

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS LEADERS
IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE
CHINESE MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF
GUANGZHOU CITY

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A 1995 UNESCO-commissioned survey of Chinese women journalists revealed that women only comprised 8.5% of high-level leadership positions in the Chinese media. Taking the survey as its springboard, this study set out to explore women's leadership experiences in the Chinese media, as embodied in Guangzhou City, the hive of media reform in China. Twenty-two women media leaders and nine men media professionals in Guangzhou were interviewed. Statistical data of the overall distribution of women leaders in the Guangzhou media were also obtained.

Media leadership in Guangzhou was divided into two tiers. Women leaders are still very much the minority, with their presence in second-tier (similar to mid-level) leadership higher than that of first-tier (high-level) leadership. It was found that first-tier women media leaders followed a different promotion pattern from those in the second tier, corresponding to the political function and industrial structure of the Guangzhou media. The distribution of women in first-tier leadership is uneven among different media

sectors with the highest percentage in radio stations followed by newspaper groups and then TV stations, likely a result of the lower industrial and social status of the radio sector. Women's distribution in second-tier leadership is uneven among different media organizations, likely a result of these organizations' different institutional cultures and promotion mechanisms.

This study identified a range of reasons that have contributed to the under-representation of women in leadership in the Chinese media, which were then compared to the reasons as suggested by the 1995 survey. Women's leadership advantages and disadvantages and their experiences of balancing work and family were discussed. The women media leaders have vividly witnessed, actively participated in, and in some cases successfully propelled the transformation of the Chinese media in Guangzhou. Their leadership experiences have helped to reveal the complex interplay of the political economy of the Chinese media and to expose problems that have emerged in the transformative process. Media transformation in China has brought a significant increase of women media professionals and has resulted in a seemingly improved representation of women in media leadership in Guangzhou, mainly at the second-tier level.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS LEADERS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF
THE CHINESE MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF GUANGZHOU CITY

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DEDICATION

To Aubrey Williams

(1924-2008)

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It all started with an American professor arriving at Jinan University in Guangzhou, China, eight years ago. She was the elegant, generous, and knowledgeable foreign scholar, about to explore a culture new to her. I was the humble but curious Chinese graduate student who dared to ask to be her “assistant,” trying to make her visiting experience easier and happier. Two years later I was still the humble but curious Chinese graduate student, but this time in a foreign land about to embark a new life in the Ph.D. program at the University of Maryland. She was the most supportive, considerate, and insightful advisor, trying to make my academic journey fruitful and enjoyable.

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nurturing plants, subtle but effective. Prof. James Gao, you give me the hope that a non-native English speaker can write a book as articulate and interesting as yours. I thank you for sharing with me your smart photographs, valuable academic books, and sparkling ideas. Prof. Jing Lin, the communication between us has been beyond words. The vitality and quality of your mind and heart always pull me close to you. Thank you for encouraging and helping me pursue this research. Prof. Michael Gurevitch, I know you would have taken my thanks with raised shoulders and hands, a typical gesture signifying your wisdom. Your class is unsurpassed in enlightenment. Like my advisor said, your legacy lives in students like me.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that influence media policy. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in public and private local, national and international media organizations.

— Section J: Women and the Media, Platform for Action, par. 235
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, 1995, for the first time in the history of United Nations World Conferences on Women,¹ in its ultimate overarching document Platform for Action,² included “media” as one of the twelve critical areas of concerns that are most crucial to the development of women in the world. Section J of the Platform, entitled Women and the Media, specifically addresses the worldwide problem of “stereotyping of women and inequality in women’s access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media” and calls for relevant actions.³

This “first” happened to be shared by Chinese women journalists. Right before the Fourth World Conference on Women came to Beijing, UNESCO commissioned two prestigious Chinese institutions, the All-China Journalists Association (*zhongguo jixie*, 中国记协) and the Institute of Journalism Research of the Chinese Academy of Social

¹ The three previous World Conferences on Women were in Mexico City (1975, International Women's Year), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985).

² The official resulting documents of the Fourth World Conference on Women are The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

³ Section J is the tenth section in the Platform for Action. The twelve sections in order are Women and Poverty, Education and Training of Women, Women and Health, Violence against Women, Women and Armed Conflict, Women and the Economy, Women in Power and Decision-Making, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, Human Rights of Women, Women and the Media, Women and the Environment, the Girl-Child. See <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>.

Science (*zhongguo shehui kexueyuan xinwen yanjiusuo*, 中国社会科学院新闻研究所), to conduct a major project surveying women journalists in China nationwide. This study was the first in the history of Chinese journalism studies to specifically look at women in such a large scale. It remains the only one today (ACJA & IJRCASS, 1995; Bu, 2001; Chen & Bu, 1996).

Other than providing a comprehensive descriptive picture of women journalists at that time in China, the study exposed several problems the survey participants were facing.⁴ One of the most disturbing concerns reported by Chinese women journalists was the lack of opportunity to enter decision-making leadership positions in news media organizations. The survey found that only 8.5% of “high-level decision-making positions”⁵ in all Chinese news media organizations were occupied by women even though they comprised 33% of the whole news media workforce at the time.

This difficulty of entering key decision-making positions, or the “glass ceiling” effect as described in a more popular way in Western societies,⁶ in various social organizations including the media is commonly shared by women worldwide. A rich body of literature concerning gender and leadership, mostly in the West, has identified problems such as gender stereotyping, work-family conflict, women’s socialization, and conservative organizational culture as some of the major barriers preventing women from achieving full-fledged success in leadership. Academic inquiry on women’s leadership

⁴ A full description of the survey result concerning Chinese women journalists at the time is in chapter four.

⁵ The “high-level decision-making positions” in the survey refer to the level of president, vice president, executive editor, deputy editor, general manager, and deputy manager in Chinese news media organizations including newspapers, TV and radio stations, and wire service bureaus (Bu, 2001, p. 111). A more detailed explanation of the leadership structure in media organizations in China is in chapter six.

⁶ According to Paula J. Dubeck and Dana Dunn in their 2002 publication *Workplace/Women's Place: An Anthology*, the term “glass ceiling” was “popularized in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* article describing the invisible barriers that women confront as they approach the top of the corporate hierarchy” (cited in Sluder, 2007, p. 3).

specifically in the media has remained relatively modest worldwide and extremely rare in the Chinese context. The aforementioned UNESCO-commissioned study has so far remained the only one to reveal the salient under-representation of women in leadership positions in the Chinese news media. The survey also asked women journalist participants to express their agreement and disagreement with a set of statements defined as reasons for the scarce representation of women in the Chinese media leadership circle. Yet the study, partially due to the limitation of using a survey as an inquiry tool, was not able to further explore these reasons, which can only be achieved by deeply probing women's personal experiences in career advancement and leadership roles in the Chinese media.

More than ten years have passed since the Beijing World Conferences on Women and the seminal survey study. How has the situation of women's participation in leadership in the Chinese media evolved? According to Margaret Gallagher (2001), a leading feminist media scholar who helped to organize many of the pioneering UNESCO research projects on women and the media, the whole world after the Beijing Conference, has been standing almost still if judged from the perspective of women's representation and participation in the media. But the whole nation of China is changing, and the whole world is carefully watching it now. The media landscape in China is undoubtedly experiencing profound transformation as well, against the backdrop of ambitious social reform.

Has women's participation in leadership in the changing Chinese media changed accordingly over the decade? There is no research article or study in the literature, either in Chinese or English, tapping this question. Academic inquiry on women and media in

China is in its very infant stage with the 1995 groundbreaking survey serving as its beginning point and intellectual springboard (Bu, 2001; Liu, 2004; Yang, 2004). In the aftermath of the 1995 survey, a dozen or so scholars have done a small amount of research concerning Chinese women media professionals (e.g. Bu, 1998, 2001, 2002; Chen, 2004; Liu, 2003, 2004; Wu & Xu, 2002; Yang, 2004), but no single academic work has devoted its attention to the domain of women's road to or presence in leadership roles in the Chinese media.

Thus discovering women's experiences in media leadership in China, which is virtually invisible in academic discourse, becomes the primary goal of this dissertation. Using the 1995 survey study as my own springboard and beginning point, my exploration of women's experiences in media leadership in China has two additional focuses: 1) filling in some of the holes left by the survey by further investigating the reasons for women's under-representation in leadership positions in the Chinese media; 2) extending the road chartered by the survey to examine whether and how the transformation of the Chinese media has influenced the situation of women's participation in media leadership in China. Starting from where the 1995 survey stopped, this study also adopts a different research approach. What the survey has provided is a layer of thin, distant, and abstract data related to Chinese women's participation in media leadership. By employing in-depth interviews to delve deeply into women's personal experiences of being leaders in the Chinese media, this study hopes to generate thick, empathic, and concrete qualitative understanding of this severely under-researched topic.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The title of this dissertation contains two intertwined main themes: 1) women and media leadership; 2) transformation of the Chinese media. Why is studying these two subjects necessary and valuable?

First, why care about women and media leadership?

Almost everyone, from politicians to academics to everyday citizens, agrees that mass media in contemporary society are powerful and penetrating social forces. Individuals who are in charge of media operation thus have enormous responsibilities to the public. The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), in its 2000 research report, *Leading in a Different Language: Will Women Change the News Media?*, sums up the power of media leadership as follows:

Whoever controls assignments, whoever decides how a story is going to be covered, whoever decides what placement that story gets in a newspaper or over the airwaves, is not only shaping content of news, but is deciding what readers and listeners know and how they know it. Media leaders are not just industry leaders, they have the power to shape society's attitudes.⁷

The IWMF report argued that due to the critical power media leaders possess, it is particularly imperative to have enough women in the decision-making posts in the media. Media organizations as powerful institutions serving public interests cannot afford to miss women's perspectives when it comes to decision-making.

The IWMF report, which built upon a decade of work with international women journalists by the International Women's Media Foundation, resonated well with another leading research project on women's leadership in the media. The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania investigated women leaders in *Fortune*

⁷ From the IWMF website <http://www.iwmf.org/pub/p-leading/e-4195/ch-4196> (Accessed on March 1, 2008).

500 media companies in the United States for consecutive three years (2001-2003). Their 2003 research project justified its research intention as follows, which again answers my own question “why care about women and media leadership:”

While discrimination against women in all industries is of public policy concern, the role of women in communications companies is of particular interest because communications companies play a special role in society. The news, movies, television shows, websites, papers, advertisement, books, and magazines that we watch and read not only tell us about the events of the day through their content, but also tell us about our world in the way the content is presented. They communicate in subtle and often unconscious ways who and what is important and normal and who has status and power, and the media help tell us what our national agenda should be. Communications companies therefore play an especially important role, and the people who make decisions about what kinds of news, information, and entertainment get produced have additional power. Because of the importance of the communications industry in creating and shaping the world in which we live, the relative dearth of women in positions of power in these firms is of particular note. (APPC, 2003: P.7)

Second, why care about the transformation of the Chinese media?

It probably is not enough to answer this justification question by only stating two logical reasons: my personal interest in China being my motherland and my academic training in media studies. I feel I am obligated to say more about the need for and value of studying the transformation of the Chinese media.

China’s constantly-evolving media landscape is of particular interest to many groups with “special interests” other than media scholars: Western politicians who hope media reform can help to topple China’s political ideology (probably its structure too) which still embodies the intimidating name of Communism; civil advocates of press freedom who want to help journalists in China fight their way to change the stagnant ironclad control of the Communist Party; administrators and educators in journalism and mass

communication programs in higher education in Western countries who want to spread their enterprise to China and sow seeds of Western journalism for future generations of Chinese journalists. This list can go on for a while.

Chinese media in its transformative age also offers fertile soil for research.

According to Chin-Chuan Lee (2000), a leading Chinese American scholar investigating the development of contemporary Chinese media:

China will be the major test case of the early twenty-first century as to whether the values of Western liberal democracy are – or are not – a world standard for social governance. Media culture is at the very heart of this consideration. China's media...address, reveal, and offer clues to such complex – and enduring – issues as journalistic freedom, individual identity and liberty, the opportunity to participate in a free-market economy, as well as the ambiguous attractions of an emergent consumer society based on media culture and the circulation of information (p. 3-4).

Studying the transformation of the Chinese media thus is of interest and importance.

Although the focus of this dissertation is the experiences of women media leaders in China, the transformation of the Chinese media is the social context where their experiences have unfolded. Having achieved their leadership status, women media leaders undoubtedly are in the center of the tumultuous transformation of the Chinese media landscape, witnessing and immersing themselves in every step of this process. By analyzing their experiences, this dissertation hopes to achieve a fresh interpretation of this complicated but intriguing phenomenon.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Instead of sweeping over media organizations throughout China's huge territory, this research will concentrate on Guangzhou City as a case study location. Here are some reasons why I choose this site:

First, Guangzhou, the third largest city in China, is the capital city in Guangdong province, a province located at the southern end of mainland China, where profound and controversial economic reform was initiated in late 1970s, with the establishment there of the first special economic zone in China and a series of other reforms. Being very close to Hong Kong (only about 105 miles away) and significantly influenced by its cultural and economic development, Guangzhou's geographic advantage grants the city unparalleled opportunities to be the pioneer in China's reform. Guangzhou has always been an experimental site for the Chinese government to test its various economic policies since China stepped out of the Cultural Revolution and launched its ambitious social reform (He, 2000; Zweig, 2002).

Second, this pioneering reform spirit also extends to the media sector in Guangzhou. Its bold media reform efforts have established successful (and sometimes failed) models for media organizations in other regions in China. It was in Guangzhou where the first state-owned media conglomeration, *Guangzhou Daily Group* (*guangzhou ribao baoye jituan*, 广州日报报业集团), was established in 1996 (*China Journalism Yearbook*, 1997), whose advertising revenue has been the highest in China's newspaper sector for many years since mid-1990s (Huang, 2005). Controversial news reporting there has frequently caused the central government's intervention. New graduates from journalism educational programs throughout the country poured into Guangzhou to pursue their dreams in the media profession throughout the 1990s. Hong Kong's TV channels have long been a regular presence in Guangzhou citizens' media consumption (Chan, 2000). Guangzhou is also becoming an experimental site for introducing foreign broadcasters to China's media market due to its long tradition of reform (Huang, 2005). All these have

made the competition in the media industry in Guangzhou probably the most fierce in China. It is fair to say that even if some of the experience of Guangzhou media has not become typical in China, it may well reflect where the overall media sector is headed in the future.⁸

Third, Guangzhou is also the city where I stayed for three years to get my master's degree right before I came to the United States. Many of my former classmates are working for various media organizations and the provincial and municipal government in Guangzhou. The professors in my master's program also have close connections with Guangzhou's media sector. This valuable personal resource in Guangzhou has helped me to collect data relevant to my dissertation subject.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

For any academic work, contributing to the body of human knowledge is its foremost goal and ultimate value. This study will contribute to the literature in four distinct ways that I am able to define.

First, this is the pioneering study fully devoted to investigating women's leadership in the Chinese media. As I stated earlier in this chapter, no academic article or research project, either in Chinese or English, has specifically explored this subject. Last summer when I was at Paris for the IAMCR's (International Association for Media and Communication Research) 50th anniversary conference to present a preliminary paper based on the data of this dissertation, I met one of the leading Chinese scholars in the field of women and media in China, Bu Wei, who was also one of the major organizers of

⁸ The subject of the transformation of the media in Guangzhou will be discussed more extensively in chapter four.

the aforementioned 1995 seminal survey. Bu's 2001 book *Media and Gender* remained the only one on the subject in China until 2004 when a second book by another leading scholar came out. Bu told me that she just finished editing a new book about women and media in China. She said she had everything but a section on women and leadership in the Chinese media, which no one has done so far. We joked to each other that she should consider editing another book soon to have my research included.

Second, although this work focuses on women's leadership in the Chinese media, it inevitably covers the state of Chinese women journalists in China. Most women media leaders themselves have been journalists and have experienced various career stages in Chinese media organizations. Investigating women media leaders thus simultaneously provides key knowledge about women journalists in China. As my literature review will show, there are very few studies on Chinese women journalists, so this work contributes to the body of knowledge in this field as well.

Third, this study will interpret the transformation of the Chinese media from a gender perspective, which almost no studies exploring the development of the Chinese media have done so far. Although China's expanding media, potentially the largest system in the world, is still far from being comprehensively understood, the study of the Chinese media has begun to mature in the past two decades "with theoretical and methodological advances in various branches of the humanities and social sciences" (Lee, 2000, p. 7). In this modest but promising field of investigation, gender-sensitive or gender-oriented research is largely absent and much needed. My study will help to lay the foundation and hopefully induce other scholars to examine the development of the Chinese media through the lens of gender.

Fourth, by examining women's media leadership in Chinese society, this study makes it possible for future comparative research on this subject. There are very few studies concerning women and media leadership in areas of the world other than the West. Contemporary feminist scholarship's common effort since 1980s has been to diversify feminist discourse by including experiences of women from various social backgrounds and parts of the globe. As recognized by Li Xiaojiang (1999, 2005), the most prominent feminist scholar and founder of the women's studies in China, Chinese women's social experiences, historically and contemporarily, are very different from those of women in the West. Investigating women's media leadership experiences in China will undoubtedly contribute to the overall knowledge of the subject of women and media leadership.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL APPROACH

Since 1975, knowledge of the status of women and men, respectively, has increased and is contributing to further actions aimed at promoting equality between women and men.

— Platform for Action, par. 27
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

As outlined in the previous chapter, the two main themes carried by the title of this dissertation are “women and media leadership” and “the transformation of the Chinese media.” In this chapter, I discuss two broad theoretical approaches for these two themes. For the first theme, I render feminism as an appropriate perspective. For the second theme, a contextualized version of political economy of communication seems to be a proper framework. This chapter, however, mainly aims to provide more general theoretical approaches than specific theories. The literature review in the next two chapters will present concrete conceptual categories, both in Western and Chinese settings, to be applied for unraveling the complex subject of this dissertation.

FEMINISM AS A MODE OF ANALYSIS

During the mind-opening (and sometimes clogging) process of reviewing literature pertinent to women, leadership, and media, and searching for theories applicable to what I want to analyze, a statement made by Nancy Hartsock (1998), a prominent socialist feminist theorist, caught my eye and prevailed. She claimed that “feminism was not a set of specific conclusions about the situation of women, but was instead a mode of analysis

that could be usefully applied to studying, not simply women, but society as a whole” (p. 75).

Before feminism emerged as an established scholarly tradition or discipline, there was research on women. Even after feminism achieved its resilient presence in academic circle and politics, there has been ongoing research on women which does not bear the label of feminism research. Feminism, however, is arguably the main incentive to have inspired most of the research on women in many disciplines in the past three decades.

The field of feminist theories and politics has become very complex and sometimes contentious with ongoing proliferation and fragmentation. Sandra Harding (1989), a leading scholar in feminist philosophical, epistemological, and political tradition, made the point that “there is no one set of feminist principles or understandings beyond the very, very general ones to which feminists in every race, class, and culture will assent” (p. 29). These general ones lie in three domains that are usually identified as the basis of feminism: 1) revealing gender inequality and women’s subordination; 2) explaining social forces causing and perpetuating them; 3) looking for solutions to change that reality. Feminist scholars are united based on their recognition of women’s subordinate status, but they differ significantly in the cause(s) of the situation and how to analyze it. A goal of seeking social changes lends feminist scholarship a salient political tone, distinguishing it from other studies on women, even though feminists also have very diverse views on which interventions are effective and desirable (Steeves & Wasko, 2002).

It is way beyond the scope of this dissertation to review feminism in its totality and historiography, especially when few words cause as much confusion, misunderstanding,

and anxiety as the word “feminism.” It seems dividing feminism scholarship into conventional categories, such as liberal feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, radical feminism, postmodern feminism, poststructural feminism, minority feminism, psychoanalytical feminism, postcolonial feminism, international feminism, etc., as many books on feminism often do, is no longer valid or useful. As Jagger and Rothenberg (1993) recognized, not only are most of these theoretical categories themselves intertwined, but women’s subordination can not be understood adequately only in one single category. Different circumstance and purpose often call for different theoretical approaches. Therefore, instead of providing an overview of various feminism theories and thoughts, I would like to lay out the core understandings and common grounds of recent feminist scholarships generated in diverse categories to explain why Hartsock’s argument of feminism as “a mode of analysis that could be usefully applied to studying society as a whole” makes sense to me, and for this study.

Establishing “gender” as a category of analysis has been one of the most valuable and powerful contributions of feminist theories and analysis. The explosion in feminist scholarship in the years since 1970s has forced the basic disciplinary question in almost every discipline to be expanded and reinterpreted by including a new critical gender perspective, which has been historically missing in predominant theoretical accounts of human life. With this new approach of feminism perspective, scholars have been able not only to bring to the surface women’s lives and history, but also to “identify the bias and error in androcentric knowledge systems” and “begin to question their unexpressed assumptions and tacit ideologies” (Malson et al., 1989, p. 4).

The central concept of feminism scholarship is the definition of gender. During the 1970s, the feminist movement took the word *gender* into its use to distinguish it from the word *sex*. In feminist definition, *gender* refers to social roles of women and men as arbitrarily constructed, while *sex* only means the biological difference between men and women. Or, as Eagly and Carli (2003a) defined, the term *gender* refers to “the meanings that societies and individuals ascribe to the female and male categories based on biological *sex*” (p. 808). Therefore, gender is socially constructed, a result of upbringing and social interaction.

Feminist scholars, over the decades-long process of continuing theoretical sophistication, have come to realize that the meaning of gender is not fixed and immutable. People in different social locations and relations have different understandings and application of the term “gender.” There is no essential, universal “woman”, just as there is no essential, universal “man.” If feminist scholars continue to emphasize the existence of women as subject but fail to recognize the differences between women, they will easily fall into the same trap of the patriarchal theories which equate the diverse experiences of human beings with men who are Western, bourgeois, white and heterosexual. Harding has an artful claim: “Once essential and universal man dissolves, so does his hidden companion, woman” (1989, p. 17).

Feminist scholars also have gradually realized that gender is always part of a “myriad of social relations that may exist in any society” and never is independent of other social systems such as race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, region, and other social identities (Malson et al., 1989, p. 5). For instance, an understanding of Asian American women’s experience of gender must be based on their particular social and

historical totality; and, an individual Asian American woman may experience her gender differently among her ethnic and social group due to her particular background of class, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

Although the academic trend has placed much emphasis on differences among individuals in their local contexts, there is much evidence that feminists globally do manage to find common ground. Starting from the multi-layer understanding of gender and its intersection with other social elements, feminist scholars endeavor to understand the reasons leading to women's peripheral and inferior status and try to offer suggestions and solutions to improve it "by conceptualizing knowledge differently than traditionally legitimated in the male-dominant world" (Beasley, 2006). In the patriarchal system, the practice of dominant group becomes the normative practice of the society, and the oppressed groups are forced to participate in this practice. Thus, the answers to women's subordinate situation in society require research about the dominant institutions, and their customs and practices. Because women's subordination is a result of all the systematically related social forces and barriers embedded in various social identities, understanding the causes of women's subordination involves understanding the whole society and challenging the traditional theoretical framework from its root, which entails feminism to be "a mode of analysis that could be usefully applied to studying society as a whole" as Hartsock and many other feminist scholars have advocated.

FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY AS EPISTEMOLOGICAL TOOL

Other than providing an alternative philosophical approach to study human society with a focus on issues related to women, feminist scholarship also has managed to establish its own methodological base. It argues that androcentric methods produced

androcentric knowledge. The foreword to *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*, a book that well defined the field a quarter-century ago, argued that women's experiences should be the direct focus of feminist theory (Keohane, Rosaldo & Gelpi, 1982). Along with Sandra Harding, a group of acclaimed feminist scholars have respectively proposed and collectively refined an important intellectual perspective in feminism called "feminist standpoint theory" or "feminist standpoint epistemology" (e.g. Collins, 1991; Haraway, 1990; Harding, 1986, 2004; Hartsock, 1998).

Standpoint epistemology pointed out that the lives of women and of people belonging to marginal groups, such as blacks, disabled persons, homosexual individuals, etc., differ structurally from men in dominant groups. These differences can serve as a source of new understanding of social reality. This particular perspective is not merely a different perspective. It is also a privileged perspective for it makes it possible to understand reality better and more complete by recognizing the partiality of dominant understandings and the mechanism of oppression (Tanesini, 1999).

Harding (1986) argued that, when trying to add women's activities and gender relations to the traditional theoretical discourse that explains human life, feminist scholars encountered difficulties because most of the existing theoretical framework (liberal political theory and its empiricist epistemology, Marxism, critical theory, psychoanalysis, functionalism, structuralism, hermeneutics, to name a few), both do and do not apply to women and to gender relations. Instead of exclusively depending on these traditional theories to analyze women's lives, researchers should take women's personal and collective experiences as the starting point for building up new knowledge. Citing research findings on different groups of women – groups located in different class, racial,

ethnic, and sexual orientations in local, national, and global social relations, Harding (2004) argued that these kinds of account “enable us to understand how each oppressed group will have its own critical insights about nature and the larger social order to contribute to the collection of human knowledge” (p. 9).

Based upon feminist standpoint theory’s argument that women’s lives can be the ground for generating new knowledge, my dissertation will adopt feminism’s understanding of gender and its intrinsic relationship with other social identities, focusing on women subjects’ real life experiences to understand women’s participation in media leadership in the social context of a changing media environment in China.

Last but not least, the power of taking feminism as a mode of analysis also works in a very personal level, which probably is quite common among female scholars who conduct research about women. I have gained a privileged perspective, a standpoint, to reflect on my own experiences, part of which I share with the Chinese women that I have studied. This privileged perspective empowers me to question the legitimacy of what I used to take for granted as neutral given. Once again, Hartsock (1998), summed up very well of what I often felt during my fieldwork and writing process of this dissertation:

[I]t is important to build an analysis of patriarchy from the group up – beginning but with our own experience. We examined our lives not only intellectually but with all our senses. We drew connections between our personal experiences and political generalities about the oppression of women; in fact, we used our personal experience to develop political generalities. We came to understand our experience, our past, in a way that transform both our experiences and ourselves. ...The power of a feminist method grows out of the fact that it enables us to connect our daily life with an analysis of the social institutions which shape that life (p.35-36).

A CONTEXTUALIZED POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMUNICATION

As Chin-Chuan Lee (2000), a leading Western-educated Chinese scholar investigating the development of the Chinese media, pointed out, Chinese scholars trained in Western countries have had to contend with contrasting theoretical models while contextualizing Anglo-American literature in Chinese practices. Questions such as – How relevant are the well-established Western approaches to non-Western settings? To what extent does specific culture-oriented research represent a perspective that challenges theoretical orthodoxy? – arise frequently (p. 9).

Even though the Chinese media landscape has its particular characteristic, as Ma (2000) insightfully argued, it is not necessary to produce a completely new media theory to study it. Ma suggested the best way for scholars in the Third World to proceed is to modify and adapt existing theories to suit the social context in their own countries. For many scholars who study Chinese media phenomena, the appropriate analytical perspective that can be contextualized to study Chinese case is a broadly defined theory – “political economy of communication” (e.g. He, 2000; Lee, 2000; Ma, 2000; Zhao, 1998, 2008).

According to Steeves and Wasko (2002), the study of political economy in communication may be traced to general political economy and its roots in Adam Smith’s work in the eighteenth century. Smith defined political economy as the study of wealth (material goods and resources), which concerns “how mankind arranges to allocate scarce resources with a view toward satisfying certain needs and not others” in the context of market-economy capitalism (Smith, 1776, cited in Steeves and Wasko, 2002, p. 16). In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels added class analysis to political

economy, criticizing capitalism for its unjust and inequitable material distribution in different classes (Mosco, 1996). Since then, the study of political economy began to shift from description and relatively neutral analysis to a critique of capitalism (Steeves & Wasko, 2002). Some scholars thus call this version of political economy “critical political economy” (e.g. Golding & Murdock, 1991).

This critical perspective of political economy, when being applied to the analysis of the media, has its advantage of providing a broad and holistic picture of the dual dynamics – politics and economics – that drives the media. It links the production of meaning to the exercise of power (Golding & Murdock, 1997). The dominant application of this political economy of communication has been in the context of capitalism in Western countries. The British media scholar Nicholas Garnham and political economists Peter Golding and Graham Murdock have been influential in defining the parameters of the field, with a late-comer, Canadian scholar Vincent Mosco. As Golding and Murdock (1991) described, political economy mainly argues that the commercialization of the media has restricted cultural diversity and squeezed the “public sphere.” It therefore calls for effective public intervention by government to forestall capitalism’s hegemony.

However, as a few scholars argued (Downing, 1996; He, 2000; Lee, 2000; Schudson, 1991), the way this radical-Marxist perspective as applied in the West is rather limited and insensitive to the interplay of politics and economics, which is often indirect and conflicting in capitalist societies. It heavily leans over to the “economic” side rather than “political” side, and often takes for granted the Western democratic political system. More attention, these scholars suggested, should be paid to the political economy of communication in developing countries which have alternative authoritarian political

systems and to transitional societies where capitalism in economics and authoritarianism in politics goes hand in hand.

The interaction of politics and economics in China in general, and in the Chinese media in particular, over the past three decades or so has been dramatic. One of the most central problems facing contemporary Chinese media involves the complex relationship between continued state control and economic reform, as defined by many scholars (e.g. He, 2000; Lee, 2000; Ma, 2000; Zhao, 1998, 2008). This inherent disunity nicely meets the dialectic of political economy – the state versus the market, thus the theory of political economy of communication is very likely to find itself an inviting fertile land in the Chinese context. This Western-originated theory, however, as Lee (2000) argued, when being applied to the particular situation in China, has to be modified or refined.

Western critical political economists, for Lee (2000), are illuminating in dissecting the impact of corporate dominance of media industries, but their critique lacks persuasive strength when analyzing the political and cultural dimension of the media sector. In today's China, the reality is that the State is still taking a dominant role in shaping both the distribution of power within society and the direction of economic development (He, 2000). In Lee's (2000) description, the political economy of an authoritarian state like China, often functions like this: a policy of capital accumulation and economic growth is single-mindedly pursued, instead of harnessing economic growth to political democracy; a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime justifies state suppression of press freedom and civil liberties on the grounds that political stability is a precondition for economic growth; the state demands extensive but not total subservience from the media and media in turn

display an overall commitment to the state; the interaction between the state and the media is frequently tacit, informal, and backed by close personal ties (p. 34-35).

In order to tailor the Western-born “political economy of communication” to the China case, Lee (2000) proposed that a more liberal-pluralist approach of political economy would be a better fit, which pays more attention to the state-media relationship, or leans more toward the “political” side of the dynamics. He argued that when applying the theory of political economy of communication to a particular research case, one must cope with the larger “political” and “economic” conditions of the social context where the media are located, as well as with the interactive impact of politics and economics on the various aspects of media reality, such as media’s structure, operation, and content. Within Lee’s framework, the state is seen as an enemy rather than a guardian angel of public interest and media freedom; the market may betray the idea of democracy but it is also a necessary yet insufficient condition for checking on authoritarian state power; media professionalism, as an occupational myth, may not be totally attainable, but still can be viewed as a meaningful idea that promotes a diversity of opinion and empowers the media to “check and balance” the established power. Lee believed that as long as authoritarian control in many Third World states remains obstinate against popular resistance, the liberal-pluralist approach of “political economy” will remain viable in media studies. Furthermore, he argued, “in transitional social systems – from authoritarian to democratic rule, or vice versa – both approaches may coexist side by side, uneasily and paradoxically, under some circumstance” (2000, p. 28).

In sum, in the case of the transformative Chinese media which is the social context of this dissertation’s subject, a more flexible and balanced theory of political economy of

media is much needed, with the political side and economic side in a dynamic equilibrium which shifts its balance back and forth due to the different context of various circumstances.

CHAPTER III: REVIEW OF LITERATURE – WESTERN SETTING

The power relations that prevent women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.

—Section J: Women and Decision-Making, Platform for Action, par. 181
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

In the situation of extremely scarce original research on the subject of women and media leadership in the Chinese context, referring to the knowledge that has been generated mainly from the Western societies will help to provide useful theoretical interpretation and analytical categories to understand Chinese women's leadership experience in the media. This chapter first takes a look at scholarly research on the subject of women and leadership in general. It then focuses on the situation in the media.

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

Women traditionally have not received equal opportunities in the working world, including education, training, hiring, promotion, and networking. In spite of the fact that overall more and more women worldwide are participating in the workplace, numerous government or non-government reports as well as scholarly research show that women are scarcely present in top-level positions in most government divisions, corporations, education system, and various organizations. This phenomenon has been popularly defined as the “glass ceiling,” which is used to “depict a smaller than expected proportion

of females attaining leadership positions at the highest levels in organizations” (Hogue and Lord, 2007, p. 371).

To see the “glass ceiling” is not to deny that there has been significant progress concerning women’s social status. Most women now enjoy more personal, political, and economic power than before. And, more women are rising into leadership roles at all levels, including elite executive roles. However, women as a group are still in a structurally subordinate position to many men. Women’s under-representation in high-level leadership positions in various societal sectors is one of the signs.

Women not only occupy fewer high-level leadership slots, they also generally earn significantly less salary and have less authoritative power even when they are in those positions. Women with equal education are usually said to start at similar salary as their male counterparts, but as ten years pass, men end up making at least 20% more than women. Women often take longer to move into top management (Sluder, 2007).

Women’s under-representation and distinct experience in top management positions as briefly described above have triggered a substantial amount of research on gender and leadership, which has been gaining prominence and volumes over the years.

Organizations in modern society are complex systems comprised of dynamic networks of relationships. As Hogue and Lord (2007) explain, “gender affects leadership through a complex set of processes involving a dynamic, intricate network of relationships among multilevel components in a complex organizational system” (p.370). Most scholarly approaches, however, only provide a partial explanation of the case. Combining these approaches together, we might be able to see a more complete picture.

As many feminist scholars argued, most organizational theories on leadership are male-oriented intellectual inquiries. Harriman (1996) noted that current organizational literature is based on a "masculine" model of work, emphasizing masculine traits such as rationality, aggression, detachment and competitiveness as the norm, and feminine traits such as emotion, cooperation and intimacy as "deviant." Historically, leadership has also been construed as primarily a masculine enterprise, and many theories of leadership have focused on the desirability of stereotypically masculine qualities in leaders. When it comes to the problem of gender and leadership, masculinity is often linked to management success, while femininity is usually associated with traits known to inhibit career progress. Scholars working within this tradition often argue that women trying to fit themselves into the leadership role must therefore find a way to fit into this masculine mold (Nichols, 1994).

Feminist scholars criticized the absence of women's experience and perspective in the traditional leadership studies. They pointed out most organizational studies take the hierarchical division of labor for granted and aim at improving women's chances to succeed in a system that is intrinsically oppressive to women. Ahl (2004) argued that the approach of assigning traits, motives, attitudes, and so on to women and men is questionable because it tends to "reify and recreate gender difference , and it seldom captures how the difference are produced in the first place" (p.19). Feminist scholars have been able to pinpoint the systematic social barriers derived from male-dominant culture as the cause for the difficulties women have encountered on their way reaching for the top. With the stir from the feminism side, theories and analysis on gender and leadership have become much more sophisticated.

As Nichols claims in her introduction to the 1994 book *Reaching for the Top: Women and the Changing Facts of Work Life*, a collection compiled from articles in the *Harvard Business Review* by women business leaders and feminist scholars, it is the double bind of femininity and masculinity that defines the problem women face at work every day (p. xiv). There is almost no acceptable way for a woman to bridge the gap between her feminine nature and the traditional “masculine” demands of the leadership role. The double bind of femininity and masculinity is what has mainly caused the following social barriers that have prevented women from advancing their career to the very top.

Social Barriers as Defined by the Double Bind

Male-dominance in Organizational and leadership Culture

The conventional rule and perception of business and leadership are synonymous with the rules of the male culture. The leadership sphere has very strong patriarchal and hierarchical characteristic (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003). Historically, women act as wives in men’s family life domain where men dominate because of their ability to bring in incomes. The habit of dominance in their own family has overflowed to other social domains as well as in the workplace where women are not allowed to plant their feet firmly from the beginning.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1993), whose 1977 book *Men and Women of the Corporation* was regarded as a pioneer piece investigating women and management, suggested that the need to reduce uncertainty in large and impersonal institutions leads to the strong emphases on conformity in behavior and homogeneity in background. Since men have been the exclusive members of the business world historically, the men atop

their corporations wanted others around them with whom they were comfortable, and that generally meant other men similar to themselves. Having women in the same cohort brings in discomfort and entails adjustment which many men often refuse to make.

One of the other frequently identified problems, not unrelated to the comfort factor, is the exclusion of women from the social informal networking of men such as golf trips and sports games. Informal social gatherings in the business world are often where professional relationships are strengthened and where co-workers share information about training opportunities, job openings, important assignments and fellowships. Being excluded from these informal networking occasions can lead to missed opportunities which sometime turn out to be crucial to one's career advancement (Kanter, 1993).

Zweigenhaft & Domhoff (2006), after three consecutive studies on diversity in the power elite in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, still came up with a conventional conclusion: "The more similar they (women) are to the men who have long dominated the power elite in terms of attitudes and values, class background, and education, the more acceptable they are, and the more likely to move into the higher circles" (p. 78).

The dominance of male culture in organizations and leadership circle often leaves women no choice other than forcing themselves to assimilate sufficiently into the predominantly male culture. Women who adopt the male norm and act being assertive and tough, however, often are labeled as "insufficiently feminine" and disliked. For instance, what is considered assertiveness for a man is considered aggressive for a woman (Kanter, 1993).

Gender-based Assumptions and Stereotypical Judgment

Perhaps the most substantial and subtle obstacles women face stem from conventional gender-based judgment and assumptions, which have resulted in cultural and social stereotypes about what roles are and are not appropriate for women.

Historically, women have been regarded as not as well-equipped physically and mentally as men to function in the public sphere of the society in which men predominate (Harding, 2004).

According to Eagly and Carli (2003a), incongruity between expectations about women (characteristics related to femininity such as being caring, emotional, and supportive) and expectations about leaders (characteristics related to masculinity such as being ambitious, forceful, and competitive) underlie prejudice against female leaders. Women as leaders are likely to be judged through a lens of femininity and described as less assertive, less competitive, less achievement-oriented, and so on. Because of this gender-based stereotypical judgment, women often are not regarded as competent enough to be considered for promotion to high-ranking positions. And women who do take on leadership positions must often confront pre-conceptions of how their work should be done or what qualities are necessary for leadership roles, notions established by decades of male-dominance in a profession.

As Kathleen Jamieson (1995) pointed out, this can place women in a double bind. On the one hand, women in the corporate world are expected to be competitive and tough-minded, but not too competitive or tough-minded, or they risk being called ballbusters. On the other hand, women in the corporate world are expected to be feminine

enough to be seen as attractive and caring, but not too feminine, lest their appearance and behavior be seen as inappropriate or as an indication that they are tender-minded.

Difficulties in Balancing Work and Family

It is a well-held belief among many men and women themselves that women's mission of life is to provide care for husband, children, and the family in general. For women leaders and women who aspire to become leaders, one of the most daunting barriers they face is the dual challenge of balancing work and home responsibilities. Conventional male perception of leadership often regards family responsibility as counterproductive to job dedication and productivity. Many women often need to work much harder than male colleagues in order to combat the prejudice that women are reluctant to sacrifice their family life for their career (IWFMF, 2001).

Some feminist scholars regard the primary reason for women's under-representation in the power elite as the inflexible way in which work is structured and the increasing hours that have been demanded of executives and professionals in recent decades, which force women to choose between career advancement and their families, since they remain the primary caregiver at home (Martin, 2003).

After investigating women's participation in power elite in corporations, the presidential cabinet, Congress, and the military sector, Zweigenhaft & Domhoff (2006) predicted that the main avenue for women into seats of power will be within the political arena, where they have more control over the pace and timing of work.

Women's Feminine Socialization Struggles with Masculine Norm

Women grow up with female socialization in all aspects of life, which equip them with social personalities and behaviors that often do not fit well with the conventional

masculine norm of leadership skills. As one example, many scholars have used women's communication style, which is regarded as one of the key elements to leadership success (Sluder, 2007). Historically, women have not been trained in logical reasoning, which as defined by traditional leadership literature is an essential skill for leadership positions. In Nichols' (1994) book, there is the recurring theme that women in management positions need to speak up and not defer to men in order to be seen as effective leaders and considered for promotion into the top ranks of management. McAdams (1984) also pointed out that women lack willingness to confront others when communicating. Conventional feminine socialization has taught women not to negotiate as hard as men as well. Thus women often are not good at negotiating for promotions and salaries, which puts them in disadvantage for advancing as quickly or realizing their full potential.

In sum, gender bias in leadership is indeed a very complex system involving various personal, organizational, and social elements. As Jay, a male psychiatrist and organizational consultant concluded, the undermining of women in workplace leadership is both common and difficult to change; it stems from a complicated interaction of men's beliefs and behaviors, women's beliefs and behaviors, the structures and procedures set up by companies, and the ways in which we organize and run our families (cited in Nichols, 1994, p. xvii).

Valuing Women's Experiences: Turning Disadvantages to Advantages

Feminist scholars as well as activists have tried to turn some of the women's disadvantages, as described above, into their advantages. They argue that this only takes a change of standpoint (Hartsock, 1984). When viewed from women's perspective, those

disadvantages as defined by traditional masculine culture can be advantages for the benefits of women and the whole society (Harding, 2004).

Women's Contributions to Leadership

Feminist scholars have argued that conventional organizational culture often fails to acknowledge women or their contributions. Kanter (1993) contended that women have numerous leadership strengths. When given opportunity to use their talents, they can create remarkable innovations that make extraordinary contributions to their companies and the world around them. Eagly and Carli (2003b) argued that the discriminatory disadvantage that women encounter in male-dominated environments can sometimes produce the appearance of a female competence advantage. Given impediments to achieving high-level leadership roles, those women who do rise in such hierarchies are typically the survivors of discriminatory processes and therefore tend to be very competent. Some feminist scholars believed that this increment of competence, driven at least in part by a double standard, is no doubt one factor underlying social scientific evidence and journalistic claims of female advantage (Eagly & Carli, 2003a).

Women as Transformational and Effective Leaders

Eagly and Carli (2003a) claim that in recent years the notion that women can be effective leaders has gotten out of the small world of feminists and gradually into public discourse in the media and is making its way into popular culture. Debates about the leadership styles of women and men gained momentum in the 1990s because of new research attempting to identify the styles that are especially attuned to contemporary conditions. Although many researchers do not agree there are differences between

women and men in terms of their leadership style (e.g. Vecchio, 2003), some scholars have rather different conclusions (e.g. Eagley, Alice & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

In recent years, organizational studies have coined the phrases “transformational leadership” and “transactional leadership.” Transformational leadership refers to a leadership that is future-oriented rather than present-oriented and that strengthens organizations by inspiring followers’ commitment and creativity, while transactional leadership involves managing in the conventional sense of clarifying subordinates’ responsibilities, rewarding them for meeting objectives, and correcting them for failing to meet objectives (Eagly & Carli, 2003a, p. 815). Many researchers found out that female leaders are more transformational than male leaders.

According to Bridge (cited in Bulkeley, 2005), there is a growing interest in and wider acceptance of alternative leadership models that are based on teamwork and consensus building, which women leaders manifest more in their work. According to some recent research, women score higher than men in many attributes regarded as crucial to being a successful leader (Sharpe, 2000). For instance, women function as a consensus builder, cope with stress better, are more inclusive, motivate their followers more skillfully, are more optimistic toward the future, and enjoy more harmonious relationship among colleagues and subordinates, etc. In Kanter’s (1993) observation, women with power in a system and an interest in empowering subordinates (sharing power with them) were the most successful and effective and they were also the most collaborative and humane. Eagly and Carli (2003a) thus are able to argue that between the fact that women possess good qualities to be effective leaders and the reality that few

women make to it the top positions lies the stereotyped lag of people' perception toward women's ability.

Feminist Research's Change Strategies

Feminism is closely tied with social change, so feminist scholars have come up with various strategies to make leadership more diverse and represent equality and equity.

Liberal Approach

Faculty researchers at the Simmons Center for Gender in Organizations evaluated three common change strategies proposed by liberal feminist scholars (Coleman & Rippin, 2000; Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

Fixing Individual Woman

This strategy relies heavily on group training and individual advising to help women address their "weakness." Women at all ranks are urged to, and sometimes helped to, build up self-esteem, gain assertiveness, build networks of relationships with others who might assist their individual career advancement, and find mentors who can coach them. With this assistance, women should gain a repertoire of skills better tailored to leadership positions. Simmons researchers elucidated many limitations of this strategy which assume women themselves are to be blamed for not fitting into the organizational system. Women are actually forced into accepting the male norm and learn to act like men. Women who gain power by acting like men often do little to help other women to follow their road and are likely to see the system that fostered their own success as conducive and gender neutral. Stereotypical images of masculinity, such as being tough, showing no

emotion other than anger, being competitive, etc. are also left unchanged by this strategy, which some research shows is constraining to men as well.

Adding Woman and Stirring

This strategy assumes that hiring women into previously male-dominated jobs is equivalent to giving them “equal opportunity” to succeed. It puts more emphasis on recruitment instead of retention and promotion. Simmons researchers argue that this strategy is difficult to enact because it is difficult to get women to apply for jobs that have previously been held mostly by males and require long hours, weekend, and evening work, and extensive travel. When women enter the previously male-dominant leadership circle, they may feel their performance will be much more carefully scrutinized and there is strong probability that it will be evaluated in a biased fashion.

Small Cultural Changes in the Organizations

Under this approach, organizations need to adopt minimum changes in order to accommodate the needs of women, such as setting up day-care centers, allowing part-time working schedules and flexible hours, etc. Few women can evade the forces that are changing both their home and professional lives and in that sense the problem for women in the work world is one that must be addressed at the corporate level.

These three strategies are actually related to each other and are often hard to separate in practice. For instance, once “adding women and stirring” is adopted, “fixing the women” strategy often has to be used to follow up when problems appear. The combination of these strategies, used in different contexts with differing levels of success, has created some progress. But these three strategies are also blamed for their ignorance of the difference among women in terms of race, ethnicity, and class.

Radical Approach

Some critical theorists have argued that feminist scholarship should not focus on helping women gain access to existing hierarchies by increasing their skills and competencies, because that individually-focused change strategy does not seek to change existing hierarchical arrangement that perpetuate class, as well as gender and racial, inequalities (Martin, 2003). The two following strategies are proposed by feminists whose approaches to change are more radical.

Creating New Organizational Structure

This strategy is basically anti-bureaucratic and argues for an organizational structure in which hierarchy and division of labor are dramatically reduced, such as rotating all jobs including leadership positions, relying on consensual decision-making practices, etc. Some small feminist organizations have been established to implement this strategy, which usually have their own governing problems. This strategy is often regarded as unrealistically utopian.

Transforming Gendered Society

This strategy aims to transform the gendered aspects of society, rather than attempting to alter individuals or single organizational contexts. Without question, this approach is very ambitious with strategies that cross institutional boundaries involving various societal sectors including religion, government, the education system, business, media, etc. Martin (2003) gave an example of South Africa where the federal government has created gender equity task forces to ensure that a transformation in gender relations is included in the national transformation of race relations and economic power. Martin points out that the large-scale social turmoil in South Africa has loosened the

interdependencies of different dimensions of inequality so changes in gender inequality become more possible. Such a strategy, however, is much more difficult to implement in a more stable society.

In sum, just as Hogue and Lord (2007) pointed out, “despite impressive scholarly work relating such factors as role development, status, and social categorization to gender biases in leadership, we still may be quite far from a full understanding of this important topic, which means that we also may be far from developing effective means of remediation” (p. 371). As Nichols (1994) confessed:

[I]t is possible for women to succeed in many different ways; by battling their way up the corporate ladder, by becoming an entrepreneur, by fighting discrimination openly and fervently, and by turning a deaf ear to it, which is why dealing with the topic on a theoretical level is so difficult. There is no one right way and no one right answer. And yet there seems to exist one universal approach: women of all ages and in all fields must continue to reach for the top in an unrelenting desire to fulfill themselves, to serve their employers and their families, and to create economic prosperity for themselves, their companies, and their countries. That, after all, is the only measure of success (p. xxii).

WOMEN AND MEDIA LEADERSHIP

The theme presented in the previous section about women and leadership should find its strong resonance in the field of women and media, because just as Steeves (2004) said, “gender inequalities in communication are entwined with inequalities in all areas of life” (p. 289). Gallagher (2004), who was among the first cluster of feminist media scholars to be concerned with women’s representation in media content and in the media profession, cautioned that despite ongoing theoretical sophistication and the evolving global communication environment, the issues that need to be addressed related to women and

media are fundamentally the same, which revolve around the most basic questions of power, values, access, and exclusion (p. 279).

Although the educational program in journalism and mass communication has been feminized in many countries since the late 1970s and women now comprise more than 60% of the students in journalism educational programs in universities in many countries (Beasley & Theus, 1988; McAdams et al., 2004; Splichal & Sparks, 1994), the current proportion of women employed in media industries worldwide seldom exceeds one third of the overall media workforce (Bulkeley, 2004; Gallagher, 2001; Steeves, 2004; Weaver et al., 2007). Although women have gained more opportunities and chartered new lands in the media profession, women's presence in top-ranking positions in various media companies worldwide is still disappointingly low (Gallagher, 2001; van Zoonen, 1994). As Weaver et al. (2007) observed in the book, *The American Journalists in the 21st century*, the general picture of women in the media profession in the U.S. in 2002 looks much the same in many ways as it did a decade ago: Compared to men, women occupy a lower percentage in overall media workforce (one third), earn less money (81% of men's median salary), are less likely to be married (48% to 67%) and less likely to have children living with them (32.5% to 46%), have fewer years of experience, work for smaller news organizations, are less likely to be managers, have less influence in the newsroom, are slightly less satisfied with their jobs and report higher tendencies to leave, etc. (p. 182-196).

Feminist studies in the field of women and media have long been involved with two central themes: the under-representation and misrepresentation of women's image in media content and the marginalized status of women within media organizations

(Gallagher, 2001; van Zoonen, 1994). The first theme has produced a vast volume of research work, while the second theme has received relatively less attention with very little devoted to women's presence in media leadership. The pioneering international analysis of women's employment in the news media was conducted in 1995 by Margaret Gallagher for UNESCO and reported in her book *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*. Just as Gallagher (2001) pointed out, systematic monitoring of gender employment patterns in the media presents a real challenge for the feminist activist. It can be extremely difficult to obtain raw, first-hand employment statistics. Many organizations consider employment data to be confidential, and are reluctant to hand over information. In some countries organizations simply do not keep statistics that are differentiated by gender. Bulkeley (2004) also pointed out that the overall record of women in media management position and their presence in top leadership is sparse, often buried within bigger general studies of all journalists. Yet scholars who have made an arduous effort to investigate this problematic have yielded valuable insights and suggestions.

Enduring Problems in Leadership Issues

Before making serious charges concerning women's subordinate power in the media leadership, some scholars first acknowledge the progress women have made in the past decades in the media. It is undeniable that women more than ever before are entering media industries in almost all world regions. Women now comprise an "important mid-level cohort" as editors, producers, and directors in the media in many countries (Gallagher, 2004, p. 279). According to the aforementioned UNESCO report (Gallagher, 1995), in Africa women are 8% of broadcasting managers and 14% of managers in the

print media. In Latin America, the figures are 21% for broadcasting and 16% for print. According to some studies, it seems women in management positions in the U.S. fare better than women in the developing world. Bulkeley (2004) pointed out that although women's employment rate in the U.S. media has stayed almost static since 1980s, the percentage of women achieving news department management jobs is increasing. According to a report by the International Women Media Foundation (IWMF, 2001), in the U.S. women are 24% of news directors in television, 20% of those in radio, and 34% of newsroom supervisors in the newspapers.

Weaver et al. (2007), when carefully examining women's progress in the media profession in the U.S. during the 1990s and compared it with the 1980s, however, pointed out that the percentage of women in supervisory and management positions has actually decreased during the last decade (p. 186). This was confirmed by a 2002 study from the Media Management Center at Northwestern University, which found out the numbers of women in newspaper management actually are decreasing in the 21st century, as opposed to the 1980s and 1990s when the numbers of women entering newspaper management had been increasing. Weaver et al. (2007) also cautioned that the size of the journalistic labor force shrunk during the 1990s. Since many of the desirable jobs in U.S. journalism are held by those in their late 40s or early 50s who are still years away from retirement, ambitious young journalists, especially women and minorities, will find fewer opportunities for advancement for the next decade or so (p. 194).

Compared to the modest progress women have achieved in mid-level management, women's entrance into high-ranking decision-making positions in top media leadership has come much slower. Most women are stuck in middle management and never reach

the point that they can even touch the “glass ceiling” not to mention break it. Women are still in the very minor league of the top leadership circle which is largely male-dominant. One of the pioneering research projects on women and media leadership worldwide was sponsored by UNESCO in 1987. Media researchers from five countries – Canada, Egypt, Ecuador, India and Nigeria – where media systems differ greatly in structure and development, drew similar conclusions: in every case, women were almost absent at the senior management levels. A majority of the women journalists from around the world who responded to a 1997 IWFM survey said that not even one out of ten decision-makers in their companies were women. These findings support Gallagher's 1995 UNESCO report which found that women lead only 3% (8 out of 239) of the media organizations polled and hold a mere 12% of the top posts in those companies. A study from the International Federation of Journalists also confirmed that less than 3% of senior media executives and decision-makers worldwide are female at the beginning of 21st century (Bulkeley, 2004).

The situation is better in the U.S. media compared to the present world average and compared to their own three decades ago. An early study of women in newspaper management was conducted by a team from the Indiana University School of Journalism and Center for New Communication in 1976 and updated in 1982 (Bulkeley, 2004). These studies found women held only 2.4% of the top newspaper management positions⁹ in 1976 and 4.5% in 1982. The study also pointed out women managers were often younger than the men, were more likely to promote women, were paid less than the men, in general headed smaller departments, were less optimistic about their own job future,

⁹ Top newspaper management positions defined by the study refer to the publisher and six department heads (advertising; circulation; production; news/editor; corporate, general management, and business; personnel/promotion).

and believed they worked harder than the men. The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania conducted research on women's leadership in media industry for consecutive three years (APPC, 2003). This study found that the percentage of women entering executive positions was stagnant. On average women make up no more than 15% of top executives and even less of board directors.

The Media Management Center in Northwestern University has conducted research on top women leaders in newspaper industries for more than six years (Arnold et al., 2006). Their survey in 2001 found women filled about 30% of senior management jobs, but the number dropped to 8% for the very top positions of president, publisher and CEO among 137 newspapers with circulation over 85,000. Even for those women at the top, many did not have equal power with their male counterparts. The majority of women in the top leadership cohort tended to be clustered at the lower levels or at posts that are outside the most prevalent lines of succession to the top, such as human resources, community affairs, and legal departments, instead of in departments more likely to lead to a top job, such as advertising, finance, and editorial. Only 10% of the second-in-command positions (executive VP or general manager) were occupied by women (Hemingler, 2001). Their most recent survey, conducted in 2006, found no big difference (Arnold & Nesbitt, 2006).

Williams (1998) surveyed top female executives in four different job categories (general manager, sale manager, news director, program director) in four broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX) in the U.S. She found men outnumbered women by more than 50% in these management positions, men reported significantly higher average salaries than women with a minimum gap of \$20,000, and men also reported a

significantly higher perception of their own authority than women. And it seems the more years served in the media industry, the difference between men and women in terms of salary, benefits and authority gets wider.

Experts said it is imperative to have women gain top decision-making posts in the mass media, not only because women should be equally represented and share equal rights in every social category, but also because media as powerful institutions serving public interests cannot afford to miss women's perspectives especially when it comes to decision-making.

Do women have aspirations and determination to execute their influence at the very top? Women graduates entering media profession hold strong aspirations similar to their male counterparts (McAdams, 1984). In Weaver et al.'s (2007) study, more women journalists than men regarded career advancement as very important to them, and women also had much higher expectations than men concerning the importance of influencing public affairs. It is disheartening to see the discrepancy in women's strong aspiration and high expectation and their under-representation at the top. Why are there not enough women in high-level leadership? What are the barriers preventing women from getting into the top echelon? Many research projects have tried to answer this question.

Barriers to Women's Progress to Media Leadership

As Gallagher (2004) pointed out, compared to the situation decades ago in which women had to first survive in an overwhelmingly male world, the boundaries that constrain women in today's media institutions are usually "more subtle, and may seem more porous" (p. 277)..

The Media Management Center at Northwestern University held a conference titled *Women in Newspapers in 2000*, inviting top women leaders in newspaper industries worldwide, to explore where the barriers lie. They came up with the following five most common barriers to women's progress to media leadership:

- Exclusion from informal network (80%)
- Male stereotyping and preconception (68%)
- Lack of general management and line experience (49%)
- Inhospitable corporate culture (45%)
- Too short a time in the pipeline (43%)

These barriers as presented in media industries are very similar to the ones facing women in leadership in general. It is not necessary to elaborate on them again because most were discussed in the previous section. There are, however, other barriers that are specific to the media industry. As Porter & McLaughlin (2006) pointed out, organizational context often influences leaders' behavior and their effectiveness. Since media organizations have their particular cultural context, women in the media are facing some media-only barriers on their way reaching for the top.

Women are Opting Out

Research has revealed that women in the media industry have much higher turnover rates than those in most other industries (e.g. Bulkeley, 2004; IWMMF, 2001; Weaver et al., 2007). This higher turnover partially contributes to the imbalance between male and female journalists in terms of their positions in management. A 1992 survey in the U.S. showed that women were virtually equal in numbers to their male counterparts when just starting out in the journalism field, but as the years progressed, women's numbers

decreased significantly. Of all television professionals who had been in the industry four years or less, women accounted for 45%. But the figure for women in the industry 20 plus years dropped to 24% of all workers with the same tenure (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). A 2002 survey of 273 newspaper editors by the American Press Institute and the Pew Center for Civic Journalism found that 45% of women, as opposed to 33% of men, said they anticipated a better job at another newspaper or leaving the industry completely (API, 2002). A survey in 2002, conducted by Weaver and his colleagues, showed that women made up of 60% of the under-25 journalism workforce and 45% of the 25-34 age group. After the age of 34, the percentage of women in journalism is much lower. This survey also pointed out that the percentage of women in journalism remained virtually constant since 1980s at the rate of 33%, while women's presence in other occupations, including professions that are male-dominant, such as those of lawyers, judges, architects, engineers, and physicians, were steadily increasing from 1990 to 2000 (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 9). This again indicates that many women are leaving the journalism profession when reaching a certain age, either to raise children, enjoy more personal life, or shift to other professions they consider less demanding or more promising. This has resulted in the diminishing representation of women with years of experience, an important reason that contributes to the scarcity of women in top-ranking positions (Weaver et al., 2007).

Why are women opting out at such a high rate? Women leaving newspapers are twice as likely as people in other businesses to say the workplace is not conducive to balancing work and family responsibilities. Women report a stress level higher than that in general in the workplace, with 46% of them describing their jobs as very stressful. The conflict between family and career is very common among all professional women, but

this issue concerns women in the media more because their working conditions are not as predictable as those of many other professions. They have to be available for urgent tasks like covering breaking news; they have to do night shift for news stations or newspapers running in a 24/7 manner.

Traditional Division of Labor in the Media

It is commonly assumed that a journalist reporting “hard politics” (more likely to be a male) is supported and regarded as worthy of promotion, while someone writing about “human” and “everyday” issues (more likely to be a female) is seen as not ambitious and often will remain as a rank-and-file reporter (Gallagher, 2004). This conventional phenomenon in media organizations reflects and constructs power relations between women and men in that system (Gallagher, 2001). In journalism, getting good assignments goes hand in hand with career advancement. Many women journalists have reported that the type of assignments they receive inhibits their advancement potential. They have listed the lack of access to high visibility projects as one of the top five obstacles they face in advancing their careers. They have said that men are directed toward careers covering hard news stories in politics, finance and technology, all of which carry respect and significance in the newsroom. Women are assigned to soft topics – social affairs, culture and arts reporting. Women who want to cover politics and economics often have to follow the avenues set by their male colleagues or risk being assigned to soft news (IWMF, 2001).

The Changing Media Environment: Opportunities for Leadership

The Media Management Center at Northwestern University, through its robust research, claims that contemporary media companies have to rely on innovation and

being constructive, instead of defensive, to survive and fare in the global evolving media environment. They also argue that the key to successful innovation and cultivating a constructive organizational culture is to build up a creative workforce. In their studies, they have found media companies that enjoy growth from innovation are more likely to have a diverse set of leaders, which means more women and minorities, at the top (Arnold & Nesbitt, 2006). After six years of study, the project leaders at the Media Management Center proudly announced that they can now tie the role of women in leadership to profitability of media companies. Most of the top innovative companies today have women in very senior positions for their talents and to ensure those companies are meeting the needs of their women consumers (Arnold & Nesbitt, 2006).

Why is there this tie between women in leadership and profitability of the media companies? Scholars at the Media Management Center argued that women have an advantage because their leadership style tends to be more inclusive and responsive, (rather than hierarchical), which brings talents together, encourages new ideas and innovation. Women as newcomers to leadership positions also have another advantage: they are not as entrenched in the conventional way things have always been done, which often can not meet the challenge proposed by the significant transformation going on in the media industry (Arnold et al., 2006).

Unfortunately, the Media Management Center (2001) found that some media companies are defensive and not innovative enough to meet the market challenge, which is also related to their reluctance to bring women to the leadership cabinet. To benefit from the talents of top women, media companies should make a commitment to increasing women in management and avoid relegating them to departments outside the

line of succession. To retain women employees and ensure there are enough women in the pipeline, media companies should have favorable work and family policies (Hemingler, 2001).

Despite the challenges women journalists around the world face each day, women leaders in the most recent 2006 study by the Media Management Center are optimistic about women's contributions to the future of the media and the resulting positive changes that women in the media will bring to all of society. A survey of International Women Media Foundation on women journalists worldwide confirmed this positivism (IWWMF, 2001).

CHAPTER IV: REVIEW OF LITERATURE – CHINESE SETTING

While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

— Platform for Action, par. 9
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

The literature reviewed in the pervious chapter presented a web of knowledge gained about women and leadership in general and in the media particular, mostly in the West. Due to the scarcity of research work on the subject of this dissertation, the analytic framework based on Western experience is very useful. However, as many Chinese feminist scholars have noted, borrowing these frameworks uncritically will also be misleading due to the great differences of culture, tradition, history, and social environment in different societies. To understand the experience of Chinese women leaders in the media, it is important to clarify the kind of cultural and social environment in which they work and live.

This chapter first discusses the trajectory of Chinese women's status in the twentieth century and the social construction of gender in the historical process. The second section focuses on women's career development and gendered inequality in the workplace in China. The third section shifts to another focus: the transformation of the Chinese media driven by economic reform and political control. The media landscape in Guangzhou is also covered. This chapter concludes with discussions of women's employment and

career development in the media sector, women's dominance in journalism educational programs, and scholarship on media and gender in China.

WOMEN'S STATUS AND GENDER ROLE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINA

Since gender is central to this study and to any studies adopting a mode of feminism analysis, an examination of gender in its Chinese context is needed. The social construction and evolution of gender in China, reflected in the transformation of Chinese women's social status and lives in the twentieth century, have followed a distinct path due to the particularity of Chinese culture and history.

Throughout China's more than 5,000 year history, women's lives had never experienced such a dramatic change as they have in the twentieth century (Hershatter, 2007). They had been caught in the feudal and patriarchal history, which is the longest in all of human societies, but they also were thrown into the socialist revolution which advocated and practiced sweeping women's liberation as endorsed by the communist ideology. The ongoing economic development and commercialization during the past three decades or so furthered complicated their lives, positively and negatively (Welland, 2006). Overall, Chinese women's gender identities have been formed by three major social forces, which started at different times in Chinese history but have come together in contemporary Chinese society: historical feudalism, the socialist movement, and economic reform (Wang, 2002).

Historical Feudalism: Women's Subordination and Enlightenment (Prior to 1949)

Chinese women had a history of prolonged oppression and degradation in a thoroughly entrenched patriarchal social system in feudalist China. Discrimination

against women was institutionalized within all the structures of society: family, marriage, economy, education, political system, etc. (Chen, 2004; Hao, 2005; Yang, 1999).

Women's roles had been almost completely confined to domestic work, childbearing, household handicrafts, or prostitution. The proper relationship between women and men was supposed to be total submission on the part of the women. Women were believed to be inferior to men and not regarded as full people, seen as psychologically weak and intellectually undeveloped. Their access to education and participation in the public sphere were completely denied. Working outside of their homes, exposed to direct contact with men outside of the family, was often considered to be a deep shame for well-to-do women. Some scholars, however, argued that the reasons and reality of women's oppression in Chinese history were very complex (Hershatter, 2007). The Chinese paternalistic system suppressed Chinese women, but it also left some room for women to develop their own space. For instance, Taoism, a philosophy which formulated Chinese cultural and national personality along with Confucianism, emphasized Ying (feminine quality) and Yang (masculine quality) as harmonic co-existence.

This long tradition of feudalism was interrupted by the May Fourth Movement which was initiated by a group of Western-trained or influenced young Chinese intellectuals in the late 1910s. They tried to borrow Western democracy and science to lift China out of its weak state, economically and culturally. Feminism was first introduced into China during the movement and earnestly embraced by intellectuals who were dominantly male. Throughout the May Fourth movement (1917-1927) and in its aftermath, whenever Chinese intellectuals struggled to develop a vision of a united, strong, and free China, they criticized the oppression of women as one of the major obstacles to the realization of

that vision (Honig and Hershatter, 1988). The unequal status of women in the Confucian family became a symbol of everything in Chinese culture that kept China weak. Those male intellectuals, along with a scarce number of female companions, encouraged women to step out of traditional family confinement to struggle for the independence of their country along with men (Li, 2005; Yang, 2004). Scholars later on defined the women's movement in this period as "men-led liberation of women" which is intrinsically intertwined with nationalism and the liberation of human beings as a whole (Li, 2005). This legacy was well inherited by the Communist Party, which was an outgrowth of the May Fourth Movement, established by young intellectuals who adopted Marxist theory as the most relevant theory to resolve China's social problems. From its inception in 1921, the Party advocated the liberation of women. Nevertheless, this advocacy is a byproduct of Marxist theory which sees women's subordination as part of class exploitation and domination. It argues that once class domination is eliminated through proletarian revolution, women will achieve thorough liberation accordingly (Edwards, 2002; Li, 2002).

Socialist Movement: Liberating Women and Erasing Gender (1949-1976)

When the Communist Party came to power in 1949, the liberation of women and the elimination of gender inequality were written into law. The state constitution contains a particular article called Gender Equality, which states "(1) Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, political, economic, cultural, and social, including family life. (2) The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women alike, and trains and selects cadres from among women" (cited in Solotaroff, 2005, p. 145). Based

on this egalitarianism in gender relation, the state has over the years introduced a succession of progressive regulations and official policies aimed at promoting equal opportunities and protecting women's rights and interests in their working, family and social life. The Women's Federation was established by the national government to safeguard the interests of women (Cooke, 2003; Edwards, 2002; Hao, 2005). It was widely accepted that the establishment of socialism would automatically result in the liberation of women. In a way, women's liberation (legally equal with men) has been regarded as a token for the liberation of the whole Chinese nation. The socialist movement has profoundly influenced the lives of Chinese women and their sense of themselves and their gender identity (Honig and Hershatter, 1988).

One of the most important measures that the socialist state took to guarantee women's liberation and freedom was to encourage women to join the paid labor force. Women were brought into the workforce in unprecedented numbers after 1949. They were also expected to participate fully in the political and social transformation of society. Young women were encouraged to participate in higher education, especially in the science and engineering fields.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), class struggle took precedence over all other issues, including those of gender equality. The result was an upheaval that disrupted every aspect of political and social life. The complexity of gender relationship was reduced to the simple statement that politics should be in command in the home as well as in public. The history of the Cultural Revolution remains mired in controversy both in China and abroad, making it very difficult to evaluate its effect on the status of women (Honig and Hershatter, 1988). Some scholars argued that even during the destructive

Cultural Revolution, women's social status were further advanced as more and more female party officials and exemplary laborers were promoted as role models for all women (Hao, 2005). Honig and Hershatter (1988) contended that the lives of young Red Guard women in particular were profoundly affected by the Cultural Revolution which ironically conferred on them a mobility previously denied them.

Many feminist scholars identified the effort to liberate and organize women in the Mao era as "state feminism" (Dai, 1999; Hershatter, 2007; Li, 1999; Yang, 1999; Yang, 2004). This kind of "state feminism" always tied the liberation of women to the liberation of the nation, and women's interests were subjugated to the interests of the nation-state, which is essentially based on a masculine culture and patriarchal system. Gender, especially female gender, was culturally invisible. Women thus were deprived of their own voices and their needs to define their own interests. Even though Chinese women achieved an entry into the public domain of production, they did not gain entry into the production of public discourse, which was reserved for the state. Thus, although state discourse granted women a central position, its very language also undermined women's self-identity and gender consciousness. Many feminist scholars therefore also identified the Mao era as a period of "gender erasure."

Here again the liberation of women was bestowed by men who led the revolution, rather than gained through a conscious struggle based on women's awakened sense of self and awareness of their submissive status (Li, 1997). It never touched one of the main reasons for women's oppression – the paternalistic social system. The root for women's oppression in China therefore has never been eradicated. In addition, equality with men was interpreted as similarity to men. In order to be men's equal and claim liberation,

women had to recast themselves in a male model, not only psychologically, but also sometimes physically. For a couple of decades in the 1960s and 1970s, even women's clothing was similar to men's. Young women who forced themselves to be physically competitive with men were praised as "iron maids," and were put forth as models for other young women. By doing this, women ignored their own gender orientation and perpetuated a male norm (Lin, 2005; Yang, 2004). The ignorance of gender difference and women's unconscious emulation of the male role failed to eradicate the deep social cause for women's oppression, rooted in the traditional cultural value and family structure, which later on revived itself when state feminism lost its momentum in a market economy.

Economic Reform: Reconstruction and Complication of Gender (After 1976)

After Mao's death in 1976, Cultural Revolution policies were resoundingly rejected in every aspect of life. Although the state continues to monopolize political power, it has retreated in significant aspects and relaxed its control over personal life and society. Beginning in 1978, economic reforms also began to restructure the lives of women.

The withdrawal of the state and the expansion of the market have had both positive and negative influences on women. On the one hand, society has become aware of the obliteration of femininity and a difference in Chinese women's gender identity. Women's subjectivity experienced a revival after the period of "gender erasure" during the Mao era, emphasizing the essential differences between women and men in general. The sensitivity to gender difference started to reappear and femininity as well as sexuality reemerged in the public discourse. On the other hand, the state has decreased its support for women. The belief that women's equal rights with men have been achieved in China is well-

rooted in society even though the reality is often bitter for women. When the state determines that economic growth is the primary task, it gives less consideration to the social and political request for issues of justice and equality such as protecting women's employment status. Meanwhile, with the retreating of state intervention, the traditional cultural value in gender relations has resurfaced, in line with the fact that even during the Mao era, it was a strong undercurrent (Yang, 2004).

In addition, the increased recognition and encouragement of the differences between men and women may be accompanied by open discrimination against women. Women's rediscovered feminine identity may put them in disadvantageous situations that women do not seek for themselves (Wang, 2002). Researchers have also started to notice that "for many Chinese, particularly the younger generation, the acceptance of and adherence to the dominant male/subordinate female stereotype has become increasingly pronounced" (Kerr & Humpage, 1996, p. 51). A new slogan even appeared, encouraging women to return to home to be virtuous wives and good mothers and leave productive work to men (Yang, 2004). Many studies have found that the representation of women in the Chinese mass media has shown them as domesticated, gentle, powerless, and hardship-enduring, as supporting wives and loving mothers, consistent with generally confirmed personality traits and virtues of "traditional Chinese women" and dramatically different from women's images in the Mao era (Dai, 1995). The "traditional Chinese woman" has resurfaced as a highly desirable aspect of a woman's identity. In order to support others, women are expected to sacrifice their own needs. A survey among male college students and professionals reveals that their top criterion for selecting a partner is willingness in "putting husband's career aspiration before hers" (Wang, 2002, p. 32).

Furthermore, gender discrimination caused by commercialization is emerging. Commercial culture continually and consistently emphasizes and exaggerates women's sexuality and femininity, and exploits these attributes as commodities. As gender-neutral attire symbolized the past era of Mao's regime, skyscrapers and beautiful women's clothes signify the modernization of the new era. In addition, as Chinese women had been deprived of a feminine appearance for such a long time, their own craving for new, feminine looks has become extremely strong (Wang, 2002).

The ambivalent influences of the state and the market on women's life in contemporary China indicate a complex situation for Chinese women. It seems that the conclusion by Honig and Hershatter in their 1988 book is still valid today:

“The ambitious modernization program devised by the post-Mao leadership sought to complete by the year 2000 the kinds of transformation that had occurred in the West over a much longer period. Chinese women found themselves trying to absorb changes and social strains similar to those brought about in the West through the industrial revolution, late-nineteenth-century urbanization, several wars, and the feminist movement – all at once. ... Not surprisingly, Chinese women, themselves products of a complex tradition and a cataclysmic recent history, reacted with a mixture of fascination, incomprehension, and wariness that was entirely their own.” (p. 8)

WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

While extensive studies on women in management positions have been conducted in Western societies, little such knowledge has been generated in the Chinese context. In general, management and leadership studies on Chinese women have been scarce (Cooke, 2003; Wang, 2002). Meanwhile, the dominant public discourse is that gender equality has been achieved in China, which has made gender a rarely-used framework with which to

study social phenomena in China, thus contributing to the scarcity of studies on this subject. Some Western scholars, Western-trained Chinese scholars, and a group of scholars in China have probed this research area and generated insightful observations. Wang (2002), however, pointed out that the very limited number of studies on women managers in China are usually conducted with a quantitative approach, and often rely on translated Western instruments to test their adaptability to the Chinese context.

Chinese Women's Working Identity

As shown in the previous section, to a large extent, the state feminism during the Mao era equated women's emancipation with women's participation in socially productive work by bringing almost all women to the workforce and enforcing equal pay with men. In general, state intervention in promoting women's participation in employment has brought considerable benefits for Chinese women (Cooke, 2005; Leung, 2002). Women already make up 47% of the workforce in China, much higher than the world average (Cooke, 2005, p. 150). As Stockman (1994) observed, "crude measures of gender inequality in urban China reveal no greater inequality than in industrial capitalist societies, in fact possibly greater equality, and a marked reduction in inequality over the period of the building of the Communist regime, up to the mid-1980s" (p. 771).

Another social fact has made Chinese women front runners as well. As shown in the previous chapter, the conflict between career and family responsibility has been one of the major issues that women in the West have been facing. Chinese women, however, usually do not share all the anxieties and difficulties over the issues as experienced by their Western counterpart. Unlike women in the West, who are likely to drop out of the labor market during their child-bearing and child-rearing period, women in China seldom

break their career path due to child-bearing activities. Women of child-rearing age in China have the highest participation rate in employment in the world (Stockman, 1994). The reasons for the reduced burden lie in two aspects: The state has invested significantly in child-care facilities to relieve the burden of child rearing on working women; the Chinese tradition of an extended family structure with grandparents helping to raise grandchildren has relieved part of Chinese women's family responsibilities. Meanwhile, even though the one-child policy has restrained women's choice of having more children, it has reduced women's bind to child rearing to certain extent.

Within this kind of social reality, being a working woman has not only been a legitimate identity for contemporary Chinese urban women, it has been really the only legitimate identity. The Sino-Japanese Working Women's Family Life Survey in 1991 revealed that 89% of Chinese women believed that whether married or not, women should go out to work (Stockman, Bonney, & Sheng, 1995). A 1992 survey conducted by the North-South Institute in Canada showed that over 75% of Chinese women said that they would still work even if their families were rich. Almost 50% of women considered family and work as equally important (Kerr, Delahanty, & Humpage, 1996).

With regards to the motivation to work, the Sino-Japanese Working Women's Family Life Survey showed that 45.5% of Chinese women regarded making their family better off economically as the number one reason to work, which is very understandable considering the low salary level of ordinary urban workers. But a substantial 14.6% were primarily motivated to work in order to feel independent, and 9% for the reason of giving full play to their abilities (Stockman, Bonney, & Sheng, 1995). Another survey reported that 29.2% of women reported their main motive to work was that work enriched their

lives and made them feel useful (Wang, 2002). This indicates that for contemporary Chinese urban women, to work is not only to meet lower level survival needs, but also to meet the higher level needs of self actualization (Maslow, 1959).

Gender Inequality in the Workplace

Taken together, it seems that Chinese women enjoy freedom and rights that are unparalleled to women in many other societies. Many scholars, however, have argued that this observation is only valid at a superficial level in terms of women's achievement in the workplace in China (e. g. Cooke, 2003, 2005; Li, 2006; Solotaroff, 2005; Wang, 2002). They have pointed out that the half century of state intervention in women's employment has largely focused on protecting women's labor rights and increasing their share in employment quantitatively, whereas little provision exists which aims to ensure and improve the quality of women's employment prospects. Chinese women's career development and advancement have significantly lagged behind that of men. China shares the common problem of women's employment worldwide: Women are generally segregated into jobs that are highly routinized and often act in clerical and lower-level positions, involving less risk and lower visibility where they are likely to have little authority (Adler, 1993).

Party membership has been the key element to one's career advancement in China. Joining the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) often is the critical criterion for advancement to high-level management in governmental and social organizations and in state-owned enterprises (Solotaroff, 2005). Women have comprised only a quarter of party members nationwide (Cooke, 2003). Woman representatives in the National People's Council never exceed 23% (*China Statistics Book on Women*, cited in Wang,

2002, p. 2). According to Solortaroff (2005), it is the upper-level, high-powered cadre jobs that appear to be the most biased against women. While the state does train and select cadres from among women, as pledged in the Constitution, less than one-fourth of those receiving elite cadre appointments between 1947 and 1996 have been female (p. 145). Yet, when women manage to become well placed in this way, it is possible for them to be rewarded with token status in the politically incorporated elite groups.

Cooke (2003) identified three ways in which women secure their upward movement: 1) through the influence of a father or husband in positions of power; 2) through a tokenism policy as part of the government's compulsory or legal program, or; 3) through their talent and hard work. She concluded that the majority of women in governmental organizations ended up in their positions by coincidence or by default (for being a woman) rather than by their own deliberation. Over 60% of the women in high-ranking positions in governmental organizations were appointed by the higher level of authorities and only 4% of them won their position through leadership campaigns or recruitment assessment (Yang, 1999).¹⁰

Barriers to Women's Career Advancement

Chinese society shares many common problems with the West when it comes to the social barriers to women's career advancement, including leadership as a male-oriented role, gender stereotyping and discrimination, work/family conflict, fewer training

¹⁰ The researcher did not explain what the leadership campaigns or recruitment assessment refer to. Based on my understanding from my own fieldwork data, this probably refers to a new promotion mechanism which has gradually become common in some organizations and enterprises in China. Rather than being directly appointed to certain management positions, candidates compete with each other for positions by participating in a series of written exams, interviews, and sometimes public speeches.

opportunities, reluctance to recruit women, etc. Chinese society also has its particular problems caused by its distinct social and cultural context.

Social Perception toward Gender (In)Equality

Although the social reality as described above shows obvious gender inequality in China, the social perception that gender equality has been achieved prevails in China. The equality discourse has been so dominant that people often deny the unequal treatment of men and women in the workplace and in career advancement issues such as promotion (Yang, 1999). Benschop & Doorewaard (1998, cited in Wang, 2002, p. 35) defines this as “gender duality” – the espoused equality and the practical inequality, which is shared by many societies. In Kerr et al.’s (1996) survey, 79.21 % of men and 70.93% of women in their sample responded that men and women had equal opportunity in promotion. 71.29% of men and 80.20% of women believed that men and women were equally likely to be promoted to a managerial level.

In this gender-duality or gender-blind mentality, gender equality often means treating women and men “the same.” As long as women are treated the same as men (for example, by expecting women to devote the same amount of time to work as men, and by evaluating women purely on their productivity), justice is served. No consideration is taken of women’s different social responsibilities. Many scholars have argued that ignoring women’s special needs and social constraints, and demanding women to contribute to society in the same ways as men, is a version of gender discrimination (Li, 2005; Dai, 1999; Yang, 1999).

Social Attitude on Women's Responsibility in Work and Family

Although as described earlier, Chinese women's burden of family responsibilities is relatively reduced due to social and cultural forces, some scholars have argued that the relative relaxing of family bind does not translate into Chinese women's career advancement as assumed by some theories (Solotaroff, 2005; Wang, 2002). Wang (2002) pointed out that Chinese women's desire to fulfill equally legitimate aspects of identity – that of the independent career women, and the sacrificing traditional women – makes it difficult to resolve work/family conflicts. While women regard work as a very important element of their identity as modern Chinese women, they are also willing to sacrifice their own careers for their husbands'. It appears that to Chinese women, work and career are two different concepts. For most Chinese women, the option of not working does not exist. To work therefore becomes a taken-for-granted element of their lives. However, there does exist the choice of not exerting one's utmost energy and time toward work with the goal of turning work into a career. It seems that most Chinese women make the decision to choose their families over their careers, even though they may still make the effort to be good workers. This choice is congruent with the image of a good woman as defined by traditional Chinese culture, and is the proof of her femininity.

Even though studies show that generally Chinese husbands play a much more active role in housework than husbands in other societies (Stockman et al., 1995), women are still considered primarily responsible for housework and especially for providing care to elders and the sick and looking after children's education. It is also true that even though the physical labor of the household and childcare tasks might be shared by husbands, parents and external helpers, generally it is the wives who are responsible for daily

household management. A 1991 survey, conducted in the greater Beijing area on women's status in marriage and family, showed that although women receive substantial support for household and childcare duties from their husbands, they are mainly responsible for making decisions in the areas of children's education, major household item purchasing, support for parents, and inter-family relationship management (Tao et al., 2004). It is obvious that these duties demand consistent energy and thought over the years.

Some scholars thus argued that Chinese women are actually in more demand than their Western counterparts (Bian, 1994). They have no choice to select either work or family, and they have to stay in the workplace and raise the family at the same time. They therefore have double burdens. According to a survey, Chinese women experienced more stress and feel more tired compared to Japanese women who often drop out of labor force after getting married. Apparently, being unable to fully realize either identity causes a sense of guilt and anxiety (Stockman, Bonney, & Sheng, 1995).

Unwillingness to Recruit Women

Gender discrimination in job recruitment is not rare in China (Tan et al., 2006). According to Wang (2002), most employers often prefer men over women in recruitment in the free-market economy. Employers who are reluctant to recruit women often justify their practice by using the excuses based on the aforementioned social attitude on women's work/family responsibility. They argue that women do not have the same level of devotion to work and aspiration for career success as men do. They worry that when women workers get married, housework will distract their attention from work, so as to make them less productive than men. Also, married women workers will get pregnant,

which will cost their employers. Finally, women with children will have child care responsibilities, which is another distraction from their commitment to work.

Defending themselves from the perspective of the well-established social (and women's) attitude toward work and career, employers make it seem legitimate and justifiable not to recruit women or not to offer equal career development opportunities for men and women, and therefore harm the possibilities for advancement of those women who actually choose career over family (Wang, 2002; Tan et al., 2006). Apparently employers regard these family duties as a cost and burden to their organization, which they have neither the obligation, nor the willingness, to bear. Judging by the principles of the market economy – using the least cost to produce the most value, which is regarded as the modern and advanced mode of economy by post-Mao Chinese society – this kind of attitude about the relationship between productive and reproductive work is highly justifiable. This attitude, together with the perception that women tend to have lower career aspirations, make women seem less-than-ideal workers when compared with men.

Economic Reform on Women's Career Development

The introduction and expansion of a market economy since the late 1970s has further complicated the gender inequality problem (Cooke, 2005; Edwards, 2002). In particular, the changing nature of the labor market, a move from workplace-based welfare towards a social welfare system, and the far-reaching state sector reform have had a direct impact on women's working careers (Cooke, 2005).

The market-driven economy has brought some positive changes on women's career development in China. As shown in Wylie's (2004) study, the abolishment of the government-arranged employment system and the marketization of the economy have

brought new opportunities for Chinese women to develop their entrepreneurship and professional careers, especially in the private sector. Women interviewees said they enjoyed their new career experience, including having more freedom, being able to develop potential ability, having a more relaxed working environment, receiving talent-based job evaluations, and experiencing more room to climb career ladder, etc.

Many scholars, however, cautioned that the state's retreat from its paternalistic role as the liberator and protector of women and the growth of market forces have actually put women at a relatively disadvantaged position (Edwards, 2002). The reform has strengthened and reconstructed the sexual division of labor, keeping women concentrated in labor-intensive and low-paid work (Honig & Hershatter, 1988). Many women, especially urban working-class women, suffered from economic reform by losing their jobs when state-owned enterprises decided to cut their personnel pool. Women college graduates also often find it difficult to secure employment because many enterprises and government officers refuse to hire women (Yang, 1999). One surprising effect of economic reform is that the number and proportion of women serving in senior positions of political leadership has significantly reduced (Rosen, 1995). The unfavorable employment situation has given leading Chinese feminists strong reservation about the economic reforms (Li, 1999; Dai, 1999; Tan et al., 2006).

Moreover, as many scholars warned, a more overt patriarchal culture has reasserted itself with the return to a privatized economy and transnational capital in the post-Mao era. Korabik (1994) pointed out that opportunities unleashed by a free-choice market may also be undermined by the deeply-embedded Chinese social convention in which women are widely expected to play a supporting role to men. Leung (2002) also noticed that even

though economic reform promised a new era of development and opportunities, there are some signs in post-reform China of a subtle re-emergence of traditional gender values. Some studies investigating women's life chances in the household, at school, in the workplace, and in political participation, concluded that gender stereotyping and sex-based discrimination from patriarchal and paternalistic cultural norms, rooted in the traditional family structure, have sustained gender inequalities in socialist China (Bian, 1994; Cooke, 2005). For Solotaroff (2005), her own robust sociological data only indicated that "trenchant gender norms in China have been the most persistent forces of stratification in the work arena, regardless of variations in the nation's political and economic climate" (p. 153). She thus concluded that paternalism, and the sex-based discriminatory practices through which it manifests, is institutionalized in contemporary Chinese society.

Overall, as Leung (2002) argued, research on the analysis of the changing organizational contexts in which women pursue their careers remains very limited worldwide. The effect on Chinese women brought by the profound economic reform, in which the state lends some of its protection and support to the market, has to be carefully investigated.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE MEDIA

Overall, the dynamic of changes in the media system in China since the late 1970s, especially since the early 1990s, have been multifaceted and complex, and display characteristics unique to Chinese society and history. Yuezhi Zhao, a leading Chinese Canadian scholar investigating the political economy of the Chinese media reform, in her 1998 pioneering book *Media, Market, and Democracy*, defined the transformation

process as “a multi-faceted creature undergoing a process of rapid transformation, with different parts of the body straining in different, even opposite, directions” (p. 10). Ma (2000) defined the transformation process as “characterized by erratic reform, periodic repression, and a deep-seated contradiction between political control and market-driven changes” (p. 21). Similar to Ma, most scholars who study the transformation of the Chinese media rest their argument on the same conclusion: The most distinguishable characteristics of the Chinese media over the past two decades are the “ambiguities and contradictions” (Lee, 2000, p. 10) arising from the relationship between effusive economic reform and continued state control (e.g. Akhavan-Majid, 2004; Chan, 1993, 1998; He, 2000; Latham, 2000; Lee, 1994, 2000; Lynch, 1999; Ma, 2000; Pan, 2000; Zhao, 1998, 2008).

Media Development in Economic Reform

Prior to the initiation of economic reform in the late 1970s, all media organizations in China acted as a subunit in the government system, not only politically controlled but also fully subsidized by the party-state. The media functioned as mouthpieces of the party or as propaganda tools to promote the official ideology and consolidate the power of the state (Liu, 2003). Early studies in the field have all noted the extent to which the Chinese media was an integral part of the political system in China.

With the progress of economic reform, the state has found it imperative to shed part of its formidable financial obligations to the media system. It thus started to experiment a reform policy, urging all media to achieve financial self-reliance and gradually pushing them to the market by withdrawing or curtailing media subsidies (Lee, 2000).

Driven by governmental policy and market forces, most Chinese media organizations have over the years gradually been transformed from government institutions or state-owned enterprises to highly commercialized, consumer-oriented entities. Previously defined only as non-profit units for public goods, the media have been allowed and encouraged to operate as profitable businesses.

The development of the media since the late 1970s had a clear watershed in terms of the scale and speed of its development. From 1978 to 1992, the pace had been gradual and modest. The initial step of reducing state subsidies for media commercialization was quickly followed by the introduction of advertising in broadcasting in 1979. Since then, media units have come to rely more and more on advertising revenue to survive in the market. In the press sector, lifestyle news-oriented afternoon or evening tabloids started to flourish and special sections and weekend editions were added to party organs throughout the 1980s. Media resumed part of their social function of being a platform for public discussion, which reached to its climax before the 1989 Tiananmen square movement.

Media commercialization intensified after Deng Xiaoping's South Talk in 1992.¹¹ Deng called for greater political reform and faster economic development, boosting up the morale of the nation constrained in the aftershock of the 1989 incident. The revived economic reforming spirit soon sent the development of the media sector to its rocketing trajectory. The party-state not only fully acknowledged and endorsed the commercial and

¹¹ In spring 1992, three years after the Tiananmen movement, Deng Xiaoping traveled to Guangdong where he made speeches to encourage the country to overcome ideological barriers to market economy. He argued that the market is only a mechanism for economic development and that it does not determine whether a system is capitalist or socialist. Deng's South Talk signaled a major relaxation of central control. Officials at all levels and in all regions began actively pushing for reform, including media reform (Huang, 2005).

industrial nature of the media, but media administration in the government (usually the Department of Propaganda) also set specific commercialization targets and industrial growth goals for media organizations and often significantly participated in or directed the restructuring of the media sector (Zhao, 2008).

The dramatic transformation is most prominent in the press sector, beginning with reforming the party press structure. As pointed out by Zhao (2008), the uniqueness of the Chinese media transformation is that instead of privatizing the existing party-state media or allowing the new establishment of private media entities, it is party-state organs themselves that have experimented and led the process of commercialization. The commercial revolution in the Chinese press peaked with the publication of market-driven urban subsidiaries (mass-appeal urban tabloids) by central party organs. These urban tabloids often turned out to be a market hit and brought in huge profit for party organs to survive well in the market. This experiment eventually led to the establishment of media conglomerates in China, starting in late 1990s. Considering the historical fact that the Communist Party had long been fiercely hostile to media conglomeration in the Western countries by “denouncing it as a manifestation of how the oppressive capitalist class seeks to control public opinion,” Lee regarded the conglomeration as “one of the most intriguing and perplexing development” (p. 12). The first press group, the *Guangzhou Daily* Group, was established in 1996 and there were more than twenty state-owned media groups in China by 2004 (*China Journalism Yearbook*, 2005). Media conglomerates usually revolve around a group of core party press, radio and TV outlets, which act as an umbrella incorporating a multitude of auxiliary newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations that cater to various areas of specialized interest.

Economically, the transformation of the media sector has proven to be one of China's economic miracles. It has become a rising enterprise that pulls in tremendous advertising revenues. Reform and openness since the 1980s created a growing demand by foreign and domestic enterprises for effective advertising channels. By the end of 2005, the Chinese advertising industry, which fuels the growth of the Chinese media market, was comprised of as many as 125,394 businesses and employed as many as 940,415 people (Zhao, 2008). The *Guangzhou Daily* received 74% of its revenue from advertising in 2002, with the other 26% from circulation (Huang, 2005). Since 1998, China's media industry has been growing at the rate of 25% annually, a growth rate significantly higher than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. It has seen its tax turnover exceed that of the tobacco industry to become the fourth-largest industry in the country. Media scholars and stock market analysts have spoken of media as the "last" most lucrative industry to be exploited for financial gains, and the media themselves endlessly recycled this notion in self-promotion (Zhao, 2008).

The possibility of generating enormous revenues has had a deep impact on what should be produced in order to meet the demands of the market. The media's market logic of attracting mass audience – especially in the case of television, which is often regarded as the most powerful medium in China – has led to the rise of mass entertainment. While traditional programs such as news, sports and soap operas have remained popular, new programs have been emerging, including those featuring music videos, economic information, criminal case investigation, stock analysis and investment advice, quiz shows, talk shows and home shopping. Nearly all forms of TV programs that can be watched in the U.S. now have their counterparts on TV screens in China. A visit to

kiosks – easily found in Chinese cities – reveals a vast array of magazines and newspapers covering sports, fashion, crime, celebrities, military affairs, computers, and many other topics familiar to popular culture around the world (Lee, 2000; Liu, 2003; Zhao, 1998, 2008). In contrast to any Frankfurt School-inspired condemnation of popular culture, some scholars argued that pleasure seeking and pursuit of mundane emotions as fueled by media consumption in contemporary China can be seen as a liberation from the socialist didactic approach to culture in the past (Zhao, 2008). Researchers, however, have also worried that when the Chinese public and media turned away from a political agenda, commercialization has gradually become the dominant ideology (Lee, 2000; Ma, 2000).

Political Control in New Form

The development of the Chinese media, seen from the appearance as being driven by the market force, was to a large extent a result of party-state's reconfiguration of its regime of control in the media sector in Chinese society. It was the party-state that has progressively embraced and promoted market forces and transformed the economic foundation of the society in general. And it was the party-state that has restructured the media system and elevated it to meet the challenge and grasp the opportunities released by the market forces. During this process of reconfiguration and transformation, the party-state has reinforced its control of the media.

The three-decade economic reform has served to weaken the still strong mouthpiece role of the media. It, however, does not necessarily mean that the party's ideological standards are no long relevant. The party is constantly making and shifting new policies to direct and regulate the operation of the media. Although negative news and pro-

democratic movement coverage criticizing political structure have been occasionally produced and disseminated, any overreaching criticism challenging the governance of the government and the party will be punished in various ways. Formal censorship has been regularized and made more predictable through efforts of bureaucratic control (Polumbaum, 1994). Many scholars have argued that the Chinese media have achieved “commercialization without independence” due to the particular social environment in China (e.g. Chan, 1994; Ma, 2000). He (2000) gave state-controlled media the new name, “Party Publicity Inc.”(p. 143). This “Inc.” aims to promote images of the party and justify its legitimacy, a role different from the past when the media were seen as a brainwashing propaganda organ. He (2000), in his ethnographic study of a lucrative newspaper in Guangdong province, showed that the party-state achieves its goal by monopolizing the national economic resources on which the media depend, and by controlling the decision-making processes in the material and editorial senses.

Although some scholars hoped that economic reform would eventually bring freedom of expression and political democracy in China, many are pessimistic (e.g. Chan, 1994; Lee, 2000; Zhao, 1998, 2008). They have argued that a profit-driven media transformation under pressure from the party-state cannot lead to media freedom and democracy in China. This view sees the emerging commercialized sector as a result of the system’s accommodation to, and assimilation of, various challenges. These scholars argue that the media have become unable to be critical of both party/government and business interests. Furthermore, the party-state uses the commercial opportunity provided by the market to promote its agenda, and the state and market combine into a precarious and temporary alliance in the interest of mutual benefit.

Media Professionals Maneuvering the Double Bind

Akhavan-Majid (2004) brought another view to the above dialectical and paradoxical logic. He rejected the “state versus market” view and developed a new conceptual framework which argues that many of the changes in China’s media system during the post-Mao period have been achieved by spontaneous action on the part of non-state actors (e.g. citizens, journalists, entrepreneurs) through what may be called “creative renegotiation and expansion” of new policies initiated by the state. These non-state actors have been successful in their efforts to push the boundaries of reform beyond those initially envisioned by the state (p. 554). Akhavan-Majid’s argument is echoed by Pan (2000) who interpreted China’s media reform as a process in which certain routine practices are questioned, challenged, and modified and certain non-routine practices are designed, implemented, and justified. He coins the concept of “improvisation” as a key feature to define the transformation of China’s media reforms.

The studies of Akhavan-Majid and Pan are valuable efforts to describe the influence of media reform on media professionals’ daily operation and career path when much of the research work published so far only investigates the transformation of the Chinese media on a macro level. As Chen (2004) insightfully pointed out, many published studies seldom connect the media product with its producer, including individual media professionals and media organizations, and thus, except for broad social conditions, they do not explore changes in organization routines and media institutions. The connection between media content discourse and social conditions cannot be self-evident, nor taken for granted, without support or dissension from the individuals involved in the transformation process.

Media reform in China has brought profound changes to media organizations throughout the country. Zhao (2008) pointed out that, thanks to commercialization and expansion – and to incentive-based profit retaining and bonus schemes – media organizations offered not only employment opportunities, but also some of the best incomes. In addition, they offered glamour and social status at a time when other state enterprises were undergoing bankruptcies and laying off workers at a massive scale.

The state is gradually relaxing management control of the media and allowing more operation autonomy for media institutions. He (2000) noticed that the commercialization of the media has encouraged new practices and reshaped media institutional culture. Although all media organizations have an institutional connection with the government, increased economic strength has given many of them operational freedom, such as hiring freelancers, adjusting pay scales, adopting new technologies, and restructuring organizational practices. The once auxiliary managerial departments have been elevated to equal the editorial departments in status. Operating within the administrative structure of the state before economic reforms, media professionals were paid uniformly according to four professional ranks,¹² regardless of the size or status of their media units. Promotions usually depended on political commitment and seniority, so the party-state could easily exert its control over media by direct bureaucratic measures. At present, however, the media organization's ability to garner advertising revenues is a more important determinant of media professionals' incomes. Although the party-state has not given up its authority to appoint top leaders, it allows media organizations to hire and fire more junior staff, thus helping to establish a reward structure based on performance

¹² Four ranks are senior reporter/editors, head report/editor, report/editor and assistant report/editor. See Ma (2000).

rather than age or rank. The restructuring of reward systems has then created new career paths.

Overall, Chinese journalists have exploited the imperatives of market competition in many ways to dilute or dodge political control. There, however, is still too little media professionalism in an authoritarian state where media freedom can be easily crushed by state demand (Lee, 2000). In general, as Lee noted, scholars still have very primitive knowledge about how media reforms and the double bind of political control and economic force have affected different interest groups within media organizations.

THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN GUANGZHOU

While the media industry in Guangzhou is closely tied to the overall evolution of the Chinese media system, Guangzhou's unique geopolitical location and economic development have played a crucial role in facilitating the rapid development of its media sector. Guangzhou is the capital city of Guangdong province which is located at the southern end of mainland China and adjacent to Hong Kong. It is the third largest city in China, after Beijing and Shanghai. In 2006, the total registered population of the city was about 76 million (ranking third in China), with another "floating population" of 50 million.¹³ Putting these two together, Guangzhou has more than 120 million people living in a land of 7,434 square kilometers.

Due to its proximity to Hong Kong and its strong overseas connections, when the central government launched its reform agenda in the late 1970s, Guangdong province was chosen as the "laboratory" of economic reform policies and as a "magnet" to attract

¹³ Retrieved from *Guangzhou Daily* http://gzdaily.dayoo.com/html/2007-04/10/content_24450272.htm (on June 5, 2008). Here "floating population" refers to the immigrate labors from other regions in China, pouring into Guangzhou to looking job opportunities. They often are at the bottom of the social stratification, earning very low wages and living a difficult life.

foreign investment. This has resulted in rapid economic growth and prosperity in the region over the years. Between 1978 and 1998, Guangdong's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at an average annual rate of 14%. Since 1998, its GDP has accounted for more than 10% of the national total. And it ranks as the first in the country in household consumption (Bui, 2003).

Economic development in Guangdong and Guangzhou has created a market for the development of local media there. Located at the southern end of China and far away from the political centre in Beijing, the media in Guangzhou have been less affected by central political control as well. Newsstands in Guangzhou typically offer dozens of daily and weekly newspapers in addition to a plethora of magazines. Urban residents receive forty or more television channels in their homes. Internet service providers have sprung up throughout the city. As Latham (2000) observed, the realities of everyday life for many people in Guangzhou and the surrounding area are increasingly intertwined with forms of media representation.

During the whole process of media transition and transformation nationwide as discussed earlier, the media industry in Guangzhou, mainly the press sector, took the lead in and gained some autonomy to engage in institutional changes. Later on, these changes often became the model for media organizations in other regions to adopt. The newspaper industry in Guangzhou has given rise to the most competitive media market in China. The city has three top newspaper groups – the *Guangzhou Daily* Group (*guangzhou ribao baoye jituan*, 广州日报报业集团), the *South China Daily* Group (*nanfang ribao baoye jituan*, 南方日报报业集团) and the *Yangcheng Evening News* Group (*yangcheng wanbao baoye jituan*, 羊城晚报报业集团), competing against each other in the same market and

flooding the city with more than forty newspapers and magazines, the most in the nation with record-high circulations. The *Guangzhou Daily* Group was the first media conglomerate in the nation as mentioned earlier, established there in 1996. When it turned out to be a successful practice, two years later, six press conglomerates were launched nationwide including the *South China Daily* Group and *Yangcheng Evening News* Group (*China Journalism Yearbook*, 1999).

Congruent to the logic of media conglomerates as the previous section, the three large dailies themselves adhere closely to the official line, but their auxiliary newspapers and magazines target the market for maximum profit. The *South China Daily* serves as the Guangdong provincial Communist Party organ while the *Guangzhou Daily* serves the same function for the Guangzhou municipal Communist Party. The *Yangcheng Evening News*, a party-led evening newspaper, focuses on soft news and entertainment, despite its status as a party press organ. The three newspaper groups are good examples of the media sector becoming a new star among “lucrative” industries. Of the eight newspapers in China with advertising revenue over 100 million RMB in 1993,¹⁴ three were in Guangzhou; of the ten newspapers with revenue over 200 million RMB in 1997, four were in Guangzhou; of the four with revenue over 500 million RMB in 1999, three were in Guangzhou. The *Guangzhou Daily* ranked first among all domestic newspapers, amassing four billion RMB in fixed assets and annual advertising revenue of 1.5 billion RMB in 2002 (Sun, 2002). The *Guangzhou Daily* Group was the third largest taxpayer in Guangzhou City in 2003 (Huang, 2005).

¹⁴ RMB is the Chinese currency. Its exchange rate to the U.S. dollar is of 7:1 in May, 2008. The rate was much higher in the past.

The ongoing reform and rocketing development of the newspaper industry in Guangzhou has had deep impact on media content, not only from the perspective of cultural diversity but from the innovative and bold reporting approach. For example, the *South China Weekend Journal* (*nanfang zhoumo*, 南方周末), affiliated with the *South China Daily* Group, is commonly regarded as the finest investigative paper and one of the most critical newspapers in China. It has frequently criticized party cadres and has reported on a myriad of previously untouched social subjects as diverse and sensitive as legal reform, lottery fraud and village AIDS epidemics. Its daring reports on news of great social importance have been much appreciated by Chinese readers. Due to its bold reporting, it has been frequently criticized by the central government, and several executive editors have been removed for their handling of sensitive stories. The existence of the *South China Weekend Journal* is even regarded by some media observers and intellectuals as a miracle in China (Sun, 2002).

Guangzhou has also welcomed foreign television programming. Rupert Murdoch's News Corp and Time Warner have found their way to enter the TV market in Guangdong province, the only province granted rights for such foreign programming by the central government (Cheung, 1998). Compared to the vigorous newspaper industry, the domestic TV sector in Guangzhou is relatively quiet. Due to the dominance of Hong Kong TV programs and foreign-invested TV channels, the local TV industry has encountered challenges. The biggest TV station in Guangzhou is the Guangdong provincial TV station with more than 2,000 employees and annual advertising revenue 950 million RMB strong. A smaller municipal-level TV station is sharing the market. In order to energize the TV sector to compete with Hong Kong and foreign channels, the provincial government

launched another TV station, South China TV station, in the city in 2001, thus creating a more competitive environment to encourage local media reform in the TV sector. Due to the expansion of car consumption in Guangzhou, two radio stations, one on the provincial level and one on the municipal level, seem to survive well in the market by creating various channels targeting urban drivers. A more detailed description of the media industrial structure in Guangzhou is provided in chapter six.

Envisaging the media sector as a new pillar of industry, the government in Guangzhou holds an ambitious goal: build “cultural power” in China there (Huang, 2005). The strategy focuses on expanding the media industry to have seven media groups in Guangzhou City. A plan to open the province as a “Special Media Zone” to selected overseas media is under consideration as well. Just as Huang (2005) concluded, “many of the questions and answers related to the Chinese media trends are found in Guangzhou” (p. 8).

WOMEN IN THE MEDIA IN CHINA

The feminist and gender-sensitive media studies have charted a well-maintained territory in developed countries for more than two decades, while media studies scholars in China only started to pay attention to the subject of media and women/gender after the 1995 Beijing Conference brought in from Western countries fresh examples of feminist theories, feminist activism, and feminist media studies. Even after the Beijing Conference, research on media and women/gender in China is still sporadic, far from enough compared to the scale of women’s participation in media organizations in China. There is no one single page containing gender-based hard data throughout the 835-page brick-like publication, *China Journalism Yearbook*, an official trade book published by the Institute

of Journalism Research of the Chinese Academy of Social Science with funds from the central government to reflect the overall status of the Chinese media industry annually.

Women Journalists in the Seminal 1995 survey

As briefly mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, in anticipation of the Beijing Conference, UNESCO entrusted the All-China Journalists Association and the Institute of Journalism of the Chinese Academy of Social Science to jointly conduct a comprehensive survey of women journalists in thirty Chinese provinces in 1995. About 4,033 women journalists participated in the survey (1,834 men journalists were also surveyed for comparison purpose). This became the first research project on women and media in China and remains the only nationwide overarching research study ever conducted (ACJA & IJRCASS, 1995).

This survey provided a comprehensive set of data about women journalists in China in 1995. There were about 28,000 women journalists with formal professional ranks in general.¹⁵ The overall percentage of women in the media workforce was 33% (37.3% in the broadcast sector, 27.5% in the newspaper sector, and 29.2% in the wire service). About 60% of women journalists were under the age of 35, younger than the average age of their male colleagues, which was 40. Almost half of the women journalists had college education, but only about a quarter of them had a degree in journalism. Women journalists had an average of 11 years in their media organizations, less than men's experience, which was 13.5 years.

¹⁵ According to the survey, there were about 200,000 media professionals including reporters, editors, producers, anchors, hosts, etc. in China in 1995. About 87,000 of them have professional ranks, which refers to an official grade system tied with salary and promotion. The professional rank system is divided into three categories: junior-level, mid-level, and senior-level in the field of reporting, editing, and anchoring respectively.

The majority of women journalists (70%) were satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction was further divided into the following categories:

- Gain more social respect than other occupations (82% support)
- Help promote social progress (78% support)
- Sufficiently apply personal talents (64% support)
- Feel creative and achieve something (60% support)
- Get important assignment (56% support)
- Professional ideas can be adopted in content (52.5% support)

Most women journalists defined their motivation to enter the journalism profession as achieving personal success. Compared with men journalists, women journalists were not as confident about their professional skills. Only 40% of them said they had strong investigative reporting ability, only 30% of them were confident about their capacity to cover breaking news and doing live coverage, and only about 10% of them said they know how to use new technology in their work.

Most women journalists (80%) did not think family domestic work conflicted with their jobs. The majority of women journalists (85.4%) regarded their marriage as one of harmony and loving. Even though 89% of women journalists agreed that equal pay and identical benefits were firmly established, their average salary was much lower than that of their male colleagues, which basically was a result of fewer women achieving the high-salary grade of the higher professional ranks, partially determined by the length of years served in media. Women only comprised 17% of the journalists who were in senior-level professional rank. The numbers were 28% and 41% among journalists in junior-level and mid-level ranks.

In the reporting field, fewer women than men were assigned to report politics, economics and sports, which were usually regarded as more important subjects. In two related categories, women journalists expressed the most complaints, the lack of training opportunities (55.2% of them said they had no access to training), and the lack of opportunity to enter high-level decision-making positions. They said their male counterparts had more opportunities in these two areas.

Studies on Media and Women/Gender

The above seminal survey not only served as the first national investigation of Chinese women journalists, but also as an inspirational springboard to initiate the inquiry of women and media in Chinese academics.

Right before the 1995 Beijing Conference, *Journalism and Communication Studies*, the leading academic journal in the field of media studies and the official publication of the Institute of Journalism Research of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, published this survey report, entitled *Survey on the Current Status and Development of Chinese Women Journalists*, along with eight other papers on media and women. This was seen as a strong signal to welcome the Beijing Conference and to propel research on media and gender in China.

The same year, after the Beijing Conference, the journal published another six papers discussing media coverage of the conference from different perspectives. Since then, research on media and gender has started to occasionally appear in academic journals in the field of media studies in China. It, however, has not been established as a strong research tradition. Since the Beijing Conference, the number of research articles published under the general umbrella of media and gender in China has been sporadic

(e.g. Bu, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002; Bu & Liu, 1998; Gao, 2003; Huang, 2000, 2002; Lin, 2001; Liu, 2003, 2004; Luo, 2002; Ma, 2000; Wu & Xu, 2002; Zhang, 2005; Zheng, 2004; Yang, 2004). Bu Wei (2001), the leading scholar in China in this field and the author of the first Chinese book on media and gender, recalled that it was due to the Beijing Conference that her consciousness on issues related to media and gender was aroused. Bu, in her 2001 definitive book, *Media and Gender*, called for more research in this field. She also pointed out that studies on media and gender in China have to be located within China's particular social environment, which is very different from the situation in Western countries where the academic discourse in media and gender first originated.

The Beijing Conference brought many Western social concepts to China, such as Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and feminism activism. Some of these concepts were adopted by Chinese intellectuals and activists in their daily effort to fight for fair treatment and development opportunities for women in the media. In Spring 1996 the first media NGO – Women Media Watch Network – was set up in Beijing. It aimed to change women's invisibility and misrepresentation in media content and promote women's career advancement in media organizations.

Bu (2001) argued that feminism consciousness is not strong among women media professionals in China. She pointed out that without feminist consciousness, more women professionals in media organizations and in high decision-making levels do not necessarily result in better representation of women's image in media and will not offer a real challenge to male-dominant social values.

Women's Leadership in the Chinese Media

There has been no research work that specifically explored the subject of women and media leadership in China except some simple descriptive data from the 1995 survey. Among the surveyed women journalists, only 4.4% were in high-level decision-making positions (editorial board or executive board)¹⁶ and 9.6% in mid-level leadership. The numbers among surveyed men journalists were 10.5% and 24%. The overall percentage of women in high-level decision-making positions in all media organizations at the time was 8.5%. Women comprised 17.6% of mid-level leadership, mainly consisting of department heads (ACJA & IJRCASS, 1995).

The survey also suggested several reasons for the under-representation of women in power in media organizations: First, although legislation has ensured gender equality, a discriminatory attitude toward women is not uncommon in society (more than 80% of women journalists surveyed agreed with this statement); Second, there were relatively few women in most media organizations, which resulted in the difficulty of selecting appropriate women candidates to participate in decision-making groups (about 60% of survey participants agreed with this); Third, women themselves said they did not want to have access to those positions for four reasons: 1) more than 70% agreed that as long as they can find fulfillment in work it does not make sense to be a leader; 2) about 54% think that most women just want to do their professional work and not control others by being leaders; 3) about 45% worried that being a woman leader is difficult and it is not easy to gain respect and collaboration from men colleagues; 4) about 42% pointed out

¹⁶ In Chinese media organizations, the highest governing body usually is executive board or editorial board, often consisting of president, vice president, executive editor, deputy editor, general manager, and deputy manager. A more detailed description of leadership structure in media organizations is in chapter six.

that women have greater family responsibility than men and they do not want it being hampered by leadership work.

Men participants, however, held different opinions from women concerning the reasons for women's under-representation in leadership in the Chinese media, as shown by the survey. More men than women stated reasons such as women had lower leadership capabilities, women were indecisive, and women were not forceful in decision-making.

In Zhao's (2008) most recent study of the Chinese media, she mentioned that the top management of CCTV (Central Chinese TV Station), the primary national TV station in China, stunningly reflects the highly patriarchal nature of Chinese power relations. In 2003, CCTV's seven directors and deputy directors were all men, and there was not a single woman on its 23-member editorial board. Of the fifty-six individuals on its editorial, technical, and administrative management boards, only five were women, accounting for less than 10% of CCTV's entire top management echelon.

Women in Journalism Education

The rocketing development of the media industry and higher education sector in China, starting from the early 1990s, has brought an expansion of journalism education in Chinese universities during last decade. There were only sixteen journalism programs in China in 1982 with 1,685 students and 364 faculty members in total. Now there are more than 300 Chinese universities that have journalism programs, most of which were established within the last ten years, with a national enrollment of more than 100,000 students (Chen, 2006). Some scholars regard this expansive phenomenon as "irrational development." They point out that many universities have no qualified faculty and adequate facilities to support their newly-established journalism programs. Education

reform in the field of journalism has recently been the focus among leading journalism educators in China (Chen, 2006).

Compared to studies on media and gender, research on journalism students in China is even scarcer. The Department of Information in the Chinese central government collects simple statistical data about student enrollment in the journalism discipline annually, but there are no in-depth studies related to students in journalism education. Chen's (2006) study on 580 Chinese journalist students (freshman and senior) at nine universities in five major cities in China is the first one to systematically and comprehensively investigate students in journalism education in China.

Even though feminization of journalism education has become more and more prominent over the last decade, no study in China has paid close attention to this phenomenon and its implication for education in journalism as well as for media industry as a whole. According to Chen (2006), the female gender majority in journalism education is similar in both the U.S. and China. Two thirds of students entering Chinese journalism programs in 2003 were female. Although Chen's study was designed to study journalism students in general, the result also showed female and male students in Chinese journalism education differ in certain aspects. In her study, female students are more likely than their male peers to pick the journalism major as their first choice while considering undergraduate disciplines. More male students are forced to transfer their major to journalism after failing to be admitted to the disciplines of their primary choices. Other than the simple description of this difference, Chen's study did not generate data for in-depth gender analysis. Research on journalism students in China, particular female students due to the feminization of the field, is an emerging need.

CHAPTER V: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

Methodologies for conducting gender-based analysis in policies and programmes and for dealing with the differential effects of policies on women and men have been developed in many organizations and are available for application but are often not being applied or are not being applied consistently.

— Section H: Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
Platform for Action, par. 200
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Primary Research Questions on Women's Experiences

As stated at the beginning of this dissertation, this study defines its primary goal as discovering and understanding women's experiences in leadership in the media in China, as presented in the case of Guangzhou City. I first approach this goal by dividing my inquiry into two more concrete dimensions: women's experiences of 1) becoming leaders in the media in Guangzhou, and 2) being leaders in the media in Guangzhou.

Because this study starts from the seminal 1995 survey, it carries with it two additional inquiry domains induced by the survey: 1) further investigating the reasons for women's under-representation in leadership in the Chinese media, as partially suggested by the survey; and 2) examining whether and how the transformation of the Chinese media, having accelerated after the survey, has influenced women's leadership experiences and career development in the Chinese media.

Because women leaders very likely have witnessed the transformation of the Chinese media and often times are in the power center of this sea change, they may be expected to

provide key insights to interpret the process and consequence of the turbulent media transformation happened in China in the past decade or so. It also can be expected that women leaders have experienced various career advancement stages in media organizations before reaching their leadership positions, which very likely have equipped them with understandings of the state of women in the media as a whole. Investigating women leaders' experiences and perceptions should be able to generate knowledge in these two areas as well.

All these above concerns, put together, comprise the ultimate set of investigative goals for this study. My personal contemplation of these research goals, interacting with the scholarly insights as presented in the previous three chapters – the theoretical elaboration and the literature reviews in both Western and Chinese settings, have generated a constructive framework including analytical categories that break down the research goals described above into more specific research themes and questions. For instance, to interpret women's experiences of becoming media leaders, this study investigates their career advancement patterns. To understand women's experiences of being media leaders, this study explores how women leaders perceive the advantages, disadvantages, and values of their leadership roles and how they balance family and career. On the problematic of women's under-representation in media leadership, this study taps reasons including gender stereotypes, social networking, promotion mechanism, and work/family conflict. On the influence of the transformation of the Chinese media on women's leadership, this study probes women leaders' interpretation of the media transformation, and the challenges and opportunities provided by the Chinese media's development on women's career development in the media.

Based on this constructive framework, a set of six research questions has been generated to provide a more concrete investigative structure for this case study of women media leaders in Guangzhou City. These six research questions are grouped under four main inquiry domains as outlined at the beginning of this chapter:

- 1) Becoming women leaders in the media in Guangzhou;
- 2) Being women leaders in the media in Guangzhou;
- 3) Reasons for women's under-representation in media leadership in Guangzhou; and,
- 4) Changes brought by the transformation of the Guangzhou media.

It should be noted that although the six research questions are divided into four groups, they are often inevitably interconnected and intertwined with each other. As Hogue and Lord (2007) precisely explained, "gender affects leadership through a complex set of processes involving a dynamic, intricate network of relationships among multilevel components in a complex organizational system" (p. 370). Only through the totality of answers to these six questions, a relatively clear picture of women's participation in media leadership in China can be presented.

The four main inquiry domains and their respective research questions are framed as follows:

Becoming Women Leaders in the Media in Guangzhou

RQ1: What have been the career development patterns of Guangzhou women media leaders?

Being Women Leaders in the Media in Guangzhou

RQ2: What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the leadership traits of women media leaders, compared to their male counterparts?

RQ3: How do Guangzhou women media leaders balance career and family?

Reasons for Women's Under-representation in Media Leadership in Guangzhou

RQ4: What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the reasons contributing to the under-representation of women in media leadership in Guangzhou?

Changes Brought by the Transformation of the Media in Guangzhou

RQ5: How have Guangzhou women media leaders witnessed and participated in the transformation of the media in Guangzhou?

RQ6: What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the changes brought by the transformation of the Chinese media on women's career development in the media?

Supplemental Research Questions on Men's Perceptions

On the occasion of defending the prospectus for this dissertation project, one of the advisory committee members proposed that men's perceptions on women's leadership in the Chinese media probably also should be included because women and men collectively construct "gender." Although the primary goal of this study is to understand women media leaders' personal experiences, men's perceptions do play a significant role in the various social factors that constrain, foster and frame women's leadership experiences. The committee therefore adopted this suggestion.

The literature reviewed in the previous two chapters revealed that men may perceive the barriers to women's career advancement and the traits and values of women's leadership differently from women. The following four research questions have been generated to investigate men's perceptions on women's media leadership:

RQ7: What do Guangzhou men media professionals perceive as the reasons contributing to women's under-representation in media leadership in Guangzhou?

RQ8: What do Guangzhou men media professionals regard as the difference in terms of leadership traits between women and men media leaders in Guangzhou?

RQ9: How do Guangzhou men media professionals perceive as women's advantages and disadvantages of being journalists in Guangzhou?

RQ10: What do Guangzhou men media professionals understand as the changes brought by the transformation of the Chinese media on women's career development in the media?

RESEARCH METHODS

Justification of This Study as Qualitative Research

Given the paucity of research on the subject of women's leadership in the Chinese media, this study defines itself as an exploratory effort. Denzin and Lincoln (2003), in their well-received three-volume series on the subject of qualitative research, argued that qualitative research methods especially fit studies which are exploratory and aim to establish a basic understanding of the overall situation. They also stressed the defining characteristics of qualitative research: holistic, empirical, contextual, and interpretive. The subject of this dissertation seems to fit all of the four elements well. It is holistic by adopting the mode of feminism analysis that examines the comprehensive social structures to understand the reasons for women's subordination; it is empirical for it aims to base its findings on the actual experiences of women in the leadership situation; it is contextual because gender always interacts with other social identities in the larger social environment, and the transformation of the Chinese media provides a particular intriguing context for this subject; and it is interpretive because it calls for women's personal experiences to be interpreted by themselves and by the researcher.

While the predominant research paradigm in leadership research is largely quantitative, contemporary leadership researchers increasingly are employing qualitative research methods, especially in the field of gender and leadership. Neuman's (1994)

description of qualitative research seems to further justify this study as a qualitative piece of work concerning gender and leadership: “Qualitative research often questions power or inequality and views social relations more as the outcome of willful actions than as laws of human nature” (p. 123). The choice of using qualitative method is thus an appropriate and natural one for this study.

This study is also inspired by the rich body of methodological research related to women developed by feminism studies since the 1970s. Many researchers have argued that feminist scholarship is at the cutting edge of social science research in general, both theoretically and methodologically, with most of the works being qualitative (e.g. Eichler, 1997; Harding, 2004; Olesen, 2003). According to Eichler (1997), the association between a feminist perspective and the use of qualitative methods, during the quarter-century of feminist research, is historical, not logical. Qualitative research is particularly well suited for exploring new topics. When feminist research first burst upon the scholarly scene, very little was known about women, since men have been taken for granted to signify the universal norm. Hence, it makes particular sense to utilize qualitative methods which are relatively free of assumption about what is typical of a given situation (p. 11). Eichler’s argument certainly speaks well for this study’s qualitative approach.

Specific Research Method: In-depth Interview

Qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as oral histories, participant observation, interviews, visual texts, etc. Among all these options, I choose to use the in-depth interview as the specific method for collecting data for this research. The main goal of this study is to learn women leaders’

experiences and perceptions toward their leadership in media organizations and their surrounding social context. The in-depth interview, a conversation with a purpose between the researcher and informant, is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their world. It is appropriate for providing elaborate data about a social actor's opinions, thoughts, motivation, and attitudes on complicated questions such as "how" and "why" (Lindlof, 1994). The in-depth interview as an investigative method also provides the essential context for subsequent interpretation of data. It is very different from the way typical surveys are conducted. In surveys, questions may be asked without context and sometime cause confusion and misinterpretation because subjects may interpret survey language differently.

Although race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and age have received increasing attention in the interviewing literature in recent years, it is gender to which qualitative researchers have been most attentive in social science research (Luff, 1999, cited in Warren, 2002). The in-depth interview is regarded by many feminist scholars as particularly useful for feminist scholarship in that it pays close attention to women's ideas and voices. These have been ignored for centuries in social research and recorded history, which are mainly written by men. Women's voices are still absent from many contemporary conventional academic approaches (Eichler, 1997; Hon, 1992; Olesen, 2003).

The in-depth interview usually is carried out based on a questionnaire which often is semi-structured by using a list of open-ended questions without assuming a fixed sequence of answers. Unlike the random samples and standard questions in a structured interview or survey, all the questions in the open-ended form of semi-structured

interviews allow the interviewee to react in unrestricted ways and reflect the diversity and complexity of experiences and interpretations. In open-ended questionnaire, the interviewer should be prepared to move away from the prescribed questions to follow up emerging themes.

The questionnaires for this study, both for women leaders and their men colleagues in the media in Guangzhou, have been constructed based on the research questions raised at the beginning of this chapter. Since men's perceptions contribute to the understanding of women's leadership but is not the major focus of this study, interviewing men subjects is defined as supplemental data collection. The supplemental interview is based on a simpler, semi-structured questionnaire, which requires less time to complete and has less complexity. (See Appendix A for questionnaire on women subjects and Appendix B for questionnaire on men subjects.)

Participant Selection and Recruitment

McDowell (1998, cited in Odendahl & Shaw, 2002), who carried out a study on London elite, insightfully observed the fieldwork process:

[A]lthough we often, in writing up our results talk blandly of our samples or our case studies, letting the reader assume that the particular industry, location, site, and respondents were the optimal or ideal for investigating the particular issue in which we were interested, we all know that the "reality"... is a lot messier. A great deal depends on luck and chance, connections and networks, and the particular circumstance at the time. (p. 307)

This is certainly the case in my own fieldwork process. The main subjects for my interviews, women leaders in media organizations in Guangzhou City (their men colleagues are supplemental subjects for this study), can be regarded as members of an elite group in Chinese society. Scholars who have done research on elites have found that

gaining access to interviewing elite subjects is much more difficult than investigating people with less social influence, which is one of the reasons that there are not as many studies on elites as on disadvantaged social groups (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002). Luff (1999, cited in Warren, 2002) pointed out that most feminist research tends to study “powerless” women and emphasizes power-sharing and the vulnerability of the subjects during the research. These inherent assumptions, however, should not be transferred to feminist research on “powerful” women. Odendahl and Shaw (2002) complained that books or articles dedicated to interview techniques seldom address the elite as a particular subject. They argued that there is a difference in interviewing elites and ordinary people. Based on their extensive research on philanthropic elite, Odendahl and Shaw concluded that gaining access to elite subjects “calls for the incorporation of strategies that include a mixture of ingenuity, social skills, contacts, careful negotiation, and circumstance” (p. 305) and “requires extensive preparation, homework, and creativity on the part of the researcher, as well as the right credential and contacts” (p. 307).

My process of obtaining access to potential interviewees reflected this extra “elite” difficulty. Even though I was lucky enough to have an effective “insider/contact” to build the bridge between me and my potential interviewees, the process was not as smooth as I had hoped. There is no public statistical data on media leaders in China, let alone data categorized by gender, so personal connection became the key element for locating potential interviewees for this study. My contact helped to produce a list of women media leaders in Guangzhou.

Knowing that my potential interviewees were there, I took a trip to Guangzhou in July 2006. It turned out that the recruitment of interview subjects became an ongoing

negotiation between me and my potential interviewees. Even with the personal introduction from my contact, some subjects rejected me immediately and repeatedly, some agreed to be interviewed only after several approaches, and some accepted with obvious reluctance. Nevertheless, a good number of them were collaborative.

I later reflected on the barriers to the recruitment of women media leaders for this study. I decided there were four possible reasons contributing to this difficulty: First, being a leader in the media is a very demanding job. Women leaders often are very busy in daily media operation and have other social activities and commitments. It is hard for them to carve out two to three hours for a strange researcher; second, although the situation is getting better, people working in the Chinese media often are quite sensitive toward individuals from the West, especially from the United States, who seek to do research concerning the Chinese media. Due to the close tie of media to the government and the constant criticism about media control in China shown in Western discourse, media officials have to be very careful when handling questions coming from Western countries; third, subtle power dynamics may have come into play. Women leaders, belonging to the socially elite group, may think highly of their own status, thus not taking seriously a request from a doctoral student; fourth, the topic of women media leaders may have seemed too sensitive or risky to allow all of the women to take part. I later learned that a couple of years ago there was a big scandal concerning an extremely influential male media leader and a few senior-level women media managers, which shocked the media sector in Guangzhou to a large extent. Due to this incident, some women leaders may not want to talk about “women” issues openly.

Other than gaining help from my contact, I also resorted to other networking resources, hoping to have access to more subjects. For instance, while in Guangzhou for my interview fieldwork, I happened to learn about a conference on media reform sponsored by a local television station, at which the president of the station would be present. Although I was not that interested in the conference theme, I realized that I might be able to ask the station president to introduce me to one of his vice-presidents who is a woman. He seemed to be happy to help me when I approached him. He asked his assistant to arrange my interview with that vice-president. I did the interview which turned out to be very informative. Through these kinds of persistent and “creative” efforts, I located twenty-two women leaders who eventually agreed to be interviewed.

The process of recruiting the supplemental men interviewees was much easier. Based on the data and preliminary findings I had obtained from my interviews with women leaders, I made another trip to Guangzhou in January 2007 to conduct interviews with men subjects. Once again, my contact played a key role in connecting me to my potential male interviewees. Nine men subjects were selected based on my criterion (mid-level management or higher, having experience working with women leaders especially those included in my previous interview database). All of the nine men subjects accepted my interview upon my initial contact, in which I explained my research topic and told them that I have already done the interviews with women leaders and needed their opinions to add another dimension to the research project.

Data Collection: the Interview Process

Although the process of recruiting women leaders as my interviewees was not as easy as I had hoped, the actual interview process, of both women and men subjects, went

relatively well. The whole interviewing process, however, is quite complex, full of ups and downs, pushed and pulled by unexpected accidents (e.g. my digital recorder went dead in one interview) and unanticipated harvests (e.g. one interview subject leading to another important subject).

People in American society have become accustomed to survey or qualitative interviewing for governmental, commercial, and academic purposes over the years. This, however, is still a relatively new thing in China. Some of my respondents told me they were quite surprised to be asked to be interviewed for research purpose. They worried about whether they would know the “correct” answer or whether they had fulfilled the purpose of my inquiry. Many of the women interviewees also expressed their surprise at my choosing a dissertation topic related to women and their leadership status in the media. They said they did not know that “women” can be a research topic for a serious academic project.

Most of the interviews were conducted at the interviewees’ offices, which was their choice for convenience. The offices often were crowded by all kinds of papers as we can imagine an editor’s desk to be. Some of the interviews were constantly interrupted by phone calls and online communication. A couple of my interviewees invited me for a meal during which we conducted the interview. One of my interviewees even brought her husband with her during our interview dinner in a popular restaurant. The interviewee herself was very open, sincere, and informative, but the presence of her husband and the disturbing background noise made the interview quite awkward and difficult.

In order to properly protect human subjects as required by the Institutional Review Board at the university, interviewees were notified of their rights by presenting them a

consent form before the interview (see Appendices C and D). Consent forms, common in research involving human subjects in the United States, were also a surprising new thing to my interviewees. After my explanation that the consent form is to protect their rights and ensure their identity would be kept confidential, all of them agreed to sign the form. The consent form has an extra line saying that if the interviewee is willing to release her identity such as her name and position, she should sign her name there. Almost all interviewees chose to keep their identity confidential except for one woman who cordially asked me whether it would help my research if she signed to agree to release her identity. I said probably yes and she signed happily, an act which was very moving to me. One subject added one line at the bottom of the consent form specifying that if I publish my dissertation as a book and cite her words, I should discuss this with her in advance.

The average length of the interviews with women subjects was one hour and forty minutes, with the longest one lasting about three and half hours and the shortest one about one hour. The average interview with men was about forty minutes. Interviews were conducted in Mandarin and digitally recorded. The question of whether the use of a recorder in the interview influences respondents' reactions to interview questions has been controversial (Warren, 2002). In my case, the recorder did make some of my subjects feel quite nervous at the beginning and a couple of them expressed their discomfort with it. My assurance that their personal identity would be kept confidential relieved their anxiety.

I found the interviewees differed from one another significantly in terms of the way they reacted to my interview questions. Seven of them contemplated hard and tried their best to give me the answers they thought were complete and comprehensive. Three of

them acted distantly and gave concise and quick answers and seemed a little bit impatient. Eleven of them were open and candid, while four were cautious and careful. Three of them showed strong interest in my topic. Two invited me for a nice meal and leisure chat afterwards.

McCracken (1989) argued that the first principle for choosing interview respondents is that “less is more” (p. 17). As he pointed out, longer and more careful work with a smaller number of people by a researcher usually yields richer data rather than superficial work with many people. Deep probing allows the investigator to discover the analytical categories and assumptions according to which respondents construe their world. McCracken’s rationale and strategy turned out to be well-grounded during my process of interviewing. Often times, in contrast to those who seemed hurried, the interviewees who spent considerable time talking to me provided me with more substantial and newer information that helped to take my understanding of the research questions to a new level. I also found that it was wise to allow the interviewee to stray from the questions the interviewer raised because it often turned out that this kind of detouring narration provided important context and unexpected but very useful clues for later data analysis.

Due to the ongoing fresh input of women leaders’ perceptions and the revelation of new issues in their experiences, the interview questionnaire came under constant fine-tuning during the process. The order of questions was adjusted, fruitless questions deleted and new questions added. When the frequency of my interviews increased, I became capable of internalizing all interview questions. Most of the time, I listened to my subjects talking and naturally throw in questions following their narratives to subtly lead them to cover all intended areas.

Reflecting on the diverse interview experience, I very much agree with what Warren (2002) vividly described at the end of her article exploring qualitative interviewing:

In the social interaction of the qualitative interview, the perspectives of the interviewer and the respondent dance together for the moment but also extend outward in social space and backward and forward in time. Both are gendered, aged, and otherwise embodied, one person (perhaps) thinking about her topic, questions, rapport, consent forms, and the tape recorder, not to mention feeling nervous. The other (perhaps) preoccupied with her relationships outside the interview, pressing tasks left undone, seeking information, getting help, or being loyal. These are the working selves and others at the center of qualitative interviewing. And that is just the beginning. (p. 99)

Some feminist scholars mentioned the effect of the interviewing process had on themselves as researchers (Hartsock, 1998). I was emotionally stirred by my interviews as well. I remember many times when I walked out of my women interviewee' office where I conducted the interview, I felt empowered after listening to a life story full of struggling, persistence, tolerance and creativity. Sometimes interviewees' insightful reading of the situation significantly improved my understanding of the dissertation topic. Some of their personal stories and the ways they handled difficulties in life are so encouraging and inspiring that I wrote them down and put them into my personal folder. I did not know that I would come to like the interview process that much when I first started. I found myself enjoying listening to their choices, their struggles, their values, and their doubts. I have to say that listening to real life stories is so much richer and fresher than dry talks heavily presented in many academic presentations and books.

Data Analysis Process

A clear-cut formula for analyzing the results of a qualitative project bearing this exploratory nature usually is not available. In general, a qualitative researcher analyzes

data by organizing them into categories on the basis of themes, concepts, or similar features.

All interview content produced in this study was first transcribed. I then used the research questions as core analytical categories and developed subcategories based on the common themes that emerged in the interview data. For example, one of the research questions (core categories) is about the career development patterns of women leaders in media organizations. I summarized various responses from interviewees, and identified common themes which constituted two subcategories: 1) party-transferring “helicopter-landing” promotion, and 2) self-development-on-job “mountain-climbing” advancement. These two subcategories then were used to organize interview data responding to the subcategories.

The process of data analysis corresponded to the interview design to a large extent. The structure and content of the interview questionnaire provided a foundation for the analytical categories needed in data analysis. The literature review and the researcher’s personal reflection generated the research questions and subcategories included in each research question. These research questions and subcategories were reflected in the interview questionnaire. Data collected during the interview process either provided answers to fill those subcategories or helped to generate new subcategories, which taken together answered each research question.

The researching findings, a result of the data analysis, are presented in the next three chapters. Since this research is about women’s experiences and their perceptions are the major sources for research findings, I very much was inclined to let my interviewees “voice” their own stories to reflect the overall scenario of women’s leadership in the

Chinese media. I heavily used direct quotations or paraphrases from my interviewees' responses to answer research questions. I believe this approach enriches the research findings in a vivid way.

CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS I – CONTEXT AND STORIES

The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue.

— Platform for Action, par. 41
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

This chapter starts the reporting of the research findings on women's participation in media leadership in the city of Guangzhou, to be presented in three chapters in total. To provide a context for research findings, this chapter first takes a detailed look at the media structure in Guangzhou. It then explains the institutional leadership structure in Guangzhou media organizations. The third section examines the overall distribution of women in leadership positions in the Guangzhou media. The fourth section presents the demographic information of the twenty-two Guangzhou women media leaders interviewed. This chapter concludes with a brief collection of these women leaders' career development stories.

TWO-TIER MEDIA STRUCTURE IN GUANGZHOU

The current media industrial structure in Guangzhou, excluding Internet media companies and Hong Kong or foreign-invested TV channels, can be divided into three main sectors: newspaper groups, TV stations, and radio stations.

There are three overarching newspaper groups in Guangzhou – *Guangzhou Daily* Group, *South China Daily* Group, and *Yangcheng Evening News* Group. Each of the three

newspaper groups is named after the primary large daily it publishes, which serves as the “mother” or core newspaper for the group. Each group also publishes a series of satellite or “offspring” newspapers and magazines, which usually include one tabloid-size mass-appeal general interest daily newspaper (often it is called “metropolitan (metro) paper”), several other daily or weekly newspapers in specialized subject areas such as business, sports, education, youth, fashion, entertainment, etc., and a range of magazines. Among all the press products published by each newspaper group, the metro paper usually is the most popular with the largest circulation. For instance, in the case of *South China Daily* Group, the large daily *South China Daily* itself has a circulation of 0.8 million, but its “offspring” metro paper *South China Metropolitan News*’ (*nanfang dushi bao*, 南方都市报) circulation is of 1.69 million, two times more, making it the most popular daily in the city. In some cases, a business daily, sports daily, or entertainment daily can have very large circulations as well. For example, *21st Century Business Herald* (*ershiji shiji jingji baodao*, 二十一世纪经济报道), belonging to the *South China Daily* Group and regarded as China’s “*Wall Street Journal*,” has a circulation of 0.64 million. Another newspaper, *South China Weekend Journal* (*nanfang zhoumo*, 南方周末), a renowned national newspaper, circulates at 1.30 million.

As mentioned earlier, the core large daily of each newspaper group is a party organ, which often reports news in a more “serious” or “formal” style, compared to the offspring newspapers and magazines. But this does not necessarily mean the core newspapers are not popular. The *Guangzhou Daily* has an impressive circulation of 1.8 million, giving it the top circulation in the city. Its affiliated metro paper *Information Times* (*xinxi shibao*, 信息时报) has a slightly lower circulation at 1.57 million. It should be noted, however, that

part of the *Guangzhou Daily*'s circulation comes from official subscription by governmental units, which is the same for the *South China Daily*. Almost all other newspapers and magazines, including the core daily *Yangcheng Evening News*, depend exclusively on market sale.

There are three TV stations in Guangzhou, two provincial and one municipal. Each of them operates several channels focusing on a different subjects, such as a news channel, entertainment channel, economics channel, sports channel, English channel, etc. There are two radio stations in Guangzhou, one provincial and one municipal, with each of them owning several radio channels specializing in particular content in a structure similar to that used in the TV sector.

To analyze the leadership structure in media organizations in Guangzhou in a clear and logical way, the above media landscape needs to be divided into two tiers. The first tier consists of the three large daily newspaper groups (*Guangzhou Daily* Group, *South China Daily* Group, and *Yangcheng Evening News* Group), three general TV stations (Guangdong Provincial TV Station, South China TV Station, and Guangzhou Municipal TV Station), and two general radio stations (Guangdong Provincial Radio Station and Guangzhou Municipal Radio Station). The second tier consists of the sub-units owned by the media organizations in the first tier. In the case of newspaper group, it includes all the offspring newspapers and magazines these three newspaper groups own. In the case of the TV and radio sector, it includes the various channels that the five broadcast stations operate. Tables 1, 2 and 3 on the next two pages present all the media organizations and units in the sectors of newspaper groups, TV stations, and radio stations in Guangzhou.

Table 1 Newspaper Groups in Guangzhou

| Newspaper Groups & Sub Media Units | Chinese Title | Publish Frequency | Circulation (thousand) | Tier |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Guangzhou Daily Group | 广州日报报业集团 | | | First Tier |
| Guangzhou Daily | 广州日报 | Daily | 1,800 | |
| Information Times (metro paper) | 信息时报 | Daily | 1,570 | |
| Soccer Daily | 足球报 | Daily | 900 | |
| Yangcheng Subway News | 羊城地铁报 | Daily | 200 | |
| Stage & Screen | 舞台与荧幕 | Weekly | 800 | |
| South Teens News | 岭南少年报 | Semiweekly | 300 | |
| Guangzhou Reader's Digest Journal | 广州文摘报 | Semiweekly | 500 | Second Tier |
| Senior News | 老人报 | Three Times/Week | 220 | |
| Gourmet Journal | 美食导报 | Weekly | 180 | |
| Guangzhou Morning Post (English) | 广州英文早报 | Weekly | 20 | |
| Win Weekly | 赢周刊 | Weekly | 390 | |
| NFC Magazine | 南风窗 | Semimonthly | 200 | |
| New Modern Pictorial | 新现代画报 | Monthly | 320 | |
| World View Magazine | 看世界 | Semimonthly | 100 | |
| South China Daily Group | 南方日报报业集团 | | | First Tier |
| South China Daily | 南方日报 | Daily | 800 | |
| South China Metropolitan News (metro paper) | 南方都市报 | Daily | 1,690 | |
| 21 st Century Business Herald | 21 世纪经济报道 | Daily | 640 | |
| South China Weekend Journal | 南方周末 | Weekly | 1,300 | |
| South China Rural News | 南方农村报 | Daily | 560 | Second Tier |
| South China Magazine | 南方杂志 | Semimonthly | | |
| City Pictorial | 新现代画报 | Monthly | | |
| South China People Weekly | 南方人物周刊 | Weekly | n/a | |
| MANgazine | 名牌 | Monthly | | |
| South China Metro Weekly | 南都周刊 | Weekly | 480 | |
| Fashion Weekly | 风尚周刊 | Weekly | 38.5 | |
| Yangcheng Evening News Group | 羊城晚报报业集团 | | | First Tier |
| Yangcheng Evening News | 羊城晚报 | Daily | 1,200 | |
| New Express Post (metro paper) | 新快报 | Daily | | |
| Private Economics News | 民营经济报 | Five time/week | | |
| Color Life Weekly | 可乐生活 | Weekly | | Second Tier |
| Guangzhou Construction News | 广东建设报 | Weekly | n/a | |
| Golf Weekly | 高尔夫周刊 | Weekly | | |
| Soccer Lottery News | 足彩大富翁 | Weekly | | |
| U Life Magazine | 优悦生活 | Monthly | | |

Table 2 TV Stations and Channels in Guangzhou

| Station and Channel | Chinese Title | Number of Employees | Ad. Revenue (millions) * | Tier |
|--|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Guangdong Provincial TV Station | 广东省电视台 | 2,253 | 950/137 | First Tier |
| Guangdong Satellite TV Channel | 卫星频道 | | | |
| Pearl General Channel | 珠江频道 | | | |
| News Channel | 新闻频道 | | | Second Tier |
| Public Channel | 公共频道 | | | |
| Sports Channel | 体育频道 | | | |
| South China TV Station | 南方电视台 | 400 | n/a | First Tier |
| South China Satellite Channel | 卫星频道 | | | |
| Entertainment Channel | 综艺频道 | | | |
| Economics Channel | 经济频道 | | | Second Tier |
| Movie and Drama Channel | 影视频道 | | | |
| Children Channel | 少儿频道 | | | |
| Guangzhou Municipal TV Station | 广州市电视台 | 1,140 | 600/86.7 | First Tier |
| General Channel | 综合频道 | | | |
| News Channel | 新闻频道 | | | |
| Economics Channel | 经济频道 | | | |
| Sports Channel | 竞赛频道 | | | Second Tier |
| Movie and Drama Channel | 影视频道 | | | |
| English Channel | 英语频道 | | | |
| Children Channel | 少儿频道 | | | |

Table 3 Radio Stations and Channels in Guangzhou

| Station and Channel | Chinese Title | Number of Employees | Ad. Revenue (millions) * | Tier |
|---|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Guangdong Provincial Radio Station | 广东省电台 | n/a | 284/41 | First Tier |
| Guangdong Satellite Radio | 卫星广播频 | | | |
| Pearl Economics Channel | 珠江经济台 | | | |
| Sound of Music Channel | 音乐之声 | | | |
| Sound of the City Channel | 城市之声 | | | Second Tier |
| Traffic Channel | 羊城交通台 | | | |
| South China Life Channel | 南方生活 | | | |
| Stock Market Channel | 股市广播 | | | |
| Guangzhou Municipal Radio Station | 广州市电台 | 222 | 66.4/9.59 | First Tier |
| News Channel | 新闻资讯 | | | |
| Music Channel | 金曲音乐 | | | Second Tier |
| Traffic Channel | 广州交通 | | | |
| Youth and Teen Channel | 青少年广播 | | | |

* The advertising revenue is as of 2007. The first number is in Chinese currency RMB and the second in U.S. dollar.

To provide clues to the scale and status of the media landscape in Guangzhou, some of the detail such as circulation, workforce number, and advertising revenue are displayed in the tables as well. Since the information about circulation, advertising profit, and personnel often is often regarded by these media organizations as confidential, some of them do not want to release relevant data. Even the authoritative trade book *China Journalism Yearbook* does not include this kind of information. Here shown is the data that I obtained through the help of my contact.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IN MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS IN GUANGZHOU

The leadership composition in media organizations in Guangzhou accordingly reflects a two-tier system. Leaders in the first-tier media organizations (at the level of newspaper groups and broadcast stations) are first-tier leaders, while leaders in second-tier media units (at the level of offspring newspapers and magazines and broadcast channels) are second-tier leaders. The former have more power and higher administrative ranks than the latter.

Who are defined by this study as the media leaders in both the first and second tiers? The leadership structure and composition of the first-tier media organizations are more complicated than media units in the second tier. The three newspaper groups usually have the most complicated leadership structure among the three media sectors. In each newspaper group, the highest governing body is the executive board (*sheweihui*, 社委会), which often includes two divisions, the editorial board (*bianweihui*, 编委会) and the management board (*jingweihui*, 经委会). The highest-ranking leader in a newspaper group is a president who is the head of the executive board (*shezhang*, 社长). The editorial board is mainly in charge of the editorial matters of the core large daily. It usually consists of an

executive editor (who often is regarded as the second highest-ranking leader),¹⁷ a few deputy editors (often three to four), and several board members. The management board usually includes a general manager, a few deputy managers (often two to three), and several board members. Besides members in the editorial and management boards, there usually are a few executive board members who are not on these two boards but are in charge of other issues in the newspaper group. In addition to that, some members of the executive board simultaneously form a party committee, which is the symbolic governing body of the executive board. It signifies that the Communist party system is in charge of the media system. The president therefore always at the same time assumes the title of general secretary of party committee. Due to this complicated structure, the number of individuals in the governing body of a newspaper group can be as many as twenty, as it is the case of the *South China Daily* Group. Both *Guangzhou Daily* Group and *Yangcheng Evening News* Group have fifteen members in the governing body.

The leadership composition of the subunits in each newspaper group, including metro papers, specialized newspapers, and magazines (defined by this study as second-tier media units), varies. For a large subunit with a big amount of circulation and revenue, such as a metro paper, the leadership team is not small. It often includes a president, an executive editor, one or two vice presidents, and a few deputy editors, and sometimes a couple of editorial board members as well. For instance, in the case of the *South China Metropolitan News*, the leadership echelon includes ten individuals. For a small-size subunit, the leadership structure can be fairly simple with an executive editor and one or two deputy editors. For example, the *Guangzhou Morning Post*, an English weekly, belonging to the *Guangzhou Daily* Group, only has two individuals as leaders, one

¹⁷ When the executive editor position is empty, there usually is an executive deputy editor.

executive editor and one deputy editor. In some cases, when the subunit is a big unit like a metro paper or a big business daily, the president of the subunit may join the group-level executive board and become its direct member.

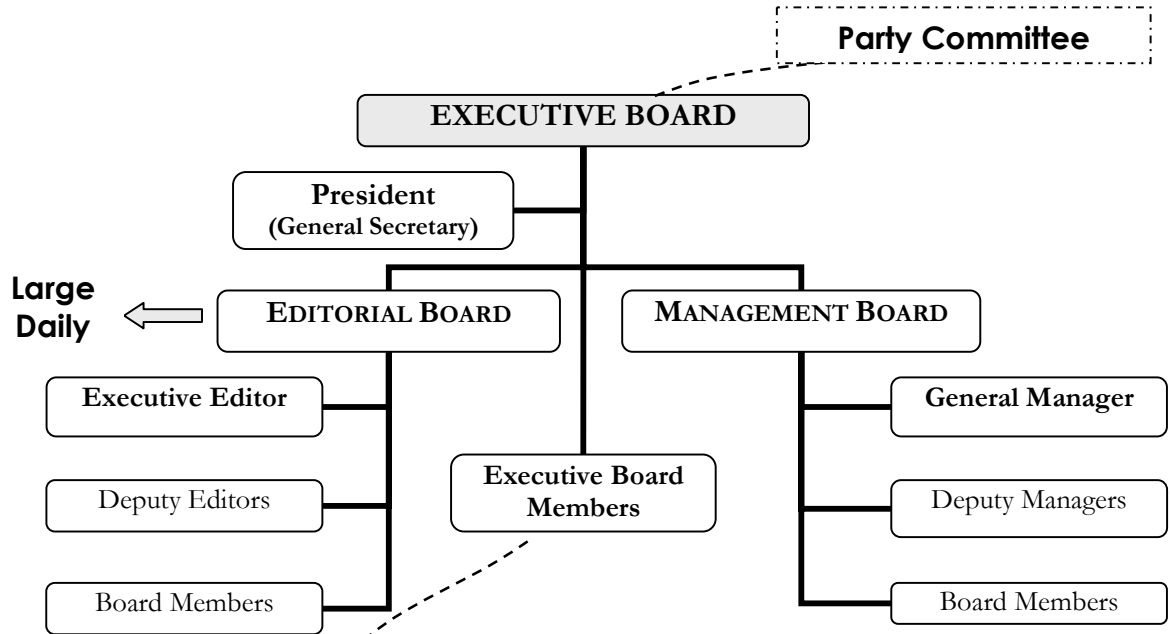
The leadership structure in TV and radio stations is relatively simple compared to that in the newspaper sector. In all broadcast stations, the highest-ranking position is also that of a president (who always assumes the title of general secretary of party committee), followed directly by that of vice president (usually three to four), and a couple of deputy party secretaries. In various TV and radio channels (defined by this study as second-tier media units), operating under their mother TV or radio station, the highest-ranking post is that of a director,¹⁸ followed by one or two deputy directors.

Individuals in all these posts comprise the governing body (or leadership team) of the media organizations and units they serve and are regarded by this study as media leaders. If the media organizations the leaders belong to are first-tier media organizations, they are regarded as first-tier media leaders. If the media units they belong to are second-tier media units, they are regarded as second-tier media leaders. Figures 1 and 2 on the next two pages use organizational charts to illustrate the leadership structures in the newspaper and broadcast sector in both tiers, which may help to clarify the complicated leadership domain of the media structure in Guangzhou.

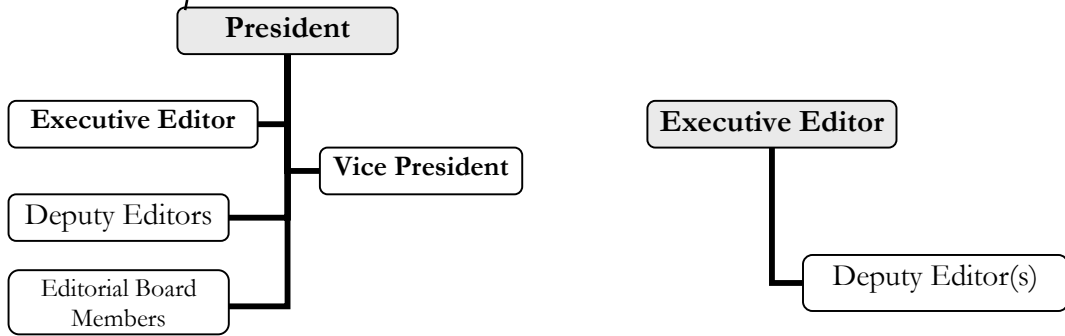
It should be noted that second-tier media units in newspaper groups and in broadcast stations are different. Second-tier media units in each newspaper group, including all the “offspring” newspapers and magazines, are operating semi-or-more-than-semi-independently from the group. They somewhat belong to the same administrative system,

¹⁸ When the director position is empty, there usually is an executive deputy director.

Figure 1 Leadership Structure in Newspaper Groups



▲ First-Tier Leadership Structure in the Group Level

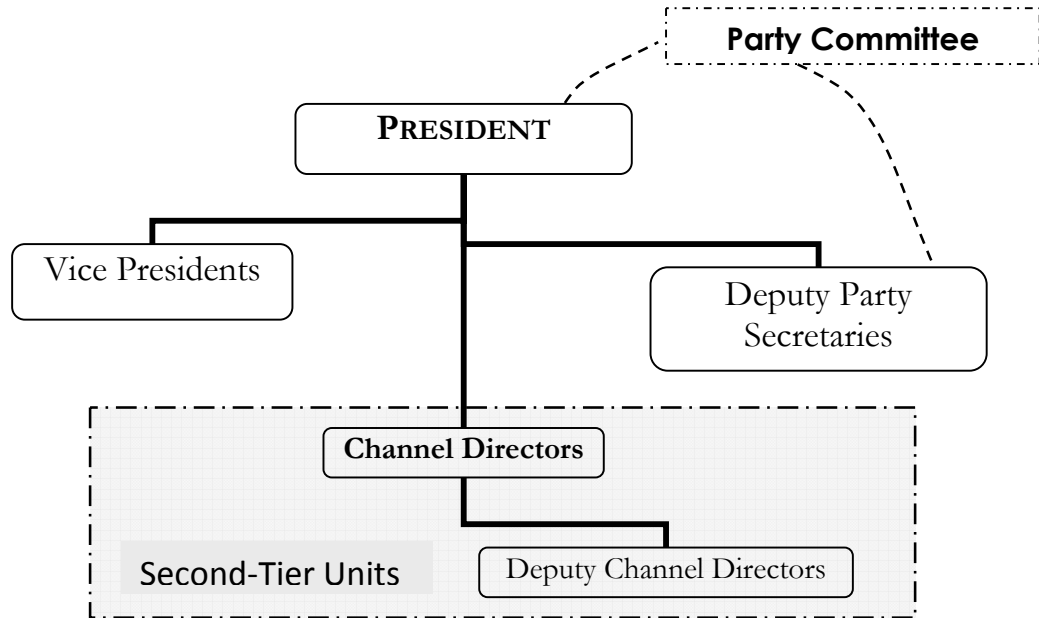


Large Sub-Units

Small Sub-Units

▲ Second-Tier Leadership Structure in Sub-Units

Figure 2 Leadership Structure in Broadcast Stations (TV & Radio)



but they usually have their own independent operating entities sometimes in different buildings in the city. They have to be almost fully responsible for their financial survival. Second-tier media units in TV and radio stations, including all the channels, always are operating in the same building as the main stations. Some of them are partially responsible for their profits and loss, but they are much closer to their “mother” stations than those press subunits. In most cases, they can be regarded as special departments within the station.

The two-tier leadership system, as defined by this study, is different from the senior and middle management system as defined by most research on management and leadership in the West. Although most of the leaders in second-tier media units, if judged by their administrative rank, are on the same rank level of mid-level managers such as

department heads in the large dailies or broadcast stations, they are in the senior management level in their own media units managing a complete media entity. This is particularly true for big subunits like metro papers, and some sports dailies (e.g. *Soccer Daily*), business dailies (e.g. *21st Century Business Herald*), and popular weekly newspapers (e.g. *South China Weekend Journal*).

OVERALL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MEDIA LEADERSHIP IN GUANGZHOU

Before presenting the research findings from the interview data, it is necessary to take a look at the overall representation of women in this media leadership structure in Guangzhou as described above. This will help to provide an institutional context to locate the women interviewees in this study. Since there are no official published data concerning the gender composition of leadership posts in every media organization, analyzing the overall representation of women in media leadership in Guangzhou in a statistical manner is almost impossible. I, however, was able to obtain an approximate data set due to the help from my personal contact.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 on the next two pages show the data of the distribution of women leaders in newspaper groups, TV and radio stations in Guangzhou, including information on the number and the title of women in the leadership team in every media organization and unit, in both first tier and second tier. The tables also give the percentage of women in the leadership echelon in the sectors of newspaper groups, TV and radio collectively.

Table 4 Distribution of Women Leaders in Newspaper Groups in Guangzhou

| Groups and Subunits | Number of People in Leadership | Number of Women in Leadership | Title of Women Leaders | Leadership Tier | Percent of Women in Leadership |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Guangzhou Daily Group | 15 | 3 | Executive deputy editor (1); deputy editor (1); Management board member (1) | First Tier | 20% |
| Guangzhou Daily | ditto | ditto | ditto | | |
| Information Times (metro paper) | 8 | 3 | Deputy editor (2); vice president (1) | | |
| Soccer Daily | 4 | 2 | President (1); vice president (1) | | |
| Guangzhou Morning Post | 2 | 1 | Deputy editor (1) | | |
| NFC Magazine | 5 | 1 | Vice president (1) | | |
| Win Weekly | 1 | 0 | | | |
| New Modern Pictorial | 3 | 2 | Executive editor (1); deputy editor (1) | | |
| World View Magazine | 3 | 1 | Executive editor | Second Tier | 36.6% |
| Yangcheng Subway News | 3 | 0 | | | |
| Gourmet Journal | 3 | 1 | Deputy editor (1) | | |
| Stage & Screen | 3 | 1 | Deputy editor (1) | | |
| Guangzhou Reader's Digest Journal | 2 | 1 | Deputy editor (1) | | |
| Senior News | 2 | 0 | | | |
| South Teens News | 2 | 2 | Executive editor (1); deputy editor (1) | | |
| South China Daily Group | 20 | 1 | Deputy editor (1) | First Tier | 5% |
| South China Daily | ditto | ditto | ditto | | |
| South China Metropolitan News (metro paper) | 10 | 3 | Deputy editors (2); editorial board member (1) | | |
| 21 st Century Business Herald | 7 | 1 | Editorial board member (1) | | |
| South China Weekend Journal | 7 | 0 | | | |
| South China Rural News | 5 | 1 | Deputy editor (1) | | |
| South China Magazine | 5 | 1 | President (1) | Second Tier | 14.6% |
| City Pictorial | 3 | 1 | Executive editor (1) | | |
| South China People Weekly | 4 | 0 | | | |
| MANgazine | 5 | 0 | | | |
| South China Metro Weekly | 1 | 0 | | | |
| Fashion Weekly | 1 | (1) | Executive editor (1) (serving as deputy editor of the metro paper) | | |
| Yangcheng Evening News Group | 15 | 3 | Deputy editor (1); executive board member (2) | First Tier | 20% |
| Yangcheng Daily | ditto | ditto | ditto | | |
| New Express Post (metro paper) | 9 | 1 | Deputy editor (1) | | |
| Private Economics News | 7 | 0 | | | |
| Color Life Weekly | 4 | 3 | Executive editor (1); deputy editor (2) | Second Tier | 16.1% |
| Guangzhou Construction News | 5 | 0 | | | |
| U Life Magazine | 3 | 1 | Executive editor (1) | | |
| Golf Weekly | 3 | 0 | | | |
| Total Number in First-Tier | 50 | 7 | | First Tier | 14% |
| Total Number in Second-Tier | 120 | 27 | | Second | 22.5% |

Table 5 Distribution of Women Leaders in TV Stations in Guangzhou

| Groups and Subunits | Number of People in Leadership | Number of Women in Leadership | Title of Women Leaders | Leadership Tier | Percent of Women in Leadership |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Guangdong Provincial TV Station | 7 | 1 | Vice president (1) | First Tier | 14.3% |
| Guangdong Satellite TV Channel | 6 | (1) | The vice president above acts as Party secretary for the channel | | |
| Pearl General Channel | 5 | 0 | | Second Tier | 0% |
| News Channel | 5 | 0 | | | |
| Public Channel | 4 | 0 | | | |
| Sports Channel | 3 | 0 | | | |
| South China TV Station | 6 | 1 | Vice president (1) | First Tier | 16.7% |
| South China Satellite Channel | 5 | 1 | Deputy director (1) | | |
| Entertainment Channel | 3 | 1 | Deputy director (1) | | |
| Economics Channel | 6 | 2 | Director (1); deputy director (1) | Second Tier | 42.1% |
| Movie and Drama Channel | 3 | 2 | Director (1); deputy director (1) | | |
| Children Channel | 2 | 1 | Director (1) | | |
| Guangzhou Municipal TV Station | 9 | 1 | Vice party secretary (1) | First Tier | 11.1% |
| General Channel | 4 | 0 | | | |
| News Channel | 3 | 1 | Director (1) | | |
| Economics Channel | 3 | 2 | Director (1); deputy director (1) | | |
| Sports Channel | 3 | 0 | | Second Tier | 36.8% |
| Movie and Drama Channel | 2 | 1 | Deputy director (1) | | |
| English Channel | 2 | 1 | Deputy director (1) | | |
| Children Channel | 2 | 2 | Executive deputy director (1); deputy director (1) | | |
| Total Number in First-Tier Leadership | 22 | 3 | | First Tier | 13.6% |
| Total Number in Second-Tier Leadership | 61 | 16 | | Second Tier | 26.2% |

Table 6 Distribution of Women Leaders in Radio Stations in Guangzhou

| Groups and Subunits | Number of People in Leadership | Number of Women in Leadership | Title of Women Leaders | Leadership Tier | Percent of Women in Leadership |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Guangdong Provincial Radio Station | 7 | 2 | President (1); Vice president (1) | First Tier | 28.6% |
| Guangdong Satellite Radio | 3 | 2 | Deputy director (2) | | |
| Pearl Economics Channel | 4 | 0 | | | |
| Sound of Music Channel | 3 | 0 | | | |
| Sound of the City Channel | 3 | 0 | | Second Tier | 19% |
| Traffic Channel | 3 | 2 | Director (1); deputy director (1) | | |
| South China Life Channel | 3 | 0 | | | |
| Stock Market Channel | 2 | 0 | | | |
| Guangzhou Municipal Radio Station | 6 | 2 | President (1); Vice president (1) | First Tier | 33.3% |
| News Channel | 3 | 0 | | | |
| Music Channel | 3 | 2 | Director (1); deputy director (1) | Second Tier | 45.4% |
| Traffic Channel | 3 | 2 | Director (1); deputy director (1) | | |
| Youth and Teen Channel | 2 | 1 | Deputy director (1) | | |
| Total Number in First-Tier Leadership | 15 | 4 | | First Tier | 26.7% |
| Total Number in Second-Tier Leadership | 32 | 9 | | Second Tier | 28.1% |

At the first-tier level, the data show that in all three newspaper groups and all three TV stations in Guangzhou, the highest positions in the leadership structure, bearing the title of president, are occupied by men. The two radio stations, however, both have women as presidents.

Among the three newspaper groups, the *South China Daily* Group has the most members in its first-tier leadership echelon, twenty individuals. Both the *Guangzhou Daily* Group and the *Yangcheng Evening News* Group have fifteen members. The *South China Daily* Group only has one woman as a first-tier leader, while the *Guangzhou Daily* Group and the *Yangcheng Evening News* Group both have three women as first-tier leaders. The highest position held by any of these seven women at the time of my interviews was that of an executive deputy editor working for the *Guangzhou Daily* (I later learned that this woman has been promoted to the rank of executive editor). Three women are deputy editors, two are executive board members, and one is a management board member. The overall percentage of women in first-tier leadership in the sector of newspaper groups is 14%.

The *Guangzhou Daily* Group has the most “offspring” newspapers and magazines among all the three newspaper groups. These thirteen newspapers and magazines comprise a second-tier lump. Among the forty-one second-tier leaders, fifteen are women, resulting in a percentage of 36.6%. Three of these thirteen media units are headed by women. The metro paper, *Information Times*, with a circulation of 1.57 million, is led by a male president and a male executive editor. Women’s presence in second-tier leadership in the *South China Daily* Group is the lowest among the three newspaper groups, the same as the situation in its first-tier leadership. The group has ten “offspring”

newspapers and magazines. Two are headed by women. There are forty-eight second-tier leaders in total, of which seven are women, resulting in a percentage of 14.6%. The distribution of women in its second-tier leadership is also quite uneven. The most popular metro paper, *South China Metropolitan News*, has three women in its ten-member leadership team, but both its president and executive editor are men. The *21st Century Business Herald*, front runner of business newspapers in China, only has one woman in its leadership echelon. The renowned *South China Weekend Journal* has no woman in its seven-member leadership team. Among the three newspaper groups, the scale of *Yangcheng Evening New* Group is the most modest. It only has seven auxiliary press products. Two are headed by women. There are thirty-one individuals who are second-tier leaders, of which five are women, resulting in a percentage of 16.1%. Overall, women's participation in all the second-tier leadership positions in three newspaper groups is 22.5%.

The leadership structure is relatively simpler in the broadcast sector compared to the newspaper groups. The Guangdong Provincial TV Station has seven individuals in its first-tier leadership echelon, the South China TV Station has six, and the Guangzhou municipal TV Station has nine. They all have only one woman in their first-tier leadership team. Two of the three women are vice presidents; one has the title of vice party secretary. If calculated based on percentage, women consist of 13.6% of the first-tier leadership in TV stations. Women's distribution in the second-tier leadership in the TV sector is anything but even. It is astonishing to see that the largest TV station, the Guangdong Provincial TV station with 2,253 employees and 137 million dollars annual advertising revenue, has no woman in any of its five channels' leadership teams, resulting

in a percentage of ZERO of women's participation in second-tier leadership there.

Fortunately, this situation has not been copied by the other two stations. In fact, women's participation in second-tier leadership in the South China TV Station and Guangzhou Municipal TV Station is promising, 42.1% (eight women out of a team of nineteen) and 36.8% (seven women out of nineteen), respectively. In the South China TV station, three of its five channels are headed by women (the economics channel, the movie and drama channel, and the children channel). In the Guangzhou Municipal TV Station, three of its seven channels have women as directors (the news channel, the economics channel, and the children channel). Overall, women's presence in second-tier leadership in the whole TV sector is 26.2%, a trend lowered due to the complete absence of woman in one TV station.

As mentioned before, the radio sector is where women have the highest command. Both of the radio stations, the Guangdong Provincial Radio Station and Guangzhou Municipal TV Station, have women as the president. The Guangdong Provincial Radio Station has seven members in its first-tier leadership team and Guangzhou Municipal TV Station has six members. Both stations have one more woman, a vice president, in their first-tier leadership echelon besides the president. There therefore are four women in the whole thirteen-member first-tier leadership lump in the radio sector, resulting in a percentage of 26.7%. This percentage is the highest among all the three media sectors at the level of first-tier leadership. Woman's participation in second-tier leadership in the Guangdong Provincial Radio Station is much lower, only 19%. Among its seven channels, only one is headed by a woman (the traffic channel). The Guangzhou Municipal Radio Station has so far the highest rate of women's participation in second-tier leadership in all

Guangzhou media organizations, 45.3%. Two of its four channels are led by women. The overall percentage of women's participation in second-tier leadership in the radio sector is 28.1%.

Table 7 on the next page presents the summary data on women's participation in leadership in the media in Guangzhou. Putting all Guangzhou media organizations together, there are eighty-seven individuals as first-tier leaders. Among them, fourteen are women. So, women's participation in first-tier media leadership in Guangzhou is 16.1%. The percentage is 14% in newspaper, 13.6% in TV stations, and 26.7% in radio stations. Radio, no doubt, is where women have the most opportunities to lead at a higher level. However, even in the radio sector, women's presence in first-tier leadership is only slightly over a quarter. The rate in the newspaper group and TV sector is less than one seventh. Women still are the absolute minority in the first-tier media leadership.

Meanwhile, although women command top leadership in radio stations, it has to be noted that radio stations are often considered as marginalized media in the contemporary media landscape in China (Zhao, 2008). Nationwide, TV stations are usually regarded as the most powerful segments in the media market earning the most profit. In Guangzhou's case, the press sector is regarded by some scholars as the most influential (Huang, 2005; Lee, 2000). There is no woman assuming any of the highest ranks in either newspaper groups or TV stations in Guangzhou, which indicates that women still have difficulties in setting their feet in media sectors of higher social influence and more power resources.

The situation in second-tier leadership seems better. There are 213 individuals as second-tier leaders in all Guangzhou media organizations, of which 52 are women. Thus,

Table 7 Summary of Women’s Participation in Media Leadership in Guangzhou

| Leadership Categories | Number of People | Number of Women | Percentage of Women |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| First-tier leaders | 87 | 14 | 16.1% |
| First-tier leaders in Newspaper Groups | 50 | 7 | 14% |
| First-tier leaders in TV | 22 | 3 | 13.6% |
| First-tier leaders in Radio | 15 | 4 | 26.7% |
| Second-tier leaders | 213 | 51 | 24.4% |
| Second-tier leaders in Newspaper Groups | 120 | 26 | 22.5% |
| Second-tier leaders in TV | 61 | 16 | 26.2% |
| Second-tier leadership in Radio | 32 | 9 | 28.1% |
| Media organization with highest and lowest percentage | | | |
| Media organization with highest percentage of women’s participation in First-tier leadership | Guangzhou Municipal Radio Station | | 33.3% |
| Media organization with lowest percentage of women’s participation in First-tier leadership | South China Daily Group | | 5% |
| Media organization with highest percentage of women’s participation in Second-tier leadership | South China Provincial TV Station | | 42.1% |
| Media organization with lowest percentage of women’s participation in Second-tier leadership | Guangdong Provincial TV Station | | 0% |

women comprise 24.4% of second-tier leaders overall. The percentage is 22.5% in newspaper groups, 26.2% in TV stations, and 28.1% in radio stations. Although again the percentage is the highest in radio stations, there is no significant difference among the three media sectors. One puzzling thing, however, is that there seems no clear pattern of women’s distribution in second-tier leadership in the Guangzhou media. Even though the percentages are quite even among the three media sectors, more or less around a quarter, they are somewhat irregular and even erratic within each media sector. In the same TV domain, one TV station has a percentage as high as over 40%, while another TV station falls to ZERO. In the same newspaper sector, one group has a percentage of over 35%,

while another group goes as low as around 10%. In the same radio field, one radio station's second-tier percentage is lower than its first-tier percentage, while another station has the highest participation rate among all media organizations. This irregularity probably indicates that women's participation in second-tier leadership is closely related to each media organization's institutional culture and promotion mechanism. Judging women's participation in second-tier leadership based on an average level probably has the danger of over-generalization.

How is the overall representation of women in media leadership in Guangzhou compared to the situation in the 1995 survey which serves as a springboard for this study? The survey showed that only 8.5% of high-level decision-making positions in the media nationwide were occupied by women in 1995. The "high-level decision-making positions" as defined by the survey referred to positions at the level of president, vice president, executive editor, deputy editor, general manager, and deputy manager. In one word, it referred to the same group of leaders as defined by this study as first-tier leaders. Women's participation in media leadership in Guangzhou, as shown by this study, is 16.1%. It is slightly less than twice as high as in the 1995 data.

The survey also showed that 17.6% of the mid-level media leaders nationwide were women, which mainly referred to the level of departments heads (both executive and deputy titles) in media organizations (Bu, 2001, p. 121). This study finds women's percentage in the second-tier leadership to be 24.4%. Since second-tier leaders as defined by this study are different from the mid-level leaders as identified by the survey, as explained earlier, it is not proper to make a parallel comparison between these two data. But second-tier leaders in this study do belong to the middle level if judged from an

administrative rank standard, so to certain extent, the percentage partially reflects women's participation in mid-level media leadership as well.

Judging from the difference between the data presented by this study and in the 1995 survey, it seems women's participation in media leadership (both senior and middle level or first and second tier), in the case of Guangzhou City, has improved. This rough comparison, however, is not justifiable. There are no separate data in the 1995 survey concerning women in the Guangzhou media specifically. Guangzhou might already have had a higher percentage than the national average in 1995 in terms of women's participation in media leadership. Even though the data do seem to suggest an improvement, it is not appropriate to draw a firm conclusion that women's participation in media leadership has somewhat improved in Guangzhou.

Overall, in the case of Guangzhou, women's participation in leadership is still quite low. Women only occupy about one sixth of the first-tier leadership positions, and their presence in the second tier is less than a quarter. Why has women's under-representation in high-level decision-making positions been persistent? If there is a slight improvement, what has contributed to it? Why does the distribution of women in second-tier media leadership in Guangzhou seem so irregular? How do women leaders in the Guangzhou media themselves perceive this situation? How has the transformation of the Guangzhou media influenced their leadership experiences? There is much to question and ponder. The women leaders interviewed by this study may be able to provide some of the answers.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF WOMEN INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

This research interviewed twenty-two Guangzhou women media leaders. Among them, nineteen came from the aforementioned group of women leaders in seventeen

media organizations and units in Guangzhou. The total number of women media leaders in Guangzhou as presented in Table 7, in both the first-tier and second-tier leadership, is sixty-five. So, this study has covered about 30% of all women media leaders in Guangzhou. Three women interviewed do not belong to those aforementioned media organizations. One of them is the executive editor of a popular national magazine sponsored by a governmental organization on the provincial level, which does not belong to the conventional media system as presented in the three media sectors. The other two women are mid-level managers at a nationally-renowned Internet company in Guangzhou, who were selected to help to generate relevant understandings of women's participation in media leadership in the sector of new media.

The age of the twenty-two women interviewed ranges from the late 20s to the middle 50s with the majority in their late 30s to early 40s. All of them have received higher education (twelve bachelors' degrees and ten masters' degrees) with most in various humanities (Chinese literature is the most common). Only five of them graduated from journalism programs. Most of the women leaders identified themselves as married except for two who are single, two who are divorced, and one who did not want to release her marital information. Among those who are married, only two have no children; all others have one child.

Among the nineteen women who came from conventional media organizations, four are first-tier leaders, with one the president of a radio station, one the vice president of a TV station, and two deputy editors of two large daily newspapers. Fifteen women belong to the group of second-tier leaders, assuming various posts including president, vice president, executive editor, deputy editor, director, and deputy director in second-tier

media units. Even though the woman who is the executive editor of a national magazine does not belong to the media system that I have identified for this study, I regard her as a first-tier leader as well because she is in charge of a prestigious magazine with a national circulation of 2.4 million.

Among these twenty-two women media leaders, eight have been working in the media for more than twenty years, eight for more than ten years, and six for more than five years. The average length of their service is sixteen years. More than half of the twenty-two women, thirteen to be exact, had worked in occupations other than the media. With regard to the years serving in their current positions, four have been there for more than ten years, while all others have been in their positions for less than ten years with fifteen of them for less than five years. Table 8 on the next page presents a summary of the demographic information of the interview subjects.

WOMEN LEADERS' PERSONAL STORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The primary goal of this study, as outlined at the beginning of this dissertation, is to discover women's experiences in media leadership in China. To a large extent, experiences are stories. While doing the interviews, I always started the conversation by asking each woman to share with me the story of her entering and advancing in the media profession. I decided to briefly present these stories here in order to generate a full picture of the diverse yet common career development patterns of these women. Presenting these concrete stories also helps to personalize these women before this study enters the more abstract stage of analyzing the interview data in the next chapter.

Table 8 Demographic Information of Women Interview Subjects

| Demographic Category | Subjects in Category (N=22) |
|--|-----------------------------|
| AGE | |
| late 20s | 1 |
| 30-34 | 0 |
| 35-39 | 5 |
| 40-44 | 8 |
| 45-49 | 2 |
| 50s | 6 |
| EDUCATION | |
| Bachelor's degree | 12 |
| Master's degree | 10 |
| MARRIAGE | |
| single | 2 |
| married with children | 15 |
| married without children | 2 |
| divorced | 2 |
| n/a | 1 |
| LEADERSHIP TIER | |
| first-tier leader | 5 |
| Second-tier leader | 15 |
| others | 2 |
| YEARS IN THE MEDIA | |
| 0 to 5 years | 0 |
| 5 to 10 years | 6 |
| 10 to 15 years | 5 |
| 15 to 20 years | 3 |
| 20 to 30 years | 7 |
| 30 plus years | 1 |
| WORKING EXPERIENCE | |
| in other occupations before entering the media | 13 |
| solely working in the media | 9 |

When presenting the stories (and in the next findings chapter as well), I have used pseudonyms (in three letters) to protect my interviewees' confidentialities. A listing of these women interviewees (in their pseudonyms) and their demographic information is included in Appendix E. The stories of first-tier women media leaders are presented first, followed by those of women in second-tier leadership, and then of the two women leaders in Internet media companies. Within their own group, the stories are arranged in alphabetical order (by the pseudonyms). The stories vary in their length. Some interviewees simply provided more details of their career development trajectories than others.

First-Tier Leaders

Fei – 55, president of a radio station

Fei is a Guangzhou native. She had a rich life experience before entering the media profession. She was a teacher during the Cultural Revolution. Fei went back to university in 1979 and got her master's degree in comparative literature. Upon graduation she was assigned to the Department of Propaganda in the Guangzhou municipal government. Two years later, she was appointed to be the executive associate chair of the Alliance of Literature and Arts (*wenlian*, 文联), a government-affiliated cultural organization which most writers and artists in Guangzhou are connected with. When a new radio station was established in the city in 1991, Fei was appointed by the Department of Propaganda to be the executive vice president of the station. She was promoted to be the president in 1994. Fei said her experience of being familiar with the field of literature and arts and its practitioners has contributed significantly to her work in the media.

Jun – vice president of a TV station

Jun is a Guangzhou native as well. She worked for six years upon graduating from high school during the Cultural Revolution. She was later enrolled in a nationally prestigious university in Guangzhou, Sun Yat-Sen University, in 1978. Jun was assigned to a local radio station upon graduation. She worked as a rank-and-file reporter and editor for a couple years. Her first position of “leadership” was being the executive producer of children’s programs, supervising about seven people. She later launched, along with some of her colleagues, the first call-in radio talk show in the nation. She was promoted to be the head of the department of strategic planning in the station. Under her leadership, the station launched the first outdoor live broadcast program in the nation in 1990. She left the radio sector to establish an experimental TV station in 1994 with a group of her media friends, specializing in business news and fully depending on market profits. The station kept running for seven years with modest success before it was merged with another local cable TV station in 2001 to create a new TV station. Jun was then appointed as the vice president of the new station.

Pan – 50, deputy editor of a large daily

Pan is also a Guangzhou native. She was in the same class with Jun in her undergraduate years, majoring in Chinese literature. She started her media career as a reporter in a county bureau of a Guangzhou large daily in 1982. She now still works for the newspaper. After assuming a couple of mid-level editorial posts, in 1995, she was promoted to be the executive editor of a weekly newspaper owned by the large daily. This nationally-renowned weekly was regarded by the public and scholars at the time as a pioneering newspaper which often carried bold coverage on important and sensitive

social issues in China. She was shifted to be in charge of a newly-created business newspaper in 2002. Pan was again transferred to lead a newspaper specializing in rural news in 2004 and remained in the executive editor position in 2006 (at the same time assuming the title of deputy editor of the large daily) when I interviewed her. I later learned that she has become the head of a metro paper owned by the large daily. It is the most successful mass-appeal urban tabloid in Guangzhou and arguably in the nation.

Yao – 43, deputy editor of a large daily

Yao is a Guangzhou native. She has a relatively simple career trajectory, which she claimed to be very smooth. After graduating from Sun Yat-Sen University majoring in Chinese literature in 1984, she was assigned to a large daily newspaper, which was the most prestigious daily in Guangzhou at the time. She worked as a reporter, covering culture and education first, and politics later. She became a copy editor and soon became the head of the reporting department in the daily. She was promoted to be the deputy editor in 1994, becoming the youngest media leader in the city.

Zou – 40, executive editor of a national magazine

Zou is a native of Hunan, a mid-southern province in China. She graduated as the best student of her class of 1985 from a university in Hunan and became an instructor at the school afterward. She came to Guangzhou to study for master's degree in Chinese literature at Sun Yat-Sen University in 1988 and became a reporter for a local political magazine upon graduation. She was determined to enter "the best magazine" (in her own words) in Guangzhou and she did so in 1994. She became the executive editor of the magazine in 2004, after ten years of working in various posts right from the bottom up.

Second-Tier Leaders

Bai – 50, director of a radio music channel

Bai is a native of Beijing but was raised in Guangzhou. Similar to others in her age group, she worked for a few years after high school. She was sent to a forest farm in the Guangzhou suburbs during the Cultural Revolution and was later recruited by a radio station in a county in Guangdong province in 1976. She was enrolled in the Beijing Broadcast Institute (now the Chinese Communication University) in 1978, which was the best college in the field of broadcast journalism in the nation then. She returned to Guangzhou and was assigned to a very small regional radio station in 1982. Being a graduate from Beijing and with exceptional professional skills in broadcast, she became the president of the station in two years. When a new radio station was established in 1991, Bai left her old job to join the new entity. She soon demonstrated her ability as the leading political reporter of the station. She was promoted to important roles in a few crucial divisions of the new station (in her own words, “where the station needs the most”) before she became the director of a music channel in 2002. The music channel has grown into one of the most popular radio channels in the city.

Cao – 37, deputy editor of a metro paper

A native of Henan, a mid-northern province, Cao went to Guangzhou in 1991 to continue her education in a master’s program in journalism. She first worked for a large daily. She said she did not feel the excitement of working as a journalist until she was given the opportunity to launch a new metro paper along with a group of young enterprising journalists, all from the large daily. The metro paper was the first in the city to adopt a “market-oriented, mass-appeal, brand-new” (in her own words) journalism

style and soon became a market hit. Cao left the metro paper in 2001 after maternity leave and went back to the large daily being a rank-and-file editor for a more relaxed work schedule. She was promoted in 2005 to return to the metro paper as a deputy editor.

Dai – 40, deputy editor of a metro paper

A native of Tianjin, a big city in northern China and close to Beijing, Dai went to a prestigious university (Fudan University) in Shanghai in 1986 majoring in its journalism program, which is arguably the best in the nation. Dai, however, did not want to be a journalist upon graduation. Instead, she went to Guangzhou, working for a government-sponsored research institute specializing in public opinion polls. After three years, she decided to return to her original field of journalism, becoming a reporter for Guangdong bureau, China News Agency. When the newspaper she now works for was launched in 1998, she joined the reporting team. She was promoted to the position of deputy editor in 2005.

Gan – 49, vice president of a magazine

Gan is a native of Guangzhou. She did not get a chance to have formal higher education but managed to finish continuing education courses in journalism in 1987. Prior to entering the media profession, she worked as a secretary in a factory for a few years. Gan started her journalism career in 1984, as a reporter for a national magazine. She joined her present magazine in 1987. After being a rank-and-file reporter for two years, she became the deputy director of the editorial department. She moved on to be the director of the editorial center in 1993 and the vice president in 2001.

Hou – 52, president of a sports daily

Among all the interviewees, Hou is the one who had experienced the most diverse occupations before entering the media. In the midst of the Cultural Revolution, Hou only managed to finish a modest-level education, five years of elementary school and one year of middle school, before she was sent to farmland to work. She was a rural doctor, director of a rural woman federation, and the head of a village commune in charge of crop production. She returned to a town in Guangdong province in 1975 and had her first formal job as a reporter at a local radio station. She was sent by the station to take training courses in journalism for three months at a large daily in Guangzhou and was later recruited by the daily as a reporter. While being at the newspaper, Hou finished her continuing education courses in journalism and a master's degree in economics. After being a reporter and copy editor for a few years, she was promoted to be in charge of the section specifically devoted to the theoretical discussion of the ongoing economic reforms in the nation. Hou remained at the post for nine years and made the section the best among similar pages in newspapers nationwide. She continuously advanced to be the director of the reporting department and the evening editorial center. Hou was promoted to be the executive deputy editor of a nationally-renowned sports daily, owned by the large daily, in 1999. She became the president in 2004.

Kun – 35, editorial board member of a metro paper

Kun is a native of Guangzhou. She graduated from Sun Yat-Sen University in 1994, majoring in Chinese literature. She first worked as a public relation manager for a five-star hotel in Guangzhou. She, however, always wanted to do journalism someday. She was hired to be a reporter by a metro paper when it was established in 1996, covering

news of community life and infrastructure construction citywide. Her strong performance and social ability soon stood out, and she was promoted to be the deputy manager of the sales department to explore the market for selling newspapers at booths (most newspapers depended on subscription at the time and were delivered through the national post system, which was very inefficient and expensive). After the sale network was successfully established, she resumed her role of being a reporter, covering politics and crime. Right before being promoted to be the director of the reporting department, she had to slow down her pace due to her pregnancy. She returned to the metro paper after maternity leave but had to start over as a rank-and-file reporter. Kun, however, was soon promoted to be the deputy director of the reporting department and joined the editorial board in 2003.

Liu – 35, deputy editor of a metro paper

Liu is a native of Guangzhou. She has a bachelor's and master's degree both in Chinese literature from Sun Yat-Sen University. She interned at a local large daily in 1997 and stayed there after graduation. She started as a copy editor. Two years later, she was sent to another city in the Guangdong province to run a bureau there. When the large daily bought a small business newspaper and converted it to a metro paper in 2000, she was promoted to be the deputy editor.

Mei – 49, deputy editor of an entertainment weekly

Mei is a native of Guangzhou. Mei did not go to formal university but managed to finish a continuing education in pharmacy in 1983. Mei's father is a veteran journalist. Due to his influence, she always wanted to be a journalist. When she learned that a large daily was recruiting reporters, she decided to try to get a job there and succeeded in 1984.

Her reporting field was youth news in the first few years, and culture news for eight years, and then politics and economics for another couple of years. She became a copy editor in 2000, and was promoted to be the deputy editor of an entertainment weekly owned by the large daily in 2002.

Nan – 51, president of a magazine

Nan is a native of Guizhou, a remote province in mid-southern China. She has a bachelor's degree in Chinese literature and taught Chinese language in high school for a few years before joining the *Guizhou Daily* in 1984. Nan is a writer and poet as well, so she was assigned to be in charge of the literature and arts section. She also did reporting, covering rural life and the working class. She soon became a star journalist in the city. She decided to go to Guangzhou in 1992 for better career opportunities. She first was affiliated with the Guangzhou Alliance of Literature and Arts as a professional writer and published short stories and poems. Two years later in 1994, she launched a magazine with the help of the government and the Alliance. The magazine is affiliated with a large daily and covers international issues. She assumed the role of executive editor and has remained in the post since then.

Qin – 42, director of a TV news channel

Qin is a native of Hunan, a middle province in China. She has both bachelor's and master's degrees in history. Upon graduation in Nanjing, a capital city close to Shanghai, Nan went to Guangzhou to be a reporter for the TV station where she still works. Qin later also did an editing job for a couple of years. She became the director of the editorial department ten years after beginning work for the station. She was promoted to be the director of a news channel when it was launched in 2003.

Rui – 41, deputy director of a TV English channel

Rui is a native of Guangzhou. Like many other interviewees, she graduated from Sun Yat-Sen University in 1988, majoring in Chinese literature. She worked as a reporter for the first eleven years at the same TV station as Qin's. She later acted as an editor in the editorial center. She was promoted to be the deputy director of a channel (Life Channel) in 2004 and was shifted to the English channel with the same title when it was launched in 2006.

Tan – 38, deputy editor of a metro paper

Tan is a native of Anhui, a mid-eastern province in China. Tan first received her bachelor's degree while in Anhui. She then went to Guangzhou to get her master's degree in Chinese literature. Tan's dream of being a journalist started when she was in her middle school editing a school newsletter. Tan first worked for a business daily, which no longer exists now, for five years. She was recruited by a new metro paper when it was launched in 1997. She started as being a copy editor for the national news section, then moved to copy editor of the front page, to deputy director of the editorial department, and to assistant executive editor. She was promoted to be the deputy editor in 2003.

Wei – 40, deputy editor of an English newspaper

Wei is a native of Lanzhou, capital of Gansu, a hinterland province in Northwest China. Due to her exceptional talents in academics, she went to the university at the age of sixteen in 1982, two years ahead of the normal age. Wei has a master's degree in English language and literature and her first job was as a university teacher. She was a visiting scholar at the University of Birmingham in England for one year in 1997. Upon returning to China, she went to Guangzhou for better personal development opportunities.

She joined a new English newspaper there, launched on July 1, 1997, the date of Hong Kong returning to China. She started as a reporter and then copy editor and later was promoted to be a department head. She was shifted to be in charge of a newly-created English magazine, owned by the large daily, in 2001. Under her leadership, the magazine became the most popular journal among foreigners in Guangzhou. She returned to the English newspaper to be the deputy editor in 2004.

Xie – 43, editorial board member of a business daily

Distinct from all the others women leaders, Xie's original field was in theatre. She graduated from the Central Theatre Academy in Beijing in 1985. She was assigned to the Guangdong Drama Institute and worked there for five years. She received a national award for a drama she wrote there. Xie, however, felt there was no future for playwrights pursuing pure art. A large daily's department of advertising and management spotted her talents and invited her to join its strategic team in 1995. In her spare time, she also wrote for the daily in the field of economics and new technology. She later moved to Beijing to unite with her journalist husband. When a business newspaper was launched by the large daily in 2002, she was recruited by the executive editor to work there. She helped to establish its Hong Kong bureaus. Xie joined the editorial board in 2005.

Yue – 42, deputy editor of a metro paper

Yue is a native of Guangzhou. Her experience is diverse and intriguing. She graduated from a military art institute and served in the military for nineteen years. She is a prolific writer and has published sixteen books. Yue had been a visiting scholar in Australia and the United States. To collect life experiences for her writing, she entered the media profession in 1998, working for a large daily in Guangzhou. She started

reporting village affairs as the head of a county bureau in the province. She later helped to launch a business weekly for the large daily. The success of the weekly made her well-known in the media circle. She moved on to become the assistant executive editor for a Hong Kong newspaper in 2001. Yue returned to Guangzhou two years later to be together with her son. She was soon hired by a metro paper as the deputy editor in 2004.

Internet Media Company Leaders

Guo – 37, director of a news department in an Internet media company

Guo graduated from a well-regarded journalism program in a university in Wuhan, a capital city of a province in middle China, in 1992. She first worked for a small newspaper for a couple of years before returning to school to get her master's degree in journalism in Guangzhou in 1997. She chose to work for an economics newspaper. Seven years later, she was the copy editor of the most important section of the paper. Guo, however, felt that was the best position she could obtain in the newspaper, so she jumped to a bigger business daily in 2004. Three months after she was in her new job, a famous national Internet company spotted her. Although she has a strong emotional tie with the newspaper industry, she decided that Internet content providers would replace traditional media in the future. She joined the company as the director of its news department.

Sai – 29, deputy director of an entertainment department in an Internet media company

Sai is the youngest among all the interviewees. She graduated from a local university in Guangzhou in 1999, majoring in journalism. She first worked for a human resources company for three months but soon realized she did not like her job at all. Her first media job was as a reporter for a Macao TV station. Sai entered a metro paper in 2000, starting as a rank-and-file editor. She became the copy editor for the front page a couple of years

later. Somehow, her interest in print journalism faded and she wanted to explore something new. She changed her field to new media by joining an Internet company in 2005. She was soon promoted to be the deputy director of the entertainment department.

CHAPTER VII: FINDINGS II – WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES

Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

—Section J: Women and Decision-Making, Platform for Action, par. 181
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

Building upon the previous chapter which provides an essential context, this chapter reports primary findings related to women’s participation in media leadership in the city of Guangzhou, derived from the interview data with twenty-two Guangzhou women leaders. As presented in the earlier chapter of research questions, this study locates women’s experiences mainly in two domains: 1) women becoming media leaders in Guangzhou, and 2) women being media leaders in Guangzhou. Starting from the 1995 survey, this study is also designed to explore two additional domains: 3) reasons contributing to women’s under-representation in leadership in the Chinese media, and 4) the changes brought by the transformation of the Chinese media on women’s media leadership status and experiences, both as exemplified in Guangzhou. Each of these four inquiry domains contains a set of specific research questions. In this chapter, the themes emerging from the interview data are presented under each research question corresponding to these four inquiry domains. Women leaders’ personal narratives collected during the interviews are frequently used to illustrate the themes.

INQUIRY DOMAIN I: BECOMING WOMEN LEADERS IN THE MEDIA IN GUANGZHOU

This inquiry domain contains only one research question:

RQ1: What have been the career development patterns of Guangzhou women media leaders?

The individual stories presented in the previous chapter show that the twenty-two women media leaders have followed a diverse range of career development patterns, which reflect the transformation of Chinese society in general and the media sector in particular in the past three decades or so. To better analyze these career development patterns, it is necessary to group them into two categories: patterns of entering the media and patterns of moving upward in the media.

Patterns of Entering the Media

For the eight women leaders who are in their late 40s and 50s, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) has been part of their life experiences, often throwing their career development into a chaotic and erratic trajectory. They entered their maturity during those destructive ten years, so they are often called the “generation of the Cultural Revolution.” Like millions of young people, some of them were assigned “proletarian” jobs or sent to the countryside to work in farmlands in their middle or late teens during the Cultural Revolution (Perry & Xun, 1997).

Many of them, however, still grabbed the chance to go to a university after the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976 with the passing of Chairman Mao and the arrest of the “Gang of Four” (Spence, 1990). In modern Chinese history, the years of 1977 and 1978 are very significant in terms of higher education. It was in 1977 that China resumed its annual National University Entrance Exam and in 1978 the students who passed the

exam went to universities all over the country for the first time since the Cultural Revolution started. Many of the students of 1978 were well beyond the age of high-school graduates in that they had worked for some years in the various jobs before attending the university entrance exam. Of the eight women interviewees who belong to the “generation of the Cultural Revolution,” four (Bai, Jun, Nan, and Pan) are among the lucky students of 1978. Fei went to a university in 1979, studying at a high level in a master’s program, which was quite unusual at the time. The other three, Gan, Hou, and Mei, did not get a chance to go to a formal university but all managed to get higher-education degrees through continuing education.

For the five who received formal university education, three, Jun (now vice president of a TV station), Pan (now deputy editor of a large daily), and Bai (now director of a radio music channel) entered the media profession right upon graduation in 1982. They were all assigned to media organizations by the government. At the time, job placement was centrally planned and fully controlled by the government, which had been the practice since 1949. Every working unit or social organization reported its employment needs to the central or local government. The government then asked universities to select appropriate graduating students to send to those units and organizations. The other two, Fei (now president of a radio station) and Nan (now executive editor of a magazine) worked in other occupations before entering the media. Fei served in Guangzhou municipal government for a couple of years and was promoted to lead the municipal Alliance of Literature and Arts for five years. She was appointed by the government as the vice executive president of a radio station when it was established in 1991. Nan worked as a high school teacher for a couple of years before entering a large daily in a

remote southwestern province. The three women who did not receive formal higher education, Gan (now vice president of a magazine), Hou (now president of a sports daily), and Mei (now deputy editor of an entertainment weekly) were recruited to the media in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At the time, some media organizations, rather than exclusively relying on the government to assign university graduates to their units, started to recruit those who had writing skills but were working in other occupations to supplement their workforce. Hou recalled that a couple of large dailies in Guangzhou gave journalism training courses to new recruits and potential employees at the time. She said some of the graduates of those classes are still the backbone of these dailies.

The other fourteen women interviewed, who do not belong to the “generation of the Cultural Revolution,” are all below their middle 40s. They usually received formal higher education upon graduating from high school, following a normal social pattern. The majority of them (a total of eight) entered the media right upon graduation, although six worked in other occupations before joining the media workforce. Two women, Yao and Rui, who graduated before the late 1980s, were directly assigned by the government to their media organizations. Yao, deputy editor of a large daily, reflected on her entrance to the media, which she said was very common among women journalists in her age group:

When I graduated in 1984, I was selected by the newspaper in which I am still working now. At that time, we as undergraduates in universities did not need to choose our future jobs. I never worried about where I should go to work after graduation. The government just took care of everything. It allocated jobs based on the social need they observed and calculated. We would be assigned to various job categories and posts based on this social need. I was assigned to this newspaper, which was regarded as a very good job at the time. I guess they chose me because my studying record and performance in my university were quite

impressive. I did not know what I was going to do in this job post, but I soon started learning on the job site after I entered this newspaper. I was very lucky and happy to discover that I really like to be a journalist.

Starting in the late 1980s, the Chinese government began to reform its outmoded centrally-planned job placement system, which no longer was able to keep up with the economic development in the nation. Job placement gradually became two-way traffic among graduates and governmental units, state-owned enterprise, public organizations, and private companies in China. Job fairs became common and frequent in every province and city. Organizations and companies began to go to universities to directly recruit talent. Six women leaders interviewed graduated after the late 1980s and chose to enter the media based on their own interest and the market supply. Tan, deputy editor of a metro paper, recalled her job-hunting experience:

I guess I always wanted to be a journalist. I was actively involved in school publications since my middle-school years. So, when I graduated from my master's program in Guangzhou in 1992, I chose to work for a local economics newspaper right away.

Another six of the fourteen women who are below their middle 40s have worked in other occupations before entering the media, including public relations, research, theatre, military, and higher education. Their job transition from other occupations to the media all occurred in the middle or late 1990s when the job market had become flexible and active. The loosened social environment allowed them to change jobs when they no longer liked the work in hand. Meanwhile, the media industry in Guangzhou rocketed up in the 1990s, which provided many job opportunities for new graduates and veteran talents. Kun and Sai had similar experiences. They liked journalism but did not want to start in the field right upon graduation, so they both took employment in other

professions. After a while, they got tired of what they were doing, so they changed their jobs and became journalists. Xie jumped from her career in the theatre to being an advertising manager of a large daily in 1995. Five years later, she started to work for a business newspaper as a reporter.

The majority of the twenty-two women leaders, a total of sixteen, are Guangzhou natives. Many of them graduated from the prestigious Sun Yat-sen University majoring in Chinese literature. Among the other six women who are non-Guangzhou natives, three of them, Cao, Tan, and Zou, graduated from master's programs in universities in Guangzhou and entered media organizations in the city upon graduation. The other three, Dai, Nan, and Wei, however, came from other provinces to Guangzhou because the city at the time was the center of economic reform in China. They came to look for more exciting and promising career opportunities. Nan was a copy editor and reporter of a large daily in Guizhou, a remote middle-southern province, before she came to Guangzhou in 1992. While I asked her why she left her old city for Guangzhou, she talked about her motivation and her experience of doing media work in her new city:

Guizhou at the beginning of the 1990s was still a place relatively remote and backward in terms of economy. And, there were not that much exciting news, simply not a focal spot for journalism. Guangzhou, however, was a magnet at the time. It was a hot land of reform, especially after Deng Xiaoping gave his South Talk in 1992. I felt like there was a fire of hope in Guangzhou and believed that the hope of China ought to be in the South. At the time I was still young and had high aspiration anyway. Even though I was not very sure what I could do in Guangzhou, I still wanted to come here for opportunities. I first asked the Alliance of Literature and Arts in Guangzhou to accept me as a professional writer and help them to launch a writing workshop. I then persuaded my husband to come together with me. At first, he did not want to move or change. But I was able to find a good government job for him, so he eventually came together with me. Even though I was affiliated with the Alliance of Literature and

Arts as a writer, I was looking for opportunities to do media-related work in Guangzhou. I got support from the former mayor of the city to launch a magazine focusing on international affairs, being a window to learn the world and to let the world learn China. The magazine started in 1995 and they appointed me as the executive editor.

Wei used to live in Lanzhou, a capital city in the hinterland of the northwestern China. She was a university teacher before coming to Guangzhou. Unlike Nan, she never worked in the media before she joined a newspaper in Guangzhou, but similar to Nan, she came to Guangzhou for better opportunities:

I was the only one selected by my province to go to Beijing to compete for thirteen national scholarships to be a visiting scholar for one year overseas. Every province had one slot. There were about thirty of us. I passed a rigorous exam and got the opportunity to go to the University of Birmingham in 1996. While I was still in England, my husband got a call from one of his friends who had been in Guangzhou for quite some years and had a good career and life there. He told my husband that I should go to Guangzhou for there were a lot of good opportunities for talents like me. He mentioned that a large daily there was recruiting new employees due to its bold expansion. After discussing this with me, my husband sent my resume to that daily. We got their response very soon, saying that they were going to launch a new English newspaper and I seemed to be the right person to work there. They wanted to interview me once I returned to China. On the day of the interview, conducted by the president of the large daily, they decided to hire me right away. They agreed to take my husband as well for he has a master's degree in English literature and is very capable. So, we ended up relocating to Guangzhou.

Dai's decision to go to Guangzhou is even more straightforward and clear-cut. She graduated from a prestigious university in Shanghai in 1990 and would have been able to get a very good job there. She, however, decided to go to Guangzhou right upon her graduation. She said Shanghai at the time was not as open and vibrant as Guangzhou. Even though she majored in one of the best journalism programs in the nation in her undergraduate years, she did not want to work as a journalist upon graduation. She said

she wanted to try something different first. She got a job at a non-governmental research institute, analyzing public opinion. Dai returned to her field of journalism three years later, as a reporter for the China News Agency's bureau in Guangzhou.

The experiences of Nan, Wei, and Dai showed that Guangzhou was the magnet in the 1990s, attracting talents all over the country to seek opportunities that they had been denied for too long. The pouring of talents from other regions to Guangzhou certainly was healthy for the development of the media industry in the city.

Patterns of Moving Upward in the Media

The application of dividing the media leadership structure into two tiers has its particular value when it comes to analyzing the patterns of these women's career upward mobility in the media. Through a careful reading of all the interviewees' career progression stories, it is clear that the patterns of these women leaders' promotion to their leadership positions are different between first-tier and second-tier leaders.

The first-tier leadership positions, with titles such as president, vice president, executive editor, deputy editor, general manager, deputy manager, and party secretary, in the governing body of first-tier media organizations including the newspaper groups and TV and radio stations, are still under the direct control of the government. The Department of Propaganda (*xuanchuanbu*, 宣传部), along with the Department of Personnel (*renshichu*, 人事处) and the Department of Organizing (*Zuzhibu*, 组织部) within the government, be it municipal or provincial, is directly in charge of investigating, selecting and appointing high-level leaders in first-tier media organizations. Candidates for these first-tier leadership posts usually are from two personnel pools – governmental units or government-related social organizations, and media organizations themselves.

Here I use two metaphorical phrases to describe the government's patterns of selecting and appointing leaders from these two different personnel sources. Appointing someone from governmental and social organizations, in other words, from outside of the media profession, to first-tier media leadership positions, can be described as "helicopter landing." This phrase actually is commonly used by professionals in Chinese media organizations to depict this practice. Selecting someone directly from media organizations to take first-tier leadership positions can be described as "mountain climbing." Individuals who are selected following this pattern usually have worked in the media for many years before the promotion – in other words, they have climbed the mountain for quite a while.

Among the five first-tier women leaders interviewed, one is the example of "helicopter landing" pattern, while the other four are all "mountain climbing" models. Fei, president of a radio station, was appointed executive vice president by the Guangzhou municipal government when the station was launched in 1991. Prior to taking her media leadership role, she was the executive vice chair of the Guangzhou Alliance of Literature and Arts, a government-affiliated cultural organization. Although Fei's appointment was not that typical of "helicopter landing" because she was appointed to lead the radio station when it was newly launched, the practice of "helicopter landing" is not rare as a promotion mechanism in high-level leadership positions within established media. According to some interviewees' description, this "helicopter landing" promotion is more common in TV stations than in the press sector or radio stations. Qin, director of a TV news channel, talked about the situation in her station:

In high-level leadership positions, we have many leaders directly coming from government appointment right out of their own

administrative pool. There are few leaders who grow out of our own professional team. Radio station is doing better in this aspect than the television sector. In my TV station, among the five top leaders with the titles of president and vice president, we only have one vice president who is the outgrowth of our own people. He was promoted from the post as the director of the department of news to be the vice president.

According to the data of the overall distribution of women leaders in the Guangzhou media shown in the previous chapter, each of the three TV stations in Guangzhou has one first-tier woman leader in its governing body. Among the three, two are vice presidents and one is vice party secretary. Based on the relevant information that I have learned from my interviewees, two of the three women are from governmental or social organizations other than the media sector, following a typical “helicopter landing” pattern. In the case of the radio sector, there are four first-tier women leaders, two in each of the two radio stations. Among the four, two are presidents and two are vice presidents. Fei as one of the presidents is the result of “helicopter landing,” while the other president followed a “mountain climbing” route. The two vice presidents both were “landed” to their positions by the government from other social sectors. In the newspaper groups, the practice of “helicopter landing,” however, is very rare. According to some interviewees, very few leaders who were outsiders can stay in their leadership positions in the print media very long due to the newspaper operation being much more professional skill-oriented than that of radio and TV stations.

This “helicopter landing” practice in the first-tier media leadership certainly demonstrates the strong connection between the political system and the media sector in Chinese society. Qin said she understood the need for it:

They said we need to have “Statesman Running the Station (*zhengzhijia bantai*, 政治家办台),” which means the person who

runs the media should have political sensitiveness and strategy, understand the need of the government and society, and know how to direct a healthy public opinion (*yunlun daoxiang*, 舆论导向). So, when the government is considering appointing leaders for our station, it usually looks for individuals who can ensure the political responsibility of the station. An individual who is a veteran in the government system often gets the chance to come here because government officials think he knows the system and is trustworthy.

Even though Fei is a beneficiary of the “helicopter landing” practice, she herself said she was not that government-oriented. She is very outspoken and candid. It indicates that “helicopter landing” leaders may have different versions and diverse personal traits. Moreover, when the government considers candidates for “helicopter landing” to the media, it often prefers to pick someone who had or has worked for the Department of Propaganda or who has been in the fields related to the culture sphere. Fei worked in the Department of Propaganda for a couple of years and was a leader in the Alliance of Literature and Arts in Guangzhou. She said her previous experiences have helped her to succeed in her new role as a media leader:

Even though I have never been in the media before assuming the role of being an executive vice president for the radio station, my training background in Chinese literature and my previous experiences as a leader in the circle of literature and arts in Guangzhou helped me significantly in adjusting to my new role and successfully conducting my work.

The other four first-tier women leaders interviewed, Jun, Pan, Yao, and Zou, all followed the other pattern – “mountain climbing” – to reach their leadership posts. They all have many years of practice in the media profession. Jun, Pan, and Yao entered the news media more than twenty years ago and Zou has been with her magazine for twelve years. Each of them started as a rank-and-file reporter or editor and progressed through various mid-level positions such as copy editors or department heads before they arrived

at the top. Although this “mountain climbing” pattern is mainly a merit-based promotion mechanism, it does not mean that the government is no longer in the game. In fact, for first-tier media leaders who directly come from media profession as these four women do, their promotion was either ordered or endorsed by the government. Often times, top leaders of media organizations and officials of the Department of Propaganda form a temporary selection committee to decide the candidates for promotion and their appointment in the level of first-tier leadership.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, I did not explicitly ask these four women interviewees how their leadership promotion was orchestrated by the government. Yao, deputy editor of a large daily, did mention that before she was officially appointed to her position she had a personal meeting with a government appointing committee official who wanted to know whether she was willing to take the job. Yao also endorsed this close connection between the government and the promotion of media leaders:

China has its special social context which is very different from the West. The stability of the society is the priority for national development. The media sector is a very sensitive domain. The government needs to make sure that media leaders understand that keeping the society stable is the primary goal instead of stirring it by unguarded controversial coverage. So, when choosing leaders, the appointing committee in the government prefers to have candidates who are stable and not risky and understand the rules through many years of experience in the media and occasionally in government system. I think this is reasonable, for if there is no stability, there is no survival of the media organizations themselves.

This “mountain climbing” pattern seems to be most common in the press sector. The seven first-tier women leaders in the three newspaper groups in Guangzhou as shown in the earlier data are all veteran media professionals. In the TV sector, one of the three first-tier women leaders is a “mountain climbing” example. In radio stations, one of the

four first-tier women leaders followed this pattern. Even though the radio sector seems to be “helicopter landing”-dominant, Fei said that many women leaders in radio stations nationwide that she knows of advanced their career through their professional ranks in a typical “mountain climbing” style:

The majority of the women leaders in radio stations in the nation that I know of started their career as a rank-and-file radio program host, reporter, or editor. I can count for you many of them who have been journalism professionals. My case of “landing” is not that common.

Even though the four first-tier women leaders interviewed, Jun, Pan, Yao, and Zou, share the same politically-incorporated “mountain climbing” pattern, there are differences among them in terms of their motivations and concrete promotion formats used to appoint them. Pan and Yao advanced to their leadership positions through direct appointments, largely not of their own seeking and even to their own surprise. Pan, deputy editor of a large daily and former executive editor of a renowned national weekly newspaper, recalled her appointment experience in her previous post:

I never wanted to be in leadership positions. I liked my role of being a journalist. I did work very hard in being a good reporter, but I never wanted to climb career ladders in management sense. They chose me to be the executive editor. I do not know why they chose me. Probably they saw my potential, or they liked the work I did. When they asked me to take the leadership, I did not say no. I was thinking that they trusted me. They gave me such an important post, so I would try my best to do a good job.

Yao, who became the deputy editor of her large daily in her early 30s and remained as the youngest leader in the media circle for many years, had a similar experience:

I had a very good time just being a journalist. I worked very hard. I just enjoyed my work and never thought about promotion or career development kind of thing. I was first promoted to be the deputy director for the department of reporting in the newspaper. A few years later, they pulled me to the top leadership circle, to be the

deputy editor. I was the youngest one in that circle, in the whole media sector in the city. I was only thirty-one. To be honest, I was quite surprised that they chose me. It took me quite a while to adjust myself to the leadership role.

Different from Pan and Yao, Zou seems to be more self-motivated. She works for a popular national magazine with a circulation of 2.4 millions. Although her magazine does not fall within the three media sectors defined by this study and is not affiliated with any of the three newspaper groups, her appointment still involves the government's participation. Zou did not talk about her promotion process in detail, but she said she liked the magazine profession and very much wanted to advance her career. She started from the bottom and worked all her way up to the top, motivated by her high career aspiration.

Jun's experience is an example of a new promotion mechanism, "competition for promotion (*jingzheng shanggang*, 竞争上岗)." This new mode is a result of social reform aiming to introduce a more fair and transparent promotion mechanism in various governmental and social institutions. In this new system, Jun competed, along with other men and women, for the position that she wanted. She explained the process:

I was the vice president of a TV station specializing in economics coverage. It was merged with another local TV station in 2001 to form a larger and more comprehensive TV station. Of course, the whole leadership team needed to be reshuffled. They (the selection committee) adopted a different style of appointing and promoting leaders this time. They publicized all the leadership posts, including both the senior and middle level, and encouraged all individuals who met the credentials to apply and compete. Not only people from the two old stations like me could apply, government officials who are in the system of the Guangdong Broadcast Administration could apply as well. The selection process included a written exam and interviews. There were many top leaders interviewing our candidates, including the General Secretary of the Broadcast Administration, president of a TV station, some leaders from the provincial government, etc. There

were many competitors. It seemed all of them were more capable than me. I was not confident at all. After the oral interview, there was, of course, comprehensive investigation of your background, and evaluations from your supervisors, your colleagues, and your subordinates, followed by intensive discussion by the party committee of the government and the Broadcast Administration. I was quite lucky to be selected as the vice president after all these rounds. They later told me that I was the number one in the written exam and the number two in the interview. The individual who was appointed as the president of the station performed the best in the interview but was ranked right after me in the written exam.

Although this “competition for promotion” mode has started to become a well-received promotion mechanism in some media organizations (*China Journalism Yearbook*, 2005), according to some interviewees and my contact, it is still rarely used at the level of first-tier leadership. Its application mainly happens in the domain of second-tier leadership.

During the interview, when discussing the subject of first-tier leadership promotion, some interviewees mentioned a particular policy – gender policy – the government uses to ensure women’s participation in high-level leadership. This policy, somewhat like the affirmative action policy in the United States, insists that women should represent a certain percentage in various leadership structures in society. The percentage varies depending on particular situations. The minimum requirement as encouraged by the government is to have at least one women leader in the governing body in governmental and social organizations (Ding, 2006).

Gender policy operates at the first-tier leadership level in both “helicopter landing” and “mountain climbing” patterns, but more in the former than the latter. According to the data of the overall women’s participation in media leadership in Guangzhou, each of the three TV stations has only one woman, including Jun, in its governing body. Jun,

however, as just explained, was promoted through the “competition for promotion” mode, mostly depending on her own performance in the competition. She therefore is not the result of the gender policy. The other two women, according to my interviewees, are the beneficiaries of the policy. Two of the four first-tier women leaders in the radio sector were promoted due to the consideration of the gender policy. The situation in the newspaper groups is not as clear-cut as it is in the broadcast media. One of the newspaper groups only has one woman in its governing body, while the other two both have three. It is not clear any of them is the result of the gender policy. It is believed that usually the first one appointed to an exclusively-male leadership team was promoted based on this gender policy consideration. Gender policy therefore is often regarded by the public as a token policy.

None of the women interviewed believed that they were promoted based on the gender policy. Three of them argued that this policy helps to get more women to participate in leadership structures. Jun is an endorser:

I think the gender policy helps. I feel now they are trying their best to create opportunities for women to get into higher-level positions. There indeed is room for women.

The practice of this gender policy ensures that women will not be absent in first-tier leadership in the media sector, which has been proved by the data. It, however, has negative effects on women’s career advancement as well, which will be discussed later.

Although the government directly controls the distribution of first-tier leadership posts in the media, the second-tier leadership promotion is largely left to the discretion of media organizations themselves. The appointment of leaders in second-tier media units, such as president, vice president, executive editor, deputy editor of offspring newspapers

and magazines, or directors and deputy directors of various TV and radio channels, is determined by the governing body of the first-tier media organizations including the three newspaper groups, the three TV stations, and the two radio stations.

The promotion patterns at the second-tier leadership level vary from one media organization to another. I do not have specific data on promotion mechanisms within each media organization in Guangzhou. According to my interviewees' description, it seems there are two general patterns, one is the aforementioned "competition for promotion" and one is the older style of direct appointment. In the "competition for promotion" pattern, the governing body of first-tier media organizations publicizes vacant second-tier leadership posts and invites all qualified candidates to compete by following a set of open-test procedures. In the direct appointment pattern, the governing body of first-tier media organizations directly selects someone it regards as competent and qualified to take second-tier leadership posts.

Among the fifteen second-tier women leaders interviewed, four of them (Cao, Gan, Kun, and Tan) followed the "competition for promotion" pattern, while the other eleven were all directly appointed by first-tier leaders. I do not have details of how the four women advanced through open competition because they did not talk about the concrete procedures. Kun, editorial board member of a metro paper, said when she returned to her newspaper after maternity leave, she found that she had missed the "competition for promotion" occasion which usually is held every three years in her media organization. Every leadership position was filled, so she had to wait for another three years to compete. Kun, however, was able to pick up a leadership position in the next round of "competition for promotion" event in her newspaper.

Among the eleven second-tier women leaders who were directly appointed to their leadership posts, several shared detail of their promotion stories. Nan launched a magazine with the help of the former mayor of Guangzhou and was appointed the executive editor when the magazine started. The magazine now is affiliated with one of the newspaper groups. Bai was asked by the president of her radio station to be in charge of a music channel. The president regarded Bai as the only person in the station who has the ability to turn the money-losing channel to a market success. Dai, deputy editor of a metro paper, was persuaded by the executive editor to join the editorial board. He said she should not delay her career progress any more for her family commitment. No one's promotion story, however, is as dramatic as Hou's:

I was the director of the center for evening editing in my large daily. I was working in the editing office that day. The president of the daily called me to his office and told me that he wanted me to be the executive deputy editor of the sports newspaper the daily just claimed from a governmental sport organization. I was very shocked and immediately said no. I did not know the field of sports well. He said you had to take the position. There is no room for negotiation. The situation of the sports daily was very complicated and he needed someone to take the lead right away. He said he had already called for the plenary meeting of the employees at the sports daily to announce my appointment. Ten minutes later, he announced it at that meeting. I was sitting in the boss's office of the sports daily the same evening.

Hou's story of course is an extreme example of the direct appointment pattern. According to my interviewees' report, this same president of the large daily, who was also the president of the newspaper group, promoted a good number of women as second-tier leaders in his media organization.

No matter which promotion pattern they followed, most of these fifteen second-tier women leaders all started as a rank-and-file reporter or editor, and progressed through

positions such as chief reporter, regional editor or copy editor to posts that put them in charge of one division such as the department of reporting, department of editing, editorial center, etc., and eventually advanced to their current second-tier leadership posts.

There is no data to show which pattern, “competition for promotion” or direct appointment, is more beneficial for women to advance their career. It seems the “competition for promotion” mode provides women with more control of their own career development, which might help to remove some of the social barriers (to be discussed later) that have prevented women from reaching for the top. This is a domain to be investigated in the future. The data on the overall distribution of women leaders in the Guangzhou media show that women’s participation at the second-tier leadership level is very uneven among different media organizations. This probably is because media organizations employ different promotion mechanisms to select second-tier leaders as discussed above, and every media organization’s governing body may have a different attitude or policy on women’s participation in leadership. I learned that the South China TV station, which has the highest rate of women’s participation in second-tier leadership in the TV sector (42.1%), employs the “competition for promotion” mode, while the other two TV stations do not. This, however, is only a single example, which can not be used to draw any firm conclusion.

Women leaders in Internet media companies may have very different career advancement patterns. These companies are private enterprises whose promotion system is independent of the government and performs in a way that is more congruent with organizational structure common in the private business sector. The two women leaders in Internet media companies that I interviewed have not gone through the promotion

steps in their companies because when they joined the company they were appointed as mid-level leaders in the positions that they have now. Both of them worked in the newspaper sector for more than five years and achieved certain management credentials before transferring to the Internet sector, which helped them obtain directly the leadership positions there. I thus have no data to show the career advancement patterns of women leaders in the sector of new media.

INQUIRY DOMAIN II: BEING WOMEN LEADERS IN THE MEDIA IN GUANGZHOU

This inquiry domain contains two research questions:

RQ2: What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the leadership traits of women leaders in the media, compared to their male counterparts?

RQ3: How do Guangzhou women media leaders balance family and career?

RQ2. What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the leadership traits of women leaders in the media, compared to their male counterparts?

Every woman leader is different. Sometimes, the difference between individual women leaders is even bigger than the difference between individual women and individual men leaders (Kanter, 1993). But taken together, women leaders as a group do present some common traits that are quite different from men leaders as a group. When asked to reflect the differences between women and men in terms of leadership style and approach, each of the women leaders had something to say. Some recognized more differences, some fewer, but none of them denied there is difference. The traits of women being media leaders can be divided into two categories: advantageous and disadvantageous traits. There, certainly, is no clear-cut standard as to what is advantageous and what is disadvantageous. Sometimes, advantageous traits become

disadvantages in certain situation, as we will see from specific discussions later. This dichotomic categorization, however, helps to organize the analysis of the data.

Advantageous Traits

The advantageous traits of women being media leaders, listed by women interviewees collectively, include: being caring, encouraging, and tolerant; being collaborative and not power-oriented; being highly responsible, persistent, and loyal.

Being Caring, Encouraging, and Tolerant

This is the trait mentioned by almost all the women as the most salient trait that women have as leaders, compared to men. They said that women often pay more attention to others' feelings, are easier to get close to, and often make the working environment feel more like a family. Women are more positive and prefer to praise subordinates more, which help to build up smooth relationships with subordinates and stimulate their working momentum.

Tan, deputy editor of a metro paper, said her colleagues have a close emotional tie with her:

I think women have a natural ability to be connected with others. I can feel that my colleagues have deep connection with me. This I think is because I am a woman. They feel it is easier to be close to me. They may also have deep connection with men leaders as well. But because I am a woman, they tend to let me know that they are emotionally close to me or they come to tell me that they enjoy being working with me.

Hou, president of a sports daily, said being tolerant is one of the reasons that she gains trust from her subordinates:

My bottom line is the good will of my subordinates. As long as they have real good will for the newspaper, even they disagree with me on various issues, even they shout at me, I tolerate it.

Some of my male subordinates used to disagree with me vehemently when I first took the position. They could get very angry when debating with me on various issues. But I understood they all have good intentions for the newspaper, so I always listened to them first and then explained my plan thoroughly afterwards. They later on came to me to thank me for my tolerance. After a while, we know each other very well, so we do not need to explain too much. We know we are all trying our best for the organization and for the newspaper. Now I have a very good harmonious environment to work in.

Bai's music radio channel has a very good atmosphere, which I could feel while interviewing her. She said she indeed tried very hard to create a family-like environment for every one in the channel:

I believe that only working in an emotionally warm and connected environment can a team or a person reach its fullest potential. When I assign tasks or when I have staff meetings, I am serious. But in other occasions, I am their sister. Every time I came back from job traveling, I always brought back small gifts and snacks for them. They are all very talented people, hosts and journalists. But they all feel like we are in the same family. Being a leader of this small team, I want to affect others with my warm personality.

Yue, vice president of a metro paper, argued that women leaders being subtle and detail-oriented has its particular function for the media profession:

I regard the media profession as a profession of people. Every journalist or editor has his or her particular style, talent, and persona. You can not manage them the same way as you manage a typical business. To win their minds and hearts, you have to be very subtle and pay attention to detail.

Being Collaborative and Not Power-Oriented

Women interviewees mentioned that women leaders pay more attention to team work than men, which often means women leaders know how to make better use of human resources. Nan is very proud of this quality which she believes women commonly share:

I think I know how to stimulate others' enthusiasm in work. I pay attention to the different characters of everyone and put them in appropriate positions and grant them my full trust. I respect my colleagues and my subordinates. I really believe in them. Once you build up this collaborative working environment, everyone is trying his or her best, and leading the organization becomes a very easy thing.

More than half of the women interviewees said women leaders often are more concerned about having work done for the organization instead of pushing their own promotion or gaining power. Wei argued that women's leadership style is distinct because of this selfless focus:

Studying women's leadership might help to change the meaning and value of leadership. For women, the task of being leaders usually is not to get power or social status. It often is to contribute what they can to have work done in an ideal way. I think we should try hard to discover the special qualities or advantages women have as leaders.

Hou, a strong leader in charge of a sports newspaper with a large male staff, said she did not want others to call her president:

I always miss the time some twenty years ago when I was just a reporter. All of us in the daily did not emphasize administrative ranks. We did not call each other by rank title. We directly used first names. I like that atmosphere. Now, I am the president of the newspaper. They all call me president. I always tell them I prefer them to call me my name. It makes me feel that we are all in the same group and we are making effort together for the newspaper.

Highly Responsible, Persistent, and Loyal

More than half of the women leaders interviewed emphasized women's high commitment to their organizations as an important advantage. They said women are often very responsible in taking care of the working situation, especially when the organization is facing difficulties or a downhill trend in the contemporary competitive media environment. Wei was very proud of women's sense of responsibilities:

Giving me a media company that is facing difficulty in the market, I believe I can endure the difficulty and eventually bring it out of the adversity. I strongly believe in women's persistence and commitment. I will devote all my time and energy. It is like a general receiving command in danger and trying his/her best to fight. I just fully believe that I can do it.

Wei's view was shared by Yao, whose media organization used to be very prestigious but now also faces development difficulty due to the market pressure:

As you might know, my newspaper is going downhill recently. We are under huge pressure. Some of my colleagues left and some are thinking of leaving, but I think I will never choose to leave. I feel it is my responsibility to be with the newspaper no matter how it is. I have deep emotional ties with the newspaper. Some people came to try to talk me to leave and get much better pay somewhere else. I never wavered. It is just not right to leave.

Hou said in the large daily group that her sports newspaper belongs to there are more men but women tend to stand out more. She said that is because women are very persistent, and endure adversity better, which makes them exceptional. Jun argued that being responsible is the innate quality of women. She said she has endured a lot of difficulties when her station had a very bad time. Guo, who works for an Internet media company, also regarded persistence as the most distinct quality women have:

Concerning women's advantages over men, I think it is persistence. My passion can go very long. I carry through my ideas and turn them all the way to actions. Women often endure stress better because they have already endured a lot of stress in their own domestic lives.

Yue also believes in women's persistence and ability in coping with stress. She vividly described her understandings:

A woman is like an elastic band. When she is facing adversity, she has the elasticity to endure it and to recover. You have to be quite careful when being a leader in today's media. On the one hand, you are responsible for the party's propaganda function. On the other hand, you have to face market pressure to keep your

organization performing well as a company. The leader therefore often finds himself or herself facing the conflict. He or she might break the news for the market based on belief in professionalism but at the same irritate the party, or he/she might make a big advertising client angry by publishing negative coverage about the company, which might result in the client taking away all his advertising commitment in the future. It is inevitable to run into these kinds of problems. So, as a leader, you find yourself constantly in the hot water of these criticism and threats. You have to negotiate, to apologize, to argue, to make both sides happy to follow your way. Women are better in this aspect than men. I myself have often been involved in these embarrassing moments, but I have the elasticity and persistence to handle them, like a soft bamboo stem. I found my male colleagues often break easily like hard tree branches.

Because of their sense of responsibility, women are often very loyal to their organizations. Five interviewees regarded women's stability in and attachment to their workplace as an advantage to the development of their media organizations. China used to be a society where job mobility was very rare. Individuals usually were confined to certain work units from their initial entrance to their final retirement. For many people, this is not the case anymore. In contemporary China, changing jobs has gradually become a common practice. Men tend to change jobs much more often than women. Women prefer to stay in one workplace and concentrate on developing themselves there rather than looking around for a better place to go. This career stability and loyalty help media organizations to make good use of their investment.

Pan recognized women's advantage in this aspect, but she also pointed out that this advantage at the same time reveals a disadvantage for women:

Yes, compared to men, women indeed are much more loyal to their work. But this is also related to their disadvantages. Women are more concerned about keeping what they have and often are afraid of change. They do not want to take too much risk. The mentality is like this: if they go to another new workplace, will

they be able to advance and grow as they already have done here?
This is quite intimidating.

Tan did not agree that being loyal is women's advantage in first-tier leadership. She said men as top leaders also are very stable in their positions. She said the difference in loyalty only work on the middle level or rank-and-file level. In first-tier leadership, men may attach themselves to the position even more than women because they take the positions as a power base. To the contrary, women might leave the position if she needs to sacrifice her career for her family.

Disadvantageous Traits

Nan, a very charming and capable woman herself, told me the "secret" of being a successful woman leader:

I think it is not that difficult to be an excellent woman leader as long as you know what your innate shortcomings are and then take relevant actions to get rid of them. Even though these shortcomings are innate, they can be discarded as long as you are conscious of them and make effort to overcome them. You just need to be a little bit more open, a little bit less sensitive, a little bit more decisive, you soon show that you are different.

So, what are those common "shortcomings" women might have as Nan believed and should try to overcome as Nan suggested? Although all of my interviewees tried to identify disadvantageous traits of women being media leaders and all of them did come up with more or less something, it seems this is the domain where they have most disagreements with each other. Some traits regarded by some women as disadvantageous were completely rejected by others. And most of the women interviewed, when listing some traits that they think are disadvantageous and might be commonly shared by women, often emphasized that I should not take their definitions as generalization for they know there are exceptions. The most salient two disadvantageous traits mentioned

by the women leaders are: lacking strategic ability and bigger vision; not being decisive enough.

Lacking Strategic Ability and Bigger Vision

These are the disadvantageous traits that women interviewees agreed on the most. Tan held the strongest opinion. She said although she recognized all of the advantages women might have as leaders, she believes the most important quality for being a top first-tier leader is strategic vision and logical analytical ability. She said a leader needs to be particularly sharp in terms of strategic planning. As a leader in today's competitive media environment in China, one especially needs to have broader vision to be able to design the future development of his or her media organization. Tan, however, did not blame women for not having enough strategic power. She regarded that as the result of women's life experience. Jun's observation is similar to Tan's:

I think women tend to concern themselves more about their present tasks in hand. They might be able to see the first step of the future, but not the second and the third. It is not because a woman does not want to. It is because she lacks the consciousness to see that picture. At least her consciousness is relatively weaker than men. When you are a top leader, you have to take into account many relevant social factors to make a wise decision. The broadness of your vision really determines whether you are a good decision-maker or not. There still is innate quality difference between women and men. Many women, including myself, are not as strong as men in these aspects, probably because we have not been trained to think in that manner or we lack good guidance.

Nan said one of the disadvantages of men is they often ignore details, but when they are in first-tier leadership, it becomes an advantage because their leadership situation needs them to pay more attention to large issues. Women tend to pay too much attention

to details and often are perfectionist in details, which may prevent them from having bigger vision.

When I raised the concern of women's deficiencies in these leadership qualities to other women, most women agreed more or less except for two, Pan and Zou. They both gave the example of Hu Shuli, who is one of the most famous leaders in the Chinese media. She is the executive editor of a business and finance magazine in Beijing, *Caijing* (财经), which has had boldly covered many sensitive issues concerning China's economic development. Hu was awarded the "Star of Asia" designation by the *Business Week* magazine in 2001 and was named *World Press Review's* 2003 International Editor of the Year. The U.S. magazine *Foreign Policy* recently named her as one of the top 100 public intellectuals in the world in May 2008. Pan took Hu as an example to argue that women can be very strong strategically:

Yes, in general, women might be weaker than men in terms of vision and strategy, but that is not the universal norm. There are women who are very strong in this aspect. We all know Hu Shuli. Who can say that she is not as strong as man? She is in any case stronger than most men.

Not Being Decisive Enough

A couple of women also mentioned that women often are not as decisive as men, which can be regarded as disadvantageous. Again, Jun took herself as an example:

I think I am not that decisive. I often pay attention to this difference among women and men. I observe and compare and I do find I am not as decisive as some of my male colleagues. But this is very individual. There probably are women who are very decisive. But at least in my own TV station, I did not find any woman being very decisive. They are all in the same level as me.

Tan said she is more decisive than people expected. Some of her male colleagues are also surprised at her decisiveness, which they regard as rare among women. Tan said she

is very proud of her “masculine” traits of being decisive. She believes that women being not as decisive as men is the result of socialization:

In many aspects, I am not very feminine. Yes, you can say I have a lot of masculine traits. Actually, women have the potential of being masculine, but traditional culture and social value have constrained the development of masculine traits in women. Over the years, the potential disappears. My colleagues often said that I am very decisive, which is rare among women. But who said a woman could not be decisive? We are trained to be feminine. And the social image of women is women often are indecisive because being indecisive seems to be equated to being gentle. Being gentle is what women should be according to conventional wisdom. Therefore, over the year, the masculine “decisiveness” in women faded. I am proud that I have it.

Some of the other disadvantageous traits women interviewees mentioned are over-sensitive, being petty, too emotional. They, however, often did not give detailed elaboration or examples of those disadvantageous traits.

RQ3. How do Guangzhou women media leaders balance career and family?

According to the themes covered in the earlier literature review chapters, the work/family balance issue is the area where women in the West exhibit their most uncertainty and conflict. This is the reason this study devotes one full research question to this subject.

Women interviewees’ attitudes and experiences concerning work/family balance issue are very different. Women in their late 40s and early 50s tend to not have significant work/family conflict. Their children often are reaching their maturity, so these women do not need to spend much time or energy to take care of them. Women in their 30s and early 40s are more anxious about balancing family responsibilities and work performance. The majority of women also get social support and domestic help. Some of

them shared their particular strategies of balancing these two most important domains in their lives.

Working Identity and Family Conflict

Working is an taken-for-granted social identity for Chinese women. All women leaders interviewed have never broken their career path due to their childbearing or child-raising needs. In most cases, their only absence from work was the three-month-or-so maternity leave granted by the government (Tan et al., 2006). Yao recalled vividly her experience in pregnancy in the midst of her working career:

While I was in my eighth-month of pregnancy, I was still highly committed to my job as a reporter. At that time, we had no other transportation tools but the bicycle. I remember I needed to lift my big belly to ride bicycle to do interviews. Some of my interviewees were quite moved by my commitment, but that was very common among women journalists at the time. One of my colleagues gave birth on the day when she was riding bicycle to do her interview. She felt the labor pain, so after the interview, she rode her bicycle to the hospital and gave birth very soon. A couple of days later when she met her colleagues, they were so surprised to see there was no big belly anymore.

For Guo, it seems one can not have it all. She said a woman who wants to have career success must sacrifice part of her family time:

You have to sacrifice something. Have to be bitter first then sweet follows. I believe any woman who has achieved certain career status must have sacrificed. Only after she reaches certain level, she can start to balance family and career. A person's energy is limited anyway.

The majority of the women, however, do not think their family lives have been hampered significantly by their work commitment. But they agreed that their demanding work as a journalist or a leader does interfere with their family commitment to a certain degree or in certain stage. Pan analyzes her role in family and work:

When I was a reporter, sometimes I would get urgent calls to rush to do reporting, so I could not take care of my family in the way I should. After I assumed the deputy editor role, I often need to cope with extra stress, which sometimes worries my family members because they feel they want to share my psychological burden. And, sometimes, being a leader, I have more social networking events than before. For instance, I probably can not have meals with my family at least once every week. They have to put up with me. Thank goodness, they do.

Taking care of children seems to be the main demanding family commitment and often conflicts with one's work the most. Fei does not need to worry about her daughter any more, who now is an adult, but she said many of her woman leader friends do:

As a woman leader, the main family responsibility is not housework. I think her salary is good enough to hire maids. She worries most about how to raise her child well. It demands a lot of time. This is where the real conflict rises.

Bai is divorced and used to have a very busy schedule. She said she felt very guilty toward her son:

I used to live with my parents after I divorced. My job often required me to frequently travel to other cities. Every time when I left, my mother would carry my son to the door to say bye to me. Every time he cried, saying "mom please come back soon," I cried together with him. I always felt guilty toward my son. But I had to take care of my work for that is the way for us to survive and to fill the hole in my heart left behind by the divorce.

Pan pointed out the dilemma between work and family and the importance of having a supportive family:

If there is conflict between family and work, I think you need to first fulfill your work needs. They are urgent and sometime they influence the organization's future and your colleagues' work as well. You can not put aside your work to take care of your family. That is your social responsibility. Family members sometimes can help to share part of your family responsibilities. So, for women leaders, having a cooperative family is very important. If the husband is self-centered and believes in androcentrism, the conflict

between family commitment and work demand will become quite hard to solve.

Social Support System

The majority of the married women leaders said they do have a supportive family. They attributed the smooth development of their career to the help they get from their husbands, and often times from their own parents and parents-in-law who in Chinese cultural tradition often help to raise their grandchildren. Wei expressed her gratitude:

I do not think I missed any important stage in my family or my child's life. I have fulfilled my role of being a good mother. I think it is partially because I am lucky to have my parents-in-law sometimes take care of my kid and some of the domestic work. They live with us, which lifts me out of much of the family commitment. If that was not the case, if my family needs me to do more domestic work, I probably would need to slow down my career to a certain degree to cope with the family situation.

Yao gets similar help from her own mother:

My mother is a doctor. After I gave birth to my daughter, she took care of her very well. I often resort to her for various help in raising my daughter. My husband shares some domestic work with me as well. I do not really feel the huge burden as many other women might face. I know that family commitment can be a big deal for many women. I think I am just quite lucky.

Tan was very guilty over her insufficient role of being a mother. She thanks her husband for being the major caretaker:

I gave a speech three years ago in the "competition for promotion" occasion. I said I was very guilty for I was not a good wife and not a good mother. This is how I defined my family role. My work of being a deputy editor leaves me little time to spend with my family. I have to say "thanks to heaven" for giving me such a caring husband who is willing to take care of the family. I do not think that a mother has to spend more time with the child than the father, but I have not even fulfilled one third of the time.

Sacrificing Career for Family

Even though many of the women tend to get social support from their family members, some of them still have to sacrifice their careers, at least temporarily, for family responsibilities. Wei just made a choice to slow down her career development due to her son's schooling needs:

They are thinking about promoting me to the executive editor position, but I would say no if they do ask me. My son is entering his high-school years next month. The following three years are very important for his future development because he is preparing for the highly-competitive national university entrance examination. I want to spend more time to be with him. I will hold back my career for a while. I am a very dedicated person. If I do agree to take the executive editor role, I know I will fully dedicate myself to my work, which certainly will occupy much of my private time. I can not do it now because my son needs my time. For now, I would like to save it for my son. There will be more opportunities in the future and I am very confident in my capability. My son's high-school years only happen once in his life-time and he needs my attention to perform to his utmost. That is a key period in his personal development. If I do not do that for him, I will regret it for the rest of my life.

Dai was about to be promoted to a mid-level leadership position when she got pregnant. She had to slow down her career. After giving birth to her son, she returned to work but did not want to take a leadership position anymore for she wanted to spend more time with her child. She chose to be a rank-and-file editor for quite a while. Then about five years later, the executive editor talked her into joining the editorial board. She accepted. Kun shared a similar story. She returned to her paper after maternity leave only to find that there was no mid-level position left for her. So she had to start over. But she was strong enough to make herself stand out again very soon and join the editorial board in a couple of years.

Strategies of Balancing Career and Family

A couple of women shared their strategies of coping with the conflict between career and family. Wei's secret is being exceptionally diligent and grasping any time that she can make use of:

My understanding is that if you want to have it all, good family life and successful career, you need to be very diligent and know how to artfully arrange your time and life. For instance, when I get back home after work, I start to do more than one thing at the same time. I will turn on radio first and then start cleaning floors or cooking. I have a radio in every room, so that wherever my domestic work calls for me to be in the house, I have access to news coverage to keep myself informed all the time. You know it is very important to keep up with the news all the time when being a media leader. Most evenings I accompany my son doing his homework, being with him in the same room and answering his questions from time to time. I also do my own work over the computer. This way, I not only keep in communication with my child, I also give him a good example that I am working hard instead of wasting time.

For Nan, a simplified life is the way:

I asked myself not to be too attached to my child and my husband, like many women in my age do. Being yourself is important for women. I tend to take it easy when it comes to household stuff. For instance, if I have no time to cook, I will ask my husband and daughter to eat together in cafeteria. Training your child to be independent so you do not have to spend that much time to always look after him or her. And, how to cultivate the relationship with one's husband? I believe that no man wants to only have a realistic woman. So, trying to be a little bit more romantic and enrich the relationship by doing something special. Keep on learning and let him feel your importance. Let him share your ideas and get his support.

Many women, however, have to struggle on their own or depend on their family members' help, just as Jun pointed out:

When it comes to family and career conflict, it is very individually based. There is no common road to take. You have to adjust by yourself depending on your own situation. Everyone is different and every family is different.

Potential Problem in Marriage

Traditional Chinese cultural value believes that men should be stronger than women in terms of social status and ability (Tao et al., 2005). There is concern in Chinese society that when a woman's social status is higher than her husband, the relationship between the couple probably will be in jeopardy. Hou, who is single in her early 50s, said this kind of cultural value is not rare when talking about her personal experience of looking for a partner:

It is believed in China that a first-grade man matches a second-grade woman, and a second-grade man finds a third-grade woman. So, the bottom-grade woman is still able to find a man better than her, but ironically, the best woman has no man to match with. It is common that men want women to be lower than them.

I asked most of the interviewees whether their status as media leaders has created certain tension in their family lives. More than half of them agreed that this conflict does exist in Chinese society, but none of them think they themselves have had this negative effect caused by their career success. They either have husbands whose careers are also in a very successful track or who do not regard their wives' career success as a threat to their ego.

Fei, president of a radio station, said she knew some of the Guangzhou women media leaders do have this kind of problem. Nan said women leaders themselves should make effort to adjust their role at home, being an equal wife instead of taking back home the trace of being a leader to command her husband around.

Wei did not agree this is the main problem among couples. She raised another concern contradictory to this one:

I do not see the threat to family relations if a woman's career is more successful than the husband. Women are more tolerant, so

even when they are quite successful in their work, they usually do not impose the pressure on their husbands to push him to be that successful as well. To the opposite, I think if a husband is very successful and the wife keeps staying in low status and does not grow intellectually as he does, there might be a danger to the marriage. I have seen a lot of examples of that happening to my friends and colleagues. In contemporary China, the society is quite open and successful men are exposed to a lot of attractive women outside of their marriage. There is more danger in this case.

INQUIRY DOMAIN III: REASONS FOR WOMEN'S UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA LEADERSHIP IN GUANGZHOU

This inquiry domain includes one research question:

RQ4: What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the reasons contributing to the under-representation of women in media leadership in Guangzhou?

As discussed in the earlier chapter, the overall percentage of women in media leadership in Guangzhou presented by this study, if compared with the national percentage reported by the 1995 survey, seems to suggest an increase of women leaders in the media. The percentage in itself, however, is still far from satisfactory. Women's presence in first-tier leadership in the Guangzhou media is only 16.1%, about one sixth, and 24.4% in second-tier leadership, less than one quarter.

Other than one woman (Fei, president of a radio station), all of the women leaders interviewed recognized the issue of under-representation and pointed out that women leaders tend to congregate more in second-tier leadership positions than in the first tier. Most of them said they did not realize this insufficiency until being probed by this study. Five of them said once they recognized this problem, the reality of women's under-representation seemed very prominent.

During the interview, women leaders tried to identify the reasons for women's under-representation in media leadership. It is interesting that most of the women interviewed, when being asked to discuss the reasons, first stated that Chinese society is still a male-dominant or androcentric society (*Nanquan Shehui*, 男权社会). They often stopped short of explaining what the concrete symptoms of the male-dominant society in China are, but they were able to mention social problems here and there during the interview conversations that can be placed under the general umbrella of the phrase "male-dominant society." Overall, the reasons contributing to women's under-representation in media leadership as defined by these women leaders mainly include: gender stereotypes and social expectation placed on women, women's modest self-concept and career aspiration, women's family responsibilities and double burden, side effect of gender policy and stagnant promotion mechanism, male-oriented social networking, inadequate number of women in the pipeline, alternative fulfillment in the journalism profession, negative feeling about leadership, and women's deficiencies in leadership qualities.

Gender Stereotypes and Social Expectation Placed on Women

More than half of interviewees pointed out that the social expectation placed on women in Chinese society, most salient in traditional Chinese culture, is one of the main reasons preventing the career advancement of women to the leadership level. Jun's understanding was shared by many interviewees:

There are somethings very deep in Chinese society that are very difficult to change; some traditional cultural values. For instance, it is believed that the most important role for a woman is her family role. She does not need to try that hard to develop her career; it is better for her to find a good husband; it is most crucial to have a

happy family, etc. Those social values, of course, have effect on women themselves.

Tan believed the influence of this social expectation starts very early in one's development and continues throughout the whole education process. She gave an example of her own childhood:

My parents both are teachers. They always said to my brother and me that son and daughter are essentially the same and women and men should be equal. But in fact, they hold different expectations for him and me. For instance, my brother often brought back home a lot of his classmates from school, and my parents thought it was just normal; I did not bring back classmates, but they regarded that as perfectly okay. If I also brought back that number of classmates, they would think it was strange and should be corrected. So, I think women and men received a different set of education and guidance. At least, it is very different in China. It is this difference that accelerated the cleavage between them. Women tend to be more and more feminine, and men are inclined to be more masculine and achieve more of the qualities that are required by leadership positions.

Pan said gender is indeed an element when considering promotion:

When top leaders consider candidates for promotion, they sometimes will inevitably consider reasons related to gender. It is very common. For instance, they assume that women may need to spend more time on their family or may be easily distracted by their childrearing responsibilities, so that women may not be able to fully devote their time and energy to work as men do. Therefore, when they consider promotion, if they believe that the woman candidate is in a stage of greater family commitment, they might promote a man candidate instead.

Pan continued to point out that this sometimes can be a misconception. She said women's commitment to family life does not mean that they do not have the potential to be a good leader. Rather, she said, women can still be good leaders if they are given the opportunity. They just do not seek leadership out on their own. This has created a misunderstanding among leaders, both male and female, who have the promotion power

to assume that women are no longer able to commit as much time and energy as they were before their marriage or giving birth. Pan drew her conclusion based on her many years' experience of working with women journalists:

I have been in my newspaper for more than twenty years. I have seen many women journalists developing their career in the organization. They are very strong intellectual women. We, including women and men, tend to think that giving birth is time-consuming and troublesome, and women would slow down their career after having children. The reality is often not as serious as people thought. The maximum time women take off or slow down to have children is about one year, from their late pregnancy to early breast-feeding. Many of them then recover for a full-fledged work schedule. I think some even become a better professional after being a mother, probably because they are more mature or they understand life or society better by assuming the role of mother. Anyway, I think it is not fair to assume women would and should slow down their career development after having children. It is a stereotype, but we just take it for granted, men and women, so we stop giving women more challenges and opportunities.

Pan's perception is justifiable. Most of the women leaders interviewed are married and have children, and almost all of them took their leadership roles after they had children. Situations, however, do vary. Many individual women do face greater family responsibilities which have hampered their career development. This subject is discussed later.

Women leaders interviewed also mentioned that the society may have doubts about women's abilities. Women often are regarded not as capable as men for leadership positions. Mei, deputy editor of an entertainment weekly, said this is particular true in high-level leadership:

Looking around, I can see there are a good number of women at my level. People may think women are competent enough to be mid-level leaders. The higher the level, however, the fewer the women. One of the main reasons probably is that people start to doubt women's capability as top leaders.

Hou, president of a sports daily, said she was very sure some men have prejudices against women. She said she dares to challenge the gender bias and competes with men to see who is stronger in reality. Being a very capable leader, Hou was mentioned by a couple of women interviewees as a good example of women being strong.

In sum, the main gender stereotypes most women leaders referred to are social expectations that call for women to have greater family responsibilities and lesser occupational achievement, and social perceptions of women's lower abilities. These social expectations have greatly influenced women's self concept and career aspiration, which were frequently mentioned by some of the interviewees as reasons resulting in the scarcity of women in media leadership.

Women's Modest Self-Concept and Career Aspiration

Women media professionals, in the eyes of women media leaders, are very dedicated to their work and loyal to their profession. This, however, does not mean that they all have high career aspirations. A majority of the interviewees pointed out that when it comes to setting their career goals, many women tend to define themselves in a traditional, family-oriented way because the society expects them to do so. They said most women do not have strong aspirations to climb the career ladder as men do. Pan observed this social constrain on women:

For most women, it is hard to go beyond social expectations. The society anticipates women to take care of their families and men to take care of their careers. Women, constrained by this social belief system, tend to confine themselves to a narrower social role. They do not look around for bolder working roles. Many of our women leaders were chosen to take their leadership positions not on their own will. We often do not make our own conscious effort to get promoted. This is quite hard to change. It is deeply embedded in social value system. China no doubt is still a male-dominant society in this sense.

Bai, director of a music radio channel, is divorced. She said one of the reasons that has driven her to work so hard is because her family life is not very happy:

My view might be very narrow. I always feel for a woman the most important thing is her family. But I do not have a family that I can attach to for happiness. I could not keep it running normally. So I have to find an alternative focal point in my work.

More than half of the women leaders interviewed noticed that many women tend to lose their career development momentum especially after having children. Although women can be very committed to their work, they also seek hard to be fulfilled in their traditional family roles. Pan again recognized this common thread among her female colleagues and subordinates:

We women in the newspaper often have our casual talks. I often hear my female colleagues talking about their kids getting admission to good universities or their husbands having made progress in their jobs, and how relieved they are to know that their family members are doing well. So, many women are more content in the security and warmth their family lives can provide them. They think more about the development of their husbands and children rather than themselves. It seems for some of them, once they find comfort in family life, their career advancement is no longer that important to them.

Women's Family Responsibilities and Double Burden

During the interviews, women leaders gave various examples of how women have to sacrifice their careers to meet the need of raising a good family. They argued that in women's career development trajectory, there often is a gap when women have to slow down for family responsibility. Due to this gap, women tend to lose some opportunities of getting to the pipeline on time for promotion. Men have no gap of this kind so they often get more opportunities.

Tan felt very pity for one of her colleagues who she thought has the potential to grow to be a very strong leader:

I think many women still are bounded by their families. I had a very good mid-level manager. She was the key in her department and her position was very important. She told me that she had to slow down. She said she has not taken good care of her kids for a few years. Now her son is going to enter elementary school and she must look after him well. She could not take the responsibility of her job anymore. So, I ended up having to transfer her to a more relaxed post.

Cao, deputy editor of a metro paper, shared her story of how she had to adjust her career path to adapt to her new role of being a mother:

After my maternity leave, I returned to my position of being the deputy director of the department of regional news in my metro paper. They kept the position for me. The schedule was very demanding and the work was very stressful, same as in the past. I remember that I often needed to stay in my office discussing coverage plan and layout design even after midnight. My mother and the maid had to carry my baby to my office for me to feed her. It eventually reached to the point that I could not cope with it anymore. So, I asked my boss to transfer me back to the large daily where the working environment was relatively more relaxing. I, however, had to start over as a rank-and-file editor for there was no leadership position left. It was not easy for me to adjust to that.

Cao, however, managed to advance in the large daily and five years later she returned to the metro paper to be the deputy editor.

Yao compared Chinese women's role as working professionals to their Western counterparts and argued that Chinese women actually have a double burden they can not unload. She expressed her concern:

Chinese women have no choices like those enjoyed by women in Japan or other Western countries. Chinese women, after Chairman Mao's slogan of "holding up the half sky," do not want to be off work. No Chinese woman is willing to give up her job just because she needs to give birth. We have no concept like that. Most Chinese women can not accept and have no luxury of being a full-

time mother. Chinese women therefore actually have a double burden. On the one hand, they need to endure the burden caused by child bearing and raising. On the other hand, they need to be committed to their work. There is no middle road for them to take.

Because of this double burden, a few women leaders said Chinese women have to shoulder more responsibilities and stress than men. Hou, although herself single, talked about the common situation that working women often face in China:

Women have to contribute more in order to make both family and work meet social expectations. When there is some problem in family life, people tend to blame the woman, saying that she has not fulfilled her family responsibilities. When women devote much time to the family, they receive criticism saying that they are not as dedicated to work as needed. It is tough.

Side Effect of Gender Policy and Stagnant Promotion Mechanism

Although as discussed earlier, gender policy helps to prevent women from being absent in leadership structures, it has negative side effects. Five women interviewed said that the policy is a double-edged sword and is indeed flawed. It might seem to help women from the beginning. It actually hampers the advancement of women eventually.

Hou did not like the policy at all:

The gender policy is actually a quota system. The government uses the policy to make sure there indeed are women being represented in the leadership circle. If there already is a woman in the governing body, then it becomes difficult for the second or third to get in. Once women fulfill that poor small percentage, many leaders stop pulling women in anymore. They achieve the task as required by this policy, so there is no motivation to promote more women.

Hou also thinks the gender policy has helped to create social stereotypes toward women leaders:

Why does the society hold stereotypes and prejudices toward women leaders? This is partially because of the unfair promotion policy. The gender policy works along with other “quota system”

such as minorities, non-party members, etc. Sometimes the government need to look hard to find a woman for the position whose social identity happens to meet four criteria: non-Communist Party member, intellectual, minority, and being a woman (*wuzhi shaonü*, 无知少女).¹⁹ It is not easy to always locate a capable one based on these rigid lines. So, it is not rare that someone who meets all those criteria but is not strong enough ends up in that position. The public knows this process and often jokes about it. This then creates a social prejudice that many women leaders are promoted merely because they are women or they have these social advantages by default. They thus are regarded as an empty vase (token), just for decorative function. But in the reality the majority of women leaders have not advanced their career through this process and they are actually very capable. If we have a transparent and fair promotion mechanism, this social bias toward women leaders will gradually disappear.

Hou said the large daily newspaper group she is in has a large number of women in second-tier or mid-level leadership positions, but very few of them can go beyond that level. This is partially related to the gender policy set by the government:

We used to have a president who did not discriminate against women and promoted a good many of women in the newspaper while he was here. We therefore have quite an impressive number of women in the middle level now, much more than in other newspapers. But still very few of us fly to the top. It becomes much more complicated at the top level. There is the gender policy, the actual quota system, to restrain women's representation. It never is spoken out, but there is gender discrimination there.

There is another gender-related policy which has caused a particular barrier for women to advance their career. One woman leader, Jun, specifically mentioned it. Government policy in China requires women to retire five years before the required age of men. Women workers have to retire at the age of fifty and women government employees, intellectuals and cadres at the age of fifty-five (Ding, 2005). Jun was fifty-one

¹⁹ Similar to the gender policy, the Chinese political system has a quota policy for other social groups, such as minority nationalities, intellectuals, non-Communist Party members, etc., to be represented in political and social organizations in various levels.

when the interview was conducted, only four years away from her retirement deadline.

She complained about this policy:

Women have to retire at the age of fifty-five. If you are close to that retiring age, who is going to promote you to an important leadership position? It is not fair. At the age of fifty-five, you still have so much vitality and so many good ideas. This is often the best time in your life to fully devote to work. You have accumulated a lot of experiences so far. You do not need to worry about family and children any more. Your aspiration, your wisdom, and your family, probably is the strongest at this age. If you are still healthy, even at the age of sixty-five you will have no problem in working full time. I know that the annual Congressional meeting in Beijing had a bill on this issue, but it was not passed. No results so far. It may be related to too many social factors. An immediate abolishment seems impossible in a short run.

Other than the constrains of gender policy on women, seven women interviewees also discussed the flaws in promotion mechanisms in media organizations in general and related it to the under-representation of women in leadership. They said that even though Chinese society has shifted from a planned economy to market-oriented economy, the reform process in organizational structures and promotion mechanisms in many organizations including the media still heavily lags behind. Individuals often are promoted mainly based on elements that are not related to their performance or ability, such as the length of the time they have served in their organizations and favoritism based upon personal relationship.

Although the new promotion mechanism – “competition for promotion” – seems to attract a lot of attention and gradually has become well-accepted, the old promotion mechanism is still dominant. Wei, deputy editor of an English newspaper owned by a large daily, complained about the stagnant promotion mechanism in her unit:

The old executive editor of our newspaper retired. The leader of the large daily looked around for someone to take over the job.

They eventually appointed a person who does not know English at all. Can you imagine? An executive editor of an English newspaper has no training background in English language. I learned that he has served in the large daily long enough that they have to find a position for him before he retires so he has the rank and can enjoy certain benefits after retirement. This, however, has created a dilemma for my newspaper. It certainly has also made my work more difficult.

Women often have disadvantages in this stagnant promotion mechanism. When considering the length of serving in the media organization as the major factor for promotion, top leaders find there are fewer women in senior age compared to men (to be discussed later). When promotion tends to be based on favoritism, women lose edges to men as well because men often form a social network and build up social relationship easier and faster than women, as discussed hereafter.

Male-Oriented Social Networking

Chinese society is famous for its emphasis of “interpersonal relationship” (*guanxi*, 关系) or human capital, built up through informal social networking (Yang, 1994). The male dominance in social networking is regarded by six women leaders as one of the barriers to women’s career advancement. Yao shared a story of her interviewing a female mayor, a vivid example of how male-oriented social networking functions in China:

I used to often interview a female deputy mayor. She was quite open to me. One day, she felt over-stressed and vulnerable and started to confess to me her anxieties. She said, you know, we as women are really not easy in the society. Men build up their social network easily by having meals, smoking cigarettes, and drinking liquors together. They pat each other’s shoulder and things get done. We women have to keep our dignity and can not do those things as freely as men in the public areas. In Chinese society where everything can be negotiated based on personal relationships, women have disadvantages. Women have to obey those networking rules and keep distance with some social settings. Men are just like fish swimming in the water in those networking

occasions. We can not do that. After I myself became a so-called leader, I taste this kind of awkwardness in social networking.

Nan explored multiple layers of women's disadvantage in building up social networks needed for career advances:

It is more convenient for men to explore their social networks. There are hidden game rules in any social units or levels in China, emphasizing interpersonal relationships. For instance, we have a chat here today in this café and we feel quite relaxed with each other and build up good relationship. Informal networking is very important. Women have more to worry about than men in terms of social networking. Men can extend their working arena to many locations other than their offices, such as bars, MTV, etc. They can spend time there even after midnight. Women can not do that freely. While I was young and pretty, I also needed to be cautious about my relationship with men colleagues in case others say that my promotion is due to my appearance. And, for a woman, your male boss or male colleagues are more careful when considering giving you help for they also worry about gossip. It really is very subtle.

Since the power circle in Chinese society is still male dominant, if women want to socialize actively for their career advancement, they inevitably have to interact with males in power. For many women, the interaction between women and men in power is indeed very sensitive and not easy to handle as Nan suggested. Yue, vice president of a metro paper, experienced this kind of subtle situation:

I have quite strong professional skills and social abilities. I soon got multiple promotions in the newspaper within a short time and had intense interaction with the editor of the newspaper who is a male. Some of my colleagues feel that my promotion is probably too frequent compared to normal standard. But that is all because of my professional dedication and excellent performance. I did not anticipate that others would have different thoughts. The other day, the editor called me to his office. He said he faced suspicion and pressure from his colleagues who think he and I had some "special" relation so that I got all these promotions. He said in order to prevent any of those "guesses," he would have to keep my appointment stagnant for a while. I of course was quite angry, but I understand him. A strong woman does not have it easy.

A couple of women, however, said that this kind of social networking does not bother them as a barrier. They argued that women actually have advantages in social networking. Wei is confident of her being socially skillful as a woman:

I think being women sometimes can be quite helpful in social networking occasions. It is boring to have only men. Women can add color to it and make the social setting more relaxing and enjoyable. I am good at balancing relationship in those occasions and it seems to work well in my social networking.

Tan had a different interpretation of this situation. She said the Chinese style of social networking, which emphasizes banqueting including drinking and smoking, is not a healthy mode of social networking. She opposed it not because it involves drinking and smoking, but she regarded it as inefficient and time-wasting. She said many of her male colleagues actually did not like it either.

Inadequate Number of Qualified Women in the Pipeline

Four women leaders attributed the scarcity of women in the leadership circle partially to the scarcity of women journalists in the media profession ten or twenty years ago. They said there were not enough women in the pipeline who have worked in the media long enough to advance to high-level leadership positions in the media. Yao, deputy editor of a large daily, has witnessed this insufficiency throughout her own career development:

When I first entered the newspaper in 1984, there were very few women journalists at that time. There were just very few of us. I was probably one of the twenty women in my newspaper which had more than 100 journalists at the time. Compared to men, many fewer women graduated from universities as well. I remember in my undergraduate class majoring in Chinese literature, only about one fifth of the students were women. When I was recruited to the leadership circle in 1994, there were still not very many women in the media. There are just not enough veteran women journalists who can keep developing their career to reach the top.

Liu, a deputy editor of a metro paper, interned at a large daily in 1997 before her graduation. She said there was no woman in the evening editing center of the newspaper. Men colleagues took her as a “little sister” and taught her on-site job skills, she said. According to the 1995 survey, the percentage of women in the newspaper sector in China is about 27.5% at the time (Bu, 2001, p. 104).

Alternative Fulfillment in Journalism Profession

Three women leaders argued that women as journalists have diverse career aspirations. Being a leader in the media is not the only advancement goal or path for many women. The media profession is different from many other professions. Many women journalists achieve fulfillment in simply being an excellent reporter or editor. For them, doing reporting and improving their professional skills are probably more rewarding than being a leader. Fewer women, therefore, than men seek out to be leaders. Pan, deputy editor of a large daily and herself a renowned journalist, explained the alternative fulfillment for women in the journalism profession as she witnessed her colleagues:

We have quite some outstanding women journalists in our newspaper. They have their loyal readers. They are highly respected in our profession. I know they do not have desire to move upward in terms of administrative rank. They just want to do pure reporting and writing. I think that is not rare among many women journalists.

Xie, editorial board member of a business daily, said it is perfectly okay if she only works as a journalist. Her story tells her strong interest in being a journalist:

Some years ago, I had to leave my daily in Guangzhou to go to Beijing to unite with my husband there, so I asked the newspaper to assign me to the Beijing bureau of a popular weekly that the daily owns. They said there was no leadership position for me in Beijing. I said I do not care to be a leader or not. I just want to

write. There is so much to write about especially when China is experiencing such a transformative change; economics, finance, new technology, whatever. So, I became a rank-and-file reporter in Beijing. For the three months there, I was the one in the weekly who published most articles.

Negative Feeling about Leadership

Mei said the fact that women find fulfillment in simply being a journalist may be also related to the negative feeling they often have about leadership. Mei said being a leader is very stressful and much more complex than being a journalist:

Reaching for the top is not easy and very complicated. You have to face various governmental and institutional evaluations, a lot of stress and pressure. Being a journalist with a specialized field, you are respected by the public and your peers. You are only responsible for your own field. For some women, being a leader is just too complicated.

Yue said leadership certainly involves power. Women, in her understanding, are much less power-oriented than men:

You have to fight in politics. It is tiresome to many women. Sometimes you have to be disingenuous in order to get what you want or have something important done. Women are more authentic. Being in politics is too demanding for many women.

Women's Deficiencies in Leadership Qualities

This subject was partially covered in the earlier section when discussing the advantageous and disadvantageous leadership traits of women being leaders. Some women interviewed mentioned that women as a group, due to their bringing up and socialization experiences, often are not very strong in strategic planning and analytical thinking. Not being decisive enough was also regarded by some as one of the deficiencies women have when it comes to leadership. Being not as competent as men in these aspects,

women thus have fewer opportunities to be selected as media leaders, some interviewees claimed.

Yue, being very outspoken, related one of women's attributes to the Chinese media's political function:

I tell you the truth why there are so few women in the highest-ranking positions in the media: because most women are too emotional to perform as the gatekeeper for the news control by the party. Women may become too sympathetic to victims to hold politically sensitive news which will do harm to the party.

Yue's opinion, however, did not get any resonance from other interviewees. They did not think women have any disadvantage in this aspect. A couple of them argued that women actually are often more careful than men when it comes to the political standpoint of media content. Furthermore, they said, in the case of first-tier leadership, since individuals in these positions usually have been in the media profession for more than twenty years, they know the system so well that most of them will not break taboos no matter whether they are women or men.

A couple of women leaders pointed out that many women tend to show weaker learning ability compared to men on the job. In their words, women do not have as much "sustainable growing ability" as many men after they enter their middle age. They did not relate this directly to women's scarcity in the leadership circle, but they indicated that this might have contributed to women's deficiency in leadership quality.

Xie, editorial board member of a business newspaper, advocates the necessity of keeping learning:

I feel very strongly that being a good leader in contemporary media industry, you have to understand the society extremely well. You have to know politics, economy, business management, etc. You have to have far-reaching judgment, being able to see and

build the future for your organization. I do not know why, but the reality is that many women stop growing in terms of their knowledge after entering their middle age. They are not intentionally grabbing knowledge and social understanding any more. That is dangerous. To be a media leader in contemporary China, you have to be very well-informed and think hard. I keep learning whenever I have a chance, which is regarded as very rare by my women and men colleagues. I am going to Beijing University to attend part-time classes to learn economic law this summer. I read latest books in politics, economics, sociology, etc. I feel I am constantly learning and growing. I bet if more women keep doing this, more of us will not only secure what we have gained now, we will go much further.

Yao, herself a very strong learner, echoed this view:

One of the main challenges of being in the media profession is you need to keep up with the change of the society constantly. We not only need to provide information, we also need to interpret it. If we ourselves do not understand the society well, how can we serve our readers? For women leaders, this is a real challenge. We need to keep our passion in this profession. It is hard but it is the only way to move forward. I have a mentor who was the pillar for our editorial page and worked in the newspaper until his early 80s. He taught me how to keep up the passion. One key element is to keep learning. I always remember that once I needed him to write an editorial piece urgently to go with a news article. I gave him the news material, and he handed me an editorial article of 1,000 words in 15 minutes. It was so well done that we did not change one single word. He was in his early 80s at the time. I always remember this example. I often use that to encourage my reporters.

Value and Need of Having More Women

Other than asking these women leaders to identify possible reasons for women's under-representation in media leadership, I also asked them whether and why it is necessary to promote more women to leadership positions. Most of the women said it is not necessary to deliberately bring more women in. Their common logic is that the standard ought to be to put capable individuals in leadership positions no matter whether they are women or men.

Three women, however, said women do bring in special quality and contributions to the leadership. Nan said not only the media should bring in more women leaders, but any institution should do the same. Her reason is very simple:

Women might have this or that deficiency, but they share one common quality that can supplement all other defects. That is women's sense of responsibility. That is the sense coming from their experiences of being mothers. They are highly devoted and highly responsible. Once being put into certain positions, they will be fully committed to do the job. Even if only for this, I believe there should be more women.

Wei presented a straightforward and practical reason for the necessity of bringing more women to media leadership:

I always think that a balanced structure is a better structure. Women and men have different perspectives. Both genders have advantages and disadvantages. Working together in leadership, they can supplement each other to make wiser and more comprehensive decisions. No matter how people sometimes emphasize that women and men are the same, they are actually not. Women certainly have their unique female perspectives, which come from their lives being women in the society.

Zou, executive editor of a national magazine, is more concerned about women leaders being role models for more women to advance their career:

Bringing more women into media leadership can establish a model for the society. We all know Hu Shuli. She is phenomenal. She not only has created a high-quality financial magazine which has played an important role in improving social fairness in the economic development in China, but also makes people realize that women can be so powerful and contribute so much to a society.

INQUIRY DOMAIN IV: CHANGES BROUGHT BY THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MEDIA IN GUANGZHOU

This inquiry domain contains two questions:

RQ5: How have Guangzhou women media leaders witnessed and participated in the transformation of the media in Guangzhou?

RQ6: What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the changes brought by the transformation of the Chinese media on women's career development in the media?

RQ5: How have Guangzhou women media leaders witnessed and participated in the transformation of the media in Guangzhou?

The transformation of the media landscape in Guangzhou has had deep impact on the experiences of these women leaders. During the interview, the theme of the media transformation appeared frequently in my conversations with these women leaders, sometimes as the context and sometimes as the subject. I have been convinced that these women leaders feel the transformation strongly and are profoundly concerned about it. The answers to this research question are divided into two subcategories: witnessing and participating in the transformation of the Chinese media; problems in the political economy of the Chinese media.

Witnessing and Participating in the Transformation of the Media

More than two thirds of the women interviewed had been in the media for more than fifteen years when the interviews were conducted. The minimum length of their service was seven years. Therefore, apparently, the majority of them have witnessed, participated, and in some cases propelled the whole process of the transformation of the Chinese media in Guangzhou first-hand.

Jun said she has experienced the reform of the broadcast media sector in Guangzhou since its beginning. She started her journalism career in a radio station in 1982. She and her colleagues launched some milestone initiatives including creating the first call-in radio program in the nation in 1989 and the first outdoor live broadcast in 1990. After Deng Xiaoping's 1992 South Talk, she and a group of her media friends saw the market potential of the TV industry and launched a TV station in 1994. To better prepare

Chinese broadcast media industry for forthcoming higher-level competition with foreign-invested TV channels, the Guangdong provincial government merged two local TV stations including Jun's into a new big station in 2001. Jun became the vice president of the station, the only one woman leader in its six-member governing body.

Hou, president of a sports daily owned by a large daily newspaper group, had been the copy editor of her large daily's section specifically devoted to discussing the economic reform policies and theories in South China for nine years. She therefore personally witnessed and reflected on the historic process of economic reform in the most active region in China. Her section was often selected by the central government as study materials for other regions. She directly participated in the large daily's making-history action of publishing ninety-seven pages on the day of Hong Kong returning to China, July 1, 1997. She recalled her experiences:

The daily that I was in is the first media group in China. It was a golden development time in 1997. We decided to do something really big and exceptional, doing ninety-seven pages to celebrate Hong Kong's returning to China. At that time, a regular large daily was only about a dozen pages a day. Publishing ninety-seven pages was a bold idea. The executive editor had a strategic team and I was part of it. He asked me to be in charge of the overall implementation. That was the first time I learned that news can be planned and designed. In the past, we thought journalism is all about reporting. But after this case, I know that we can engineer a media event, a coverage campaign. Other newspapers started to learn from us. The Chinese newspaper industry entered the "thick newspaper" era after that. Some published 200-pages millennium special edition on the New Year day of 2000. But that was copying us. We created many "first" in the history of the Chinese media. And I personally grew and matured professionally during that process.

Pan, now deputy editor of a large daily, had been the editor for a newspaper which has been regarded by the public and intellectuals as the best newspaper in China since the

early 1990s. The newspaper experimented with many bold ideas and covered various sensitive social issues in China. She said she was very lucky to be connected with that newspaper and personally participated in the media reform which her paper helped to propel:

I came to that newspaper in 1995. I was very lucky to meet my mentor, the executive editor, there. He is the person who has made significant contributions to the media reform in China. After Deng Xiaoping's South Talk in 1992 which literally accelerated the national economic reform, my mentor started to experiment with his ideas in media reform. It turned out to be one of the driving forces for the media transformation afterwards. He has transformed the newspaper and made it to be the platform for communicating various reform ideas among Chinese intellectuals and exposing some sensitive unjust social issues. He is the person who enlightened and guided me in my journalism career. Later on, I assumed his role as the executive editor. I think what Chinese media can contribute to the society is to help national development by opening up communication channels and allowing more ideas to be exposed and shared.

Fei, president of a radio station, is proud of her achievement. The radio station has been under her leadership since its inception in 1991. It has developed into a strong and well-respected broadcast medium in Guangzhou:

I feel like it is my best time now. I am very fulfilled and satisfied. I am not bragging that I have achieved something big, but I have done what I wanted to do. It was a rare opportunity (for me) to develop an entity from the ground zero to its successful shape as my station is today. It has been fifteen years. We started out with 3.5 million RMB and now we have 200 million RMB in property. We have such a good building and nice working environment for everyone. I have left my own mark in the history of social development in Guangzhou. It is very fortunate that one has this opportunity.

As Zhao (2008) defined it, the publication of the mass-appeal metro paper is the climax of the transformation of the Chinese press system after the first newspaper group was established in 1996. Each of the three newspaper groups in Guangzhou publishes one

metro paper and each of them has a circulation higher than 1.5 million. Tan, as a deputy editor of one of the most successful metro papers in China (arguably the first and defining metro paper), has been immersed in this transformation since its inception. Her metro paper, similar to Pan's previous newspaper, has approached news coverage boldly, which from time to time resulted in the government's intervention. Tan believes that the newspaper industry in Guangzhou is the most advanced in the country. In her judgment and standard, there is no real news media in China, news media that can be defined like those in Western countries that are independent. But she said the metro paper she now works for probably is the closest China can have at this stage. She reflected the value of her metro paper in a larger context:

I think the metro paper I am in has done a little bit of what a real newspaper should do. The paper is market-oriented so it has market function. It has influenced its surroundings, people in this region and the society. It has taken social responsibilities seriously. Now in China, only newspapers in Guangdong are doing relatively well. I believe it is only us who have tried and achieved the goal of telling people what journalism really is about. If foreign media come to China, the public will know better what real journalism is. We are very limited and only are confined to South China. I look forward to the arrival of foreign media.

With more than twenty newspapers and magazines published every day and numerous TV and radio channels in one city, the media market in Guangzhou is highly competitive. Every medium is looking for opportunities to expand its market share. For most of these women leaders, to ensure their media organizations' survival in the market is crucial and urgent. They shared many stories of how they have struggled to keep their media units and products running strong in the market.

Bai, director of a music radio channel, built her channel from scrap and turned it into one of the most popular music channels in the city. She said she was bold enough to steal talents from other stations to make her channel an instant success:

I built up the strongest team of music-program hosts in the city within three months. I had to have the best team or else there was no chance to occupy territory in a saturated media market. I successfully persuaded a very popular female host from another city to come to my station. Her boss hated me to death afterwards. I also went to Beijing to recruit a star to do part-time program for me. He is the host for the best TV entertainment program in the CCTV (Chinese Central TV Station, the only national TV station). I stayed in Beijing for three days to persuade him to work for my station. Eventually, I gained his trust and he agreed to join my team. He said he was moved by my sincerity. There, however, was no way for him to come to my place exclusively for he still has the appointment with the CCTV. So, I bought a whole set of equipment, very expensive, and set it in his house. I asked him to record programs in Beijing and send them to me in Guangzhou. His music program was a market hit for he is so famous. I did not tell the president of my station that I bought the equipment just to meet his needs. She later learned but she appreciated what I did. She also said she received various complaints from her media friends that I was stealing talents from them. I told her to shut off hers ear and help me when I need it.

Hou's sports daily is a nationally popular newspaper in China. It has a strong competitor, a sports daily in another province. The competition between them has created the record of the highest salary for a star journalist. One of Hou's star reporters was so famous that she was hired by Hou's competitor for three million RMB in 2001. It was the biggest sports news in China that year. Hou talked about the fight against her competitor afterwards:

The three-million incident put us in a real disadvantage for a while. It was a very good advertising piece for them to boost their market share by hiring my top reporter in such an insane price. We then entered this battle of talents competition. It developed to such a ridiculous state. I sent my assistant to drive a car to its editorial office (more than 400 miles away) to get one of its top editors, and

it immediately sent a car to take him back. The president said to this editor that any price my sports daily paid to get him, he can pay more. It was irrational and unhealthy for the development of the sports media industry. It is no longer like this now. But thinking back, how crazy we were driven by the market then.

Hou also talked about her recent business actions of launching an auxiliary sports newspaper and exploring new media technology:

We launched an auxiliary newspaper exclusively devoted to covering basketball news. Well, we built up the reporting team by digging all the basketball reporters from my competitor. The newspaper now has the highest circulation in the nation among all basketball newspapers. I also noticed the potential of new media. I registered a company to explore online and wireless market in new formats such as cellphone newspaper and cellphone text message. I want to build up a three-dimensional information transition system. About 280 million people in China subscribed to our information service during the last World Cup.

Yue worked for a large daily before joining a metro paper to be the vice president. She created an economics weekly for the daily without any training or working experiences in economics coverage. She was a writer-turned amateur journalist then. She described how she made the weekly a market miracle:

I was thinking how to make the weekly running strong. I had no training background other than passion. An idea occurred to me. I could host a salon to invite a group of local economists and businessmen to have a brainstorming gathering every week as a way to collect ideas and articles for the economics weekly. I ran around the city trying to find a bar to hold the salon for free, sweating so hard in the summer. I eventually found one. The boss was moved by my persistence. I published an ad in the weekly for the salon. I expected about thirty people might show up other than my guests. You guess how many? Four hundreds. The bar had to stop running business right away. Our first topic was the WTO and agriculture in China. It was so successful. The salon then moved to big buildings, shopping plazas, stadiums, with two to three thousands people every time, like big concerts. I not only made the weekly successful, I also created a media event, a platform for social interaction and communication. We have had 430 salon sessions altogether.

Yue's new position as the vice president of a metro paper is to boost market sale for the newspaper. She said she told her staff that they should be as aggressive as wolves in the market. Whenever there is opportunity for market share they should grab it like a wolf tearing a chunk of meat, she described. Yue regarded it as the only way to compete in Guangzhou's furious media market.

Among the twenty-two women leaders interviewed, two work for an Internet company which is ranked as the third top Internet company in China. Guo and Sai both worked for newspapers before they shifted to the world of Internet. Guo said she saw the potential of new media and described her work there:

The Internet company solicited me to join them because they started to realize that content is the most important foundation for an Internet company. I never thought about working for a website. But after I had a talk with the CEO, I decided to do it. I saw the potential of new media. I always like challenges and I enjoy the new opportunity to explore something which has big potential. They put me in an important position and I soon built up a good team. We launched an internet business magazine, a comprehensive platform providing business information and news coverage. It was very successful. Soon the Internet circle knew us and they started to copy our model.

Problems in the Political Economy of the Chinese Media

As discussed in the earlier chapters of theoretical framework and literature reviews, the interplay of political economy in the contemporary Chinese media has been dramatic and complex due to the conflicting dual roles of the media defined by political control and market drive. Due to this particular political economy, contemporary Chinese media are facing many complicated problems and challenges emerging from the process of transformation. During the interviews, I asked these women leaders to identify problems and to think about possible solutions. The topic was sensitive for it touched the core issue

of political control. Not every woman leader was willing or able to share her opinions. A few of them, when commenting on the subject, delivered their messages in a vague way. But the majority of them talked openly about how they have struggled to negotiate media's dual roles and where the problems lie. Their experiences have vividly revealed the complexity of the political economy of the Chinese media.

Fei, being in the highest position in her media organization, was able to summarize well media's dual roles and the dilemma she is facing every day:

The Chinese media is experiencing transformation and the scale is getting larger and running deeper. The most significant transformation is that media organizations have changed from being a public entity fed by the government to an entity not only as the government's "mouth and tongue" but also as a business. The standard for journalism in China is different from it is in the West. What we can report, what we can not report, how open news coverage can be, how open entertaining programs can be, are all regulated. We, however, have become business units anyway. To learn how to operate media in the special environment in contemporary China, to make money and not make trouble, is really challenging. It is very difficult. For instance, we face this dilemma almost in every advertising item we run. Some sexual medical advertisements, we know they are not good, but if I do not run them, how can we survive in the market? There is no definite solution. Just handle them cleverly depending on different situations (*linghuo chuli*, 灵活处理).

Just as Fei described, even though the market reform has turned the media into business to a large extent, media organizations, especially those first-tier news media such as the three large dailies which are all party organs, still are operated under the monitoring radar of the government. Having been in the Chinese media system for a long time, some of the women leaders interviewed have inevitably internalized the political function and ideological perspective the Chinese media have had historically and in the present. Jun said the news media sector is a very sensitive sector in China. It is not run

solely by itself. She said green-hand journalism graduates often have unrealistic ideas of media's heroic watchdog social roles. But as a veteran practitioner, she is able to think about the development of the Chinese media in a more realistic way.

The rapid development of the Chinese media, however, has created opportunities for news media to approach a wide range of social subjects. The public, after years of abundant media consumption, is no longer content to be kept in dark. Meanwhile, a new generation of young journalists, equipped with bold liberal ideas, is eager to experiment with their new style of journalism. Driven by market force and guided by journalism professionalism, some news media inevitably broke political taboo from time to time and often ended up being punished by the government in various ways. For some of these women leaders, writing self-criticism reports (*xie jiancha*, 写检查) ordered by the government for their mishandling of politically sensitive news is a very common task. Wei, deputy editor of an English newspaper, said although she personally had no experience of writing self-criticism, she knew her friends who are media leaders often need to do that.

Writing self-criticism report is just a small-scale punishment. Sometimes, the punishment caused by mishandling of news coverage can be very serious. Two of the women leaders interviewed, both working for very popular and highly respected newspapers, were removed from their leadership positions by the government due to their "negligence" on the political consequence of some sensitive news coverage which the government regarded as harming the party's image and social order. Tan, deputy editor of a metro paper, is one of them. She was degraded to a lower administrative level. Sai,

now working in an Internet company, used to work under Tan's leadership. She voiced her protest against the political treatment Tan received:

You know Tan. She is very competent and well respected by all of us. But she has no opportunities to reach further top. She made some political mistakes by carrying coverage on social issues that are sensitive. She is competent enough to be an executive editor for any newspaper, but she has no chance so far.

For some women leaders, this political constrain over the content of the media is the most disturbing and frustrating. Although they did not talk about it specifically, their message certainly indicated their hope of being free of this constrain. Tan claimed that her dream for the Chinese media is for them to be independent but she soon followed up saying it is realistically very difficult to achieve. When being asked where the bottleneck for media development is, Jun said it is the political system in China, although she did not want to further explore her ideas. Sai has left the conventional media sectors, so she can talk more freely. She said leaving the traditional media circle helped her to see the problems more clearly:

I feel that if the situation that the party-state has command over the media keeps intact, there is not much room for the media sector to really develop well. This is the fundamental problem. Only after you solve this problem will you have the capacity to think about what is the core competition strength of traditional media. Probably because I am out of the system now, I can see it more clearly. To be fair, when you are in that system, it is not clear to you where the outlet is. It is very difficult to change for it relates to the fundamental question of the political system in the nation.

Some scholars argued that the media reform in China might open up the possibilities of reducing the political control of the media and eventually bring in press freedom. In many women leaders' eyes, this is not possible in foreseeable future. Fei concluded:

Chinese government is not going to loosen up its control over the media sector significantly. The regulation policy in the ideological

domain will keep the same. At least in the foreseeable future, there will not be a big change in this aspect. The development of new media will have strong impact on the media market. But the traditional three media sectors are not going to change fundamentally.

The party-state achieves its control over the media content by controlling the personnel resources in the media. As explained earlier, first-tier leadership positions are under the control of the government. The practice of “helicopter landing” was regarded by a couple of the interviewees as not healthy for the development of the media industry. Qin, director of a TV news channel, said among the nine leaders in the governing body of her station, only one came from the station itself. All others were “landed” by the government to the station from other social sectors. She said the professional-turned leader knows how to operate the TV station better than the others. Sai again complained about the stagnant employment and unfair promotion system in the newspaper group her previous metro paper belongs to:

Why does the large daily not survive as well as its affiliated metro paper in the market? It is because it has a stagnant employment and promotion system. The employment in the large daily is a tenure track. Once you are there, no matter how awfully you perform, you are not going to be kicked out. They also have a stagnant promotion system mainly based on seniority. So, you feel like it is not that necessary to push yourself that hard because someone who has been in the media longer than you is going to run ahead of you anyway. But in my previous metro paper, it is mainly contract-based. You will be fired if you do not work hard. The metro paper has a transparent promotion system mainly based on performance and adopts the “competition for promotion” format. But the high-level leaders in metro paper are still directly appointed by the top, by the governing body in the large daily and sometimes even influenced by the government. So, in one newspaper, you have two different employment and promotion systems. As the top leader, you are not in the same system as your followers. It is not going to work out well. I saw that deep flaw. That is one of the main reasons why I decided to leave the metro paper.

Wei, deputy editor of an English newspaper, said that the newspaper group she works for has a two-track employment system among media professionals. For people who entered the newspaper before 2000, everyone is in tenure track. For individuals who are later-comers, most are in contract track. Employees are required to sign contracts with the media organization, which can be renewed every three years based on performance evaluation. These two tracks offer different salaries and benefits. Wei said this uneven treatment has created tensions among media professionals. She regarded it as unfair.

Another troubling problem mentioned by some women leaders is the flawed reward system. Media organizations as public entities in China all have a similar reward system mainly based on administrative rank and professional grade. The salary gap between different administrative and professional ranks is very small. Fei, running the radio station with all her dedication and achievement, has a similar salary as her subordinates.

I am working for the government instead of for a private boss, so I cannot measure my salary based on how much I have been devoted to and achieved. My main motivation is to achieve personal satisfaction instead of money. I work much harder and have much more responsibilities than vice presidents of the station, but we gain similar money. I can not enlarge the income gap among my colleagues and subordinates as well. Everybody is in the same playfield, enjoying similar salary. I know that is unfair because some of them work much harder and have achieved much more than the others. But as the head of a governmental public entity, that is what I have to do. Even though I know it is really unfair, I have to follow the line. If I worked for a private boss, I would do many things differently. I will prioritize my resources, I will have much higher standard in employment, I will have a reward system exclusively based on performance, and I will control the cost more carefully.

Hou has the similar reaction when it comes to the reward system. Her job as the president of a sports daily is very demanding. She, however, receives the same salary as her peers who are running much smaller weekly newspapers or magazines:

We have thirteen “offspring” press media units in the same newspaper group. Mine is the second largest. But in terms of salary, we are all at the same level. There is so much work to do in my daily. I almost need to stay in my office every day until 11 p.m. to review reports and think about new market plans. I have four auxiliary sports newspapers with national circulation. I need to take care of more than 100 printing factories running in different places around the country. Leaders who run a media unit of twenty people, and I who run a newspaper of more than 200 employees, have the same income. Yes, the newspaper group is doing better in adjusting the flawed reward system among journalists, but at the level of top management, nothing has changed. I am complaining now. But probably by the time when they start to make effective changes, I am already out of the game, retired.

For the women leaders who are the commander-in-chiefs of their media organizations like Fei and Hou, the lack of management skills among leaders in the Chinese media is also of particular concern. Hou said most of the top leaders in the press sector are editors-turned managers. There are no professional managers who have solid training backgrounds in business management science. Hou said this adjustment is not easy:

I think many of us are stretched out. We have no background in management. We did not start as real managers from the bottom. We were all editors. Many have no clear understanding of the media market. I visited the biggest media group in South Africa. Every member in its top leadership echelon has a background of running individual newspapers and magazines. After they demonstrated that they could bring in profit, they moved on to higher positions. In our case, however, we either have leaders landing from the government or coming from the editorial team. No comprehensive training or experience in media management at all. When a bunch of laymen manage a big media group, you know how disorderly it can become. We often receive instructions from different leaders at the group level. I do not know whether these are wise instructions and even to whom I should listen to.

A couple of women leaders, however, pointed out that media leaders should be cautious about the negative side of the market competition. Pan, who was the executive

editor of one of the most respected newspaper in China, shared her dream of media being independent but also examined the potential danger of the market:

The economic reform and social transformation have provided the Chinese media golden opportunities to develop themselves. I always think that being independent is the ultimate role for news media. The political control is relatively loosening up now and we have much more room to move around and report various cases to improve the Chinese political system. But we have a long way to go in that respect. On the other hand, Chinese media are still in their infant stage in terms of surviving rationally and maturely in a market economy. We have rushed too much to pursue profit. We have lost some of our commitment to the public good. We have not built up strong professionalism and journalism ethics. The strong rapids of the market current have pulled us into its dangerous water. We are struggling. We need to find a way out. We need to take a good road in the double squeeze from the political constraint and market temptation. It is very hard to do but that probably is the only way to do.

RQ6: What do Guangzhou women media leaders perceive as the changes brought by the transformation of the Chinese media on women's career development in the media?

The Increase of Women in the Media

The biggest change brought by the media transformation in China concerning women's career development in the media, as perceived by the women leaders interviewed, is the increase of women media professionals over the past decade. The 1995 survey reported that women journalists comprised 33% of the whole workforce in the news media in China at the time. Although there were no official statistical data to show the percentage of women in the Chinese media either nationwide or in Guangzhou as of 2006, the approximate number reported by some women interviewees confirmed the evident increase. Two women leaders in the TV sector said that women are slightly over half in their overall workforce. The situation in the radio sector is about the same as it is in TV stations, according to women leaders interviewed. Three women leaders in

newspaper groups reported that 40% to 45% of their workforce are women. (According to the 1995 survey, the percentage of women in broadcast and print media was 37.3% and 27.5% respectively.)

Yao has been in charge of the recruitment in her newspaper for the past decade . She has witnessed the increase of women in journalism educational programs in universities and in the media:

When I first entered the newspaper in 1984, we had very few women journalists. This started to change in the middle 1990s. I went to top universities throughout China to recruit new graduates in every May. We received more and more applications from female students. It is just so obvious to see the trend. The number is increasing every year.

I asked all the women leaders interviewed to identify the reasons for the increase of women in the media. Their answers, put together, seem to provide a comprehensive description of the social forces that have driven more women to the media.

Many of them said the development of higher education has provided girl students with more opportunities to receive education in journalism. The expansion of higher education in China started in the mid-1990s and accelerated in the late 1990s. The university enrollment was 9.8% in 1998, 12.5% in 2000, 17% in 2003, 21% in 2005, and 23% in 2007 (Lin, 2008). Along with the dramatic development of higher education, journalism educational programs have mushroomed during the last decade. In 2005, more than 300 Chinese universities had journalism programs, with a national enrollment of more than 100,000 students. There were only sixteen journalism programs in 1982 with 1,685 students and fifty-two with 16,920 undergraduates in 1992 (Chen, 2006).

There are no published statistical data to tell the gender composition of journalism students over the years. It therefore is difficult to tell when the field of journalism

education started to have the gender turn, or “feminization.” According to Chen (2006), two thirds of students entering Chinese journalism schools in 2003 were female, similar to the situation in the United States.

Most of the women interviewed also attributed women’s increased presence in the media to the development of the media industry itself, which has created many job opportunities. Yao had a lot to say on this due to her active role as a recruiter for her newspaper:

The development of the Chinese media is a miracle. When I first entered the media profession in the mid 1980s, the daily we published only had four pages. Can you imagine? Only four pages. Now, how many pages do we publish? Forty pages on average. Of course, this might be still modest compared to newspapers in the West. But in the city of Guangzhou, how many newspapers and magazines are being published every day? More than twenty of them. Three big dailies, three metro papers, a bunch of small dailies, and various magazines. My goodness, what an expansion over the past decade! So many pages we need to fill. This certainly has created the need for more journalists. Universities, all kinds of them, started to set up their journalism programs to capture this need.

The state of the job market is closely related to high school graduates’ choice of majors in universities in China in recent years. Job placement has gradually become a problem (Lin, 2008). Majoring in a field which has a promising job prospect therefore is very important to most undergraduates. A couple of women interviewed argued that working in the media is a decent job, such as Pan:

The job market is highly competitive in China now. Working in the media can provide a good salary, a decent social status, a way to fulfill one’s talents, and to some of the graduates, it also is a way to realize a dream to do something important for the society.

But, if the media job market seems so promising, why there are many fewer male students choosing journalism as their major? Yao again laid out her answer quite straightforwardly:

As you might understand, girls usually prefer to take humanities fields as their undergraduate majors because most of them do not like science and technology. Undergraduates in China are very different today from when we were twenty years ago. They know they need to choose their majors based on the job market and their future career design. What kind of major in humanities fields can provide a decent job and is interesting enough to pursue? Journalism, right? So, more and more girls choose to major in journalism programs. The result, of course, is we get more and more applications from female graduates.

Jun shared similar understandings. She said girl students also tend to get better scores in the annual national university entrance exams, which facilitates their entrance to journalism programs:

These journalism programs, I believe, are very popular among high school students, so they often have higher score requirement than other majors. Girls tend to get higher scores than boys in the national university entrance exams, especially in the humanities categories.²⁰ So more girls end up in the journalism programs nationwide.

Jun continued to point out that women students not only often score better in the national exam than men students, they often beat men graduates when it comes to job-hunting competitions as well. Many media organizations, when recruiting new graduates, have applicants take selection exams, both in written and interview format, besides considering their GPA and resumes. Applicants with better test results get recruited. According to Jun, women applicants often score better than men, so they end up getting

²⁰ Every high school graduate in China needs to take the National University Entrance Exam. There are two sets of the exam, respectively designed for students who want to major in humanities and science. The tested subjects in these two sets are different.

more opportunities to enter the media. Jun argued that this does not necessarily mean women graduates are better than their male counterparts. She said real strength often takes time to show and men graduates seem to deliver better potential after a couple of years' practice. She compared herself with the president of her TV station:

The president and I both participated in the “competition for promotion” test for our leadership positions. I scored a little bit higher than him in the written part and he performed slightly better than me in the interview. But later on, in real job tasks, he is much stronger and competent than me in many aspects. So, an interview or a written exam does not tell the quality of a person that much.

Nan argued that women students actually perform better than men students in most universities. She said girls tend to reach their maturity earlier than boys, so female undergraduate students make more conscious efforts than men students to develop themselves. When it comes to graduation time, women graduates often have a better repertoire of skills to compete in the job market.

Three women leaders pointed out that the transformation of media's social functions also has helped to attract more women to the media. They argued that in the past the media was the “mouth and throat” for the government and party, so the main function of media organizations was to transmit official narratives defined by the party and to only cover news stories that followed the state's agenda and reflected the bright side of the country. Now the media have assumed more social roles and tend to define their main function as to provide information. Media have become more public-oriented, covering diverse subjects related to peoples' daily lives. Some women interviewees argued that women are relatively more sensitive in covering social topics. Their narrative styles are often more appealing to readers and audiences. In Yue's words, “women journalists' orientation has matched media's new orientation,” so they need each other. Dai, deputy

editor of a metro paper, is in charge of the fashion, art, and food sections of the newspaper. She described her “women team:”

I am in charge of a group of young women journalists. They are very fashionable themselves and know how to look for fun. They go around to every street and corner of the city and bring back vivid reports of fashion, food, clubs, movies, shows, etc. We have a very popular newspaper section created by this young generation. We call them New New Human Beings,²¹ right?

A couple of women leaders, however, moved away from the focus of women’s advantages and instead interpreted the issue of women’s increase in the media in a much larger social context. They argued that the changed social status of journalism as a profession is the major reason for women’s gain in the media. Yue, an outspoken metro paper leader, said that women’s concentration in the media profession is partially the result of men’s retreat from the profession because journalism has lost its appeal to men:

In contemporary China, the social standard for success has changed. Working in the media used to be a glorified job, right? Journalists had very high social status and were well respected and trusted by the public. They were social elites. But what is their social status now? Media are everywhere, so are journalists. Journalism is no longer regarded as respectful and sacred as it was before in Chinese society. Fewer men therefore like to work for media organizations. Men still define the social standard for success. You know where the best men go nowadays? Business. They are clustered in business because in contemporary China more money means more personal power and thus more success. When men retreat from the media sector, women get more chance in the media.

Hou said even for those male graduates who did enter the media, many of them tend to leave after a while. She also related women’s presence in the media to women’s disadvantages in other professions:

²¹ The phrase “New New Human Being” is a new term in popular discourse in China, referring to the new generation of young people who often are rebellious and like to try new trends in society.

A lot of competent men graduates do not plan to stay long. Every year, when we recruit talents, we tend to get an equal number of women and men graduates. Anyone who is qualified for the job, we get him or her in. But men tend to leave in a few years, and women usually stay. For women, the media profession is more tolerant and fair to them. A lot of state-owned enterprises and private companies do not want to accept girl graduates. They believe that women's maternity leave is a burden for them. This issue is not as prominent in the media as it is in other professions.

Even though Hou said she is not going to discriminate against women when hiring new hands, the media profession is not immune to gender discrimination in job placement. Guo, who now works for an Internet company, said she personally experienced gender discrimination while looking for her first media job:

One month before I graduated from my master's program, I went to an economics newspaper asking for an internship opportunity. I liked that newspaper, so I hoped they could hire me if I performed well as an intern there. They told me that they did not have openings. That was just an excuse. I was 27 at the time and have not had a baby yet, so they think it was not worthwhile to hire me for I might very soon need to take maternity leave. I was very persistent. I asked them to give me one month. I only need one month to prove myself. They did. I delivered many important pieces of whole-page coverage within that one month, so the department head was very pleased with me. He asked the executive editor to hire me, but the editor's response was that a woman of my age and with a graduate degree was not as good a candidate for the job as a young undergraduate. My department head protested. He said if a person as competent as me could not be hired, he did not know whom he should look for. The editor backed off and eventually let me in. He later knew that he made a good decision.

Zou, executive editor of a national magazine, is an extreme example of how a woman suffered just because she was in her child-bearing years:

I so very much wanted to join this magazine. I first approached them in 1990 but they said they do not accept women. I tried again in 1992. They still had this policy. I was 27 then. But I liked the magazine so much that I decided to sacrifice. I promised them I

would not bear child within five years. I did follow my promise. I waited until 33 to have my son.

Zou's case may not be common, but Guo's experience is by no mean rare in the Chinese media. Pan, as a deputy editor of a large daily, has seen this happen quite often in her own organization. She said the assumption that the time women take to bear a child is "wasteful" for the organization is not well-grounded and she did not like the reality at all:

Although we get more applications from excellent female graduates than male graduates, every department still tries to get more male applicants if they can. Some male leaders even say they will not accept any female students any more. They argue that new female graduates will get married and have kids soon. It is too troublesome for them to handle this kind of commitment. In their judgment, women journalists are just not as functional as men journalists. I personally will never refuse a graduate just because she is a woman. It certainly is unfair. Women's commitment to give birth to children is the way to continue the existence of human beings as a species. It is a huge contribution to whole humankind. It is just so unfair to refuse to hire them based on that factor. But unfortunately, it is a common practice now.

During the interviews, I asked all the women leaders to tell me their hiring preference if there is one woman and one man with similar qualification for an open position. Almost half of them said they probably would or have to consider the man. None of them said, however, they would reject the woman because of her "doomed" social responsibility in bearing children. They gave two alternative reasons for their choice. Some of them said there simply are too many women in their organizations now and they believe a balanced workforce with women and men in about equal number, or with men slightly more than women, is the best composition. And, they seemed to agree with each other that men journalists often are more versatile for assignment of journalistic tasks than women. Yao explained the rationale behind it:

We often need to send reporters to the sites of breaking news or to some remote or dangerous locations to do reporting. It is safer to send men journalists because you do not need to worry that much about their security. If I send a woman reporter, in order to make sure she is safe, I often need to send another man reporter to go with her. In this case, I have to spend double resources. I would rather just send a man reporter alone. The other day I counted the numbers of women reporters in my newspaper. I was quite surprised to see that I have about 44 women reporters in my reporting team of 104 people. Well, I know, that sounds like there is still room for women. But as a person who has been in charge of the whole reporting team for more than ten years, this ratio is a little bit too feminized already. I am the one who brought in most of the women reporters to my newspaper, but I have to say that I probably cannot recruit any more women from now on. That is not gender discrimination. That is just the need for a more functional and manageable reporting team.

Sai, who now works for an Internet media company, gave an opposite example of how the company went beyond gender stereotypes toward pregnant women:

We had an overhaul of website design last month. It was very well done. It was carried out by our leading designer. She used to work for a metro paper. She was pregnant when our executive editor recruited her. She told that woman that the company does not care about her pregnancy at all and she can work as long as she wanted to before her delivery. The designer felt she was well respected. She came over and contributed so much to our website. I think our executive editor is very wise. Pregnancy does not take that long. After the woman recovered from her pregnancy, she became the permanent asset of the company. That is the core value.

Changes on Women's Participation in Media Leadership

Among the twenty-two women leaders interviewed, eighteen of them assumed their current leadership positions in the aftermath of the 1995 survey, including two first-tier leaders (out of five), fourteen second-tier leaders (out of fifteen), and the two women leaders in new media. This flourishing of second-tier leaders after 1995 is closely related to the development of the media landscape in Guangzhou. After the first media group in China – *Guangzhou Daily Group* – was established there in 1996, the media sector in

Guangzhou started its rocketing development. Many of the metro papers, business dailies, weekly newspapers, magazines, and TV and radio channels that these second-tier women leaders work for were launched afterwards over the ten year course. As presented earlier, the percentage of women media leaders in Guangzhou is 16.1% in first-tier leadership and 24.4% in second-tier leadership in 2006. These two percentages, compared to the 1995 survey (8.5% of high-level leadership and 14.7% of mid-level leadership), seem to signify an improvement if one ignores the discrepancy of the two samples (one being national and one being citywide). There are no nationwide data or studies that can provide a comparison of the 1995 result with the present situation in China. Even the authoritarian annual trade book in Chinese journalism has never contained any gender-based data. This study is the only one to present a set of data that has a rough comparison with the survey. If this comparison indeed suggests a real improvement, one of the main reasons for this improvement might be more women getting into leadership positions due to the expansion of the Chinese media industry.

I asked these women leaders to reflect on the changes brought by the media transformation on women's participation in media leadership in Guangzhou. They shared with me many accounts of how the transformation has influenced their working experiences, as presented earlier, but when it came to the subject of women's share of leadership positions, most of them seemed to have little to say about the changes other than stating a single theme: more women have entered second-tier or mid-level leadership than in the past but there has been no big gain in first-tier leadership.

Mei, deputy editor of a weekly entertainment newspaper, said she felt there are a good number of women at her level in her newspaper group, but it is not the case when it gets to the first-tier leadership:

If you take a look at the “offspring” newspapers and magazines, you can see women leaders are not rare. I feel the gender composition is relatively balanced at my level. But the higher the leadership level, the fewer the women.

Tan’s metro paper belongs to another newsgroup but she shared Mei’s observation:

I do not think women have that many advantages in journalism but it seems there are more women in the mid-level management in my newspaper than men. But when it gets to the higher level, the number of women or the percentage of women is sharply reduced.

I also asked my interviewees to project the future of women’s leadership in the Guangzhou media. It seems the majority of them are optimistic, especially concerning second-tier or mid-level leadership. Their belief that there will be more women as media leaders in the future is based mainly on their confidence in women’s abilities. They said that many women have showcased that women can be very competent leaders, which helps to reduce social prejudice against women. This theme was discussed earlier.

More than half of the women interviewed also pointed out that compared to the past, there are more women in the pipeline now qualified for promotion. Pan and Bai both said that very few women in their age group (early 50s) had opportunities to receive higher education. There often were not enough women who met all the qualifications in order to be promoted. They hoped that the increase of women media professionals in the past ten years will lead to different results.

A couple of women leaders also rest their hope on the next generation of women journalists. They said women of the younger generation often are not as bound by

traditional values as their older counterparts. They will be more aggressive and flexible in pushing their career bars. The younger generation of women grew up in an environment when they are the only child of their families, so they have gained the full support and attention of their family members and often have been less influenced by feminine socialization in domestic environment. Jun said the gap between the younger generation of women and men in her station seems to be much smaller than that of her generation.

The majority of women interviewees also have confidence in the development of Chinese society. They believed a more developed society will be more tolerant toward women and provide a more relaxed social environment for women to develop themselves. Fei said she senses a positive future by observing women in Hong Kong:

Guangzhou is very close to Hong Kong. You can see that there are many women leaders in Hong Kong's government. They are in some very important positions. And, they, of course, are very strong. I think the development of women is closely related to the development of society. When a society progresses, social expectation placed on women may change accordingly. Chinese society has not reached that stage yet, but it will.

A couple of women leaders also mentioned that the economic and technological development is going to alleviate women's family commitment burden. Social support such as maid service and more sophisticated household equipment will partially replace women's domestic work, which then will give women more time and energy to devote to their career development. Fei and Nan said women leaders have good enough incomes to hire helpers to handle their domestic work. This, they believed, will gradually become more of a trend among white-collar working women in China. Jun also gave the example of Hong Kong women, who she believed have less of a family burden than women in mainland China.

Not every one shares these optimistic views, however. Five women were quite pessimistic when projecting the future of women's participation in first-tier leadership. Hou complained a lot about the embedded institutional flaws in the process of transformation, which was presented earlier. She said she could not see a change coming soon:

Women's involvement in high-level leadership is not going to change within a short period. It may improve in the long run. I believe a more transparent competition and promotion environment can grant women greater opportunities to advancement their career. But the media transformation in China is still in its infant stage. The whole process has not been conducted based on law or pure market logic. I do not see a fundamental change coming soon concerning women's career development.

Mei also was not optimistic about women's leadership gain and its influence:

They said that women have this and that leadership advantages. But how practical are those claims? I know women are more of a consensus builder than men, more persistent, etc. But when you as a woman are the only one in a ten-member leadership team and you almost for sure are in a deputy position, how powerful are you as a leader and how much change can you bring in? Women are still in subordinate status and have little discourse power.

Yue said China is not the only one having this "women and leadership" problem:

Well, women's under-representation in leadership is a world-wide phenomenon. Take a look at Western societies. Do they have a better situation? I do not think so. Compared to them, Chinese women's leadership gain may be a little bit more superficial, but there probably is no big difference.

Wei did not see the younger generation as where the hope lies. She said she was quite disappointed about the prevailing outlook among them:

I am quite worried about the new generation of female undergraduates. I do not know why but many of them share the belief that it is better to marry a rich husband and skip the process of making their own effort to gain career success. They want to enjoy material reward instantly. When I was in my undergraduate

years, we emphasized that a couple should both work hard to gain a good future together. Well, this is regarded by them as an outmoded view now. I just think it is not good that more and more women students claim that “marry well is better than work well.”

Dai, deputy editor of a metro paper, is in charge of the sections of fashion, entertainment, and food in her newspaper. She thus has a lot of young women staff members. She confirmed part of Wei’s observation. She said many of the women journalists who were born in the 1980s tend to have a more modest life goal than women of the older generation. It seems that they are retreating to their domestic roles and femininity. Dai defined their goal as “having a happy family, a husband who has good income, a lovely baby, a job that is enjoyable, and a hobby to hold to.”

Pan also said there are, indeed, a considerable number of young women in the media who share this view. She, however, seemed to be not as worried as Wei and Dai. She regarded it as very reasonable. She said this means Chinese society has become more diversified than it was before, which probably is a good thing. Meanwhile, along with the economic development and the adoption of market logic, modern life in China has become busy and competitive. It therefore is natural for some women to want to turn to a more peaceful domestic sphere, she concluded.

CHAPTER VIII: FINDINGS III – MEN’S PERCEPTIONS

[W]omen share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world.

— Platform for Action, Par. 3
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995

This chapter reports findings related to men’s perceptions on women’s participation in media leadership in the city of Guangzhou, derived from the data collected through personal interviews with nine men media professionals. The first section of the chapter presents the general demographic information about the male interviewees. The following sections are organized around the four research questions raised earlier. Themes emerging for each research question are presented and analyzed. Male interviewees’ personal comments collected during the interviews are often used to illustrate the themes.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MEN INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

This study interviewed nine Guangzhou men media professionals. They came from seven different media organizations: one from a radio station, three from two TV stations, and five from four newspapers. Two are first-tier leaders as defined by this study, one vice president of a TV station, and one editorial board member of a large daily. The rest are all in mid-level management in their media organizations. They all have women either as their direct supervisors, colleagues or subordinates.

The age of the nine men interviewees ranges from the early 30s to the late 50s with the majority in their late 30s to early 40s. All of them have received higher education (two Ph.D.'s, one master's and six bachelor's degrees). One has been working in the media for more than thirty years, five have been for more than ten years, two for more than five years, and one only for three years. Table 9 on this page presents a summary of the demographic information of the interview subjects.

In the same way as the findings of women media leaders were reported, pseudonyms (in four letters) are used to protect participants' confidentialities. A listing of these men interview subjects (in their pseudonyms) and their demographic information including position titles are included in Appendix F.

Table 9 Demographic Information of Men Interview Subjects

| Demographic Category | Subjects in Category (N=9) |
|--|----------------------------|
| AGE | |
| 30s | 5 |
| 40s | 3 |
| 50s | 1 |
| EDUCATION | |
| bachelor degree | 6 |
| master degree | 1 |
| doctoral degree | 2 |
| LEADERSHIP TIER | |
| first-tier leader | 2 |
| Second-tier leader | 7 |
| YEARS IN THE MEDIA | |
| 0 to 5 years | 1 |
| 5 to 10 years | 2 |
| 11 to 20 years | 5 |
| 30 plus years | 1 |
| WORKING EXPERIENCE | |
| in other occupations before entering the media | 4 |
| solely working in the media | 5 |

RQ7: What do Guangzhou men media professionals perceive as the reasons contributing to women's under-representation in media leadership in Guangzhou?

All the nine men interviewees recognized that women are still very scarce in the first-tier leadership. Feng, vice president of a TV station, a professor-turned media leader (who still has the title of full professor and has doctoral students in Chinese literature), said he never thought about this reality of women's under-representation in media leadership until my interview.

But at the level of second-tier or mid-level leadership, all the nine men interviewees said women's presence is evident, except for Xing, executive editor of a metro paper, whose newspaper has no women in mid-level management. The majority of the interviewees noticed that more women than before have become department heads, channel directors, and leaders in "offspring" newspapers and magazines in recent years, although a couple of them also said the percentage of women at this level still lags behind that of men. Bang, director of the department of regional news of a metro paper, said he has been directly under women's leadership most of the time since he entered the metro paper, which has three women in its ten-member leadership team.

Four men, when asked why women are so scarce in first-tier leadership, said that the appointment of leaders at this level is controlled by the government and they had no idea of the government's mentality when it comes to gender and leadership. Fei is the only one who tried to explain why government appointment could result in women's under-representation in first-tier leadership. Feng himself is a result of the government's "helicopter landing" appointment. In his case, he "landed" to the position because the government was looking for someone who is in higher education and has a Ph.D. degree to fill the leadership opening in the TV station. Appointing intellectuals to the media is

also related to the government's quota system, similar to the mechanism of gender policy as discussed in the previous chapter. Fei did not believe the government deliberately chose more men than women to take leadership positions. Based on his scholarly background and training in critical theories, he used the phrase "collective unconsciousness" to explain the reasons for women's under-representation in first-tier media leadership:

Male-dominancy is a kind of collective unconsciousness. When the government picks candidates for leadership positions, they tend to choose men instead of women not because they deliberately want to exclude women. Social expectations for women and men are different. When the government consider an individual for a leadership position, especially if it is an executive position, the natural candidate seems to be a man. I think the main factor is this kind of collective unconsciousness.

Feng examined his own "collective unconsciousness" and said he himself also tends to assign leadership positions with executive titles to men and have women take positions with deputy titles. Feng said even though women do have disadvantages in the leadership appointment system, the government's gender policy is helping more women get to the first-tier leadership circle. Feng's endorsement of the gender policy was supported by Qing, department head of a TV station, who drew this conclusion based on his broad observation:

I have traveled to some countries. I discovered that the effort made by the Chinese government to promote gender equality is quite exceptional, sometimes even more effective and deep-reaching than in many Western countries. There is the unfortunate case that the government promoted someone who is not strong enough to meet the leadership requirement but happened to fulfill the quota. That is another matter. In general, I think the gender policy has provided women more advancement opportunities. Although the percentage required by this policy is not high, when there are very few qualified women in the pipeline, this quota can help significantly. We sometimes could not find qualified women to fill

in some leadership positions in our station. So, there is room. I think women's opportunities are actually bigger than men's. The competition between men is fierce.

Xing pointed out that no matter how strong women are, they seem to need a man to provide them the platform on which to surface themselves. He mentioned three women leaders in the large daily group his metro paper belongs to and indicated that these three women's success all started from the promotion push of the former president of the large daily who was a male "omnipotent" leader, but is no longer in the media field.

Four men interviewees believed women's modest career aspirations also have prevented them from getting more leadership positions. Qing gave examples of rank-and-file women journalists in his station who he believed have a totally different career goal from men. He said most of them hope to have a stable life and a happy family and make their family members' achievement their priorities. They do not regard administrative ranks as a worthy goal for themselves. Feng also commented that many women themselves do not want to pursue career success at the top level. He used the example of his own graduate students to argue that the younger generation of Chinese women has alternative social values different from those of earlier generations of women. He said a considerable percentage of young women prefer to have a more relaxed life by marrying a rich husband and even staying at home to raise kids. He gave his own theory to justify women's choice:

I think it is very understandable that some young women in the present society have modest career aspiration. The question of Chinese women is different from that of Western women. Women in the West need to step out of their families to gain their space in the social domain. Chinese women probably need to return to their family to recover their domestic roles. I often had discussions with my feminist friends and argued that Chinese women should go back home. They, of course, criticized me to death. So I chose to

shut up. But I found my female students tend to agree with me. Chinese society has become more diverse. Instead of all following the same goal, women are allowed to have multiple choices.

Xing pointed out that women tend to be more emotional and are not as rational as men, which probably makes them not desirable for leadership positions requiring political sensitiveness. Xing spoke very highly of his female deputy editor, but he said she sometimes was a little bit too emotional to make politically wise judgments:

She is very capable and has played a crucial role in the development of our metro paper. But occasionally, she made an unwise decision. The other day she showed me a very bold front page, very controversial. I sensed it was dangerous to do it in that way for it is going to irritate the top [the government]. I told her do not push too hard and move too fast, or else we will be set back many steps. It is better to move slowly but move forward step by step. We need to save energy to go a long way. Her case probably is not rare among women leaders; sometimes a woman is not politically sensible enough as to know where the bottom line is.

I asked Xing why the large daily group his metro paper belongs to actually has a woman as the executive deputy editor in charge of the whole editorial issues of the daily. Xing said she is more obedient and usually does not take risks. Long, department head of a large daily, who worked under this woman executive deputy editor, said women can be as rational and controlled as men when it comes to editorial matter. He said anyone placed in the top editorial position long enough would know what is the right thing to do.

Six men interviewees agreed that women's greater family responsibilities often hamper their career development. Hang, department head of a radio station, said women usually need to spend more time than men in raising a family but have to spend equal amounts of time and energy as men in their work in order to be as competent as their male colleagues, which has created an extra burden for them. Wang, department head of

a metro paper, said he constantly encountered the situation that his staff women journalists got pregnant and needed to adjust their work:

I am in charge of evening editing in my paper. All pages have to go through my department and then go directly to press. So we often need to work very late. Once a woman staff member in my department gets pregnant, I immediately ask her to stop doing evening jobs and assign her to do less demanding work. It usually takes more than one year for her to recover to go back to her regular schedule. She might lose some opportunity for promotion. I cannot promote someone who is pregnant.

Wang thus concluded that women have a much shorter “golden development period” in their career path than men. He said, for a woman, her best time often is from the moment she starts her career to the moment she has a pregnancy. This “golden development period” is much longer for men. Yong, editorial board member of a large daily, also used the same concept to compare women and men. Bang, department head of a metro paper, however, did not agree women have a shortened development time. He said the women leaders in his metro paper are all in their late 30s after having children and they are as strong and devoted to their work as they were before.

Feng said some mid-level women managers in his station do not have children even in their 40s. He said that might be the price some of them pay for their career development. Zeng, deputy director of a news channel at the same station as Feng is, confirmed the situation and explained the reasons behind it:

I have seen many of my female colleagues have family problems, especially competent women journalists. They inevitably paid the price of being fully devoted to work. I think there are two reasons behind it. First, being journalists, they are not as constrained by traditional cultural values as many other Chinese women. If they do not like their partners, they chose to divorce or depart. They are more courageous to pursue their happiness in the way they want. Second, their work is very demanding and very tiresome. They often are too busy to take care of themselves, not to mention their

families or partners. I see the big differences between my own wife and my female colleagues. I want my wife to take care of the family, the kid, my parents, her parents, and me. But I need my women journalists to work very hard.

Xing, as the executive editor of his metro paper, often needs to promote others to certain management positions. He said when choosing candidates, he did take into serious consideration a woman's family responsibility, say, this woman has a child to take care of, that woman's husband is often on leave, etc. He said he knew that might sound unfair to women, but if he takes the risk of assigning a woman to a leadership position and she turns out to be not able to handle her work well due to her family commitment, there is unnecessary cost.

Feng and Hong, however, argued that women are not the only one who have to struggle between family and career. They said Chinese men need to balance family and career as well. Hong gave an example of himself:

I was selected to go to the municipal government's branch in Hong Kong for five years. It was a very good opportunity. There is only one slot for each city. At the time, my wife and I just had our baby. My wife did not want me to go. So I gave it up. If I had not had the child, I think I would have gone.

Feng believed that Chinese men have similar family responsibilities as Chinese women:

I used to talk to a woman scholar. We both thought that being a Chinese man is not easy. You need to earn money, share family responsibility, and often are checked by your strong wife. I do not think men have less family burden. I need to pick up my child every day from work. In China, every woman and man have to work extra hard if she or he wants to be successful. Since the wife has to go to work, both the husband and the wife need to work hard to balance family and career.

Zeng pointed out that women and men often receive assignments of different importance, so their chances of getting assignment-based promotion are different. He said even though there are a lot of outstanding women journalists in his station, the top stars often are men:

This is partially because men are assigned more important topics to cover, topics having bigger social impact, topics having more political functions. Men thus get more opportunities to practice and to stand out. When there is opportunity for promotion, men become the pick. This is the way of cultivating cadres.

Qing tried to explain why women leaders are so few in TV sector. He said doing TV work requires a lot of physical strength. Being physically not as strong as men, women usually do not get as many opportunities as their male colleagues to cover important topics. Qing's station is a new station and adopts the "competition for promotion" mechanism which is largely based on one's professional performance. Most of the top leaders grow out of the station itself. Qing said women in his station tend to have fewer opportunities in the field due to their physical deficiency, so they accumulate fewer performance credentials to make themselves stand out for promotion.

RQ8. What do Guangzhou men media professionals regard as the differences in terms of leadership traits between women and men leaders in the media in Guangzhou?

All nine men interviewees think there are differences between women and men leaders, although Hang said the differences are very little. In terms of women's leadership advantages, they all mentioned that women are detail-oriented, caring, emphasizing collaboration and teamwork, easy to communicate with, thus giving responses similar to the ones identified by women interviewees themselves.

Yong had the most to say of all the male interviewees about women leaders' advantageous traits. He is in his large daily's editorial board which has three women among its fifteen members. Yong said he got more praise from and communicated better with his women leaders than men leaders. He noticed that woman often serve as a buffer to balance the conflict among male members of a leadership team. He recognized that women are less power-oriented and often are more candid than men in expressing their true thoughts on controversial issues. He said a hardworking woman leader often serves as a role model for her male subordinates:

I feel it is not appropriate to leave if I see the light in my woman boss' office is still on. I say to myself, she is working so hard, so I ought to work hard. But if I see a male boss's office light is on, it does not affect me at all. I might think he is a workaholic.

With regards to women's leadership disadvantages, men interviewees had diverse opinions. About half of them agreed that women are not as strong as men in terms of strategic planning ability and vision. Yong mentioned a concrete case to support his judgment:

Well, I will give you an example. Earlier this year, we needed to send a team to cover the congressional convention in Beijing. My woman leader had a very straightforward and simple plan: sending out our best reporters to cover it and every one of them takes care of one area on their own. That is it. But men leaders in the paper had a more strategically smart plan. They did not send all star reporters individually. They organized several teams. Different teams have different goals and operating mechanisms. Every team's composition is different. Best reporters team up with green-hand journalists, who can share the work needed and learn from the top reporters. Several mid-level reporters form a team to make it strong. There is cooperation among the teams as well. Men leaders know not to use up all individual good resources at once. They know how to put different resources together, good and mediocre, to build up a best troop. This is what I mean by strategic planning.

Feng discussed his understanding of strategic capacity and commented on women's deficiency in this respect:

Chinese society is in its transformative stage. The development of contemporary Chinese media calls for resource integration and strategic planning. The top leader needs a very broad vision and strong analytical ability. At least in my personal experience, I have not seen women colleagues who are as strong as men in this aspect. Managing media in China in its present stage, a leader needs to have two kinds of wisdom, political wisdom and business wisdom. Women usually are not as strong as men in both domains.

Feng said this might also relate to why there are so few women in top leadership. When the government considers candidates for leadership positions for the media, officials are looking for someone who has very strong strategic and analytical ability as well as political experience. They find more men than women qualified for this kind of requirement.

Hang, however, did not agree that women leaders are lacking strategic planning ability. He gave the example of his own boss, the president of the radio station he is in. He said his woman leader managed to develop the small station into a big enterprise with a very profitable market and good reputation in the media circle. The station started with only twenty people in a small group of offices. It now has more than 200 employees and a big building of its own, mainly due to the management of the president. Hang said she is as strong as any enterprise leader. Wang also did not think that women are less capable in terms of strategic ability. He pointed out that women often lack of opportunities to take positions which allow them to have practice in strategic planning to cultivate their abilities in this aspect. He believed women and men are just focusing on doing different things but their potential are at the same level. Bang, being led by more than four women leaders, said he never felt his women leaders are in any sense weaker than his male

leaders. Qing evaluated his two direct women leaders in his station. He concluded that they have masculine traits such as being decisive and have a broad vision, which probably is the reason that they can make it to the top.

A couple of interviewees did not define the differences between women and men leaders as advantageous or disadvantageous other than pointing out where the differences are. Hang said men leaders tend to lead more loosely. They usually grant subordinates more discretion to do things and are more concerned about result instead of process, while women leaders are more detail-oriented. They prefer to learn about the steps of subordinates' progress and manage more tightly.

Based on his many years' experience of being in charge of front page editing in a large daily, Xing said newspaper style under a woman leader can be different from that under a man leader. He said the large daily, now led by a woman executive deputy editor, leans more toward coverage in social issues, education, and culture, but is not as strong as it was in the past in politics and big news. He said the daily used to be very aggressive and bold under a male leader. Wang has both women and men deputy editors as his boss. His observation is women leaders tend to have better aesthetic judgment on page layout and often have innovative ideas on feature sections such as entertainment and fashion, while men pay more attention to politics and daily news. Bang acknowledged that women leaders might have a different perspective from men leaders when it comes to particular topics. He gave an example:

We once had a piece of news about poisonous baby milk powder. If handled by a man leader, it would be treated as an important news. But this happened to be in the hand of my woman leader who is herself a mother, so this news became a super important piece.

RQ9: What do Guangzhou men media professionals perceive as women's advantages and disadvantages of being journalists in Guangzhou?

All nine men interviewees believed that women have many advantages as journalists. The most common advantages they listed include: being good at communication, having easy access to interviewees, being stable and loyal, persistent, and detail-oriented.

Hang mentioned the phenomenon that women political reporters (“White House” reporters) tend to get more attention from governmental leaders and have better access to interviewing them. He gave an example of a women political reporter at a local TV station:

It is well known that this woman reporter has exclusive interview access to the mayor. When the mayor went to Hong Kong, the reporter was with him. All Hong Kong reporters had to wait for this woman to raise her question because the mayor only accepts questions from her.

Hang said he himself also prefers to use women reporters because it is often easier for them to get interviews or provide coverage. Zeng also had his personal observation of women journalists' better access to political leaders:

When a political leader was in his tour to visit some place, once he stepped out the car, a flood of young and confident women journalists swarmed in, fearless and aggressive. The political leader had to slow down and eventually took some questions. That is the advantage that men journalists often do not have.

Zeng said women journalists often are much more persistent. He said new male graduates in his TV station find it easy to give up on topics or fields of reporting after two or three times tries. They feel they are familiar with the topic at hand and they want to try new things. But female new graduates do not take off their hands that easily. They can cover the same field or topic for many times and still keep doing it. So they dig deeper. Zeng thus argued that the stuff women journalists come up with is often more nuanced

and profound than their male counterparts. Qing said women prefer and are more competent in doing editing work in his TV station. They pay a lot of attention to details and have a better aesthetic feeling about images. Men often do not want to do repetitious and meticulous work like editing.

Hang also mentioned that women tend to be more stable and stay in one media organization longer than men. Xing said his women staff all like to work for his newspaper and do not want to leave. Being stable, however, as argued by Xing, sometimes also has resulted in them being stagnant. Xing said his women staff tend to remain at the same level in terms of their professional skills and knowledge base over the years they are at the newspaper. Men in his newspaper have more momentum to leave, he said. If they do not like the newspaper, they leave immediately.

Zeng said in a profession like journalism, which used to be male-dominant and now still has a male-dominant leadership structure, women often get more attention so they stand out. Zeng said he needs to do ten good deeds to get praise from his boss, while his women colleagues only need to do three. He also said that women journalists get more attention from the public. Many of the TV star journalists are women in his station. When a woman journalist encounters danger during her reporting work, the public tends to regard her as heroic, but danger often means very little if a male journalist is involved.

Zeng gave an example of one of his colleagues:

When she was doing an interview on the street, a mentally-ill man came and harassed her by tearing her clothes apart. The camera was on at the time, so we broadcast the incident that evening. After the news, we received numerous calls and emails from the audience, all wanting to console this woman reporter and praise her for her courage. This would never happen to a man journalist if he was beaten by someone on the street while doing reporting.

Most of the men interviewees said the most evident advantage men have as a journalist is probably their physical strength. If there is breaking news or events in dangerous places or news work involves long-distance traveling, men often are handier to use for assignment than women. Bang is the one who often needs to assign journalists to different spots:

For dangerous or potentially dangerous reporting, or tasks involving long distance and onerous traveling, I always send male journalists. I have seen other departments sending women journalists and they accomplished the tasks as well as men reporters. So, women actually have similar ability as men in doing that kind of reporting. But for me personally, sending male journalists is more secure. I do not want women journalists to take that kind of risk.

Bang said working in a metro paper in a highly competitive media market like Guangzhou can be very demanding intellectually and physically. This often is more challenging for women than for men because physically women tend to be not as strong as men. In order to survive in the profession, women often need to make an extra effort.

Zeng argued that another advantage men have as journalists is men's editorial insight. He said when it comes to big social, theoretical and political topics, men have better control and manipulation of materials. He gave the examples of editorials in large dailies, most of which he knows are written by men journalists. Bang said in his department, men in general show a slight advantage in terms of their logical thinking and analytical ability, but he emphasized that is only an over-generalization because the two chief reporters in his metro paper are both women. They are exceptionally strong in terms of their logical reasoning ability.

Hang believed women and men have different approaches in the journalism profession. He said the way women editors design newspaper pages, women producers

shoot scenes, and women reporters pick up topics, etc. are different from men. Women's coverage tends to be more nuanced and personal relationship-based. He said women might pick a toy store to reflect the change of economy on citizens' lives, while men reporters seldom do that. Wang said women copy editors are more creative in terms of page arrangement and layout. He pointed out that in the competitive media environment in Guangzhou where there are three big dailies and three metro papers fighting against each other every day, every newspaper has to try its best to capture readers' attention by drawing their eyes to front pages. The design of the front page therefore becomes very crucial. Wang said, according to his many years of experience, women editors seem to always win men over in terms of editing. He, however, felt pity that women's creativity often sharply declined after they gave birth to children. Zeng said women journalists approach their topics more subtly, more detail-oriented, and often in a more lively fashion than men. He said he usually can recognize the gender of the reporter by looking at the footage shot. He used his personal experience to show that women and men do have a different approach in reporting:

I always remember the moment when I was with a veteran woman journalist ten years ago. She was interviewing a stepmother and her three children. I was the camera man. She interviewed the three children first. They were accusing this stepmother of killing their original mother. They used very bad words and loud voices. The stepmother sat in the corner having her head lowered and saying nothing. I wondered what this woman journalist would say to this stepmother when she got ready to interview her. After she finished interviewing the children, she stepped over, kneeled slightly, and said to the stepmother, "Isn't it not easy to be a stepmother?" The stepmother burst into tears instantly. We had such a good story afterwards. A man journalist will never know to approach her like that.

RQ10: What do Guangzhou men media professionals understand as changes brought by the transformation of the Chinese media on women's career development in the media?

The Increase of Women in the Media

Similar to the women interviewees, men interviewees confirmed that more and more women have entered the media profession over the past decade. Many of them have personally witnessed this transformative process: Media as a social sector has changed from being male-dominant to having male and female equally share the proportion and in some cases being female-dominant. Five of them said they have more women colleagues than men, mostly in the case of TV and radio sectors but in some newspapers as well. Wang is in charge of the department of evening editing at a metro paper. He said 70% of his staff are women. Hang said the department of news in his radio station, of which he is the deputy director, has about fifteen reporters and only three are men. This is exactly the opposite compared to the situation in 1991 when he first joined the radio station. He was very impressed by this change:

The other day I went to a press conference. I sat down with a group of reporters afterwards for lunch. I counted. There were twelve people around the table. Only two were men including me. It was amazing and shocking to suddenly see this sheer contrast. One of my colleagues, a middle-age male reporter, often said to me that he did not want to do reporting anymore. He had to fight for news with a group of young girls the age of his daughter. He felt quite bad about that.

Xing has been in the newspaper sector for more than 30 years. He said the change is gradual but very obvious:

When I first started in the department of evening editing in the large daily, we only published four pages every day. One article often was read by seven to eight of us. We edited it over and over and tried to make perfect headline. At that time, there was no woman in the department. I guess the newspaper at the time was

quite male-dominant and boring so very few women read it. Gradually, the newspaper started to expand. We added feature sections and news coverage also became more diverse. Our department gradually started to have women. Now I guess there are more women in that department than men.

I asked men interviewees to identify the reasons for the increase of women in the media profession. They mentioned most of the reasons discussed in the previous chapter as provided by women interviewees, including the development of higher education and journalism programs, the development of media, media being a good occupation for women, the depreciation of journalism as a profession, etc. They also raised a couple of new reasons.

Men's retreating from the media seems to be a topic these men interviewees have consensus on. Hang pointed out even for those men graduates who enter the media upon graduation, many of them tend to leave the profession after being a reporter for a while. Once they reach their 30s, they often want to change to another media organization or simply jump to another occupation. Hang said for himself, he also thinks ten years of being a reporter is enough. Therefore, even though media organizations like his radio station recruit the same number of women and men graduates every year, women tend to congregate in the station after several years because many of their male colleagues have left the profession.

Feng said the increase of women in the media is related to the change of the status of journalism as a profession in China. In the past, media as a profession was highly respected in society. There were very few journalists, so it was regarded as an elite profession. But now the field of elite professions has shifted to transnational corporations in China, to the telecommunication sector, to finance and real estate, which have the most

profits and provide the best incomes and more innovative opportunities for career development. Men prefer to go to those professions now. Women, however, are more concerned about having a stable job and a secure income. Media organizations are state-owned public organizations, which will ensure their employees have good income and job security, thus making them good choices for women. Bang said the change also is related to the transformation of social values in China in recent years. He sharply pointed out that Chinese society is a society that has always worshiped power. Due to economic reforms, people started to worship money as well. Contemporary Chinese media do not have either of these two as their defining quality, so fewer men like to enter the media profession.

Yong, when I asked him to explain reasons for women's congregation in the media, paused for a while, then cautiously asked me whether I want to hear the "true reason" or not. After I ensured him that I particularly welcomed true reason, he started to "confess:"

I do not want to offend you. Please do not take it personally. In the past, the standard for being a journalist was very, very high. Only those top, absolutely top graduates could have opportunity to become a journalist. And, to be honest, most of those top students were men. That is a fact. Now after ten years of development and expansion, the media profession has lost its glory and social status. Being a journalist at present, you do not have to stand that high, see that far, reflect on the society that deep. The era of one piece of investigative reporting or feature story influencing thousands of people has gone. Both media and journalists have stepped down from the altar. Contemporary Chinese media, of course, have assumed new important social roles and the media sector as a group probably has a bigger social impact than it did before, but if you count a single media organization, it is no longer that prestigious. Being a journalist only means a job, a way to make a living. Journalists also no longer have as many important social capitals or resources as they had in the past. So, top graduates from prestigious universities no longer want to come. You get a lot of middle-level or low-middle-level graduates. There are both women and men students at this level, but more of them, to be honest, are

women. I have had interns every year. They used to be excellent graduates. Now they are just mediocre.

Qing, department head of a TV station, also noticed this changed reality of journalism. He took Hong Kong as an example:

Hong Kong is highly business-oriented. Young people there do not want to be journalists who have low income and social status. Men is a dominant gender compared to women, so men do not want to take the same kind of low jobs. It seems the same thing is happening in China. Probably the value system in Hong Kong has influenced China.

Zeng, deputy director of a TV news channel, had a dream of being a journalist, but now he said he wanted to leave the profession:

I always wanted to be a journalist when I was a kid. I thought that being a journalist is very sacred, so meaningful, and so interesting. I tried my best to enter one of the best journalism programs in China in 1985. After Deng Xiaoping's South Talk in 1992, I very much wanted to come to Guangzhou, the frontier of reform, to be a journalist. I became a contracted reporter in a local TV station. But to tell you the truth, after more than ten years of practice, I do not want to be a journalist anymore. After the marketization of the media sector, there are so many of us journalists, everywhere now, more than flies. Men always have big ambition and want to have their own mark. I realize that I cannot accumulate anything substantial by only following the daily happenings of society, which is what journalism all about. I want to do my own stuff. The only motivation I have in my work now is to help to develop my channel and earn big money for the station. I believe many men journalists share similar thoughts. The media profession is losing men journalists.

Qing raised a more concrete reason based on his own experience. He said male journalism graduates had difficulties in securing good jobs after graduation during certain periods. Qing graduated in 1996. He recalled that from 1996 to 2000, male journalism graduates seem to be disadvantaged compared to women in locating good jobs. He said women were doing much better in job hunting at the time for they were better at taking

exams and often had better testing scores, which helped them to get into media organizations when the media started to expand in the market. Probably the discouraging job placement of male graduates a decade ago has turned away some of the later generation of male students from choosing journalism as a major.

Xing paid attention to the difficulties women are facing in the job market in general and pointed out that the media sector has provided relatively more opportunities than other fields for women in recent years. Xing said hiring women is more costly from the perspective of investment. Women have to take leave for childbearing and slow down for their families. Many occupations do not want to hire women due to this family bind, he said. The advantages women have as journalists are not as obvious in many other occupations, a fact which has resulted in greater discrimination toward women in the job market in general than in journalism. Turning to the media profession thus seems to be a natural choice for many women. Zeng said compared to other elite professions, the media has a relatively lower threshold and is not difficult for women to get into, especially in broadcasting.

Zeng also think women choose to enter the media because many of them like to be journalists, partially due to journalism being a glamorous job:

You have the opportunity to travel around, have connections with various people, your name displayed in newspaper, your face shown up on screen, etc. Those are all very appealing. In my station, the first time women reporters get a chance to appear on screen, they spend so much time doing make up. I told them it is not necessary for they are pretty enough. They were so overjoyed with their assignment.

Optimism on Women's Participation in Media Leadership in the Future

Almost all of the nine men believed that more women will get into media leadership in the future, including the first-tier and second-tier leadership. Feng, vice president of a TV station, was the only one who had some reservation. As mentioned earlier, he argued that the complexity of the media transformation in China has set a high bar for media leaders, requiring them to have very broad vision and strong strategic planning ability. He was not very confident in women's capability to meet that kind of challenge and requirement. Even though he had this concern, he said he still thinks more women will become media leaders in the future.

This widespread optimism is based largely on men interviewees' belief in the progressive development of society in general. They said due to the continuous development of Chinese society, women will have more education and career development opportunities. In a more developed society, gender will become a less important element in determining the distribution of social resources. Along with the development of the Chinese media, more women will get into the media profession. More women therefore will grow to become mid-level managers, get more training opportunities, and gain ability in management and strategic planning, which will put more women in the pipeline as candidates for higher-level positions.

Feng argued that the Chinese government does pay attention to women's participation in leadership even though the proportion is still low in the present stage. Qing believed that gender policy will gradually pull more women into leadership positions.

A couple of men interviewees also pointed out that household duties will be taken care of in the future by society in the form of paid maids and more advanced household facilities, so women's family responsibilities will be reduced. They argued that probably the ultimate liberation of women will be from family commitment.

Qing is particularly confident in the future of women in media leadership. He said his positivism and confidence in women's future achievement rest on his observation of women from the new generation and the strength that he has seen in his own women leaders. He, supported by two other interviewees, said the main barriers preventing women from gaining more leadership are social expectations placed on women and women's own career aspirations, which they believe will change over the time. Qing said in his station, the younger generation of women who were born in the 1980s seems to have fewer cultural constraints compared to older generations. Younger women grew up and received education in a social and cultural environment that is more open and diverse than previously. They pay a lot attention to their own development. He, echoed by a few other interviewees, said he was quite sure that this new generation of women will advance to change women's under-representation in media leadership in the future.

CHAPTER IX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Investing in women is not only the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do. ...in women, the world has at its disposal the most significant and yet largely untapped potential for development and peace. Gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but a prerequisite for reaching all the other international development goals.

— “Investing in Women and Girls”
Theme of the 2008 International Women’s Day
Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the United Nation²²

The significance of this study lies foremost in its exploratory nature. Through this study, women’s experiences in media leadership in China, as embodied in the case of Guangzhou City, have become visible, meaningful, and provocative. The research findings as presented in the previous three chapters act as a spotlight, illuminating the locale of Chinese women’s leadership in the media and revealing the complex social web in which gender and leadership interact with each other against the backdrop of the transformation of both Chinese society and the Chinese media.

This final chapter first summarizes the research findings and interprets their implications. Limitations of the study are examined afterwards. The chapter concludes with a discussion of possible future research.

²² “The Secretary-General Remarks at Inter-Agency Event to Mark International Women's Day ‘Investing in Women and Girls’”, <http://www.un.org/events/women/iwd/2008/statements.shtml>. (Accessed on March 8, 2008.)

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

As laid out clearly in the introduction of this dissertation, the primary goal of this study is to discover women's experiences in leadership in the Chinese media, which was virtually invisible in academic discourse. I approach this primary goal by dividing it into two inquiry domains: women becoming media leaders and women being media leaders. Because this study also uses the 1995 survey as its springboard, it thus carries with it two additional inquiry domains inspired by the survey: further investigating reasons for women's under-representation in media leadership as first revealed by the survey and examining whether and how the transformation of the Chinese media in the aftermath of the 1995 survey has influenced the situation of women's participation in media leadership. In this final summary and discussion section, main findings from both women and men interviewees as presented in the previous three chapters are integrated, summarized, interpreted, and organized within these four inquiry domains, all as embodied in the case of Guangzhou City.

Becoming Women Leaders in the Media in Guangzhou

It is clear that the patterns of these twenty-two women leaders' entrance to the media profession are diverse, reflecting the transformation of Chinese society in general and the Chinese media in particular in the past three decades or so. For the earlier generation, being assigned to media organizations by the government upon graduation was the norm, except that a couple of them were recruited by media outlets from other occupations in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the media sector started its reform. The younger generation entered the media profession based on their own interests and the market supply upon graduation, except that a few of them worked in other occupations before

joining the field of journalism. A couple of women leaders' job-hunting experiences (leaving their original cities) also show that Guangzhou has been the hive of economic and social reforms, attracting talents from other regions in China.

Based on the industrial structure of the media landscape in Guangzhou, this study divides media leadership into two tiers. The research shows that the patterns of these twenty-two women leaders' promotion to their leadership positions are different between first-tier leaders and second-tier leaders. The first-tier leadership in the media is highly politically incorporated, fully controlled by the government. The Department of Propaganda, within the government, be it provincial or municipal, appoints individuals to these posts from two personnel pools – governmental units or government-related social organizations (“helicopter landing”), or media organizations themselves (“mountain climbing”). The “helicopter landing” mode is most common in the TV sector, less so in radio stations, and very rare in print media where “mountain climbing” is the norm. The application of the government's gender policy also operates at the first-tier leadership level. It is required in most cases and encouraged in others that women should occupy at least one position in the governing body in various governmental and social organizations. The Department of Propaganda is the agency that executes the gender policy in the media sector. Women's representation in the first-tier media leadership in Guangzhou was 16.1% in 2006, according to the data obtained by this study, with the radio sector having the highest percentage of women as first-tier leaders at 26.7%. The percentage in newspaper groups and TV stations is 14% and 13.6% respectively.

No matter whether it is the “helicopter landing” or “mountain climbing” pattern, the government is the one determining the distribution of first-tier leadership positions. The

high involvement of government in the formulation of first-tier leadership in the media vividly reveals the control the Chinese government has over the media sector. Through the unraveling of the leadership composition of the Guangzhou media, this study shows that the contemporary Chinese media, no matter how transformative they are, apparently still belong to the political system of the party-state. The media leadership domain probably is where this connection is most salient. It is through controlling the appointment of leaders that the party-state achieves its commanding height and successfully incorporates media leaders into its political system and ideological domain.

This direct involvement of government in the formation of media leadership is also the root for some of the problems the Chinese media is facing now. The particular practice of “helicopter landing,” assigning officials from governmental and social units to lead media organizations, seems to hamper the practical operation and development of the media, as reported by some interviewees.

The second-tier leadership promotion, however, is largely left to the discretion of media organizations themselves. The appointment of leaders to second-tier media units (“offspring” newspapers and magazines and broadcast channels) is determined by the governing body in first-tier media organizations including newspaper groups and broadcast stations, consisting of first-tier leaders. Second-tier women leaders gained their leadership through two patterns: direct appointment or “competition for promotion” within the first-tier media organizations they belong to. No matter which pattern was employed in their promotions, most of them have worked for some years and assumed different mid-level management positions in their media organizations before reaching their current positions. The overall representation of women in the second-tier media

leadership in Guangzhou was 24.4% in 2006, with a similar percentage in each of the three media sectors (22.5% in newspaper groups, 26.2% in TV stations, and 28.1% in radio stations). There is an interesting phenomenon concerning women's participation in second-tier leadership as presented by this study. The percentage of women second-tier leaders varies to a large extent in media organizations within each media sector. In the TV sector, each of the three TV stations has one woman first-tier leader, but the percentage of second-tier women leaders is 0%, 42.1%, and 36.8% respectively. In the radio sector, both of the two radio stations have women as presidents and one more woman as vice president, but the percentage of their second-tier women leader is very different, 19% and 45.4% respectively. In the three newspaper groups, the percentage is 36.6%, 14.6% and 16.1% respectively.

This uneven distribution may be attributed to the different promotion mechanism used by every media organization and the different policy and attitude on women's leadership possessed by each governing body in these media organizations. Unlike the first-tier leadership, every media organization decides the distribution of the second-tier leadership positions by itself and uses a different promotion mechanism based on its organizational culture and policy. It is not clear whether media organizations which adopt the "competition for promotion" mode have a higher percentage of women's presence in second-tier leadership than those following the pattern of direct appointment. Because the "competition for promotion" mode is regarded by some interviewees as a more transparent and fair promotion mechanism, I assume it is more conducive to women's career advancement in the media. The concrete format of direct appointment in second-tier leadership also varies from one media organization to another in terms of its effect on

women. A pro-women president may appoint a good number of women as second-tier leaders as exemplified in one newspaper group, as reported by a couple of interviewees. A direct appointment pattern depending more on seniority or favoritism may do harm to women's career advancement. The connection between women's participation in second-tier leadership and different promotion mechanisms used in media organizations therefore is one of the areas which need future investigation.

Being Women Leaders in the Media in Guangzhou

Although women media leaders are very different from each other, taken as a group, they seem to present some common traits that are different from men media leaders as a group. Almost all the women and men interviewees acknowledged that there are differences between women and men in terms of their leadership approaches and styles as media leaders. Congruent with the literature, women leaders are defined by themselves and regarded by their men colleagues as more caring, encouraging, and tolerant than men leaders. They also emphasize more collaboration and team work and less power and authority. Being highly responsible and persistent are regarded by women interviewees as two of the most distinct characteristics that women should be proud of as leaders. A couple of women interviewees pointed out that women's experiences of being mothers and the major caretakers of their families have given them distinctly advantageous traits in their leadership. One trait of women being leaders in newspapers, as recognized by a couple of male interviewees, seems to have particular implication for the development of the Chinese media in recent years. Women leaders are reported as being adept in expanding feature sections in entertainment, shopping, fashion, food, which have over the

years become more salient in Chinese citizens' media consumption. This connection, however, was not mentioned by most interviewees. It needs more investigation.

It seems women's disadvantageous traits as defined by interviewees, both female and male, are much fewer than their advantageous traits. The major disadvantage as mentioned by a few women and men interviewees is that women are not as competent as men in strategic planning and analytical thinking abilities. Even though this was the only major disadvantage raised, it is a crucial one concerning the context of the transformation of the media in China. As some interviewees pointed out, the complexity and scale of media development in China's particular political and economic environment entail high-level strategic planning and analytical abilities. If women are regarded, both by themselves and by others, as less competent as men in this aspect, they have the danger of losing relevant opportunities in entering leadership positions that require that particular capability.

Not all women and men interviewees, however, agreed that women are less capable in this aspect. When interviewees rejected this assumption, they always gave examples of women leaders, both in Guangzhou and at the national level, who they regarded as strategically and analytically competent. Interesting enough, the two women who spoke particularly strongly of women's deficiency in strategic and analytical abilities are the ones praised by their male subordinates in the interviews as being very strong in these aspects. This probably is because these two women hold a very high standard concerning strategic planning and analytical abilities, so even if they are very competent in their subordinates' eyes, they tend to ask more of themselves. Or perhaps they have a different

definition of “strategic planning and analytical abilities” based on their own leadership experiences with which their subordinates failed to align.

It seems the women interviewees who have both traditionally “masculine” traits such as being decisive and analytical and traditionally “feminine” traits such as being warm and collaborative gained the most praise from their subordinates and are the most confident about their leadership ability. This is actually congruent with the literature. According to Korabik and Ayman (1989), those women managers who were more feminine values-oriented and those more inclined to hold predominately masculine values encountered uncertainty and discomfort in managing their work group. However, women managers who were able to maintain a balance between feminine traits and masculine traits reported better adjustments and confidence as managers.

With regard to family and career balance, it seems the women leaders interviewed in general are not as worried and entangled on this issue as their Western counterparts shown in the literature. Although these women leaders believe that women’s family commitment plays an important role in influencing women’s career development and in some case does prevent women from advancing their career aggressively, the majority of them think they themselves have a good balance of family and career. They often mentioned that their family members including husbands and parents or parents-in-laws have helped to ease their domestic burdens. Some of them did slow down their career development pace in order to take better care of their family and children, but they recovered and eventually assumed leadership positions after their family responsibilities were reduced. Because of their greater family responsibilities and the norm that Chinese women rarely leave the workforce except for maternity leave, some women interviewees

did say that they needed to work extra hard, a fact which was also acknowledged by most men interviewees.

Overall, these women leaders do face social situations commonly encountered by career women. Nevertheless, differences stand out. It seems there are two general categories among women as described by interviewees: “ordinary women” (or “women on average”) and “women who have overcome common constraints.” Women leaders often were defined by themselves or described by their men colleagues as women who have successfully overcome common social constraints on women including modest career aspiration, family bind, and feminine “deficiencies.”

Reasons for Women’s Under-representation in Media Leadership in Guangzhou

The overall representation of women in media leadership in Guangzhou in 2006, as presented by this study, is 16.1% in first-tier leadership (less than one woman out of every six men) and 24.4% in second-tier leadership (less than one woman out of every four men). It is fair to say that women in media leadership in Guangzhou are still very much in the minority.

Why has women’s under-representation in leadership in the Chinese media been so persistent? This study has defined a range of reasons through the interview data. Here the study needs to go back to the 1995 survey. Other than exposing the extremely low percentage of women’s participation in high-level media leadership in China nationwide (8.5%), the survey identified several reasons contributing to women’s under-representation and asked survey respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with them. Since this study started with the 1995 survey, it is necessary to see whether

the two sets of reasons differ from each other and what these reasons mean for women's career advancement in the Chinese media.

Although the reasons listed by the 1995 survey were already explained in the earlier literature review chapters, it is necessary to present them here again for comparison with the research findings of this study. The reasons are:

1) Discriminatory attitude toward women is not uncommon in society (84.1% of women journalists being surveyed agreed);

2) There are few women in some media organizations, which resulted in the difficulty of selecting appropriate women candidates to participate in leadership (60.5% agreed);

3) Women themselves do not want to have access to leadership positions for four reasons:

a. As long as women can find fulfillment in their work, it does not make sense to be a leader (72.4% agreed);

b. Most women just want to do their professional work instead of commanding others as leaders (54.2% agreed);

c. Being a woman leader is difficult and it is not easy to gain respect and collaboration from men colleagues (45% agreed);

d. Women have greater family responsibility than men and they do not want it being hampered by leadership work (42% agreed).

The majority of the above reasons listed by the survey were mentioned by the interviewees of this study, both women and men, except for two reasons: "most women just want to do their professional work instead of commanding others as leaders" and

“being a woman leader is difficult and it is not easy to gain respect and collaboration from men colleagues.”

The first surveyed reason “discriminatory attitude toward women is not uncommon in society,” supported by most survey respondents (84.1%), finds its resonance with this study. Almost every woman interviewee and the majority of men interviewees, when being asked to think about reasons for women’s poor presence in high-level media leadership, stated immediately that “Chinese society is still a male-dominant society.” Although only a couple of the women interviewees specifically used the word “discrimination,” the claim of “male-dominant society” by interviewees, as I understand it from the interview data, does contain the meaning conveyed by the survey of “discriminatory attitude toward women is not uncommon in society.”

Many women interviewees, much more so than men interviewees, did mention that gender stereotypes and social expectations placed on women function as barriers to women’s career advancement to leadership, which in a broader definition, also can be placed under the general umbrella of “discriminatory attitude.” Social expectations embedded in traditional Chinese values define women mainly in their family role. Women are expected to be caring wives and mothers, not powerful and strong in the public domain as leaders. It is commonly believed that women will not be fully devoted to their work and their life focus will shift to their family after they have children. Some women interviewees said society may hold the perception that women are not as capable as men of taking leadership positions. A couple of women and men interviewees mentioned that even when women get promoted to leadership positions, most of them are

in deputy roles. The social assumption is that men should be the executive and women ought to be assisting them doing “petty” tasks.

This gender stereotyping ignores the reality that many women have capacities well beyond these stereotypes. The reality as revealed by this study is that most of the women leaders interviewed are married and have children. Most of them said they are as devoted to their work as before they had their children. Those who decided to slow down for their children made the decision themselves not to take future promotions if they were granted the opportunities. These women are highly responsible and do not allow their families to hamper their work outcome. So they either devote themselves to their work fully or they do not take the promotion. It seems most of the nine men interviewees do not hold apparent gender stereotypes toward women. They gave very positive ratings of their women leaders or colleagues in many aspects. It seems gender stereotypes are institutionalized, especially in the political system and in the societal level, and often beyond the level of individuals. These men interviewees all have women as their leaders, peers, or subordinates, which seems to break down the gender stereotypes society has imposed on them.

The second reason reported by the survey, “there are few women in some media organizations, which resulted in the difficulty of selecting appropriate women candidates to participate in leadership,” is also supported by this study. Some women interviewees recalled their entry to the media profession when there were very few women as journalists and therefore argued that there are not enough women accumulating similar credentials for promotion as men based on the length of service in their media organizations.

The third overarching reason provided by the survey to explain women's underrepresentation in media leadership is "women themselves do not want to have access to leadership positions." It includes four sub-reasons for approaching women's "unwillingness" for leadership positions. The first sub-reason is "as long as women can find fulfillment in their work, it does not make sense to be a leader," significantly supported by survey respondents (72.1%). This statement is also reported mainly by women interviewees in this study as one of the reasons for lack of women media leaders. Most of the women interviewees expressed their passion for journalism and a couple of them did point out that a large number of women journalists are satisfied with being a good journalist so that they do not have the extra desire of seeking management success. Journalism work is itself highly rewarding. It brings to practitioners strong feelings of achievement. Different from those in organizations in many other fields, individuals in media organizations thus have two career development channels: upward advancement in terms of the management ladder or horizontal advancement in terms of professional achievements. This two-track rewarding pattern may send fewer "ladder-climbing" ambitious women into the pipeline for promotion.

The second sub-reason, "most women just want to do their professional work instead of commanding others as leaders" (54.2% survey respondents agreed), was not mentioned by any of the interviewees, including both women and men. This reason actually reveals that more than half of the women journalists surveyed in 1995 defined the role of leaders as "commanding others." Scholarship in the field of leadership and gender, as examined in the earlier literature review chapters, shows that this definition of leadership is a stereotypical "masculine" definition. The reason that the majority of the

surveyed women journalists held this view probably is due to the male dominance in leadership positions both in the Chinese media and in Chinese society. The image of a highly manipulative male leadership has thus discouraged women from pursuing leadership roles. Scholarly work shows that, compared to men leaders as a group, women leaders lean more towards a leadership style of collaborating. This study also reveals, as explained earlier, that women media leaders perceive themselves and are regarded by men media professionals as more collaborative and less power-oriented. Increasing women's presence in media leadership thus may help to redefine the image of leaders and make leadership more psychologically appealing to women who have high aspirations to achieve career success. The reason that none of the interviewees of this study mentioned this surveyed item probably is that women interviewees themselves as leaders and men interviewees who have worked with women leaders no longer define leadership as "commanding others."

The third sub-reason provided by the survey to explain women's unwillingness to pursue leadership positions is that women tend to think "being a woman leader is difficult and it is not easy to gain respect and collaboration from men colleagues" (45% survey respondents agreed). This is also not supported by this study. None of the men interviewees mentioned this as a reason. A few women interviewees did say that being a leader is difficult and women may not want to get involved in this difficulty. They, however, did not say that being a "woman" leader is difficult and that it is not easy to gain respect and collaboration from men colleagues. None of the women interviewees mentioned that their male colleagues do not respect them or that they have difficulty in collaborating with them. A couple of them did mention that their men colleagues might

have doubted their ability from the beginning, but they soon gained their trust by displaying their competence. It seems most of the men interviewees held respect toward these interviewed women leaders.

The last sub-reason listed by the survey is “women have greater family responsibility than men and they do not want it being hampered by leadership work.” This reason is supported by this study. Women’s greater family commitment has played an important role in retarding women’s career development, as observed by most of the women and men interviewees. Women interviewees gave examples of their own experiences and those of their colleagues to explain the potential conflict between family and career. Men interviewees also provided accounts of their women colleagues to show the difficulties of balancing family and work. A couple of women also argued that Chinese women have double burdens because they cannot stop working while raising a family.

The role of family in women’s career development, however, is more nuanced in Chinese society compared to that of women in the West. In fact, among all the four sub-reasons listed by the 1995 survey to explain women’s unwillingness to approach leadership positions, “women’s greater family responsibilities” is the least supported. Less than half of the women journalists surveyed at the time endorsed this reason (42%). The majority of the women interviewees in this study also said they have a good balance of family and career development. In China, societal facilities (e.g. affordable public kindergarten) and cultural tradition (e.g. grandparents looking after grandchildren) have provided women with substantial social support. Meanwhile, the working environment seems to be more tolerant toward women’s family commitment than that in the West as suggested by the literature. Due to media organizations as state-owned units, Chinese

women have adequate maternity leave and can return to their media organizations with the same salary level and in some cases in the same management titles.

Nevertheless, family life is working as a mechanism to prevent women from pursuing ambitious career advancement in another way. Both women and men interviewees observed that a good number of their women colleagues, even though very committed to their work, tend to prioritize their domestic roles as good wives and mothers. Social expectations placed on women and women's socializations have contributed to keep women's self-concept and career aspiration at a modest level. They tend to believe that having a successful and aggressive career is the goal mainly for men and it is not necessary for women to fight that hard to advance their career for social capital. This cultural mechanism certainly contributes to the reality that fewer women in the Chinese media than men make efforts to advance their career to leadership positions.

All the above examined reasons listed in the 1995 survey to explain women's underrepresentation in media leadership, however, failed to point out one factor regarded by this study as one of the most important reasons – the involvement of government in the formulation of media leadership in China.

As explained in the previous session concerning women's career development patterns, the appointment of first-tier leaders in the Chinese media is fully under the control and disposal of the government, either through “helicopter landing” or “mountain climbing” channel. The first-tier leadership in the media is closely integrated into the political system of the party-state. Relevant literature shows that Chinese women's participation in the political system in China is very low. The mode of women's low participation in politics in China affects the first-tier leadership in the Chinese media.

When considering candidates for media leadership in the “helicopter landing” pattern, the personnel pool – officials in governmental organizations and sometimes social organizations – is itself highly male-dominant, which has inevitably resulted in the low participation of women. When considering candidates in the “mountain climbing” pattern, even though the personnel pool – individuals in media organizations themselves – has a lot of women in its repertoire, the governmental mentality and traditional promotion mode are still male-dominant due to the ingrained influence of male-dominance in the power structure in Chinese society, which works to pick up more men as the “legitimate” leaders for the media.

Furthermore, the Chinese government’s gender policy has played a paradoxical role in women’s advancement to first-tier leadership. On the one hand, the gender policy does help to pry open the ironclad male leadership echelon and squeeze in one or two women. On the other hand it seems to keep women locked in a very small percentage in any governing bodies. Once there is one woman being represented in the leadership team, the other posts naturally become legitimately male. The three TV stations in Guangzhou all have only one woman in their first-tier leadership echelon with members ranging from six to nine, a good example of this “gender policy” effect.

None of the interviewees, both women and men, directly connected women’s under-representation in media leadership to male-dominancy in the political system in China. Most of them, however, as mentioned earlier, made a statement that Chinese society is still a male-dominant society, which they think has contributed to the scarcity of women in media leadership. I believe they drew this conclusion partially based on their interpretation of the male-dominance in the power center in various social sectors,

especially in the party-state political system. I therefore think many of my interviewees, both women and men, sense the role male-oriented politics has played in influencing women's participation in media leadership. The 1995 survey did not list this as one of the reasons for women's under-representation in media leadership probably because this statement is too sensitive to be listed in the survey or it has become a taken-for-granted reality that no one thought to probe.

Other than revealing this "male-dominance in political system" as the major reason for women's scarcity in first-tier media leadership, this study also identified a couple of other reasons the 1995 survey failed to mention. The stagnant promotion mechanism based on seniority and favoritism is regarded by some interviewees as one of the barriers to women's career development. Male-dominant social networking has an advantage in this promotion mode. It is easier for men than women to establish interpersonal relationships in this kind of social networking, which is used as human capital to propel their careers. Women's assumed deficiencies in leadership qualities including abilities in sustainable learning, strategic planning, and analytical thinking also are identified by some interviewees as reasons that have prevented women from moving upwards or moving faster. These may be attributed to gender bias on the part of both men and women interviewees who subscribe unknowingly to stereotypical ideas about women.

Overall, it seems most of the reasons listed both by the 1995 survey and by this study can be divided into two categories: institutional bias and women's deficiencies. In the reality of social life, it is almost impossible to separate societal prejudices from individual women's weakness because the latter often is the result of the former and they tend to reinforce each other.

Changes Brought by the Transformation of the Media in Guangzhou

It is very clear from the research findings that the women media leaders interviewed have vividly witnessed, actively participated in, and in some cases successfully propelled the transformation of the Guangzhou media. It turns out that investigating the locale of media leadership exposes the complicated interplay of political economy in the Chinese media to a large extent. The leadership echelon is where the party-state executes its control, where the market tests its force, and where liberal professionalism pursues its dreams. The experiences of women as media leaders immersing in this interweaving web have revealed the particular complexity of the transformative process of the Chinese media.

As explained earlier, contemporary Chinese media is still an integral part of the political system in China. Women media leaders, especially those first-tier leaders appointed directly by the government, need to fulfill the political responsibilities the party-state has imposed on them. Surviving and advancing in this political system, most of them have inevitably internalized the values embedded in the system. All of them have to manage their media within the legitimate diameter the government draws, or else they will be punished in various formats.

Operating media organizations as state-owned but exclusively market-oriented enterprises also puts these women leaders into the hot water of surviving in a competitive media market. Women leaders interviewed told many accounts of their innovative strategies and efforts to keep their media products strong competitors in the market. They dug talents from other media organizations, they adopted sexual medical advertising, they

established new channels, they launched auxiliary newspapers, and they adopted new technologies, answering to the needs of the market.

Most theorists analyzing the transformation of the Chinese media tend to rest their analysis on two major social forces described above: the political control and market drive. Based on my research, I would like to argue that there is a third social force coming into play: journalism professionalism. This journalism professionalism as embodied by some individual women leaders has attempted to negotiate the execution of the political control by occasionally publishing politically sensitive news pieces, thus breaking a political taboo. The *South China Weekend Journal* and the *South China Metropolitan News*, both belonging to the *South China Daily* Group, are arguably two of the most outspoken and revered newspapers in China, whose bold coverage often has caused central government's intervention. Both of the newspapers had or have women leaders as their top decision-makers. Two of the women interviewees in this study were degraded due to their aggressive approach to controversial coverage.

Trapped in the political environment, driven by the market force, and guided by journalism professionalism, the experiences of women leaders interviewed appear to be typical of those of media leaders in China. These three forces, however, are all fluid parameters. Different individuals in different circumstances find different implementation of them. The interplay and contestation of these three forces are the origins of the many problems the Chinese media are facing and with which people who work in the media, especially leaders, are struggling. Women leaders interviewed complained about many institutional flaws caused by this conflict such as an unfair salary system and stagnant promotion mechanism. It seems the expression "crossing a river by feeling the stones

(*mozhe shitou guohe*, 摸着石头过河),” a famous proverb used by Deng Xiaoping in his 1992 South Talk to encourage Chinese economic reform agents to dare to experiment, can be applied to the way media leaders have experienced the transformation process. Sometimes they stumble over a big stone and wet themselves, sometime they hesitate to move when encountering a strong rapid, and sometime they progress fast when approaching a shallow portion. This seems to be congruent with the argument made by Akhavan-Majid (2004) and Pan (2000) who both pointed out that China’s media reform is a process in which certain routine practices are questioned, challenged, and modified and certain non-routine practices are designed, implemented, and justified. Media leaders are no doubt in the center of all these routine and non-routine practices.

The transformation of the media has brought opportunities for women to advance their career. Interviewees noticed that more women have entered second-tier or mid-level leadership in recent years. Women’s scarce presence in first-tier leadership, however, has not changed that much, according to the interviewees. The reason for women’s gain in second-tier leadership seems obvious. Most of the second-tier media organizations or units these second-tier women leaders work for were launched in the aftermath of the 1995 survey. Among the fifteen second-tier women leaders interviewed, fourteen of them were promoted to their current leadership positions after 1995. Certainly, the expansion of the media sector in Guangzhou has created leadership openings for women, mainly in the second tier. Although the actual percentage of women in second-tier leadership (24.4%) is still less than a quarter, the sheer number of second-tier women leaders is fifty-one, which may present a rosy image that women’s presence in second-tier leadership is adequate. According to the data of the overall representation of women in

media leadership in Guangzhou, however, women's distribution in second-tier leadership varies significantly from one media organization to another. Interviewees who said women's presence in second-tier leadership is adequate tend to be those whose media organizations have a good percentage of second-tier women leaders.

The situation in first-tier leadership is less straightforward. Compared to the 1995 survey which showed women's representation in high-level leadership nationwide was only 8.5%, the percentage of first-tier women media leaders in Guangzhou (16.1%) seems to signify an improvement. But again due to the discrepancy of the two samples, this conclusion is not well-grounded. Among the five first-tier women leaders interviewed, two of them were promoted to their positions after 1995. Since there are no data on the number of first-tier women leaders who retired in the aftermath of 1995, it is difficult to conclude whether the situation has indeed improved or not. The scale of first-tier women leaders is very small. There were only fourteen first-tier women leaders in all three newspapers and five broadcast stations in Guangzhou in 2006 (with a total of eight-seven first-tier leaders). An increase of one or two women can significantly change the overall percentage but will not show that women's presence in the first-tier leadership has improved. This probably is the reason that most of the women interviewees said they were not aware of any obvious change. Therefore, judging women's progress in first-tier leadership by the percentage given seems to be too simplistic.

One thing, however, is for sure. Women's distribution as first-tier leaders in the Guangzhou media is in fact largely uneven. Each of the two radio stations, a marginalized media segment, has a woman president (even in the radio sector, women's overall presence in first-tier leadership is only slightly over a quarter). The TV sector as the most

powerful media segment nationally and newspaper groups as the most influential media segment in Guangzhou, both have no woman assuming the highest rank, which indicates that women still have difficulties in setting their feet in media sectors of higher social influence and more powerful resources. Another characteristic of women's distribution in first-tier leadership is of particular concern. Very few women leaders have assumed management responsibilities. Among the fourteen first-tier women leaders in Guangzhou, other than the two radio-station presidents who have management command, only one woman has a management title (managing board member of a large daily), all others either belong to editorial leadership teams or are in charge of party or logistics issues. Considering that each governing body in the three newspaper groups has at least four to five members with management titles, and each governing body in the five broadcast stations has at least two members with management titles, women's presence in the management circle is extremely low. After the media sector in China fully entered the market in the early 1990s, managing media as a business became more and more important for the survival of every media organization, sharply different from the situation in the past when the major concern for media leaders was editorial matters. Many media organizations started to add management boards to their governing bodies. The government has been training media leaders to master management knowledge. Leaders with management responsibilities have more and more important status in leadership teams. Women's extremely low representation in management leadership thus lags far behind the needs and trend of the present media landscape in China. Learning how to manage a medium in the market is therefore one of the challenges the media transformation has brought to these women leaders.

One of the biggest changes concerning women's career development in the media is the increase of women media professionals since middle 1990s, as reported by interviewees. Although there are no official statistical data to show the gender composition of the workforce in the media now, according to interviewees' report, women comprise 40% to 45% in the press sector and more than half in the broadcast sector. The enrollment of women in journalism programs has also increased dramatically, with women students now comprising more than two thirds of all students in journalism programs nationwide. Interviewees attributed the increase of women in the media and in journalism education to multiple reasons. The development of the media industry has created big personnel demands. The expansion of higher education and journalism educational programs has provided more young women opportunities to receive education. Journalism as a profession no longer enjoys the high social status it had previously. The transformation of Chinese society has resulted in alternative elite professions which more men choose to enter. Women, however, find working in the media bringing job satisfaction and security which many other professions fail to provide them. All these reason have created the phenomenon of "men retreat and women march," resulting in what appears to be the gradual feminization of the media in Guangzhou.

This reality is exactly the opposite of the case in the United States. The enrollment of women students in journalism programs in the U.S. is about the same as it has been in China since 2000 – about two thirds of students being women. But the case in the media profession is exactly the opposite. According to Weaver and his colleagues, who have conducted surveys of U.S. journalists for three decades consecutively, the percentage of women working as full-time journalists for mainstream U.S. news media has remained

virtually constant since the early 1980s at 33.3%, despite the increase of women in the U.S. civilian labor force (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 182-196). Their 2002 survey found out that women and men were entering the news media at about the same rate. Women made up of 60% of the under-25 journalism workforce, exceeding the total U.S. labor force percentage of women by 13 points in the 1990s, which means mainstream media were indeed attracting young women journalists. The representation of women, however, diminished with years of experience. The average number of years of journalism experience was 18 years for men and 13 for women (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 7-8). There was a steady drop of women in age categories. The biggest drop occurred with women journalists who were 25-34 years old in 1992. Their number dropped by 13%. More women (21%) than men (16%) also said they would most likely to be working outside the news media in five years. The reality that women tended to opt out of the media profession in their middle or late 30s on average, while men tended to stay has created the phenomenon of “women retreat and men march” and resulted in the lesser percentage of women in the news media compared to their presence in journalism educational programs in the U.S. The interesting contrast between China and the U.S. reflects the sharp difference between these two societies in terms of the status and practice of journalism as a profession, social attitudes toward success, the organizational culture and working situation in the news media, and women’s family/work relationship, etc.

Even though women have tended to enter and stay in the media more than men over the past decade in China, the future of female journalist students is of concern. Their prospect of entering the media seems to be hampered by their increased number in the media and by prolonged gender stereotypes and discrimination in Chinese society. A

good number of women interviewees themselves said they prefer to recruit male graduates, voicing what seems to be a common attitude toward female graduates in many media organizations. The preference of men over women is based on the rationale that men are more useful than women for breaking news assignments and in a dangerous reporting environment. Women also received discrimination as a result of their “doomed” destiny of bearing children.

When it comes to the future of women’s participation in media leadership, nevertheless, the prevailing attitude is optimism. All of the men interviewees believe more women will take leadership positions in the media, a view which is shared by the majority of the women interviewees. The common reasons they used to justify their optimism include the overall progress of Chinese society, the development of the media industry, more women entering the media, a younger generation of women less constrained by traditional cultural values, and women’s reduced family burdens. Some of them also believe that gender policy will play a positive role in propelling women’s advancement to media leadership. A minority of women, however, did not share this optimism. They distrust the gender policy, they criticized a stagnant promotion mechanism and other institutional flaws, they are discouraged by the prolonged under-representation of women in high-level media leadership, and they are not confident in the younger generation’ career aspirations.

Based on the research findings, I partially share the optimism. There is hope that more women will take part in second-tier or mid-level leadership in the years to come. An increased percentage of women media professionals, women’s proven aptitude for the profession and leadership, and a more transparent promotion mechanism based on the

“competition for promotion” mode may help to open up larger territories for women to advance their career in the media. I, however, have reservation concerning women’s prospect in first-tier media leadership. Their progress will be much slower. As long as the Chinese political system is male-dominant, media top leadership as an integral part of the political system will remain male-dominant.

Reaching the end of this dissertation after all the lengthy interpretations on women’s experiences in media leadership, I remind myself once again of what Hogue and Lord (2007) precisely claimed, “gender affects leadership through a complex set of processes involving a dynamic, intricate network of relationships among multilevel components in a complex organizational system” (p. 370). The mode of women’s progress within this complex setting, as positively defined by Jamieson (1995) in her book *Beyond the Double Bind*, is a one of struggle and hope:

Women’s progress has been thwarted by double binds that, when surmounted, have in fact been replaced by other double binds. But as women have conquered the no-win situations confronting them, they have marshaled resources and refined aptitudes that have made them more and more capable of facing the next challenge, the next opportunity. At the same time, they have systematically exposed the fallacious constructs traditionally used against them, and changed and enlarged the frame through which women are viewed. Although the result is not a steady move toward equitable treatment of women, it is a world in which progress is certainly sufficient to justify optimism (p. 7).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While I do believe this study is very valuable, there are many limitations to be acknowledged. In fact, after these months’ digging through the data and relevant research literature, I feel like I want to carry all the results and go back to Guangzhou to do

another round of interviews and extra data collection. There are holes here and there to fill.

I started with a national survey but rested my work on a citywide investigation. This discrepancy apparently failed to provide comparable data to examine the progress (or the setback) of women's participation in media leadership over the past decade either nationwide or in the city of Guangzhou.

Although in-depth interview as a research method enabled me to dig deep into women's experiences and generate rich data, what I have provided here is a very small collection of women's experiences in media leadership in Guangzhou. Every woman that I interviewed gave more or less distinct perspectives that were different from or omitted by others. I thus believe many perspectives are still out there waiting to be collected. My primary goal is to make women's experiences in participating in media leadership visible in academic discourse, so I do not intend to make generalizations of these women's experiences. Nevertheless, this visibility created is still very limited not only in terms of the small scale of the research but of the partial perspectives presented.

Furthermore, interview as a research method also has its limitation. On some sensitive questions, such as family conflict and political manipulation in promotion, direct personal interaction may not be the best way to obtain an honest answer. The action of interviewing is not able to provide the extent of privacy some interviewees might need to answer certain questions. Throughout the interview data, there are also many places where interviewees made general claims without examples to support them. I felt this "hollowness" while writing up quotations from the data. I should have asked interviewees to provide more concrete examples to help explain what they mean so as to

prevent my one-side interpretation which might twist or fail to convey some of their original meaning.

There may be flaws in my distinction of first-tier and second-tier leadership. While the first-tier leadership is almost equal to the senior management level as identified in traditional leadership research and represents the group of individuals in each media organization in similar positions, my construction of second-tier leadership is more arbitrary and vague. The definition of second-tier leadership is built upon the particular structure of the media landscape in China with core media organizations operating secondary media units. There, however, are significant difference among these secondary units with some of them being very big (such as a metro paper) and some very small (such as a monthly magazine). Assigning all the leaders in these diverse secondary media units to one group of second-tier leadership thus has its flaw of over-generalization. Furthermore, mid-level managers in those core media organizations (such as department heads) sometimes have even greater responsibilities and higher administrative rank than the head of small secondary media units. These all raise questions about the validity of the category of second-tier leadership. However, due to the particular structure of the media landscape in Guangzhou, there seems no perfect way to unravel the complexity of leadership structure in Chinese media organizations.

I certainly have my personal blind point in this study as well. Growing up in Chinese culture, I might have taken for granted some of the cultural assumptions and failed to question them in the study. Meanwhile, I might have also blindly adopted some of the assumptions embedded in the Western literature about women and media and inappropriately applied them to women in the Chinese media. This flaw seems to be

unavoidable for every researcher carries the mark of his or her particular social location. Only the accumulation of intellectual sharpness through years of practice in academics can help to reduce this “blind” influence.

AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

By the end of the research, I realize that I have done so little and there is so much more to explore. This study seems to end up with more questions than it sets out to answer. I, however, feel very excited about the fertile academic land this research has chartered for me.

First, let me start broadly. Women media practitioners in China are a severely under-researched subject. They have become prominent in the media over the past decade. Yet, there is very little scholarly work out there about them. There are so many questions to ask: How has the presence of women in the Chinese media evolved over the years? What are the motivations driving them to the profession? What are their aspirations, concerns, challenges, and values? How have they changed the media in China? This study only manages to generate a very thin layer of knowledge about them through the interpretation of a small group of women media leaders’ experiences. This is a field waiting for collective construction by many scholars. And, how about women journalism students in China? Women have become the absolute dominant gender in journalism education. Yet, there is no single piece of research exclusively devoted to them. What are women journalism students’ career aspirations and understandings of journalism as a profession? How have they prepared themselves for the profession? How have they experienced job placement and discrimination? Again, this study only slightly touches the surface of this

topic. There are many questions to ask and only a deep probing collectively can provide a comprehensive scholarly understanding of this subject.

Then, let me come back to this study specifically. What can be done in the future to make this study more complete and valid? First, the 1995 survey on Chinese women journalists nationwide might have individual data on the case in Guangzhou. Although I have not so far gained information on where the data set might be (I asked the leading investigator of this study and she said she could not recall where the original data are), I believe it must be there somewhere. Tapping around persistently I should be able to dig it out for comparison.

Second, this study reveals that the government and the political system in China have played a decisive role in formulating the first-tier leadership in the Chinese media. What is the exact leader-selection process? What are the criteria for media leaders used by the government? How does gender policy operate? Only by bringing in the perspective and practice of the government can the study on women and media leadership in China become grounded. Furthermore, as explained earlier, the leadership locale is where various power sources and social forces interact. Investigating the government's handling in the process of leadership formulation helps to deconstruct the complexity of the Chinese media system as well.

Third, based on the insights this study has generated, a further refined interview questionnaire and an auxiliary survey can be constructed to avoid the pitfall of the current study when studying more women leaders in the future. For instance, it is crucial to explore the connection between the promotion mechanism and women's representation in leadership in different media organizations. This study was done in a very small scale,

only covering twenty-two women media leaders in Guangzhou. The total number of first-tier Guangzhou women media leaders is fourteen and second-tier leaders fifty-one.

Interviewing more of them in the future with a more refined research design is not that formidable if funding resources and personnel help can be found.

Fourth, it will be very useful if the study on women and media leadership could be extended to a national scale in China. Guangzhou has been the hive of media transformation in China. The practice in the media sector there often serves as the model for media organizations in other regions. The snapshot of women's media leadership in Guangzhou therefore can function as a model for studying the subject at a national level. If interviewing women leaders in various regions is too ambitious, at least some studies inspired by the Guangzhou case can be carried out in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai. And, doing surveys in more regions based on the insights generated by this study might be manageable. But again, research on this scale asks for collaboration with other scholars and social units and probably involves significant funding resources as well.

At last, let me put this study in a comparative light. What can be done to make this study of more value in an international context? This study has presented some interesting findings for comparative application. For instance, the mirror image of the gender composition of media workforce in China and in the United States is interesting to explore. Women and the media as an academic field has reached its maturity after more than three decades of scholarly development in the West. Doing comparative research can make good use of the Western academic discourse and help to generate useful analytical categories and methods to further studies on women and the media in China.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire for Women Subjects

- Background information
 - How old are you?
 - Are you married?
 - Do you have children? How old are they?
 - What is your education background?

- Career development path
 - Would you describe your working history in the media with timeline?
 - Why did you choose journalism or media profession? Who or what have influenced your choice?
 - Do you think your gender helps or hampers your career advancement?
 - Do you think whether women and men follow different career development pattern?

- Perception of media leadership role in general
 - Does your work ask for a lot of time and energy? Does your work involve a lot of stress?
 - How has the transformation of the Chinese media influenced your work content and style? What are the main challenges in your work in the current media environment?
 - How do you handle the conflict between the party line from above and the commercial interest for your media organization?
 - What kind of qualities is highly needed to be a successful leader in the media reform environment in China?

- Perception of leadership differences among men and women
 - Do women and men lead differently? Why?
 - What are the advantages of being a woman leader, compared to your male counterpart?
 - What are the disadvantages of being a woman leader, compared to your male counterpart?
 - What special contributions do you think you bring to your media organization as a women leader?
 - Do you think your colleagues or subordinates have stereotypes toward women leaders? Do they influence your career advancement or daily management?
 - Does your career upward mobility involve a lot of social networking?
 - Many people have said women have a disadvantage in social networking which involves a lot of demanding behaviors, including drinking, smoking, excessive attendance of banquets, invisible bribe, etc. How do you perceive this reality and react to that?

- **Barriers to women's more representation in media leadership**
 - Will you categorize your organization as male-dominated? Why or why not?
 - Will you categorize the overall media leadership circle in Guangzhou as male-dominated? Why or why not?
 - Do you think women's representation in media leadership is enough or not?
 - What do you think are the reasons for women's under-representation in media leadership?
 - Do you think that women's lack of self-esteem and ability results in the under-representation of women in power structure in media organizations?
 - Do you think the stereotypes of high decision-making male colleagues hinder women's advancement in the media profession?
 - Do women need to do anything different than men to advance their career? If so, what? Why?

- **Balance work and family**
 - Do you have difficulties in balancing your work and family? How do you handle the dual situation?
 - Do you think the balance between family and work is a common problem facing women leaders in the media in Guangzhou today?
 - Does your organization try to help women to better cope with their family responsibilities?

- **Perception of women's participation in the media profession in China**
 - How do you evaluate the current status of women's career development in the Guangzhou media today?
 - Do women encounter discrimination in recruitment and promotion?
 - What do you think are the reasons for the increased participation of women professionals in the media?

- **Perception of the transformation of the Chinese media**
 - How do you evaluate the transformation of the Chinese media in terms of opportunities or barriers to women's career development?
 - Do you think the situation of media in Guangzhou is typical or is general in China?
 - What is your goal for the future of your media organization and the overall Chinese media?

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire for Men Subjects

- **Background information**
 - How old are you?
 - How long have you worked in the media industry?
 - What is the highest college degree you have obtained?
 - Which position are you in your media organization?

- **Perception and attitude toward women leaders in media organizations**
 - Do you think your media organization is interested in having women in leadership positions? If yes, why? If not, what do you think are the barriers preventing women from entering leadership level?
 - Do you think there are differences between men leaders and women leaders in terms of their leadership style? If yes, what are the differences?
 - Do you think men have a different career path to leadership positions than women? If yes, what is the difference?
 - What do you think is the characteristic of good leadership in general and good women's leadership in particular?
 - Do you think women leaders have changed the atmosphere of your media organization and the media product quality compared to that of men leaders? If so, what are some of those changes that you notice?
 - What do you perceive as women's advantages and disadvantages of being journalists in Guangzhou? How do you evaluate the overall status of women journalists in the Guangzhou media?
 - Do you think the transformation of the Chinese media has affected or will affect the status of women's leadership in media organizations? If so, why? What are some of the impact that you notice or anticipate?

Appendix C: Consent Form for Women Subjects

Research Title

Women's Participation as Leaders in the Transformation of the Chinese Media:
A Case Study of Guangzhou City

This is a dissertation research study being conducted by Chunying Cai under the supervision of Dr. Maurine Beasley in the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am inviting you to participate in this research because your experience and perception as a women leader in your media organization will help to provide key information for the research topic. The purpose of this project is to investigate whether the Chinese media's transformation process has affected women's leadership in media organizations and what is the role played by gender in this situation.

During the two-hour interview, you will be asked to answer a series of semi-structured questions pertaining to your experience and perception as a woman leader in media organizations in China. Your answer and the interactive conversation between us will be digitally recorded. I will transcribe the audio files late. I will make sure I have sole possession of the data and they will be stored in a safe place.

I will do my best to keep your personal information confidential. I will not disclose your name in my dissertation unless you agree to be identified by your real name, as indicated by your signature right below.

Your signature _____ **Date** _____ empty

In my dissertation, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or government authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

There are no foreseeable risks involved in this research project. The research is not designed to help you personally, but the information you provide will help me to explore the research topic, which will contribute to the body of knowledge in relevant field.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time.

If you have any questions about the research project itself, you may contact Prof. Maurine Beasley at College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related problem, please contact Institutional Review Board Office (IRB), University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA (Email: irb@deans.umd.edu; Tel: 301-405-0678).

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

I will be grateful if you would sign this form to indicate that you are over 18 year old, that the research has been explained to you, that your questions have been fully answered, and that you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.

Name of Subject _____

Signature of Subject _____

Date _____

Appendix D: Consent Form for Men Subjects

Research Title

Women's Participation as Leaders in the Transformation of the Chinese Media:
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This is a dissertation research study being conducted by Chunying Cai under the supervision of Dr. Maurine Beasley in the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am inviting you to participate in this research because your experience and perception as a male media professional in your media organization will help to provide valuable information for the research topic. The purpose of this project is to investigate whether the Chinese media's transformation process has affected women's leadership in media organizations and what is the role played by gender in this situation.

During the half-hour interview, you will be asked to answer a series of semi-structured questions pertaining to your perception on women's leadership in media organizations in China. Your answer and the interactive conversation between us will be digitally recorded. I will transcribe the audio files late. I will make sure I have sole possession of the data and they will be stored in a safe place.

I will do my best to keep your personal information confidential. I will not disclose your name in my dissertation unless you agree to be identified by your real name, as indicated by your signature right below.

Your signature _____ **Date** _____ empty

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I will be grateful if you would sign this form to indicate that you are over 18 year old, that the research has been explained to you, that your questions have been fully answered, and that you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.

Name of Subject _____
Signature of Subject _____
Date _____

Appendix E: Women Subjects Profile (in pseudonyms)

| Pseudonyms | Age | Job Title | Years in the Media | Years in Current Media Org. | Years in Current Position |
|------------------------------|-----|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| First-Tier Leader | | | | | |
| Fei | 55 | president of a radio station | 16 | 16 | 13 |
| Jun | 51 | vice president of a TV station | 24 | 5 | 5 |
| Pan | 50 | deputy editor of a large daily newspaper | 22 | 22 | 12 |
| Yao | 43 | deputy editor of a large daily newspaper | 22 | 22 | 12 |
| Zou | 40 | executive editor of a national magazine | 12 | 12 | 2 |
| Second-Tier Leader | | | | | |
| Bai | 50 | director of music channel in a radio station | 24 | 15 | 4 |
| Cao | 37 | deputy editor of a metro paper | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| Dai | 40 | deputy editor of a metro paper | 12 | 8 | 1 |
| Gan | 49 | vice president of a magazine | 22 | 19 | 5 |
| Hou | 52 | executive editor of a sports daily | 31 | 27 | 2 |
| Kun | 35 | deputy editor of a metro paper | 9 | 9 | 3 |
| Liu | 35 | deputy editor of a metro paper | 9 | 9 | 6 |
| Mei | 49 | deputy editor of an entertainment weekly | 23 | 23 | 4 |
| Nan | 51 | executive editor & vice president of a magazine | 22 | 12 | 12 |
| Qin | 42 | director of news channel in a TV station | 16 | 16 | 3 |
| Rui | 41 | vice director of English channel in a TV station | 18 | 18 | 1 |
| Tan | 38 | deputy editor of a metro paper | 14 | 9 | 3 |
| Wei | 40 | deputy editor of an English newspaper | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| Xie | 44 | editorial board member of a business newspaper | 11 | 11 | 1 |
| Yue | 42 | vice president of a metro paper | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| Internet Media Leader | | | | | |
| Guo | 37 | director of news department at an online media company | 9 | 2 | 2 |
| Sai | 29 | deputy director of entertainment department at an online media company | 7 | 1 | 1 |

Appendix F: Men Subjects Profile (in pseudonyms)

| Pseudonyms | Age | Job Title | Years in the Media |
|-------------------|------------|--|---------------------------|
| Feng | 41 | vice president of a TV station | 3 |
| Yong | 32 | editorial committee member of a large daily | 10 |
| Hang | 39 | deputy director of department of news of a radio station | 15 |
| Qing | 34 | director of department of editing of a TV station | 10 |
| Zeng | 40 | deputy director of a TV news channel | 11 |
| Wang | 41 | director of department of news of a metro paper | 17 |
| Xing | 58 | Executive editor of a metro paper | 32 |
| Bang | 30 | director of department of regional news of a metro paper | 7 |
| Long | 35 | director of department of evening editing of a large daily | 8 |

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