitative design was employed in order to reflect the individual, and possibly varying, experiences and impressions of beneficiaries of the range of training programmes available to media practitioners in Ghana. Specifically, in-depth interviews were used to identify, code and categorise emergent issues and themes as were considered relevant to the stated objectives of the study.

A total of 24 journalists who had ever attended or benefitted from an international training programme were interviewed. Individuals were identified for inclusion through publicly available lists of alumni/beneficiaries of journalism aid at media houses and training agencies. Snowball referrals were then employed whenever interviewees were willing to provide a personal reference to colleagues that they knew had attended similar programmes.

A semi-structured interview guide, made up of open-ended questions, was used to collect the data. The areas of interest to the interview included the following: the stated and presumptive objectives of the training programme, informants' motivations for participating, the structure and content of the programme, perceptions about the host country or agency prior to and after the programme, memorable experiences, similarities and differences in journalism practices as compared to Ghana, and any commitments required of beneficiaries after training.

In operational terms, all recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed according to an adaptation of the inductively driven taxonomy recommended by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011), which involves close reading, open coding and initial memoing, creating thematic categories, focused coding and integrative memoing. Specifically, the interview transcripts were first read through serially; i.e., each response to a particular issue or question was read through for all 24 interviews. Next, the open coding and initial memoing process involved highlighting emergent ideas and issues across responses, and making marginal notes of concepts and phrases that reflected the import of particular responses. The third step was to perform a thematic coding process entailing the grouping of initial codes across data sets according to potential themes, and taking care to collate data that exemplified each potential theme. The final stages of the analysis involved a distillation and synthesis of the most important themes and sub-themes as well as the relevant quotes that illustrate them, which, together, provided the narrative response to the two key questions posed at the beginning of the study.

Findings and Analysis

The 24 informants were made up of 19 males and five females. Through the open coding and initial memoing processes, it was found that the most popular host country or provider of training assistance/aid was Germany (11), followed by the United States (4), China (3), South Africa (2), the United Kingdom (1) and Japan (1). The process also yielded a total of six broad themes, three each addressing the two key questions on the nature and influences of foreign journalism aid on the perceptions and practices of beneficiaries.

The Nature of Journalism Capacity-Building Assistance

The three themes that address the nature of capacity-building assistance to media practitioners in Ghana pertain to the purposes served, the programme content, and the structure of the journalism training received.

Responses on purposes served by the training aid programmes included the opportunities to learn the norms and international best practice in journalism, affect the practices of colleagues through training-of-trainers modules, gain international exposure and travel experience, and appreciate the donor country's social and political culture—and how these influence their journalism practices. They also included the aim to enable participants to appreciate the role of journalism in promoting accountability, good governance and economic development. As one informant recalled of her trip to the Dortmund Technical University in Germany, "It was an opportunity to go beyond what I know, what I do … and learn other ways of doing things; how to do journalism to an international professional standard. So, I'd say it was an eye opener for me" (MAB). Another journalist, who had been part of a team of 21 participants in a three-week training programme in Beijing, China, reported the stated objective of the visit as "to equip us with knowledge of the Chinese media landscape. It was like an idea-sharing kind of thing" (GK). The programme was under the auspices of the State Administration of Press Publication, Radio, Film and Television of the People's Republic of China (SAPPRFT).

Some informants reported extracurricular rationales for their participation in foreign training programmes. They saw it as an opportunity to take a break from their routines in Ghana, or to gain the exposure and experience of traveling outside the country. A typical response in this regard would be the following: "Who would get the opportunity to go to Germany and say he wouldn't" (AO). The lack of an objective, needs-driven criterion of inclusion is equally implied in the following response: "That is what I do; I apply and forget. If it comes, fine … You get away from Ghana for a few days. You do not hear the hullabaloo on air and the crap radio discussions or mundane noise … apart from what is picked up on social media" (EKD).

In terms of content, the subject matter of training covered such varied fields as democratic politics, human rights, digital rights and ethics, internal and international migration, culture and tourism, economics and finance, agriculture and genetic engineering technologies, and digital/social media and ethics. Skills training covered practices such as identifying potential news leads, reading and understanding company reports, investigating corporate transactions and tracking illicit finances. Some participants were also variously trained in how to spot fake news sources, the use of sound and visuals to tell or illuminate a story, the practice of digital and data-driven journalism, and the use of social media applications.

The structure of training typically took the form of subject-specific modules, such as science communication, agriculture reporting, and financial journalism. There were nuts-and-bolts skills transfer sessions, often pre-designed and spelt out in "a clearly defined manual for the duration" (JOG). Such sessions took the format of formal, classroom instructions. These were combined with hands-on, practical activities and assignments. There were also extracurricular activities such as site visits and excursions to media houses, museums and monuments, waterfalls, technology trade fairs and parliament buildings as well as carnivals, concerts and parties—in the words of one informant, "having a live band music on a cruise with plenty [of] girls" (EKD).

Influences on Perceptions and Practices

The findings that address the influences of foreign training and capacity-building assistance on the perceptions and practices of beneficiaries include implicit motives, dispositions towards host country or agency, and post-training practices.

It seems evident that an underlying motivation for much of the foreign assistance to journalists is the prospect that they would thereby act as interlocutors of public diplomacy on behalf of the aid agency or country of origin. An implicit motive inferred by some informants was the purpose of economic diplomacy, as illustrated in the following response (MAB):

> One of the objectives of this particular documentary that we were supposed to produce was to look at renewable energy. I want to believe that German investors were coming to Ghana or had come to Ghana … And so, they wanted to draw the attention of Ghana government to other alternative [sources] of energy; because we were facing the *dumsor* [power crisis] then.

Another informant expressed similar convictions: "In the first trip I went to London … a reporting tour handled by the British government. They wanted publicity for their Olympics project … My first trip to the US was seven years ago … a food reporting tour. They were promoting GMOs" (EKD). These implicit motives may not necessarily always bear out, however. For instance, the participant on the GMOs food reporting trip was adamant that the programme did not attenuate their critical posture (EKD):

> I think they did not succeed; because we were all strongly opinionated journalists … We came back and have consistently written very critical articles. If they are not happy, we don't know; they haven't openly told us. One thing about America is they will try to use you if you allow yourself to be used. But if you are independent-minded they would respect you. They wouldn't like you but they would respect you.

Donor countries and agencies were also apparently leveraging the potential of the media to inform and influence positive public attitudes, particularly in the event of a prevailing negative image. The participant (GK) in the SAPPRFT-sponsored programme noted, for instance, that beside the stated objective of a mutual exchange of experiences, the Chinese government had an underlying cultural and ideological *raison d'état*:

> Prior to us going the perception was that China was a closed country and their media were not free … until we entered and realized that no, it's not what it seems when you are outside the country. When you are in you realise they are so open. So basically, the unstated [objective] was to change our perception of the Chinese media landscape.

Another informant who had attended a training programme called the China-Africa Project at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa was even more enamoured. As he (OT) noted, "I tell you if you follow the kind of things that the Chinese government are involved in in Africa, you will be amazed … how much they are pumping to support countries in Africa."

Responses on dispositions to the host country or aid agency were mostly positive. A notable exception is in the experience of a journalist who had benefited from a three-month training programme in the German city of Dortmund. She remarked that she "had not really heard a lot about Germany other than the fact that like many European countries Germans are racist" (MAB). It would seem that her preconceptions were confirmed by the visit: "You know Germans … anyway let me not make any racist comments here; but I think they are not very receptive to African views. That's an observation I made." In contrast, another informant was rather deferential: "I remember we used to be told that Germans don't like black people. So I was expecting those things; but … I never really encountered any racism because I think my city was a bit different. I was in Bonn. Bonn is in the West and I think they are more welcoming than maybe the people in the East." According to her, therefore, "[m]y experience disproved the initial perception that Germans are racist. To be honest with you all of them are very nice people" (RBB).

There also appears to be a negative self–other narrative that forms around the visit to the aid country as poignantly illustrated in the following testimony: "Look, let me tell you something: When you even get to their airport, their provinces are like our regions; when you get to a province, their airport is even nicer than [Ghana's] Kotoka International Airport. You can write thousands of stories from even their washrooms in an airport" (DC). The informant had participated in a two-month "culture and tourism" visit to the Chinese province of Fushu. Similarly, the beneficiary of a two-week fellowship to New

York recalled the following: "New York was a very cool place and laws work there, unlike our country where everything is in a mess. You just cannot misbehave [in New York]; even traffic rules … are adhered to. So I fell in love with the city" (GOT). He confessed however, that "there were the shocking bits as well; because I didn't expect to see people begging on the streets of New York" (GOT).

Post-training perceptions and practices reflect the two related motives of journalism aid. First is the express expectation that trainees would transfer the norms and values assimilated from the aid country onto their future practices. The participant of a sponsored programme for campus-based radio stations explained their post-training tasks: "You needed to do a project and present it to them. For my project I have a website … and [periodically] you have to send them a report of the things you are doing in your own country" (RBB). Other informants explained that they were required to do stories, or train other people with the skills they had learnt, or send a report about their impressions to the donor or facilitating agency.

Second is the subtle suggestion that beneficiaries will extend goodwill and provide the agency for cultural and economic capital of the aid agency and country. One informant explained the quid pro quos implicit in the post-training obligations and expectations in terms of a bait: "Not really that we were asked to produce a story … [but] there is an award programme instituted at the WITS University. It gives up-and-coming journalists the opportunity to submit stories written along the lines of China-Africa relationships … So that is where the bait is" (OT). This is echoed by another informant who argues that "there wasn't any explicit requirement; but you get the understanding that it is desirable. So what I did was to write about my experiences there and publish it … so that they get to know that I went there not for the fun but I learnt something substantial … I sent them the link and they were happy about it" (KN).

There were also apparent influences on the perceptions, if not the practices, of journalists that were attributable to the particular norms of their host countries. A participant in the SAPPRFT programme in China noted that "[t]he media over there practice something that is called constructive journalism. They do a lot of developmental stories" (GK). Her response to the follow-up question about her (GK) personal impression of this practice of "constructive journalism" is revealing:

> I think that there is a lot we can also learn from China … The point is that the Ghanaian media can really bash our government and paint it all black ... We hold a role as watchdogs and gatekeepers … but I think that it is also our responsibility to get our government in a very positive light and not always malign it … [especially in] these days that we live in a global village and internet is everywhere … I think the Ghanaian media we are too fixated on publishing only negative things and bashing our government and that's because majority of us media people are also taking sides … So personally, I think that is one thing we might have to reconsider as Ghanaian media. Maybe we could learn two or three things from them.

She was even prepared to concede some media freedoms in the interest of "constructive journalism." As she argued: "[some censorship] doesn't hurt and it really regulates the media landscape … I think it's good and a little bit of censorship should work in Ghana because the liberalisation is too huge for us and I think it is getting to a point where we as media people are abusing the liberalisation" (GK).

This Chinese journalistic orientation contrasts substantially with the impressions shared by the participant in a six-week fellowship about the German tradition of journalism practice: "In Germany, the media is absolutely liberalised; they vent their views against the political system as they feel ... [and] you can never influence nobody. If anything at all, it is here that people would influence you to bury stories; but you cannot do that in Germany. Myself, I've been venting for long; but I think the Germans reinforced it" (AO).

Discussion and Recommendations

Premised on the sub-text in the international development assistance discourse that aid is not necessarily a beneficent nor sustainable solution to Africa's development needs, this paper argued that journalism aid should attract greater scholarly attention than it has received. This is to the extent that a "dependency mind-set" is a tenable product of aid and that the "in-the-head socio-psychological" (Melkote and Steeves 2015, 54) consequence of journalism aid bears a more enduring impact on the perspectives and practices of the aid beneficiary.

Dependency theorists (Bauer 2000; Elayah 2016; Moyo 2009) insist that underlying the actions of ODA countries and agencies is the intent, and tendency, to produce or perpetuate attitudes of subservience in the receiving countries and societies. Extending this logic to the question of journalism training aid, we argue that while the necessity and value of such support may be taken for granted, a counterintuitive question arises about the extent to which beneficiaries are able as such to act independent of the perspectives imbibed during the training. To what extent are beneficiaries of foreign journalism training and capacity-building assistance able to be critical of the benefactor country and the conditions of their trade or other bilateral relations? The question is particularly pertinent in the light of arguments that the development challenges of African countries are partially a product of the lack of local ownership of the policies and pathways to their resolution.

This study reveals that aid countries and agencies are similar in terms of the explicitly stated motive of building capacities and the implicitly couched intent of using the media as agents of economic and cultural diplomacy. They differ principally in terms of their modus. While, for example, the approach of China and Japan (Asia) was to couch the government-sponsored trip as a cultural exchange programme, the tendency in the West (US, Britain, Germany) was for such invitations to be extended by bilateral agencies or

interest groups, for the stated purpose of promoting enterprise reporting on a particular cause or subject of vested interest. The training model in the US and Germany generally emphasised skills transfer compared to the approach of China of influencing perceptions and attitudes.

These differences in approach may also be partially due to observable ideological variances in how journalism is understood and practised globally. While, for example, China (Asia) was found to practise "constructive journalism," the culture in Germany (Europe) reflected a more adversarial posture. This would seem to echo the case for particularising development journalism as an Africentric model. And yet, none of the training programmes showed sufficient sensitivity to the socially and culturally conditioned communication modes that Tietaah (2015) observed about Ghana. Rather, they tended to be prescriptive or pro forma in ways that evoke parallels with the long-term challenges of developing economies on which structural adjustment solutions have been imposed (Aryeetey and Cox 1997; Sachs 2005). They also echo concerns about aid as merely a "revolving credit" that ultimately leads to "increased profits" to the donor country (Nkrumah 1965, xv).

The reasons that informants gave for participating in foreign training programmes were sometimes flimsy. These included the rationale that it presented an opportunity to travel, or that it conferred a sense of international pedigree. Contrary to Guillaumont and Wagner's (2014) optimism about the prospects that efficiently disbursed aid promotes development, these responses betray the lack of a robust needs-assessment criterion for determining aid beneficiaries. They resonate with concerns that aid becomes a part of the problem rather than the solution when it is inefficiently deployed (Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). There is a need for close coordination and collaboration among donor agencies in order to ensure that their contributions to journalism capacity building in Africa produce synergies and pluralise the benefits.

From a critical dependency perspective, the fact that participants were accessing multiple traveling opportunities, and expressing negative self–other distinctions between the systems and structures of the host country in comparison to their own country, would seem to lend support to arguments that the objectives, content and structure of such training tend to produce and perpetuate a dependency mindset. More directly, while the stated aim of donor countries is to strengthen the watchdog mandate of the media, the potential for the dog to wag its tail and not bare its teeth at its minder, is a foreboding spectre. In that event, we question the capacity of the media to expose corruption or be critical of unfavourable trade terms involving the donor country.

While the search for answers to Karikari's (2002) question about the net benefits of aid for Africa's development continues, the same question is evoked with respect to journalism in Ghana: Where has journalism aid taken Ghana? Given the inherent contradictions in the enthusiastic embrace of foreign journalism aid, on the one hand, and the expressed scruples among beneficiaries about the intent (if not effect) of

compromising their watchdog orientation, on the other hand, a number of outstanding questions arise. What are the prospects for a Ghana and Africa without journalism aid? Should the media placidly embrace journalism aid overtures? Is there a plausible case for particularising the content and structure of such training programmes towards an Africentric, development-journalism paradigm? These are questions that expose the limitations of the current study. Scholarship must continue to contend with and seek answers about the purpose and prospects of such programmes to enable a realisation of the sustainable development aspirations of Ghana and Africa.

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