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Professional perceptions among male and female journalists on the Horn of Africa: A quantitative study

ABSTRACT

The article discusses differences in professional perceptions among male and female journalists in Ethiopia, which is a country known for low scores on gender equality and limited women representation in the media. The approach is quantitative, involving a survey of 350 local journalists. The study observes gender differences in the monitoring and scrutinizing functions of the media, which are found to be more important for the male journalists, and in the entertainment and nation-building functions of the media, which are emphasized more by the women. Female journalists exhibit stricter ethical viewpoints than their male counterparts, whereas male journalists are somewhat more supportive of situational ethics and ethical risk-taking. However, the overall differences in professional perceptions are relatively minor, and a series of indicators did not detect any significant difference between the male and female journalists.

KEYWORDS

journalism
role perceptions
ethical views
gender
Ethiopia
quantitative analysis

INTRODUCTION

Many reports have identified marginalization of women as a problem in African media production (e.g. Byerly 2011; Steeves and Awino 2015), but fewer have looked at the perceptual differences between men and women

in the newsroom. For instance, do male and female journalists emphasize different issues in their daily work? Do they differ in their ethical views? In interrogating these questions, the current contribution draws on fieldwork from 27 news organizations from the Horn of Africa – specifically Ethiopia. A part of the Worlds of Journalism Study, the research relies on questionnaire data from 350 local journalists. Professional roles and ethical attitudes were two of the focus areas in the study. For several reasons, Ethiopia is a fascinating country for studying gender issues in journalism, not least because the society has some of the lowest gender equality performance indicators in Sub-Saharan Africa (Global Gender Gap Index [GGGI] 2016). It is in many ways a traditional society where women and girls have low status and are disadvantaged in areas such as employment, literacy and human rights. It becomes a question to what extent the inequality is affecting media content and practice, and whether the gender disparity is reflected in the journalistic mindset. The rationale is that if gender differences are at all evident in professional perceptions among journalists, they are likely to appear in a divided society like Ethiopia, and vice versa: If gender differences are not noticeable in a society like Ethiopia, they are even less likely to be present in more liberal societies.

Before discussing methodology and research findings, it is necessary to situate the study in its broader context. The article thus begins by outlining recent trends in gender and media in Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by a review of relevant local literature from Ethiopia.

SIGNS OF GENDER PARITY IN THE AFRICAN NEWSROOM

Gender inequality continues to be a concern for African media advocacy groups, but the state of affairs varies a great deal between different parts of the continent. Southern Africa emerges as the region where equal opportunity in the media sector has come the furthest. In Namibia, for example, women are today found in all parts of the media and on all levels in the organization. The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (Byerly 2011) which involves 59 nations, including fifteen from Sub-Saharan Africa, found that nearly half of the positions on management and governance level in major news companies in Namibia are filled by women. The women in these companies are secure in their jobs and generally earn more than their male counterparts, which represents a drastic change of the situation in just twenty years (Nghidinwa 2011). In neighbouring South Africa, the tendency is, in many ways, equally progressive. Although women are a little behind men on governance level, as many as 78 per cent of the persons on management level are women (Byerly 2011) – which is unprecedented even on the global scale. Female students are in majority in journalism programmes in South African universities, and the gender ratio among academic staff is in parity (Made and Rama 2010). Gender equality in the media in these nations is largely reflective of the equal opportunity policy in other parts of society. At the same time, while statistics testify to increased parity in the media in liberal societies such as South Africa, personal experiences testify to a somewhat different story. On the basis of 37 interviews with journalists and editors in the South African print media, Ylva Rodny-Gumede (2015) concludes that women journalists feel they have less power to influence news agendas than men. Interestingly, the men on their part do not sense any difference and believe the women have just as much power to decide news agendas as they do.

Research further north on the continent points to lasting gender differences in journalistic work. According to the already mentioned Global Report, the overall statistics for the fourteen researched Sub-Saharan countries apart from South Africa reveals that approximately one-fourth of the positions in each of the three top levels (governance, top management and senior management) are filled by women (Byerly 2011). One should perhaps expect better parity on reporter's level, but the research found only marginally more women in this part of the news organization (25 per cent female junior reporters and 27 per cent female senior reporters). On the other hand, the female proportion was almost equal to the male proportion in certain non-journalistic duties in the organizations – more specifically, production, design and technical work. Salary levels are also equal, except in the very top positions (Byerly 2011: 79).

Qualitative reports maintain that newsrooms in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be pervaded by a patriarchal culture. The problem is not unique to media organizations. Despite the fact that an increasing number of nations have passed gender-sensitive laws and incentives, discriminatory attitudes prevail. This is exemplified by indicators of gender-based violence, which show wide acceptance of such behaviour among both men and women. In Tanzania, for example, 38 per cent of men and 54 per cent of women find wife-beating justifiable under certain conditions (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS] Tanzania 2011). The attitudes affect the professional sphere as well, and sexual harassment is a frequently reported phenomenon in the newsroom. This is for example indicated by studies among Kenyan media practitioners which find sexual favours to be a common way to earn promotion in the local media industry (Lando 2013). There exists an 'anti-woman culture' in the Kenyan media sector, claims Antonia Okono (2013: iv).

Reporting assignments are traditionally gender-divided. A relatively higher proportion of male journalists are found in news and current affairs departments, while more women work with soft stories and entertainment. Although it has become acceptable to transgress the traditional boundaries, a woman wanting to report on parliamentary politics will soon realize that she enters a landscape dominated by men, 'many whose cultural attitudes are extremely conservative' (Kareithi 2013: 274). Female reporters get frequent reminders of their expected family role, which is something male reporters rarely experience. As one male journalist said, sarcastically, 'We expect women to be home at 6pm cooking, and not at press conferences mingling with ministers' (Made and Morna 2009: 11). Such domestication can pose a challenge for female reporters when colleagues begin treating them as companions rather than professionals when they work after hours. For many female journalists, the family role also represents a professional limitation. Their duties at home make them disadvantaged in the presence of late-night deadlines and important evening events (Steeves and Awino 2015).

GENDER, MEDIA AND JOURNALISM IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia has traditionally been recognized as one of the least gender sensitive nations in Africa, although the situation has improved somewhat lately. The Global Gender Gap Index places the country as number 109 out of 144 in terms of gender equality (GGGI 2016). The country scores especially poor on indicators related to political empowerment of women, but is also behind when it comes to economic participation and opportunity. Even if female representation in the House of People's Representatives rose to an impressive 39 per cent with the 2015 general elections, the gender proportion in the executive is much

1. Ethiopian persons are referred to by their first name, in accordance with the local naming tradition.

poorer. Only three of the 24 ministers in the current government (November 2016) are women. The closer to the nexus of power, the fewer women.

Women have traditionally been marginalized in the Ethiopian media sphere as well. Previous research has suggested women ratios as low as between 14% (Mengistu 2007) and 17% (Agaredech 2003), although the more recent and systematic Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media found 23% female journalists when technical and administrative staff were excluded (Byerly 2011). The Global Report concluded that the gender ratio is rather similar in all levels of the media organizations and therefore did not detect a 'glass ceiling effect' in the Ethiopian media industry; in other words women are able to advance to all ranks of the organization although the overall representation is low. Using a qualitative approach, on the other hand, the African Media Barometer notes that women in the Ethiopian media are confined to 'window-dressing positions' where they appear as presenters and in positions where less decision-making is involved (African Media Barometer [AMB] 2010: 53). Indeed, the local media have fostered several famous women journalists, such as Ellene Mocria, who became a pioneering female voice in Ethiopian radio and television in the early 1960s. In 1997, Ellene¹ and some other female journalists started the Ethiopian Media Women's Association (EMWA), which since has been the most active network for gender advocacy in the Ethiopian media environment. In the nearly two decades that EMWA has existed, the attitudes towards women in the media have changed considerably and many female journalists today feel respected and are able to do similar work as their male colleagues. This is not at all to say that patriarchal attitudes have vanished in the Ethiopian newsroom. A male-controlled culture is still highly perceptible. A young woman who applied for a job in a newspaper experienced that attitude as she came to the editor's office for the job interview. She was eventually hired, but the editor was not interested in querying about her professional qualities; rather he complemented her for her good looks (personal communication with journalist, 2008). Several studies confirm the prevalence of sexual harassment in Ethiopian newsrooms (e.g. Mengistu 2007), although interviews with female journalists suggest that they develop strategies to keep the intimidation at a certain distance and generally do not regard it as a personal or professional threat (Firehiwot 2014; Rahel 2010).

A number of studies observe that women are underrepresented as sources and voices in the local media. Although the researched material is limited, the Global Media Monitoring Project, which surveyed Ethiopia for the first time in 2010, found that more than 90 per cent of the news subjects in the researched Ethiopian media outlets were men (Global Media Monitoring Project [GMMP] 2010). In comparison, the global average is 74 per cent. The women who get to speak often appear either as workers in the NGO sector or in domestic frames. An in-depth analysis of gender representation in the local print media suggests that the newspapers present a social reality where women's knowledge is presented 'as being subjective and does not go beyond their personal experience' (Seble 2006: 70). Gender roles are found to be stereotyped in locally produced media content, although more alarming in the popular media such as magazines (Gubae 2009) and television advertisements (Kenaw 2006) than in journalistic content. In news coverage, it is argued that the status quo situation is sustained and reinforced, both in the state-owned and privately owned media (Agaredech 2014). The state media have formally had gender-sensitive policies for many years. The editorial policy of Ethiopian Press Agency, the state-owned print media publisher, prohibits reporting that depicts women as

dependent, powerless and as sex objects (Mulu 2009: 15). Various state media outlets have given room for specialized gender columns, but the overall challenge is to normalize women's presence in the regular coverage.

It turns out, however, that the gender of the journalist is central to how gender is actually covered. Studies indicate, for example, that female journalists have a considerably higher interest in covering domestic violence than do male journalists (Bruktawit 2008). In the traditionally male-dominated newsroom, domestic violence is not regarded as newsworthy and thus receives minimal treatment. The situation is different in more gender-balanced newsrooms, and especially if women are in editorial positions (Martha 2006). The gender proportion in the workforce therefore appears to make a difference for the actual media content.

A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH TO STUDYING GENDER DIFFERENCES

The purpose of the current study is to find out whether male and female journalists think differently about key issues in their professional practice. The method comprises a quantitative survey in which 350 Ethiopian journalists were asked about numerous aspects of their work. The survey is part of the global Worlds of Journalism Study, which involves more than 60 countries around the globe. The current analysis, however, is limited to Ethiopia only. Journalists from 27 local media institutions were approached in a representative sampling of print, broadcasting and web channels as well as a news agency. The journalists came from both the state-owned media (80 per cent) and the private media (20 per cent), in a proportion, which is assumed to represent the two ownership types. The media in Ethiopia remain largely state-owned, especially in the broadcasting sector, where the state controls the national radio and television channels.

All questionnaires were filled in by means of face-to-face interviews with the informants. The questionnaire contains a wide range of items, although the current analysis extracted aspects mainly related to role perception and ethical attitudes, where gender was chosen as the independent variable. With a confidence level set to 95 per cent the survey for Ethiopia has a sampling error of <5 per cent. The data collection was carried out in three Ethiopian cities (Adama, Addis Ababa and Mekelle) between March 2013 and September 2015. The data presented in this article are the first results presented from the Worlds of Journalism Study in Ethiopia.

A methodological note should be attached to the question in the survey dealing with professional roles. In the research literature, a distinction is drawn between role perception (usually equated with role conception), which is commonly defined as the normative, ideal-type importance of various functions in journalism, and role performance (sometimes called role enactment), which is the functioning of the roles in actual practice. This distinction is important because there can be considerable discrepancy between what journalists think are important functions of journalism (role perception), and what is actually the case in the day-to-day work (role performance). The distinction becomes additionally important in controlled media societies, such as Ethiopia, where journalists often experience competing loyalties (Skjerdal 2013) between their personal values and the expectations from the media organization. In research literature from more liberal societies, the distinction tends to be downplayed (and often ignored) because it is taken for granted that journalists are free to exercise the kind of journalism that they esteem.

To complicate the matter further, the concept of role perception is used in (at least) two different ways in the literature. While the definition referred to above points to journalistic ideal-type values, i.e. ‘professional ideals’ (Pihl-Thingvad 2015), role perception is also sometimes used to refer to what journalists *perceive* as the actual role in their work, so as to differentiate it from what the actual function is (Mellado and Van Dalen 2014). In this particular study, the research question concerning professional roles sought to identify the importance of various functions in the actual work of the journalists (‘How important are these things in your work’). However, as pointed out by Lea Hellmueller and Claudia Mellado (2015: 7), there is a risk that respondents perceive the question in two different ways – either as a personal question (‘I regard this as important in my work’) or as a question asking more about institutional practice (‘I perceive this as important in our professional practice’). From the experience with the survey in Ethiopia, however, it appeared that when respondents sensed a gap between personal values and actual practice, they typically asked for clarification (‘Shall I tell you what I think is important, or what is important in our daily practice?’), which gave the researchers a chance to explain that it was the second interpretation that was sought.

The following section presents the research results. Before discussing professional perceptions, however, it is necessary to pay attention to some elementary demographic differences which indicate a gender division within the staff composition since this may have a bearing on how differences in professional views are interpreted.

MORE WOMEN IN THE NEWSROOM

The study testifies to increased gender balances in Ethiopian newsrooms. The randomly sampled population consists of 71% males and 29% females, which points to a radical increase in the female proportion from previous research ranging from less than 20% (Agaredech 2003; Mengistu 2007) to 23% (Birhanu 2006; Byerly 2011). Due to the sampling method, where not all media institutions in the nation were included, the study may not be fully representative, but it still gives an indication of the overall gender ratio in the industry. Most tellingly, the figures demonstrate the changing demographics in Ethiopian journalism, where women enter the profession in larger numbers than before. This is partly a result of the ‘education revolution’ in the local media. Many institutions today – especially the state media – require a relevant undergraduate degree for new employees. Thus, 98% of the surveyed journalists possess a bachelor’s degree, many of these in Journalism. Journalism programmes have sprung up in universities throughout the country, and gender incentives are common. This results in more women available for recruitment.

When it comes to age, female journalists are on average notably younger than their male counterparts (Figure 1). 75% of the women are less than 30 years old, compared with only 45% of the men. Indeed, the survey only found one female journalist above 40 among all surveyed journalists (some, however, refused to reveal their age). One explanation for this is the fact that a number of women have only recently entered the profession, thus the proportion of young female journalists is relatively higher than that of men. However, this can only account for some of the difference, and it fails to explain why there are hardly any middle-aged female journalists around. A stronger explanation then is that women begin to leave the profession when they come to their late 20s/early 30s, reorienting themselves to family and domestic duties, similar to

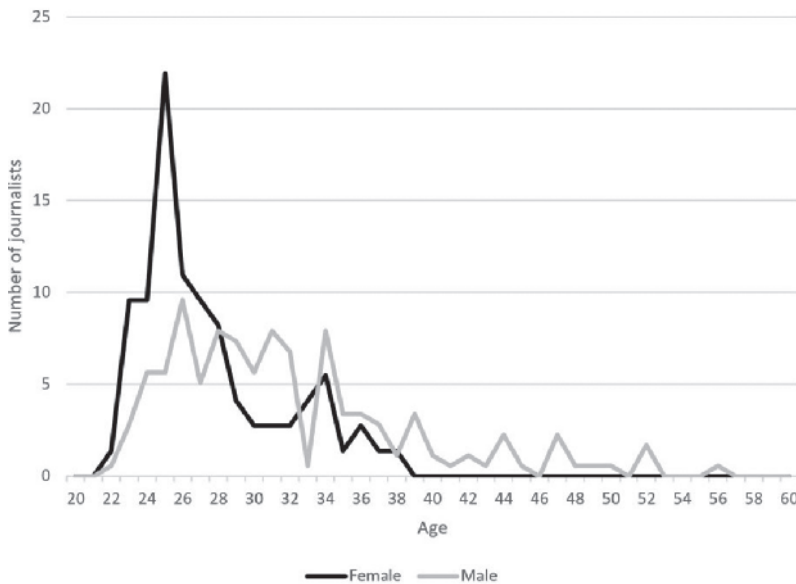


Figure 1: Age proportions of Ethiopian journalists (%).

experiences in Uganda (Kaija 2013: 325). The present survey further shows that fewer women (10%) than men (20%) inform that they engage in other paid work besides their journalistic job. This could indicate that men generally feel less obliged to prioritize family and are freer to engage in 'moonlighting'.

It is commonly noted in the research literature that male and female journalists are assigned to different areas of coverage. The Ethiopian survey affirms this impression. While most journalists have no specialized beat in their daily work (75%), those who do, are split along a male–female dividing line. Male journalists cover news, current affairs, politics, economy and sports, while female journalists are responsible for culture, entertainment and gender issues. For example, 14% of all women journalists specialize in culture and entertainment, compared with only 2% of the men. On the other hand, 7% of all male journalists specialize in sports coverage, while the survey found no women who had this area as their specialization. The study did not query whether the difference is a result of personal choice or not.

There are clear differences in newsroom ranks between men and women, according to the study. Only 9 per cent of the women hold positions in the middle or top level management, such as editor-in-chief, department head, senior editor, etc., compared with 28 per cent of the men. This appears to challenge the findings of the Ethiopian part of Global Report, which found equal proportions of women in all levels in the organizations (Byerly 2011). The findings do however correspond with the age statistics referred to above. If female journalists are younger and have less experience, they are also less likely to fill management and leadership positions.

DIFFERENCES IN PROFESSIONAL ROLES

The survey shows somewhat uneven results for different aspects of the journalistic role spectrum vis-à-vis gender. A number of indicators display little or insignificant gender variation, while others point to distinctive orientations.

Some of the indicators deviate from global research results. One of these is the detachment dimension, where studies from various countries suggest that female journalists are more human-oriented and engage less in objective and detached reporting styles than do men (Hanitzsch 2011; Van Zoonen 1998). The study from Ethiopia does not corroborate these findings but rather holds that more female than male journalists see it as important to report things as they are and to be a detached observer (Figure 2). However, studies from around the world are not congruent on this issue; a longitudinal study of professional identities of Swedish journalists, for example, concludes that female journalists have always valued the function of explanation (which is associated with objectivity and detachment) more than their male counterparts (Wiik 2010).

The functions that show the largest gap between men and women in Ethiopian journalism are those related to critical and investigative reporting. The role of monitoring and scrutinizing political leaders has substantially more support among men than women (Figure 2). This hardly comes as a surprise, as it echoes the global research literature. The watchdog role and especially

	Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%
Support national development	99	89,9	246	85,4
Promote tolerance and cultural diversity	101	88,1	249	84,8
Provide analysis of current affairs	101	86,1	247	85,5
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	101	83,1	248	81,0
Educate the audience	99	81,8	249	85,9
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	101	81,2	248	80,6
Advocate for social change	99	79,8	247	79,7
Let people express their views	99	77,7	248	79,4
Provide entertainment and relaxation	101	76,3	248	68,6
Tell stories about the world	101	75,3	249	74,7
Provide information people need to make political decisions	100	75,0	248	73,4
Report things as they are	101	70,3	247	64,8
Motivate people to participate in political activity	99	66,6	246	68,3
Be a detached observer	99	60,7	246	56,9
Monitor and scrutinize business	100	57,0	246	58,9
Support government policy	97	52,6	243	58,0
Convey a positive image of political leadership	95	49,5	242	48,7
Influence public opinion	99	47,5	241	47,3
Set the political agenda	96	46,9	243	45,3
Monitor and scrutinize political leaders	96	39,6	245	50,6
Be an adversary of the government	91	23,1	221	19,0

Question: Please tell me how important each of these things is in your work. 5 means you find them extremely important, 4 means very important, 3 means somewhat important, 2 means little importance, and 1 means unimportant.

Figure 2: Perceived importance of professional functions among Ethiopian female and male journalists. Percentage saying 'extremely' and 'very important'.

investigative reporting have traditionally been a male domain. That being the case, investigative reporting has a marginal place in Ethiopian journalism. The state-owned media mostly exercise orchestrated protocol journalism (Skjerdal 2013). The private media on their part do not have the resources or inclination to carry out serious investigation. This gives reasons to why monitoring and scrutiny of political leaders are regarded as some of the weakest professional roles in Ethiopian journalism today – in fact less esteemed among journalists in the private media than in the state-owned media, according to the study. Being an adversary of the government is seen as even less important (however, it should be noted that this particular question was not always understood). The low inclination to adversarial journalism in Ethiopia should be read against the contemporary media situation, characterized by consensus-driven, development-oriented official media channels and lack of political reporting in the private media.

Gender differences also surface in entertainment reporting and, to a lesser extent, coverage of development. Female journalists find the entertainment function to be more important than men do, which follows from the fact that the culture and entertainment sections in the local media are largely staffed by women. More intriguing yet is the high proportion of reporters who regard support to national development as very or extremely important in their daily work (90% of female reporters and 85% of male reporters). Similarly, promoting tolerance and cultural diversity gains support from 88% of the women and 85% of the men. All these values are remarkably high, testifying to a strong interventionist attitude among the journalists. A key facet of the interventionist stance is the idea that journalists are servants for the wider society and participants in the development process rather than neutral observers (Hanitzsch 2011). In the case of Ethiopia, the philosophy is materialized through development journalism, which demands salience to economic growth, social progress and national cohesion. Development journalism can also advance specific issues such as women empowerment (Solomon 2014). The study thus finds strong expression of loyalty to the nation and the people, slightly stronger among female journalists than among male journalists. At the same time, and quite importantly, the journalists, both men and women, are much more sceptical to the idea that they should convey a positive image of the political leadership and support government policy as part of their work.

DIFFERENCES IN ETHICAL PERCEPTIONS

The study found more systematic gender differences in ethical reasoning than in role perceptions. Generally, the female journalists displayed more restrictive attitudes in various ethical situations than did the male journalists. The informants were asked to respond to a list of ethical situations where they could choose between three possible responses: (1) always justified; (2) justified on occasion; or (3) not approved under any circumstances. For all items, the majority of the respondents picked 'Not approved under any circumstances'. Very few chose 'Always justified' for any of the situations. It should be added that several of the claims are less relevant for the Ethiopian context and thus represent hypothetical situations.

The overall tendency is that men were more likely than women to open up for contextual judgements of the ethical dilemmas, i.e. they didn't necessarily find them to be either/or situations but said that the ethical decision depended on the circumstances. For example, 20% of the male journalists

	Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%
Accepting money from sources	99	99.0	241	95.5
Altering photographs	99	99.0	244	95.1
Altering or fabricating quotes from sources	100	99.0	248	94.0
Paying people for confidential information	99	98.9	232	96.6
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	99	98.9	235	95.8
Publishing stories with unverified content	97	95.9	244	95.0
Making use of personal documents such as letters and pictures without permission	99	95.9	244	95.9
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	97	94.9	238	96.2
Claiming to be somebody else	98	91.9	236	92.4
Exerting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story	99	91.9	245	86.5

Question: Given an important story, which of the following, if any, do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve of under any circumstances? 1 means it is always justified, 2 means it is justified on occasion, and 3 means you would not approve under any circumstances.

Figure 3: Ethical perceptions among Ethiopian female and male journalists. Percentage who responded 'would not approve under any circumstances'.

found it justifiable to use confidential business or government documents without authorization under certain conditions, compared with only 13% of the female journalists. The male journalists were also more prone to support situational ethics on a general level. This became evident from a general question on ethics, which was asked in the survey, whereby 63% of the male respondents – compared with only 53% of the female respondents – agreed that it is acceptable to set aside moral standards if extraordinary circumstances require it. There is also a tendency that the male journalists score higher on ethical decisions which involve risky behaviour. Most notably, 14% of the male respondents 'always' find it justifiable to exert pressure on unwilling informants to get a story, contrasted with only 8% of the women.

An interesting difference emerges from the responses to 'Accepting money from sources', which is more popularly known in Africa as 'brown envelope journalism'. Of the listed cases, this is arguably the one, which is most clear-cut, insofar as ethical codes from across the continent condemn the practice (Skjerdal 2010). In the survey, nevertheless, more female journalists (99 per cent) than male journalists (95.5 per cent) reject the practice. A possible explanation in this regard could have been the length of professional experience; since the average work experience for male journalists is markedly higher than for female journalists, one could deduce that the male journalists are more realistic in their answers as they are aware of the prevalence of brown envelopes in the local society (Birhanu 2010). However, further analysis of the data shows the opposite; the more experience, the less acceptance of brown envelopes. It therefore emerges that there is a certain gender difference in the attitude to incentive-driven journalism (although statistical information about ethical attitudes must not be mistaken for actual behaviour).

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The main findings can be summarized in three areas. First, the Ethiopian newsroom is in transition, gender-wise. When comparing the present survey with previous studies, there is strong indication that the female proportion is going upward not just in support functions but in the journalistic production as well. However, leadership and management positions are still largely occupied by men. Most strikingly, the age dispersion of men and women is widely different. While most male journalists are older than 30, most female journalists are under 30 years old. Second, male and female journalists differ in which professional roles they find more important in their daily work. Men emphasize investigative and scrutinizing functions, whereas women emphasize culture and entertainment, besides finding support for national development slightly more important. However, a number of functions show insignificant differences between male and female journalists.

Third, male and female journalists differ systematically in their ethical views. The male respondents are more likely to let the situation decide whether a certain behaviour is wrong or not, and are more attracted to ethical actions which involve risk-taking. The female respondents are consequently more restrictive, for instance when rejecting brown envelopes and refusing to use documents without permission. At the same time, the difference between men and women in ethical preferences is largely one of nuances on the same end of the scale; both groups are restrictive, but the women are steadily one step stricter. Only a wider cross-cultural analysis can determine whether the difference in ethics actually pertains to gender, or if the cultural difference or other factors are more decisive.

Several studies throughout the globe have intended to address some of the same issues as the present one, i.e. whether there exists substantial differences in professional perceptions between men and women in journalistic activity. One study in particular is relevant because it uses the same framework as the current study, namely Thomas Hanitzsch and Folker Hanusch's (2012) analysis of gender differences using data from the first wave of *Worlds of Journalism* (2007–11). Their study compares journalists from eighteen nations and has a particular focus on role perceptions. Although that study found differences in some areas (e.g. men tended to value detachment and the watchdog function more than women), the overall conclusion was that there is no systematic, meaningful difference to be found between male and female journalists in their view of professional roles across the eighteen researched nations.

The present study concludes slightly differently. The Ethiopian newsroom is gendered, not just demographically, but also in terms of differing views of the profession. This is not especially surprising, given that Ethiopia is a gender-divided society in many areas, and the division extends into the newsroom. However, informants tell of profound changes in attitudes among journalists over the past one to two decades, and the gender differences among contemporary Ethiopian journalists should not be overstated. To this end, it is important to note that the present study finds that ownership type of the media organization (private or state) is more decisive for patterns of professional perceptions than the gender of the journalist. The only area where gender is a more precise indicator of role perceptions than ownership type is in the investigative function of the media. It will be intriguing to observe whether the gender gap in the Ethiopian media will continue to narrow in the next few

2. Ethiopian names are listed according to local naming tradition, i.e. by first name. The second name is the name of the author's father.

years and whether it does so in demographics only or in professional orientations as well.

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