World Cities, Translocality and Gender in Financial Service Economies:

Women Professionals and Changing Chinese Lives in China, Hong Kong and Australia

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Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date: 18 January 2017

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Abstract

Women are emerging as significant actors in international financial industries concentrated in world and global cities. This study explores the feminisation of mid-level management teams in world and global cities in the Asia-Pacific. It draws on 51 in-depth interviews with Chinese women professionals working in the financial industry in Sydney, Hong Kong, Shanghai and four other cities in Australia and China. Using intersectionality analysis, it examines the interplay between geographical location, gender and career mobility.

This study has four key findings. First, a bank's location is embedded within hierarchical fields of power. There are spatial politics within a city, among different cities and across nations, which interweave with the politics of race, ethnicity and gender as urban economies respond to increasing numbers of immigrants. Particular areas within a city exert the power of spatial coding while the level of development and real and symbolic political power differs among cities. These factors impact the upward mobility of women professionals.

Second, 'seeing face' and 'giving face' are correlated to building trust and maintaining a 'personalised relationship' in Chinese business culture. Hence, global financial capitalism requires professionals to maintain a high frequency of local and international travel. Upwardly mobile Chinese women professionals play a key role in shaping the daily practise of transnationalism and in building and maintaining dynamic global-to-local and local-to-local connectivity.

Third, women professionals are adept at performing gender: they perform the role of a '*nü hanzi*' (女汉子 tough lady) to build a 'code of brotherhood' with male clients and bosses; and they also use charismatic womanhood and heterosexual attraction both in business dealings and in the office. Ironically, women professionals often face discrimination from other women. Their own misogynistic gendered perception of female bosses reflects a 'crab-pot mentality' which has a negative impact on the limited opportunities for women to move into top managerial positions.

Finally, the thesis reveals three place-based coping strategies: (1) cooperation between husband and wife who use gender role flexibility and exchangeability to divide labour at home, in Australia; (2) cooperation between women professionals and live-in, female, domestic helpers to do housework and child care, in Hong Kong; and (3) vertical cooperation between mothers and daughters, where a professional's mother becomes the key care giver to young children, in mainland China. The comparative analysis of challenges and coping strategies reveal an intricate and complex lineage between coping strategies, state policy, an individual's resources and place-based culture and norms.

Chapter 1

Introduction

With the rise and expansion of the financial services industries, women professionals have become integral participants in the development and expansion of global business networks. Increasing research on women in international business management (Adler & Izraeli 1988, 1994; Davidson & Burke 1994, 2000; Krieg 2006) documents the feminisation of the labor force in the business services industries. However, Chinese female professionals working in the urban financial services industry have remained relatively invisible. This thesis presents a study of the experiences of women professionals working in the banking and financial sector in China, Hong Kong and Australia to explore the feminisation of mid-level management teams in the financial industry in world and global cities.

Chinese banks have experienced rapid expansion domestically and internationally in recent years. In 2014, four out of the top ten global banks, as measured by capital reserves, were state banks of China (The Banker 2014). Chinese banks are becoming major players in the financial services industry. They are located in diverse cities and serve new markets in step with vastly increased mobility from China. Such mobility involves professionals in large-scale cross-boundary activities and daily translocal practices that make cities places with dense networks of activity (Beaverstock 2014; McDwan, Pollard & Henry 2005; Schiller & Caglar 2009; Yeoh & Willis 2005).

Translocal life paths describe people's geographical mobility, that is they live and work in multiple locations. Complex translocal life paths and high mobility have become dominant characteristics of professionals working in the globally connected transnational services economy. This study, a comparative analysis of women professionals in Hong Kong and major cities in China and Australia and, seeks to deepen understanding of transnational networks in the financial industry and open up perspectives on experiences of financial industry professionals across networked spatial and institutional scales, from cities and regions to national and global trajectories.

This chapter introduces the key concepts, themes and contents of the thesis. First, it explains three key concepts: world and global cities, translocality and gender. Understanding the concept of world and global cities highlights the interrelationship between important globalised economic spaces and the movement of professionals working in the international financial industry. In this era of globalisation, complex connections among cities, especially for migrant professionals, establish local and global and translocal connections along career paths. Perspectives on translocality contribute to a theoretical framework to explore the activities of contemporary women professionals in globalised economic space. Understanding gender politics at work and home is also an important way to understand how gender norms continue, change and modernise. After the introduction of these key concepts, this chapter discusses the research methodology and conceptual framework for the thesis. Finally, it summarises the subject matter and arguments of the chapters.

1.1   World Cities and Global Cities

Capitalist economic development results in uneven hierarchies of power in and among cities. In the context of globalisation, 'world cities' link the urbanisation processes to global economic forces, yet the term itself, as a kind of brand in the world economy, also works to alternately transmit, bracket and elide 'different realities and values, and their cultural and political economic contexts' (Cartier 2011, p. 313). World cities are complex places that represent growth and economic achievement as well as risk and inequality.

In John Friedmann's (1986) world city hypothesis, he points out that world cities are centralising nodes of economic activity. They are articulator cities that link a national or regional economy with the global economy and they are often also financial centres. He argues that a city's role(s) in the world economy directly reflects the structure and change of the local economy. In globalising economic space, world cities are dominated by a number of expanding economic sectors relating to management, finance, corporate services and the media. This pattern has resulted in the massive growth of highly paid economic elites – corporate managers and specialist professionals. Thus, world cities are the result of urban adaptation to changes that are externally induced.

Peter Taylor's (2001) research defines world cities as 'global service centres' within an interlocking network. Using a global data set comprising of information on 100 global service firms in 123 world cities, Taylor and his colleagues (2002) present seven different ways to measure and illustrate power differentials among world cities: global network connectivity, banking/finance connectivity, dominant centres, global command centres, regional command centres, high connectivity, and gateways to emerging markets. In their study, they list 20 cities with the highest levels of global network connectivity. Taylor argued that cities are 'interlocked' by the office networks of financial and business service firms. The world city network is linked by the communication of information, ideas, knowledge, and instruction through virtual and material flows within service office networks. 'The less-visible, face-to-face contacts in and around the offices, and the invisible electronic transmissions of information and ideas between offices, that are crucial for world city network formation' (Taylor et al. 2002, p. 233).

Saskia Sassen's (1991) idea of the global city distinguished the largest financial centers-London, New York and Tokyo. It follows earlier definitions of world cities, including the work of Friedmann, but with a new emphasis on the production of financial and service products. She asserts that the combination of spatial dispersal and global integration of financial services have created 'new strategic roles' for cities as 'command points' or 'key locations' for leading economic service industries (Sassen 1991, pp. 2-3). In global cities there are vast multinational networks of service firms and global integration of affiliated companies forming a transnational urban system.

Friedmann, Sassen and Taylor's arguments on world and global cities highlight the connectedness and structural similarities of particular kinds of cities between themselves, rather than with the nations in which they are located. This thesis uses these terms interchangeably in quotes, but otherwise uses the term 'world city' with specifically consideration of Taylor's (2001) definition of world cities as global service centres within an interlocking network. My main research sites for this thesis include Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai which are on Taylor's list of 20 cities with the highest levels of global network connectivity. I also interviewed women professionals

in several other cities (including, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in China, and Melbourne in Australia) to gain a deeper understanding of different individual experiences associated with social and economic differences among cities within a country.

Financial power is the primary contributor to the hierarchy of global cities (Massey, Allen & Pile 1999). Cities are embedded within differential power hierarchies. A city is 'a site in the flow of social relations' (Agnew 2005, p. 91). All three feature in Taylor's list of the top 20 world cities (Figure 1). As well as globalised economic space, these world cities provide a unique platform to explore the dialectical connection between cities and various forms of transnationalism, which is a salient characteristic of urban realities in emerging world cities.

The flow of people, money, ideas, norms, practices, and identities within fluid social spaces creates very complex social geographies. The location of a city may lay the groundwork for different life choices (Schiller & Caglar 2009). World and global cities and the patterns of labour-market demand that co-exist within them are of paramount importance in influencing highly-skilled professional and managerial labour migration within the world economy. They experience a massive growth of highly paid economic elites – corporate managers and specialist professionals. The agglomeration of such migrants in the financial communities of global cities has paralleled the globalisation of financial capital, international markets, and deregulation (Beaverstock 1992, 1994, 1996). This new category of professionals in world cities have new ways of working and living and different cultural values and norms from their predecessors and this reflects the changes in the world economy now revolving around the expansion of an international financial services sector (McDowell 1997).

In world cities, the desirable image of cosmopolitan professionals is associated with symbolic meanings attached to particular geographic sites including the built environment which serves as a form of symbolic capital (Black 1996; Cartier 1999, 2003). 'Spatiality is constitutive of power relations' (Allen 2003, p. 102) and powerful 'spatial coding' (Allen 2003, p. 163) in financial spaces is constructed by certain groups of professionals like accountants, lawyers and bankers. These elite groups serve as a

dominant representation of the place, and the image created around banking and finance generates an exclusive 'membership' that professionals can use for their own needs (Allen 2003, p. 164).

City positioning in the world economy and the locality of a corporation in a world city lay the groundwork for differential self-identity, social engagement, work experience, and career opportunities of female professionals in the banking and financial service industry. This thesis addresses a significant gap in international literature by researching the roles and functions of Chinese women professionals working in the financial industry in the formation of world city networks; and the dynamic intersection between globalised economic space and an individual's transnationalism or translocality and ultimately her career path.

1.2   Globalised Economic Space, Transnationalism and Translocality

The mobility of capital engenders globalisation of markets in services for industry, commerce and finance (Featherstone 1990). The tremendous compression of spatial and temporal distance compels various relationships between people and societies and in time and space. In the globalised economic space, social resources move between the global and the local, bound in a dynamic set of cross-boundary, circular relationships (Urry 2000). This rapid increase in the cross-border movement of social resources such as goods, services, technology and capital has further consolidated the interdependence of national economies (Joshi 2009).

When capital moves, people move (McDowell 1997). Mobility enables people to re-integrate social resources so as to expand their individual horizons or fields of activity (Wang 1995). Mobile life has become a dominant characteristic of urban professionals. For more than two decades, scholars have paid much attention to social interaction and connection associated with frequent cross-border activities among mobile migrants.

Since the 1990s, migration studies have increasingly adopted transnational approaches. Basch, Schiller and Blanc initially defined transnationalism as 'the processes by which

immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that line together their countries of origin and settlement' (Basch, Schiller & Blanc 1994, p. 6).

Transnationalism is 'part and parcel of the process of globalization' (Lionnet & Shih 2005, p. 5). As a mode of migration, it conceptualises ways in which increasing numbers of migrants are able to live 'dual lives' through creating 'dense networks across political borders' in their quest for economic advancement and social recognition (Portes 1997, p. 812). Transnationalism in practice may take on various forms over time, depending on the intensity of exchanges and communication. The practices of transnationalism in the everyday life of migrants contribute significantly to the ongoing processes of transformation which is largely associated with facets of globalisation. Even people who come from same country, with similar demographic and economic backgrounds, may engage in 'dissimilar transnational acts, lead multiple lives and, as consequence, developed distinct transnational identities'(Ghosh & Wang 2003, p. 281). Marriage alliances, religious activities, and media and commodity consumption are intense links in many migrants' transnational communities (Vertovec 2001).

Transnational practices among migrants involve three modes of transformation: perceptual, conceptual and institutional. Perceptual transformation affects migrants' orientation in the socio-cultural domain. Conceptual transformation affects the meanings of identities and border in the political domain. Institutional transformation affects the economic domain in the form of financial transfer, public-private relationships and local development (Vertovec 2004). These three modes of transformation involve multiple causes and are linked together by processes of social, political and economic development. The terms 'core transnationalism' and 'expanded transnationalism' indicate distinguishability between the degree of engagement among different cross-border activities (Guarnizo 1997b, 2000).

The variations in spatial extension and temporal stability have resulted in three different types of transnational, social spaces: transnational kinship groups, transnational circuits and transnational communities. Each type of space is characterised by a dominant mechanism of integration: reciprocity in small groups, exchange in circuits, solidarity in

communities (Faist 2000a). Another social term, 'social fields', describes the sets of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships. In social fields, ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organised, and transformed (Levitt & Schiller 2004).

The ideas of 'transnationalism from above' and 'transnationalism from below' generate both utopic and dystopic views of globalisation. 'Transnationalism from above' refers to 'transnationalism of the multinational corporate sector, finance capital, of global media, and other elite-controlled macrostructural process'. While 'transnationalism from below' is 'the sum of the counterhegemonic operation of the nonelite who reuse assimilation to one given national-state', 'a resistant site' (Mahler 1998,cited in Lionnet & Shih 2005). Despite the limitation of this binary model of above-and-below, the idea of 'minor transnationalism' calls for understanding the 'awareness and recognition of the creative interventions that networks of minorized cultures produce with and across national boundaries'(Lionnet & Shih 2005, p. 7).

Insights gained from the study of transnationalism have led to growing concerns about the need for learning more about local context, internal migration (Trager 2005), global-to-local relations and local-to-local interactions (Guarnizo & Smith 1998; Núñez-Madrazo 2007; Smith 2001), and the expansion of analytical focus beyond the limits of the nation-state (Oakes & Schein 2006). Over the past decade, the perspective of translocality has gained momentum. Translocality describes phenomena involving mobility, migration, circulation and spatial interconnectedness that are not limited to national boundaries (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013). Translocality perspectives study 'complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-oriented and multi-dimensional understanding', and 'integrate notions of fluidity and discontinuity associated with mobilities, movements and flows on the one hand with notions of fixity, groundedness and situatedness in particular settings on the other' (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013, p. 376).

Contemporary professionals are simultaneously embedded in multiple sites and different social fields in which they are working and living. For example,

'work-oriented translocality' is highly spatialised, and 'distinctive expatriate spaces' are important sites for global-local knowledge networks (Beaverstock 2002, p. 536). Expatriate lives are marked by intermittent comings and goings, from place to place. As workers move, they make meaningful contributions to building and maintaining global-to-local and local-to-local connections.

Translocal life experiences are characterised by negotiation and bargaining among locals and non-locals, as well as struggle and tension in the process of individual exchanges. Hence, on the one hand translocal life stories share many similarities, but on the other they are unique as personal desires, strategies and practices, and unique spatial and institutional scales play a role in an individual's own translocality. The concept of 'power geometry of time-space compression' (Massey 1991, p. 25) provides insight in understanding the roles and functions of professionals in globally connected office networks, suggesting complex dynamics of translocal connectedness including the politics between locals, non-locals and translocals in the fast-moving, multidirectional world, in order to understand 'situatedness during mobility' (Brickell & Datta 2011, p. 3) of highly mobile professionals.

The sociological concepts of 'transnationalism and translocality' apply to an increasing number of urban professionals in general and particularly to the women professionals working in international banks whom I interviewed during this research. These concepts also helps to conceptualise the complexity of multiple interlocking networks involving both work and social relationships. This thesis, uses these concepts to explore the spatial interconnectedness of work and challenges and coping strategies of women professionals working in the financial industry in world cities. Focused on women, this thesis also particularly explores the question of gender in their professional and private lives.

1.3   Gendered Banking Industry

Gender is socially constructed through interaction (Kelan 2010) and repetition of acts (Butler 1990). It is a social mechanism to produce and naturalise the notions of masculinity and femininity (Butler 2004). Gender does not exist alone but is always

intertwined with class and race (Lemert 1994; McDowell & P.Sharp 1997), and place and space (Noon & Blyton 1997). Social perception of gender requires men and women to exhibit appropriate gender performances or ways of 'doing gender' (Hochschild 1983, 2003; McDowell 1997, 1999, 2009). The ability to adopt distinct gendered bodily performance in different social settings plays a significant role in building business relationships (McDowell 1997; McDowell & Court 2008). In merchant banks, bankers perform specific forms of masculine and feminine identities. Success in dealing, trading, and selling is conventionally associated with masculinity, the exhibitors of which tend to be aggressive, tough, and ruthless. 'Corporeality – in the three fold sense of anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance' – plays a key role in selling a service and is also crucial to an individual's attempt to ascend to a powerful position in the workplace (McDowell & Court 2008, p. 465).

Jobs are gendered (Massey 1994). The practice of exclusively hiring men in the banking field was not altered until the twentieth century. Women first moved into the American banking industry as tellers because banks sought and capitalised on the cheapest labour available (Prather 1971). The glamorisation of the teller's position encouraged more women to take up employment in banking firms, but at that time the doors had not opened wide enough for significant numbers of women to move up to management positions. The job division between men and women involved (and still involves) power relations (Ong 1991). Women, almost without exception, remained in subordinate positions. Research on European banks found that in the 1990s women were concentrated in a small number of functions at the lower grades of assistance and operative tasks, while being virtually absent from managerial or commercial functions (Jortay et al. ,1991; Quack and Hancke, 1997; cited in Zulauf 2001). Although banking had fairly structured career routes, at the managerial level promotions occurred more informally and selections tended to be based on the discretion of senior management (Zulauf 2001). More recently, merchant banking was still largely male dominated and advancement is closely related to age and gender. 'Male-dominated norms, behaviour and work practices [are] particularly strong mechanisms in slowing down women's career progression' (Zulauf 2001, p. 177).

With global expansion of the financial services industry, the international banking environment has undergone rapid changes. For instance, in 2011 Christine Lagarde was elected as the first female head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an important example of the increasing importance of women professionals as contributors to the world economy. However, the existing literature about banks is mainly from the perspective of business management, focusing on the structure and policies of banks in a specific country or city. It has paid little attention to female professionals in banks as carriers of cultural ways of doing banking (Bartel 2000; Berger & Mester 1997; Fogelberg & Griffith 2000; Mizruchi & Stearns 2001; Pi & Timme 1993).

This study of female professionals in the banking industry aims to gain a deeper understanding of changing social conditions, and ultimately reveal ways to enhance women's strengths in the industry. Gender is a crucial aspect in revealing how social practice is ordered. The social construction of sex-gender roles in the workplace and at home intertwines with power hierarchies, culture and norms which differ from nation to nation and even city to city. By focusing on a group of women professionals located in different societies in different cities, this thesis also examines the interconnections between work, family and gender. This draws a complex picture of opportunities and, constraints, and various coping strategies which effect the career mobility of women professionals.

1.4 Research Subjects and Research Focus

Research Subjects

This study focuses on Chinese women professionals working in globalised retail and investment banks in Australia, Hong Kong and mainland China. It explores the intersection of ethnicity, place of origin and gender to gain a better understanding of the meaning of being Chinese in different settings, the differences in interpreting 'being Chinese' among women professionals and hence different ways of interpreting Chinese values in 'doing gender', and the challenges associated with politics of ethnicity and place of origin; and the coping strategies adopted by specific groups of women located in different places.

One challenge is to define 'Chinese' when the research includes people in different places in China as well as in Chinese and international communities abroad. 'Chinese' includes individuals born in the People's Republic of China (PRC), a national Chinese (*zhongguo ren* 中国人), and those of Chinese descent (*huayi* 华裔) born outside of China, who live in a variety of nations throughout the world (Wang 1991). In China, native place identity continues to exist as a form of ethnicity. Emily Honig's (1992) research on ethnic differences within Jiangsu province especially demonstrates enduring place-based identity formation in China through the inside/outside or *nei* (内)/*wai* (外) distinction to distinguish people who are local and people who are from 'outside' the area. Within the constructed ethnicity of 'Han Chinese', people 'continue to evoke and manipulate geographic origins, language, and cultural practices to establish boundary markers, thereby maintaining a we/them dichotomy' (Honig 1992, p. 116).

In contrast, the scholarship on the Chinese diaspora evolves a range of perspectives on identity formation. Laurence Ma adheres to evokes the us/them dichotomy in attempting to explain that Chinese populations abroad are 'far from being a homogeneous group as perceived by mainstream citizens' (Ma 2003, p. 26), since Chinese diasporic communities display 'considerable internal subethnic diversity in population composition, spatial patterns, social structure and economic activities, even within the same country of settlement' (Ma 2003, p. 25). The cultural identity of *huayi* (华裔) 'is living and changeable; it is also the product of a shared historical experience whose record has continually influenced its growth' (Wang 1991, p. 2).

The scholarship on dynamics of identity formation develops the idea of 'Chinese transnationalism' to examine how experiences wrought through globalisation of migration, travel and increasing exposure to multiple places contributes to the identity construction of overseas Chinese. Processes of globalisation set in motion new mobilities that unseat realities and ideas about territorially-bounded national cultures. Migration flows facilitate reconstitution of and challenge to ideas about the nation across former state boundaries (Walter 1995). Social discourses of Chinese transnational capitalists include attributions of their success to traditional Confucian

culture as well as to their capacity for flexibility and networking (Chan 2000; Redding 1993), producing transnational imaginaries of ethnic self-celebration (Ong & Nonini 1997). In fact, contemporary Chinese migrants are simultaneously embedded in multiple sites and different social fields in which they are living. The practice of transnationalism ties together cross-border ethnic communities and imbues them with valuable social and economic capital that can help immigrant entrepreneurs to gain valuable market information through informal channels. In transnational businesses, merchants deliberately engage in cultural practices and display their ethnic identities as 'transnational strategies' for business development (Dahles 2004). Therefore, in the context of transnational globalisation, people with intense mobility display a high degree of flexibility in regards to their cultural identities which are multiple, hybrid and instable (Chan 2005a).

Dynamics of the banking industry are part of the global trend of expanding service industries in metropolitan areas. Studying Chinese women professionals in the banking industry as my research subjects contributes to understanding this specific group in relation to gender equality, and gender perceptions at home and how they clash with gender dynamics in the workplace. 'Chineseness' itself is 'multiply encoded and has increasingly become the site of contention from peripheral, diasporic, and minority perspectives' (Shih 2005, p. 95). The complexity and multiplicity of 'Chineseness' can be presented in different ways in China and diasporic locations. Many facets of Chineseness 'may be most aptly described as its many masks that may be adorned, yet always having one face' for both instrumental and expressive purposes at different times and in different social contexts (Tong 2010, p. 7). Chinese identities generate from many different contexts or different times and social locations. The process of Chinese identity formation for migrants is also diverse, and can be closely linked to 'ties of history and genealogy', and 'affective sentiments, obligations derived from social relationships and memories' developed from back-and-forth movement between China and a migrant country (Louie 2004, p. 41).Thus, this comparative research focuses on multiple sites through different cities with varying social, cultural, economic and political contexts across China and Australia. It also includes various personal life experiences and career mobility paths.

The diverse group of 'Chinese woman' shares some significant similarities. First, the ideology of gender equality at home in Chinese families lags far behind gender equality in the workplace in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and in other countries (Edwards 2000; Fincher 2014; Ong 1991; Pluss 2012). Women's roles in Chinese families and the division of labour between men and women at home is still closely associated with traditional, cultural expectations of filial piety, caregiving and house-keeping (Honig & Hershatter 1988; Kung 1994; Salaff 1981; Wong 2005, 2009). Second, tension is generated by clashes between gender perception at home and the perception of women professionals at work. Although there are various degrees of difference amongst the individual Chinese women professionals across different cities, they all are working in the highly competitive financial industry. On the one hand, their professional duties demand them to be 'modern women' dedicated to their careers. On the other hand, internalised Chinese gender perception impels them to be a 'virtuous wife and a good mother' at home (Tang et al. 2000). These cultural and social contexts make comparative analysis possible as the Chinese women professionals in this study share many challenges and difficulties regardless of where they live and work.

The meaning of 'professionals in the banking industry' and similar expressions in this study conveys the broad sense of a 'banker'. It refers to professionals who had worked before the interview was conducted or were currently working in various banks for at least three years in at least a mid-managerial level – such as a department head, a branch manager, a general manager or a director. Research of these groups of professionals is needed in order to understand the changing urban financial services industry environment, which is increasingly drawn into networks of emerging markets comprised of transnational Chinese clients who work and live in the metropolitan areas of Australia and China.

Research Focus

This research examines the banking and financial industry as a social pursuit intertwined with city positioning in the world economy, cross-border movements, transnational networks and gender politics in finance economy. My thesis frames financial services as a form of cultural and social activity practised by professional

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bankers. It provides a deeper understanding of how Chinese female professionals working in the finance service economy exhibit their gender, race and ethnicity in an era of globalisation. It identifies challenges they face, particularly to do with upward career mobility, and promotes further investigation into the functions of such women in this industry.

My research builds on two hypotheses. First, I propose that city positioning in the world economy influences office networks and social networks, leading to social resources, which, in the context of opportunity structures, influence the career development of individual Chinese women bankers. Second, by practising various forms of transnationalism, Chinese female professionals can transform their disadvantages into advantages to achieve better career mobility.

This dual hypothesis trains interest on how women maximize their strengths and contributions in the finance industry, with the following aims and objectives: 1) To analyse the roles and functions of Chinese women elites working in the finance economy in the formation of transnational networks and in the development of the financial services industries; 2) To examine the roles of city location, branch location, global office networks and transnational social fields in the career development of Chinese female professionals working in the financial services industry.

The key research questions include:

(1) How do Chinese female professionals in banks forge and sustain their transnational networks?

  i) What kinds of connections have they maintained with their hometown, the cities they previously lived or worked in? How often do they visit these places and what are the main activities they engage in there?

  ii) To what degree do they have contact with banking groups in other countries/cities? How much do they engage in any cross-border joint activities with other branches/societies in other cities or with any organisations in mainland China or other countries?

  iii) Who are the key members of their social networks? What kinds of activities do they engage in? Who do they seek help from when they are in difficulty, and why do they turn to that particular source of help?

(2) What are the career paths among Chinese female professionals working in banks in Australia, Hong Kong SAR and mainland China?

  i)   Why and how did they enter the banking industry? Have they experienced any differences between their job expectations and reality?

  ii) In terms of country and city of origin, who are their key clients and what are their profiles (that is, their age groups, gender, languages they speak)?

  iii) What do they do to maintain good relationships with clients who come from or live in different countries or cities?

  iv) What difficulties and challenges do they face in their daily work? What are their coping strategies?

(3) How do Chinese female professionals negotiate family obligations as wives/mothers/daughters? How do their family networks function to support their career development?

(4) What are their plans for the future? What are their opinions about the influence that the Chinese have in the world? Do they have any policy suggestions for the banking industry?

1.5   Conceptualisation and Approach: An Integrative Framework

'Subject formations and social relations are constructed through intersectionality – a set of relationships among the multiple dimensions of being' (McDowell 2009, p. 65). Intersectionality analysis examines how a multitude of factors such as race, gender, age, social class, location, culture and personal support networks influence each other (Davis 2008; Dill & Zambrana 2009; Pluss & Chan 2012). Recognising this complex intersectionality, my research takes an integrative analytical approach to unravel the complex and diverse relationships between city positioning, locality, culture, translocal urban finance industries and the career path of female professionals.

First, I adopted the concept of 'world cities' (Beaverstock 1992, 1994, 1996; Friedmann 1986; Massey, Allen & Pile 1999; Sassen 1991; Taylor 2001; Taylor 2004; Taylor et al. 2002) and the framework of 'city positioning' (Schiller & Caglar 2009) to understand the dynamic relationship between locality and career development opportunities for Chinese female professionals in the financial service economy in different world cities. As the relative positioning of a city within hierarchical fields of power may well lay the

groundwork for different career opportunities for migrants locally and transnationally, 'we should take locality and city scale into account to understand the dynamic and transductive relationships that cities achieve through their relative positioning within intersections of hierarchical fields of power' (Schiller & Caglar 2009, p. 188).

Second, to achieve a thorough understanding of complex social-spatial interactions and the effects on the career paths of female professionals, I analysed the data through the perspective of transnationalism and translocality (Basch, Schiller & Blanc 1994; Beaverstock 2002; Brickell & Datta 2011; Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013; Portes 1997; Vertovec 2001). This allowed me to understand the global-to-local and local-to-local spatial interconnectedness involved. Transnationalism involves individuals, their networks of social relations, their communities, and broader institutionalised structures such as local and national governments (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 2008, p. 276). The translocal analytical focus looks beyond the limits of the nation-state (Oakes & Schein 2006) and pays more attention to local context. The individual and his/her support networks are the proper units of analysis in this area. This approach proposes that 'the history and activities of individuals is the most efficient way of learning about the institutional underpinnings of transnationalism and its structural effects' (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 2008, p. 277). Contemporary professionals in service industries interact simultaneously in multiple sites and in different social fields. Their multiple interlocking networks of social relationships, ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organised, and transformed. Hence my research explored how the life trajectory of female professionals working in finance capitalism intertwined with multi-stranded transnational communities and thus reflected global-to-local economic interdependence.

Third, I took the sociology of work and of family as two key bases to gain an understanding of gender dynamics at work and home; family cooperation and resistance; and work related stresses and coping strategies, among female professionals in the banking industry. This approach also involved examining how respondents were 'doing gender' at work and at home to reveal how gender politics are reinforced and manipulated in the social discourse of gender 'nature' (Butler 2004; Kelan 2010; Noon

& Blyton 1997). This is important because 'institutions like the state, kinship, gender, and religion, as well as industrial enterprise, play important roles in constituting workers' activities and consciousness' (Ong 1991, p. 304). Also, merchant banks are traditionally male-dominated institutions in which gendered performance is constructed and reinforced (McDowell 1997, 1999, 2009; McDowell & Court 2008). On the one hand, women are expected to be modern elites as tough and aggressive as their male colleagues, while on the other hand they are expected to be traditional, supportive and virtuous wives and 'good' mothers (Edwards 2000; Fincher 2014; Hochschild 1997, 2003, 2012; Salaff 1981; Wylie 2004).The conceptual ideas of a 'managed heart' (Hochschild 1983) and the 'commercialization of intimate life' (Hochschild 2003) reflect the contradiction of gender-based performance in constructing relationships with clients and colleagues in the business world. At the same time, the concept of 'the second shift' (Hochschild & Machung 1990) and 'the third shift' (Hochschild 1997) reveal that women grapple with the social reality of being urban, professional elites living in rapidly changing, commercialised cities while still wearing a traditional cultural-rooted identity.

Thus, by studying the respondents' life trajectory at work and home, I was able to gain an understanding of the impact of globalisation on the financial services industry, family relationships and the fabric of local society. By locating the personal life trajectory of female professionals in the social context of modern day Chinese culture, I identified the invisible negotiations undertaken to resolve the conflicts related to an individual's career development and the strong perception of gendered loyalty and obligation to family.

1.6   Content and Organisation

The remaining six chapters proceed as follows. chapter two contextualises the study by providing four kinds of background information. First, it provides background information on the three main research sites – Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai, including general economic information and pertinent facts about the financial industry. This helps us identify different career opportunities for female professionals in each city. Second, it addresses the research aims and objectives and listing key questions asked

during interviews for data collection. Third, it explains the qualitative methodology for this thesis including: the logistics involved in identifying suitable respondents and securing their cooperation, how the in-depth interviews were conducted and how I analysed the interview data. Fourth, it provides demographic information and the employment background of each respondent, including their current and previous employers in the banking sector, their most recent position in a bank, the number of years they have worked in the industry, their age group, and their level of educational achievement.

Chapters three to six are grouped into two sections. The first section, comprising Chapters three and four, examines the data obtained from interviews with the respondents from a macro perspective. It examines the intertwined relationship between a city's positioning in the spatiality of power and the individual's working and mobility pattern. The second section, comprising chapters five and six, examines the data from a micro perspective. It examines how gender identity plays a role in women's professional careers and family life.

The two sections are closely related: private life is affected by public life; the site of a city and the site of a bank are located in hierarchical fields of power; social environment and locality encompass an individual's way of performing and coping at work and at home in the family. These four chapters analyse how transnational family life involves the forced cooperation of female professionals with others to succeed in corporate transnationalism. They demonstrate that forces such as gender, race, ethnicity, and politics intertwine with and compound each other to produce deep and far-reaching effects that are often beyond the control of the individual.

Chapter three is based on the comparative theory of locality, focusing on mainland China, Hong Kong and Australia individually to understand how the geographical location of a bank lays the groundwork for self-identity, social engagement, work experience, and career opportunity for Chinese female professionals in the globalised financial service economy. I argue that the career mobility of Chinese female professionals in Australia's banking industry is associated with the process of urban

transformation. The openness toward Asian migrants and the economic rise of China have contributed significantly to an increasingly cultural economy in urban service industries in which ethnic capital is an essential resource for business development. In Hong Kong, the desirable images of cosmopolitan elites are interwoven with the symbolic meanings attached to spatial coding of key financial districts. In interactive service work, clients' expectations and relationship projection involve complex evaluative interpretation. The female professionals in this study present themselves skilfully when dealing with different clients in different branches as class distinction is always spatially-related. In mainland China, the uneven economic development between cities and districts has resulted in hierarchical power distribution of bank branches located in those respective cities and districts. I conclude that the individual's recognition by top managerial team and their career mobility are interlocked with political significance, economic power and degrees of modernity in different cities.

Chapter four draws on Massey's insights of 'power geometry of time-space compression' (Massey 1991, p. 25) to analyse the roles and functions of Chinese women professionals in the formation of globally connected office networks and in the development of the financial services industry. The chapter examines how the life trajectories of women bankers reflect an emerging translocal life path among women professionals in urban service industries. Contemporary urban elites must operate simultaneously in multiple sites and different social fields. I argue that the complex dynamics of global-to-local and local-to-local connections, and the politics between local, non-local and translocal entities in the more rapidly developing cities are characterised by uneven power relationships between individual cities in the world financial system. Female professionals in this study are heavily engaged in different cross-border activities which lead to circulation and spatial interconnectedness beyond national boundaries. The Chinese women professionals in this study are travellers who forge and sustain social and business relationships across countries and cities. They contribute significantly to the globalisation of the market.

Chapter five explores the day-to-day working experiences of women bankers in feminised urban service industries. It analyses how gendered performance is a

significant tactic used for selling products and gaining trust from both clients and higher levels of management. The commercialisation of womanhood is embedded in the globalised and translocal financial markets which require personalised service to gain more customers. Female professionals in the service industry are required to perform according to their 'learned manhood' during goal-oriented and instrumental business entertainment, while they are also expected to act like traditional women by being supportive of and submissive toward their mainly male supervisors. Although there is an emerging feminisation of middle management positions in the banking industry, the glass ceiling which prevents further female promotion to upper levels is still a reality. Ironically, gender inequality in the workplace is reinforced by women themselves. Women as a group are one of the main sources of discrimination against other women moving into top management.

Chapter six analyses how women professionals handle family and work obligations, and the associated cooperation and conflict between family members. While female professionals increasingly gained more recognition in result-oriented global financial industries, the social ideology concerning gender equality at home has not progressed at the same pace. For the most part, role expectation and division of labour at home continues to follow traditional gender stereotypes.

The chapter describes the coping strategies of the city-based professional working wives and mothers who manage their 'triple shifts' – work, housework and 'emotional work' at home. Three different kinds of cooperation among family members of time-starved mothers are identified to understand the intersection of state policy, regional economic resources and historic social norms in different cities. I argue that gender role flexibility is the key strategy for female migrant professionals in Sydney; while in Hong Kong female professionals mainly outsource many of their so-called obligations at home to live-in housekeepers; and mainland Chinese women professionals use their own retired mothers and mothers-in-law as a resource to look after their children and to support their personal career development.

Taken as a whole, the study provides a deeper understanding of the roles and functions of Chinese women professionals in the formation of transnational world city networks and the development of financial services in urban economies. The cross-national comparative research contributes to advancing scholarship on globalisation, transnationalism and finance capitalism. From an interdisciplinary perspective, my arguments contribute to theoretical discussions on service society, sociology of family and work, gender, migration and human geography. The implications of my study for policy changes include devising measures to overcome barriers to career mobility for Chinese women professionals working in banks, and by extension the finance industry and other service industries, in an environment that is not known for openness, equality, and transparency.

Chapter 2

Research Localities, Research Focus and Research Methodology

The research sites are in Hong Kong, mainland China and Australia. The growing ties between China and Australia provide a timely opportunity to study the formation of global city networks between China and Australia. China and Australia are two key countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Both are active participants in regional and global affairs and are leading members of a wide range of regional and global institutions including APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and the East Asia Summit. They have 'an extensive network of bilateral relationships' (Australian Centre on China in the World 2012, p. 32) and their 'respective strategic profiles in Asia and the Pacific are rising' (Australian Centre on China in the World 2012, p. 38).

In 2006, the People's Bank of China, China's central bank, opened its representative office for the South Pacific in Sydney. It was the first foreign central bank to formally establish an office in Australia. The opening demonstrated the good relationship and strong trade and economic ties between Australia and China. In 2011, China was Australia's largest export market for goods and services, its largest source of imports, and its largest two-way trading partner (Australian Centre on China in the World 2012).

The research sites include three cities which are key financial centres in China and Australia, namely Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai. In this chapter, I provide information about these cities so that the reader can better understand the social contexts of this research. In addition to these three principal cities, I also conducted interviews with female professionals working in banks in other regional finance centres, namely Melbourne, Australia, and Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhongshan in Guangdong province, China. These research sites facilitated an investigation of urban service industries as a dominant globalised economic force. Each city was viewed as a specific analysis unit allowing an examination of the complexity and diversity of urban banking industries, and by extension other financial and service industries. My in-depth research on Chinese female professionals working in the banking industry in these world cities

also serves to deepen our understanding of the relationship between China and Australia.

2.1 Global and Transnational Finance Centres: Hong Kong, Shanghai and Sydney as Three Main Research Sites

The expansion of the international financial services sector through deregulation and the globalisation of markets has changed the world economy and, conversely, the economic structure of world cities (McDowell 1997; Sassen 1991). Studies on transnational banking and financial services have found that world cities greatly influence highly-skilled professional and managerial labour migration (Beaverstock 1994, 1996, 2002, 2014). This thesis focuses on three such world cities in the Asia-Pacific region: Hong Kong, Shanghai and Sydney.

The Global Financial Centres Index 18, released in September 2015, provided profiles, ratings and rankings for financial centres. Hong Kong was ranked number three, Sydney was number 15 and Shanghai was number 21 (Table 1) (Yeandle 2015). These rankings were calculated employing a 'factor assessment model' that used two distinct sets of input: instrumental factors and financial centre assessments. The instrumental factors included five broad areas of competitiveness, namely: business environment, financial sector development, infrastructure, human capital, and reputational and general factors. The financial centre assessments were based on an online questionnaire completed by 3,194 international financial services professionals. A total of 28,676 financial centre assessments were analysed in the report (Yeandle 2015, p. 2).

The Global Financial Centres Index 18 indicated that Hong Kong is a global financial leader while Shanghai and Sydney are transnational financial centres (Table 2). These categories were determined by three key measures: connectivity, diversity and speciality. Connectivity refers to 'the extent to which a centre is well known around the world'. Global centres are connected with over 70 percent of other important centres, while transnational centres are connected with over 55 percent of other important centres. Diversity refers to the breadth of financial industry sectors that flourish in a financial centre. Speciality refers to the existence of specific services within a financial centre,

including investment management, banking, insurance, professional services and services in the government and regulatory sectors (Yeandle 2015, p. 11).

Table 1: The Top 30 Global Financial Centres

Rank	Centre
1	London
2	New York
3	**Hong Kong**
4	Singapore
5	Tokyo
6	Seoul
7	Zurich
8	Toronto
9	San Francisco
10	Washington DC
11	Chicago
12	Boston
13	Geneva
14	Frankfurt
15	**Sydney**
16	Dubai
17	Montreal
18	Vancouver
19	Luxembourg
20	Osaka
21	**Shanghai**
22	Doha
23	Shenzhen
24	Busan
25	Tel Aviv
26	Taipei
27	Melbourne
28	Abu Dhabi
29	Beijing
30	Vienna

Source: The Global Financial Centres Index 18, September 2015

On the one hand, the key roles that Hong Kong, Shanghai and Sydney play in finance capitalism provide common ground for comparative research. On the other, these three cities are located in three different political and social systems: Sydney has a capitalist economic system and is influenced by Western culture; Hong Kong is a border city,

with a capitalist economic system but Chinese culture is still a significant force in constructing social norms; Shanghai is an emerging international financial centre in a 'socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics'. These two factors contribute to the uniqueness and complexity of this research.

Table 2: Financial Centres by Connectivity, Diversity and Speciality

	Broad and deep	Relatively broad	Relatively deep	Emerging
Global	*Global leaders*	*Global diversified*	*Global specialists*	*Global contenders*
	Amsterdam Dublin Frankfurt **Hong Kong** London New York Paris Seoul Singapore Toronto Zurich	Brussels	Beijing Dubai Luxembourg	Moscow
Transnational	*Established transnational*	*Transnational diversified*	*Transnational specialists*	*Transnational contenders*
	Boston Chicago Geneva Istanbul Kuala Lumpur Lisbon Madrid Montreal Prague **Shanghai** **Sydney** Tokyo Vancouver Washington DC	Busan Copenhagen Los Angeles Milan Munich Stockholm	Abu Dhabi Almaty British Virgin –Islands Casablanca Cayman Islands Guernsey Jakarta Jersey Shenzhen	Edinburgh Gibraltar
Local	*Established players*	*Local diversified*	*Local specialists*	*Evolving Centres*
	Budapest Mexico City Melbourne Osaka San Francisco Sao Paulo	Calgary Glasgow Oslo Rome	Bahamas Bahrain Bangkok Bermuda Cyprus Doha	Athens Dalian Helsinki Monaco Liechtenstein Reykjavik

	Tel Aviv		Isle of Man	Riyadh
	Vienna		Johannesburg	St Petersburg
	Warsaw		Malta	Tallinn
			Manila	
			Mauritius	
			Mumbai	
			Panama	
			Rio De Janeiro	
			Taipei	

Source: The Global Financial Centres Index 18, September 2015

Following are details of the financial background of the three key research cities:

Sydney

There were 451,500 people employed in the finance and insurance industry in Australia, as of November 2015. (The government's statistical information do not separate the finance industry from the insurance industry.) They were mainly based in the capital cities of each state. The states of New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria are the two most important states in regards to Australia's finance capitalism, accounting for 65 percent of all employment in the finance and insurance industry in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015).

Recently, the NSW government has shown clear intent to consolidate Sydney as a leading financial hub in the Asia-Pacific region. In November 2010, the Financial Service Office of the Shanghai Municipal Government and the NSW Department of Trade and Investment signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at strengthening the links between the Chinese and NSW finance sectors. Hence, by 2016, all of China's big four banks had set up offices in Sydney (Australia China Business Council 2016). In November 2014, the central bank governors from both China and Australia signed another Memorandum of Understanding stating that Sydney would become an offshore settlement hub for the Chinese currency, the Renminbi (RMB) (New South Wales Government 2014). This development came about because China is Australia's number one trading partner. Securing Sydney as an offshore RMB settlement hub will further strengthen the close business relationship between the two countries, and especially between the finance service industries in Sydney and Shanghai.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong is part of China in political and administrative terms, however, I viewed it as separate from cities in mainland China because it is operating under a different legal and financial system. Also, Hong Kong's recent colonial history sets it apart from the rest of the People's Republic of China.

Hong Kong has one of the highest concentrations of banking institutions in the world. The banking system in Hong Kong has three tiers of deposit-taking institutions, comprising of licensed banks (LBs), restricted license banks (RLBs) and deposit-taking companies (DTCs). According to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority Annual Report, at the end of 2014, there were 159 LBs, 21 RLBs and 23 DTCs operating in this city (Hong Kong Monetary Authority 2015). There were also 208 foreign banks with branches in Hong Kong. More than 77 percent of these overseas banks are listed among the world's largest 500 banks (Hong Kong Monetary Authority 2015).

The financial services industry is a major source of jobs in Hong Kong, directly employing more than 230,000 people, accounting for 6.1% of the total labour force (as of 2013). It plays an important role in 'leading Hong Kong's evolution into a knowledge-based economy'. Thirty-eight percent of the industry's employees are managers and professionals, which is double the rate of most other industries in Hong Kong (Financial Services Development Council of Hong Kong 2015, p. 10).

Shanghai

The Global Financial Centres Index 18 indicated that Shanghai is the second most likely city to become a more significant financial centre in the coming years (Yeandle 2015). The Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) views International Finance Centres (IFCs) as a 'symbol of international recognition of a nation's global influence' (Subacchi et al. 2012, p. 11). Thus, in 1990, the government opened the Pudong New Area（浦东新区）in Shanghai to provide impetus for China's reintegration into global and regional economies (Gu & Tang 2002). The central government has made extensive reforms and implemented numerous programs to maintain this impetus. For example:

the 11th Five-Year-Plan in 2006, the State Council declaration in 2009, the 12th Five-Year-Plan in 2011, and the Fourth National Financial Work Conference in 2012.

In 2012, China's 12th Five-Year-Plan (2011-2015) set the goal of Shanghai becoming the most important international financial centre in mainland China by 2020. In January 2012, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the Shanghai Government announced a plan to develop the city as a global hub for trading RMB with a total of 320,000 financiers working in the sector by 2015 (National Development and Reform Commission of China, 2012). Three years after the announcement, the Shanghai Government announced that this goal had been surpassed with 350,000 financial professionals working in Shanghai. At the 2015 Lujiazui Forum on 27 June, Kong Qingwei, the Party Secretary of the Shanghai Financial Work Committee, indicated that Shanghai has set out a financial talents attraction program aiming to bring the total number of finance professionals in Shanghai to 500,000 within the next five years (China Daily 30 June 2016). Clearly, the PRC Government is concentrating its socio-economic activities in Shanghai with the aim of this city becoming one of the world's foremost financial centres.

2.2   Research Methodology: Qualitative Research

Finding Respondents

My qualitative research method adopted snowball sampling instead of random sampling. Between 2013 and 2014, I conducted a total of 51 in-depth interviews with Chinese female professionals working in international banks and financial firms in Sydney, Melbourne, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhongshan. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed, and the interview data was subjected to thematic analysis.

I identified interview respondents though personal contacts, referrals from interviewees and community organisations but I met the majority of them through personal referrals. Initially, I tried to contact potential respondents by sending a formal research invitation letter (Appendix A) to a large number of banks and bank-related organisations, but none

replied. Then I sought personal referrals from ethnic associations (e.g. the Chinese Community Council of Australia in Sydney); alumni associations of well-known universities in Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai; and my own relatives, friends and colleagues who may have contacts in the banking industry. To start my snowball rolling, I interviewed two women with junior positions in Sydney in the hope that they would recommend me to their colleagues in middle or upper managerial positions. However, this bottom-to-top channel did not yield results. Rather it seemed referrals from an insider, another banker in a similar or higher position, would play a key role in gaining the trust required for a quality interview – that is, providing a safe reference for them to accept an invitation and then to be relaxed enough to talk about their life stories and experiences at work to a researcher whom they have never met before, a stranger, an outsider.

My first significant respondent had a senior managerial position in one of the big four Australian banks in Sydney. A Chinese women community leader recommended that she accept my invitation for an interview. This successful interview started the ball rolling for more interviews in Australia, as she referred me to several colleagues in Sydney and Melbourne.

Searching for respondents in Hong Kong was much easier compared to Australia and mainland China as I had been living in Hong Kong for more than 20 years. In Hong Kong, the first female branch manager I interviewed was a banker who had been providing financial services to my uncle for more than 10 years. My personal social networks in Hong Kong became my main resource for finding respondents.

Finding respondents in mainland China was challenging as I did not know any bankers in Shanghai, my main research site. In addition to my weak personal networks in China, the political environment in China made research on the banking industry difficult as the majority of banks in mainland China are state-owned banks and therefore have political agendas. Staff in these banks have deep personal anxieties connected to being interviewed by a researcher from overseas. The breakthrough in the long journey to finding women elites in the banking and finance industry in mainland China was a

casual conversation with two women who were originally from Hong Kong. One was my high-schoolclassmate who had previously provided insurance services for my brother. She had married a man from Shanghai, and got a job as a professional consultant for assets and wealth management in Shanghai. Her wide network included women professionals working in state-owned banks in Shanghai. The other was my high-school classmate who had migrated from Hong Kong to Singapore about 10 years before our discussion. She had a good friend who studied for her master's degree at the same university in London and was now working in an international, foreign-owned bank in Shanghai. Transnational networks in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore, proved to be a valuable informationsharing platform contributing to my successfully finding respondents in China.

In-depth Interviews

An interview dialogue is always the result of a particular interaction matrix that involves the personalities of both the interviewer and the interviewee (Chan & Chan 2011, p. 9).Therefore, interviews did not follow a particular procedure but were adjusted to suit different situations in different cities. The semi-structured interviews followed an interview guide (Appendix B). I made minor adaptations in different countries: for example, in Australia some questions related to the respondents' international migrant experiences while in mainland China these questions were often adapted to their experience of domestic migration within China. Although each interview included something new and different, three main themes were covered. The first theme looked at my respondents' detailed daily work schedule, focusing on their roles in the development of the financial services industry, conflicts they experienced, and their functions in the formation of local and global city networks. The second theme concerned the difficulties encountered and coping strategies developed by respondents. The conversations centred on their personal career mobility and the resultant tension in the family; how they dealt with gendered role expectations as a mother, wife, daughter and sister in traditional patriarchal Chinese culture; and whether or not this conflicted with their identity as a finance professional working at a managerial level. The third theme focused on their career path. Using a life course perspective, we discussed their job changing habits and the details of their career movements.

The face-to-face interviews generally lasted from one to three hours and took place at locations nominated by respondents, such as their offices or homes, and coffee shops or restaurants in the city where they were working. This helped them feel comfortable and relaxed. Only one interview in Melbourne, Australia, was conducted via Skype and one working in Hong Kong was conducted when she came back to Sydney to visit family and attend a business meeting. Interviews were conducted in Putonghua, Cantonese and English. Forty-nine out of the total of 51 interviews were recorded on digital media and later transcribed. For the two non-recorded interviews, I made detailed interview notes immediately after each interview. The entire set of interview transcripts was then subjected to rigorous content analysis for themes, patterns and insights.

Data Analysis

I have taken the concept of intersectionality to analyse my data. Intersectionality analysis examines how a large number of varied factors interact with each other simultaneously and in multiple directions to construct an individual's experiences (Davis 2008; Dill & Zambrana 2009; Pluss & Chan 2012). Thus, the interview data was not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework or idea, but subjected to thematic analysis. I examined data from each broad area covered by the questions and identified patterns or themes which emerged. This approach took place in several stages: familiarisation with the data by reading transcriptions of the recorded interviews multiple times; the generation of codes relevant to the features of the data; the collation of codes into potential overarching themes; a review, refinement, and sharpening of those themes through re-examination of the transcripts; and the writing up of the themes. This analysis resulted in a rigorous thematic articulation of the data set, which formed a comprehensive picture of the participants' collective experience.

2.3   Respondents' Demographic and Work Background

In this section, I provide details of each respondent's background – important supplemental information to better understand the data contained in following chapters. I labelled each transcript with a code to represent two aspects of the interview: the country in which the respondent worked and the interview sequence. The country where the respondent worked is represented by: 'AU' (Australia), 'HK' (Hong Kong) and 'CH'

(mainland China). The interview sequence is not chronological as a whole, but chronological for each country. The majority of quotes from respondents include this code to indicate who made the statements; however, I used pseudonyms when such quotes introduce a chapter, and when I use a biographical profile to illustrate particular theme-based discussions. My hope is that these pseudonyms will help to personalise certain accounts, making them more real to the reader.

Australia

Table 3 lists my Australia respondents' current and previous banks of employment. They include the four major banks which currently dominate the Australian banking sector: the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, the Westpac Banking Corporation, the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group and the National Australia Bank. Respondents from Australia exhibited an outstanding feature: most of them had worked in one of the big four banks.

Table 3: Australia Respondents' Current and Previous Banks of Employment

Number	Bank
1	Commonwealth Bank of Australia
2	Westpac
3	Australia and New Zealand Bank (ANZ)
4	National Australia Bank
5	Citibank
6	St. George Bank
7	Bank of Melbourne
8	JP Morgan
9	Advance Bank Australia (merged with St. George Bank in 1997)
10	Barclays

Table 4 provides a picture of my Australia respondents' latest job position, years in banking, age, and level of education. The majority of Chinese female professionals I interviewed in Australia were managers or senior departmental managers. Most of them had been working in the banking industry for more than 10 years. But the time spent working in individual banks varied greatly: from four to 34 years. The age groups of my respondents was spread quite evenly: five were in their 30's, four in their 40's and four

in their 50's. Regarding their levels of education, 11 out of 14 respondents (about 80%) had obtained a bachelor's degree or master's degree.

Table 4: Australia Respondents' Background Information

Case No.	Job Title (Latest Position in Bank)	Years in Banking	Age Group*	Education
AU1	Manager, Mortgage Department	9	35-39	Bachelor's Degree
AU2	Manager, Treasury Department	18	40-44	Master's Degree
AU3	Manager, Analytics Credit Cards	8	35-39	Master's Degree
AU4	Senior Manager, Business Development, Asian Banking	13	40-44	Bachelor's Degree
AU5	Head, Taxation Department	26	50-54	Master's Degree
AU6	Senior Manager, Business Banking	16	55-59	High School Certificate
AU7	Department Head, Asian Segment	31	55-59	Master's Degree
AU8	Manager, Group Assurance	4	30-34	Bachelor's Degree
AU9	Senior Manager, Business Insights	12	30-34	Bachelor's Degree
AU10	Senior Manager, Private Wealth	22	45-49	High School Certificate
AU11	Senior Manager, Group Assurance	9	30-34	Master's Degree
AU12	Department Head, International Customer Services	34	55-59	Unfinished Bachelor's Degree
AU13	Senior Manager, Private Wealth	8	30-34	Bachelor's Degree
AU14	Branch Manager	4	40-44	Master's Degree

*As at 2013

Hong Kong

Table 5 lists my Hong Kong respondents' current and previous banks of employment. Although the total number of respondents in Australia and Hong Kong is similar, the total number of banks of employment for my Hong Kong respondents is more than double. There are two reasons for this: 1) There were a lot of bank mergers in Hong Kong during the last decade; 2) Job and bank-hopping is a common phenomenon in the Hong Kong banking and financial industry. For example, HK7 changed jobs nine times, working in eight different banks in 17 years. Most of my Hong Kong respondents made two to four job changes to work in different banks.

Table 5: Hong Kong Respondents' Current and Previous Banks of Employment

Number	Bank
1	Chinatrust Commercial Bank (Taiwan Bank)
2	Yien Yieh Commercial Bank (merged with Bank of China in 2001)
3	First Pacific Bank (merged with BEA in 2002)
4	The Bank of East Asia (BEA)
5	Standard Chartered Bank
6	NF (French-based Investment Bank)
7	HSBC (Hong Kong)
8	Goldman Sachs (US-based Investment Bank)
9	Bank of China (Hong Kong)
10	Bank of Communication
11	Deutsche Bank
12	CIC (French-based Bank)
13	China Construction Bank (Asia)
14	FMC (Hong Kong-based private investment bank)
15	Citibank Hong Kong
16	China CITIC Bank International
17	DBS (Hong Kong)
18	ICBC (Asia)
19	Wing Lung Bank
20	BNP Paribas (HK)
21	Fortis Private Bank
22	Lloyds TSB
23	Towry Law

Table 6 lists the background information of respondents in Hong Kong. It is noteworthy that the majority were managers or department heads at the time of the interviews. In Hong Kong, more respondents are in higher positions – including managing directors, vice presidents, or senior branch heads – compared to Australia. Fourteen out of 17 respondents (about 82%) had been working in the banking industry for more than 10 years – the longest period being 35 years. Respondents in Hong Kong were a little younger than those in Australia: eight were in their 30's, seven in their 40's and two in their 50's. Regarding their levels of education, about half (47%) possessed a master's degree.

Table 6: Hong Kong Respondents' Background Information

Case No.	Job Title (Latest Position in Bank)	Years in Banking	Age Group*	Education
HK1	Vice-President (Operations)	10	30-34	Master's Degree
HK2	Customer Service Manager	17	35-39	High School Certificate
HK3	Customer Service Manager	15	35-39	Bachelor's Degree
HK4	Premier Relationship Manager	5	30-34	Bachelor's Degree
HK5	Head of Capital Introductions (Asia)	12	30-34	Master's Degree
HK6	Director/Head of Relationship Management (Asia-Pacific)	17	40-44	Bachelor's Degree
HK7	Senior Branch Manager	17	40-44	Master's Degree
HK8	Managing Director	18	40-44	Master's Degree
HK9	Branch Head	20	45-49	Master's Degree
HK10	Director, Client Relationship Management (Private Banking)	25	45-49	Diploma

HK11	Vice-President (Alternatives and Real Assets)	7	30-34	Bachelor's Degree
HK12	Manager (Change Delivery)	13	40-44	Bachelor's Degree
HK13	Senior Relationship Manager (Consumer Banking)	20	40-44	Master's Degree
HK14	Vice-President (Hong Kong Team)	35	50-54	High School Certificate
HK15	Vice-President	27	50-54	Master's Degree
HK16	Senior Associate	7	30-34	Master's Degree
HK17	Assistant Manager (Operations Department)	15	35-39	High School Certificate

*As at 2013

Mainland China

Table 7 lists the current and previous banks of employment for my mainland China respondents. They include key state-owned banks, like the Bank of China, the Agriculture Bank of China; and well-known foreign banks, like HSBC and DBS. Most of the respondents who were working in state-owned banks at the time of their interview had two outstanding qualities: 1) they joined the bank immediately after they graduated from university; and, 2) they worked in one bank for their entire career, but have been transferred between branches.

Table 7: Mainland China Respondents' Current and Previous Banks of Employment

Number	Bank
1	Agricultural Bank of China
2	China Construction Bank
3	Rural Commercial Bank
4	Bank of China

5	China Merchants Bank
6	Ping An Bank
7	HSBC (China)
8	Standard and Chartered Bank (China)
9	Bank of Communication
10	Bank of America Merrill Lynch
11	DBS (China)
12	Postal Savings Bank of China
13	Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank
14	Citibank (China)
15	Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena
16	Guangdong Development Bank
17	Shenzhen Bank
18	Bank of Japan
19	Bank of America

In mainland China, the managerial system in state-owned banks is very different to foreign banks. Take the Agriculture Bank of China as an example. There are five levels of branches, which are, in descending order of importance: Level-1 branch (Fenhang 分行), as in the Guangdong Branch; Direct branch (Zhishu Fenhang 直属分行), as in the Shenzhen Branch; Level-2 branch, as in the Zhaoqing City Branch (肇庆分行); Level-1 sub-branch (Zhihang 支行), as in the Zhongshan Xiaolan County Branch (中山小榄支行); Level-2 sub-branch which is usually called *Wangdian* (literally, 'point of net'(网点), as in the Zhongshan Eight Street Branch (中山八路支行). The level of each branch cannot be distinguished from the building's façade. Customers can determine if an employee works in a branch or sub-branch once they see his or her name cards. I was only able to truly understand the management level of a respondent working in a branch or sub-branch, through in-depth interviews. I interviewed women in different management levels, located in different levels of branches. This proved useful for comparative purposes. Table 8 gives background information about these respondents in mainland China.

Table 8: Mainland China Respondents' Background Information

Case No.	Job Title (Latest Position in Bank)	Years in Banking	Age Group*	Education
CH1	Head, Sales Department	10	35-39	Bachelor's Degree
CH2	Head, Regulatory Department	27	45-49	Bachelor's Degree
CH3	Manager, Personal Business	13	30-34	Bachelor's Degree
CH4	Manager, Mortgage Department	5	25-29	Master's Degree
CH5	Branch President, Level-1 Sub-branch	21	40-44	Bachelor's Degree
CH6	Vice-president, Corporate Section	19	40-44	Master's Degree
CH7	General Manager (Provincial Branch Human Resources), Level-1 branch	22	40-44	Bachelor's Degree
CH8	Department Head	10	35-39	Bachelor's Degree
CH9	Department Head	5	30-34	Master's Degree
CH10	Deputy Manager, Level-1 sub-branch	20	45-49	Bachelor's Degree
CH11	Manager, Sales Department	20	35-39	Bachelor's Degree
CH12	Deputy Manager, Level-1 sub-branch	15	35-39	Bachelor's Degree
CH13	Associate Director, Head of East China	14	35-39	Master's Degree
CH14	Senior Manager, Marketing Department	10	35-39	Master's Degree
CH15	Associate Director, Wholesale	9	30-34	Master's Degree
CH16	Associate Director, Transaction Banking Sales, Wholesale Banking	9	30-34	Master's Degree
CH17	Deputy Manager, Level-1 sub-branch	8	30-34	Master's Degree

*As at 2013

For respondents working in state-owned banks, the highest position was general manager of the human resource department at a Level-1 branch. A few of the respondents were presidents of a sub-branch but the majority were managers or department heads. The majority of those working in foreign banks had attained the position of Associate Director of a section of the bank. The highest position was Vice-president of corporate section.welve out of the 17 respondents (about 70%) had been working in the banking industry for more than 10 years. Among these 12 respondents, nine had continually worked in a state-owned bank after they graduated from university. In terms of age, 15 out of the 17 mainland China respondents were 30 to 45. In general, they were younger than my respondents both in Australia and Hong Kong. Regarding their level of education, all of them were well-educated holding at least a bachelor'sdegree. The percentage of those holding a master's degree (47%) was as high as the Hong Kong respondents.

This discussion of locations, research focus and methodology serves to set the scene, so to speak, for analysing data from 51 women working in the banking and finance industry in a variety of locations. With this background information in mind, we are ready to learn of their roles and functions in the globalised banking industry and examine the roles of city and branch location in forming global networks – and to relate all of this to the career development of Chinese female professionals working in the financial services economy.

Chapter 3

Locality, Power and Career Opportunity

From the bank's point of view, it's a necessity to have *yidi jiaoliu* (exchange experience across regions 异地交流). You have to go to *waidi* (outside place (s) 外地). If you refuse, then you won't get any opportunities [for promotion]. … In banks, there's a co-relationship between a city's *wenming chengdu* (level of civilisation 文明程度), its *kaifan chengdu* (degree of openness 开发程度) and a woman's career mobility. In a less-developed city, it's extremely difficult for women to be promoted to a high position.

— Lily, Branch President, State-owned bank in Guangzhou, China

A banker's opportunity for career development is embedded in the social geography of work and the economic geography of firms. The relative positioning of firms and cities within hierarchical fields of power may well lay the groundwork for differential life chances and the incorporation of opportunities for individuals locally and transnationally (Schiller & Caglar 2009). Where iconic buildings display the innovation and integrity that evolving financial organisations require (Black, 1996), they also symbolise the success of an entrepreneurial class (Cartier, 1993, 2003). In world cities, there are many 'contact zones' – places where there is 'an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect' (Pratt 1992, p. 7). People in 'contact zones' encounter and negotiate opportunities for career advancement (Yeoh & Willis 2005) while they also live and work in elite spaces that formed in relation to needs of expatriate professionals.

In world and global cities, financial industry professionals form a key, elite group who are essential to enhancing the competitiveness of firms in world city networks (Beaverstock 2014). These professionals are also prized for their 'work-oriented translocality' and capacity to build business and social networks for transferring

financial knowledge (Beavstock 2002, 2014). In the financial services industries, which has historically been dominated by men, women professionals face both opportunities and constraints in the daily life of work in the firm. In this chapter I introduce and analyse experiences of women in the banking industry to explore how their professional identities and opportunities form in the context of the workplace and career path.

Next, I introduce profile cases of women bankers in mainland China, Hong Kong and Australia. I introduce each banker through a biographical profile, including snapshots of life, highlights of certain features in their career development, and historical aspects of their managerial experience. In mainland China, ten out of the 18 women bankers I interviewed in Guangdong province were mainly working in the city of Guangzhou. In Australia, 11 out of 15 interviewees were located in Sydney. These edited accounts of three life histories of professional women provide us with significant information from respondents' pasts, convey the consciousness of a group women professionals, and enable us to make reflective accounts of this group of people.

3.1 Transformation and Opportunity in Australia

Biographical profile from Sydney

Case:	Ginny (Case AU6)
Age:	50s
Place of origin:	Vietnam
Education background:	High School Graduate
Marital status:	Divorced
Years in the banking industry:	16 years
Number of previous banks where employed:	2 jobs in 2 of the 'big four' Australian banks
Highest position attained in a bank:	Senior Business Banking Manager
Current employment:	Own finance company
Current position:	Owner

Ginny was born in Vietnam where her father was president of a foreign bank before Communist North Vietnam took over the South and triggered an exodus in 1975. In 1977, Ginny followed the wave of refugees sailing out of the instability and uncertainty prevailing in Vietnam. The refugee boat she was on first docked in Thailand but then was forced to leave. The boat was expelled by both the Singapore and Malaysian governments, and it finally arrived in New Zealand. After six years living in New Zealand, Ginny decided to move to Sydney to find a better job in 1983.

When Ginny left Vietnam, she was 20 and well educated in both English and French. She described her life in Vietnam as 'free of anxiety' but her life changed dramatically when she began her journey as a refugee. Her journey was full of fear. She was shot at by communist soldiers on the way to the boat. She experienced storms in small, unsafe boat. Her world changed dramatically. She was forced to instantly grow up to fight against dangers faced by refugees. 'I had to quickly learn how to protect myself!' 'I had no one to lean on but myself!' 'I gained my freedom by risking my life. I had to be brave!' 'I wasn't inundated by the waves at sea. I wasn't killed by communist soldiers. I marched through the toughest life experiences in a refugee camp. What is worse than that?' Although Ginny's experience as a refugee was traumatic, she transformed it into a positive internal force. She became tough. She believed that every cloud had a silver lining and she could achieve a better future by working hard.

Ginny believed she failed at her first attempt to secure employment at a bank because she said in her interview that a 'teller's job is a career' and this contradicted the white, male manager's idea that a 'teller's job is only a job'. After four years working in Chinese companies – first in a Chinese restaurant in Chinatown, then in a car service company – Ginny sought her second interview to become a teller, this time for a branch in Sydney's Chinatown. She got the job, thus beginning her banking career in 1987. Figure 1 includes a summary of her movements from bank to bank plotted on a map.

Figure 1: Branch Locations of Ginny's Employment in Sydney

1. 1987-91: Customer Service, Bank A, Chinatown

2. 1991-93: Manager of Asian Business Department, Bank A, Cabramatta

3. 1993-96: Manager of Asian Business Department, Bank A, Parramatta

4. 1996-2002: Senior Business Banking Manager, Bank B, Chatswood

5. 2003-present: Her own finance company, Strathfield
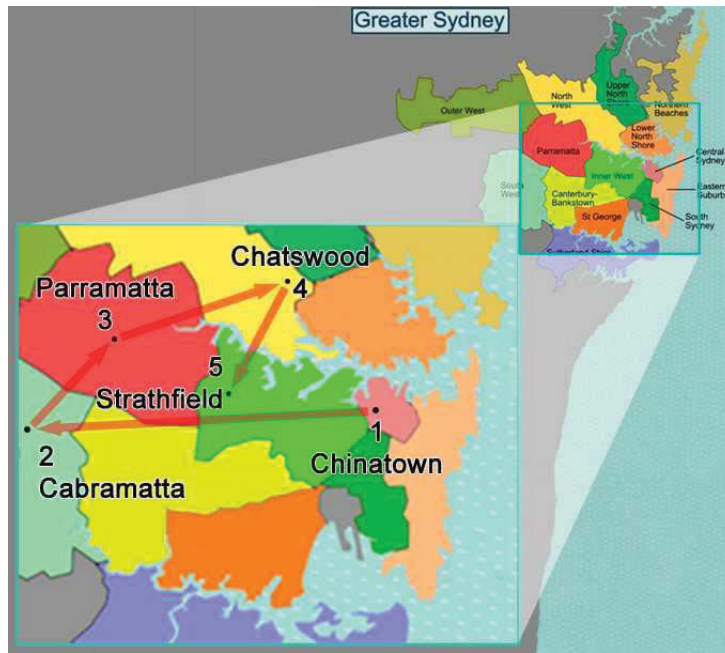
(The source of original Greater Sydney map: http://wikitravel.org/en/Talk:Sydney)

Ginny's climb up the banking ladder began when she moved to a branch in Cabramatta, a south-western Sydney suburb with Australia's largest Vietnamese community. Ginny's most valuable asset was that she could speak five languages fluently, Putonghua, Cantonese, Vietnamese, French and English, an ability that stemmed from her exposure to many languages as a Vietnamese Chinese who was educated in French. Additionally, her way of doing business including knocking on every shop door in Cabramatta, visiting clients and potential clients every day, and organising cocktail parties to get to know local business people – the result was great success in making new business deals. Ginny was the only manager in the district team that was both female and Asian; she won an award for having the fourth best performance in all of Australia. In the beginning her boss was happy, but later asked her to slow down because among the 13 managers in the district, she was the only one who achieved more than the bank's quota of selling a certain amount of the bank products. Ginny believed that her success embarrassed her colleagues and that this created a lot of difficulties for her. Eventually, she was transferred to Parramatta, another suburb with many new Asian migrants, but the same problem occurred, and also, later, in her next branch, in Chatswood – a suburb with many Hong Kong Chinese migrants. Ginny said that there was a great deal racial tension in Australian banks. She was the only Asian face in the

managerial team. She felt that the race issue was an unsolvable, invisible problem. She suffered deeply both physically and psychologically due to the politics of race and gender in the work place. Finally, after working in two big Australian banks for 16 years, Ginny decided to leave and set up her own company. By becoming her own boss, she found a way to escape the conflicts and tensions resulting from working at a bank.

Chinese Migrant Women Bankers, Urban Transformation and Career Mobility

Ongoing neoliberalization of the world economy continues to propel the movement of capital and services, in addition to professional workers (Favell, Feldblum & Smith 2006). Mobility enables people to re-integrate social resources so as to expand their individual horizons or fields of activity (Wang 1995). Tremendous compression of spatial and temporal distance creates 'intangible' relationships between people and societies and between time and space. In the process, migrants in many cities have become marketable assets (Schiller & Caglar 2009). Skilled, educated migrants impact urban economies in important ways, contributing to a city's network capacity (McDwan, Pollard & Henry 2005). Such connections link 'cities to flows of capital, good ideas, new ideas and cultural representations' (Schiller & Caglar 2009, p. 189). Migrants also actively participate in political, cultural and economic activities of the receiving country, which leads to changes in urban governance, development and social movements. Migrants indeed serve as 'scale makers in multiple ways' (Schiller & Caglar 2009, p. 189).

In this study, Chinese women migrants working as bankers in Australia were active participants in the development of new urban economies, particularly in cities with large numbers of Chinese migrants. Migrants increasingly live within communities that reflect their different origins, and these communities may be dispersed throughout suburbs with their own business districts. Research in North America on suburban residential and business areas with a notable cluster of a particular ethnic minority population found that the 'ethnoburbs' are characterised by vibrant ethnic economics. Due to the presence of large numbers of ethnic people and strong ties to the globalizing economy, ethnoburbs play an important role as 'outposts in emerging international economic system' (Li 1998, p. 482). Studies of ethnoburds in New Zealand made

similar findings, but with more distinctive differences between different 'sub-areas "inside" the broader ethnoburb' (Xue, Friesen & David 2012). Realising the possibilities of community-specific branch banking, banks have transformed the idea of 'let migrants serve migrants' into a strategy of business development. In the process, banks realise how 'ethnic capital … involves interactive processes of ethnic-specific financial capital, human capital, and social capital' (Zhou & Lin 2005, p. 261) and is an essential resource for business development (Chan 2000, 2005b, 2010; Dahles 2004; Light 1972, 1984; Light & Rosenstein 1995; Zhou & Lin 2005).

Take Ginny as an example. All the branches she worked at as a manager were in suburbs into which refugees or migrants were moving. Ginny said:

> Our bank set up a new position called Asian business development manager.
> They asked me to apply for this position. They wanted to develop their market in
> Cabramatta. At that time, the Commonwealth Bank [of Australia] and Westpac
> [Bank] already had many clients, but my bank only had a small number of
> clients, as people there didn't know much about our bank. There were so many
> Vietnamese living in Cabramatta. My boss knew I could speak Vietnamese and
> Chinese, therefore he wanted me to work in the branch there to get more
> business from Vietnamese.

The proportion of Vietnamese and Chinese in Cabramatta, known as 'Little Saigon' because of its many Vietnamese shops and restaurants, is 27.7 percent and 27.0 percent respectively. They make up the majority of residents, with people of Anglo-Saxon descent making up only four percent. The most common country of birth is Vietnam at 32.6 percent, followed by Australia at 29.4 percent. Languages spoken at home in addition to English include Vietnamese with 37.1 percent of residents speaking this language, and Cantonese spoken by 12.9 percent of residents. Only 11.6 percent of people speak only English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). In Sydney there are several suburbs with large migrant populations, including Parramatta, Campsie, Strathfield and Chatswood, where most residents are from Asia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). These tight ethnic community concentrations form a cultural economy

with markets deeply embedded in social networks and associated with cultural and ethnic affection and attraction. A banker who worked as a branch manager in Cabramatta commented:

> It was about 13 years ago. I was promoted from business banking manager to branch manager. The branch was located in Cabramatta, which was undeveloped at that time. There were so many drug dealers there! There was even a drug user who collapsed on the ground inside our branch. Therefore, no one wanted to be the branch manager in Cabramatta at that time. I knew I had an opportunity only because other people refused to take it. Everyone wants to be a branch manager. I don't have higher education. My work experience was not long enough. I didn't have managerial experience. I knew my chances were limited if I applied to be a branch manager in other areas. So, I raised my hand and I got the position of branch manager in Cabramatta. Cabramatta was full of Asians, but I was the first and the only Asian branch manager in that area (Case AU10, Senior Manager, Private Wealth, Australian bank in Sydney, Australia).

In seeking mutual economic and emotional support, migrants often choose to live close to other migrants (Chan 1991, 1992, 2000, 2005b; Li 1976, 1988; Lin 2003). In migrant communities, this reality is reflected in the maxim 'things of a kind come together, people of a mind fall into the same group' (*wu yi leiju, ren yi qunfen* 物以类聚，人以群分). But where the image of an 'ethnic niche' is constructed as a negative label for a suburb with a high percentage of migrants, this context provides opportunities for migrants to progress (Chan 1991, 1992, 2005b; Lin 2003; Zhou & Lin 2005). AU10 indicated that as a member of a minority she may have had less opportunity for promotion if she worked in branches in prestigious areas like Martin Place in Sydney, but she faced a better chance in local branches in ethnic neighbourhoods. Like Ginny (AU6) and AU10, the career mobility of many in this study is attached not only to ability, but also to the trajectories of integration in society. New migrant policies, like the abolition of the White Australia policy in 1975 and the acceptance of Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s, not only impacted the demographic structure, but also significantly changed the cultural economy. Thus, with more and more migrants moving to cities, there were more

opportunities for women bankers with migrant backgrounds. Shared ethnicity, race, gender and life path contribute to cultural affinity and trust in business transactions, thus bringing in more business (Chan 1991, 1992, 2000, 2005b, 2010; Li 1976, 1988; Lin 2003; Zhou & Lin 2005). With the idea 'let migrants serve migrants', ethnicity has now become a key strategy for developing business relationships.

The Rise of China, Symbolic Power of Race and Promotion Opportunity

The globalisation of social relations links distant localities and local happenings and may be shaped by events occurring many miles away (Giddens 1991). Factors and forces of globalisation and transnationalism greatly impact the lives and economic activities of migrants (Fong & Luk 2007; Light 2007; Luk & Fong 2007). The career path of many Chinese women bankers in Australia is not only connected to the domestic economy, it is also intertwined with the rise of China and the political relationship between China and Australia. What happens to a migrant in their receiving country may be a result of political and economic changes in their country of departure. Two women bankers who worked for one of the big four Australian banks made the following observations:

> I think my advantage is tied up with timing and trends. Our bank has a business plan called, Super Regional Strategy. Asia is our main target region. We put a lot of resources into developing markets in Asian countries, like China. This is a really important complement to us, to our team. We're walking in the right direction. It's because we're located in an up-stream industry, we get protection from our bank when we are hit by various difficulties and challenges (Case AU13, Senior Manager, Private Wealth, Australian bank in Melbourne, Australia).

> The biggest change in the past ten years is the significance of the Asian market. All big four Australian banks have begun to pay attention to the Asian market, or clients from Asian countries. There are a lot of new migrants moving into Australia, especially migrants from China. Their number is increasing rapidly and they're very rich. It's so obvious that our bank now focuses on developing

business with Asian clients (Case AU7, Head, Asian Segment, Australian bank in Sydney, Australia).

When Asian markets – both inside Australian cities and outside Australia – gained significant attention from Australian banks, career opportunities opened up for professional Chinese women in Australian banks. AU13 worked in Melbourne and AU7 worked in Sydney and both said Asia became an important market for their banks. AU13 mentioned her bank's 'Super Regional Strategy' and AU7 talked about the focus on developing business with clients from Asian countries.

The Asian market has two aspects: local Asian clients and overseas clients in Asian countries. For local Asian clients, most of my respondents in Australia indicated that their key clients were Chinese from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. In the past 10 years, the flow of students, academics, professionals, businessmen, tourists and other forms of people-to-people link between Australia and China has increased dramatically. In 2010, more than 130,000 Chinese students were studying in Australia, about a quarter of the total foreign student population (Australian Centre on China in the World 2012). In 2014, China was the third most common country of birth for migrants arriving in Australia; and the estimate of migrant residents from China was 447,400, which was 1.9 percent of Australia's total population (Australia Bureau of Statistic 2015). In step with this trend, international banks now seek to hire Chinese bankers to attract Chinese and other Asian immigrant clients. Many respondents in this study stated that to develop a share of the Chinese market, foreign-owned banks in China often cooperated with branches at home, which helped to bridge gaps between differing laws and regulations. Thus, Chinese bankers in China and Australia may work together closely, while growth in China helps create better opportunities for promotion for women bankers in Australia.

3.2 Place-based Impression Management and Politics of Ethnicity in Hong Kong

Biographical profile from Hong Kong

Case:	Daisy (Case HK7)
Age:	40s
Place of origin:	Hong Kong
Education background:	Master's in Law
Marital status:	Single
Years in the banking industry:	17 years
Number of previous banks employed at:	9 Jobs in 8 Banks
Highest bank position attained:	Senior Branch Manager
Current bank of employment:	One of the 'big four' Chinese state-owned bank
Current position:	Senior Branch Manager

Daisy was born and grew up in Hong Kong, and obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in the United Kingdom. She worked in banking as a teller for two years, then for the next 15 years, she 'hopped' among different banks to become a customer manager, a senior customer manager, an investment consultant, a team head, and a branch manager. By 2013, she had shuttled between nine jobs in eight banks, staying for as short as six months and as long as four years, changing banks on average every two years. Now, she is a senior branch manager overseeing two branches in one of the 'big four' Chinese state-owned banks. Figure 2, below reflects Daisy's career path.

Figure 2: Daisy's Career Development Path
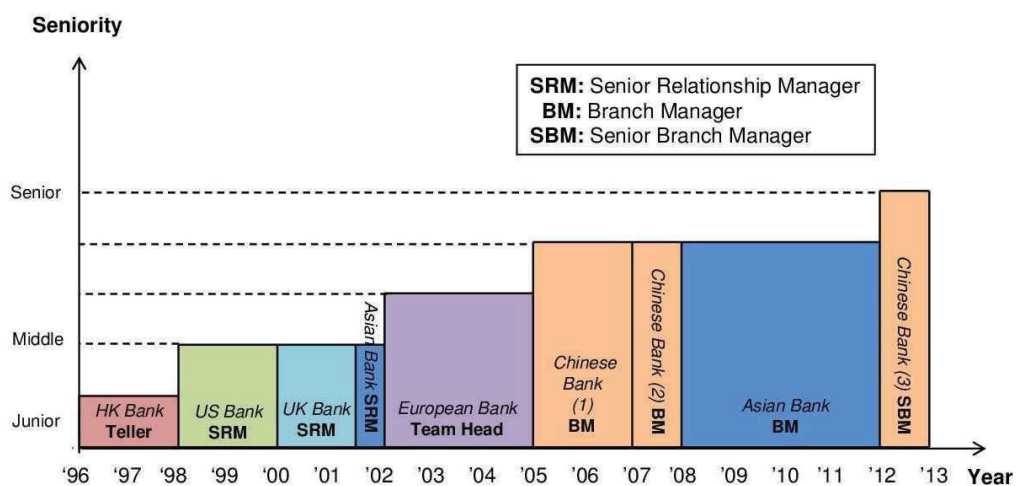
On joining her first bank, Daisy's very clear goal was to be made branch manager, and she sought every opportunity and strived to achieve this, winning several prizes from international competitions held by the banks, along the way. She also gained experience in banks of differing backgrounds, a local Hong Kong, an American, a British, a European, a Singaporean and three Chinese banks. After nine years, while she was working in a Chinese bank, she attained her goal of becoming a manager.

Daisy's various banks and branches took her to many areas of Hong Kong: a very prestigious branch in the International Finance Centre (IFC) in Central District (Zhonghuan 中环); as well as lower-middle income residential districts where new migrants from the mainland China congregated, like Tsuen Wan (荃湾) and Mei Foo (美孚). Figure 3 shows these locations, while Table 9 indicates the median monthly domestic household income in each of these districts.

Table 9: Median Monthly Domestic Household Income by District

Branch Location	Median Monthly Domestic Household Income of the District (in HK$) [1]
Central (中环)	$40,000
Wan Chai (湾仔)	$45,200
Causeway Bay (铜锣湾)	$30,000
Kwun Tong (观塘)	$20,000
Mei Foo (美孚)	$20,800
Tsuen Wan (荃湾)	$28,830

Source: 2011 Population Census, Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

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[1] Figures refer to economically active households. Economically active households refer to households with at least one member (excluding foreign domestic helpers) being economically active. The exchange rate between the American dollar and Hong Kong dollar is 1:7.78.

Figure 3: Branch Locations (the circle) of Daisy's Previous and Current Employment

(Source of original map: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hong_Kong_Base_Map.svg)

Daisy strongly believed her good fortune (*faji,* to gain fortune 发迹) began when she worked in Central District, or Central as it is usually referred to. Her promotion to branch manager happened only after she had worked as a team head at a prestigious branch in the IFC, where many well-known international banks and finance companies have set up their head offices in Hong Kong. Central is an important site for key financial companies, with its strong symbolic ties to power and prestige. For bankers, such associations attract many high-level clients. Daisy explained that having a job in Central was indeed the most important stepping stone for her career.

After working for a mainland Chinese state-owned bank for a year, Daisy realised that the central office assigned all the district heads. It seemed to her to be 'mission impossible' for a Hongkonger to be promoted above the branch managerial level. She concluded there was no possibility for further promotion within a big, Chinese state-owned bank and became open to another move. But after eight banks, what would be the next one? Daisy said she would remain open-minded and open-eyed for a better opportunity.

The Power of Central and Impression Management

Branch location as one of the key elements of locality is embedded within differential power hierarchies. There is a dynamic relationship between branch location, opportunity structure and career mobility. Hong Kong, as a city, is an important international finance centre in the Asia Pacific region. But there is a centre within this centre – the Central District (Zhonghuan 中环), or Central.

Central, on the north shore of Hong Kong Island, is an important business district where many multinational financial corporations have their headquarters, many countries have their consulates and the Hong Kong government has many of its departmental head offices. In Hong Kong, iconic banking and finance towers instantiate the city's place in the regional and international financial services industry. The monument-like built environment in Central includes financial and banking buildings that are particular focal points of attention, such as the IFC, the HSBC headquarters, the Bank of China Tower, the Bank of China Building, the Standard-Chartered Bank Building, Citibank Plaza and the Bank of America Building. On one hand, the 'monumental built environment' of the financial centre symbolises both the major agents of power housed in these buildings and Hong Kong's economic acumen (Cartier 1999). On the other hand, the local elites and the international professionals in Central, particularly those in finance and banking, have constructed a powerful 'spatial coding' (Allen 2003, p. 163) with which bankers gain recognition in society. To bankers, the monumental spaces of banking and finance generate a sense of membership. 'The exclusive nature of the City as a place of finance which generates its own sense of "membership" through the sound, sight and even scent of those recognised as present is thus, in itself, an achievement' (Allen 2003, p. 164).

The real and symbolic meanings of Central are complex and elusive. The area's financial and banking buildings represent the central pillar of Hong Kong's establishment, and are also related to powerful images of global linkage, elitism and rich diversity. The following three descriptions from Chinese women bankers in Hong Kong point out three outstanding characteristics of Central:

1.   Central as an Enclave for Headquarters and Global Linkage
There are many local and international banks that set up their headquarters in Central. No matter if it's a local Hong Kong bank, an American bank, a British bank, a European bank, a Singaporean bank or a Chinese bank, you name it, they all have at least one branch in Central (Case HK7, Senior Branch Manager, Chinese state-owned bank).

Because the Central office is our head office, so many other branches located in other areas in Hong Kong or other countries send their people here to attend meetings. … There are many meetings for top level managerial teams in our head office building. There are also so many visitors from branches, or visitors from other countries that visit our branch (Case HK4, Premier Relationship Manager, British bank in Hong Kong).

2.   Central as an Enclave for Professionals and an Elite Class
Our clients in Central branch have the highest expectation toward bankers and they are very demanding. They think if you are working in Central, you should be among the most highly qualified staff. There is a variety of requirements from our clients. … It is very difficult to get approval to be relocated to the head office in Central. You have to surmount numerous very tough tests and interviews (Case HK10, Director of Client Relationship Management, Private Banking, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

3.   Central as an Enclave of Diversity and Hybridity
In our office in Central, we have A, a Singaporean; B, his parents are Shanghainese, but he was born in Taiwan and then moved to the US when he was 12; C is a Singaporean girl; D is a mainlander; E is a half-Hongkonger,

half-mainlander, but she got her degree in Australia; F is Filipina Chinese, but she was born in Hong Kong and then got her PhD in Germany; G is a mainlander but got his Master's in Hong Kong; H is an ABC, American Born Chinese; I's father is Taiwanese and his Mum is a Hongkonger but he was born in Guam (Case HK8, Managing Director, Hong Kong-based financial investment company, Former Corporate Director of a Dutch bank in Hong Kong).

Central is a pivotal territory for 'global-local knowledge network formation' (Beaverstock 2002, p. 536). This is illustrated by HK4's comments that the head office in Central is the location of regular meetings and visits from the bank's worldwide branch network. HK10's comments indicate that clients believe that bank staff working in Central are highly competent and well qualified. This positive 'coding' contributes to the relationship building with clients who are perceived to have high net worth. HK8's comments highlight Central's role as an important 'contact zone' (Yeoh & Willis 2005) where colleagues, most of them expatriates with diverse national, racial, ethnic and social backgrounds, engage in daily interactions. People also associate a certain desirable image with Central, that of a cosmopolitan professional who is well trained, competent and intelligent, with good English.

Success in business dealings in the banking industry, to a certain degree, is related to customers' confidence in the bank in general and the banker in particular. Nine out of 17 Chinese women bankers interviewed in Hong Kong were working or had worked in branches located in Central and this played a key role in their upward mobility. As previously mentioned, Daisy indicated that her good fortune started in Central and working in Central was the most important stepping stone for her upward career mobility.

Bankers, lawyers and accountants are dominant social groups in Central. When bankers in Central 'make symbolic use of what is around them and turn it to their own needs' (Allen 2003, p. 165), they use their 'membership' to gain entry into the prestigious, highly competitive finance and banking space, which is a valuable personal asset for business development. 'The power of coding in finance spaces' enables these social

groups 'to dominate space in their own image' (Allen 2003, p. 164). Place and symbolic space are key to their interactions.

District-based 'Language and Tongue' as a Strategy for Building Social Bonds

In interactive service work, the ability to deliberately adopt different images of femininity to suit certain circumstances and locations is a key skill for building business relationships (McDowell 1997). The skill of manipulation of body image and emotions is an integral part of selling a product (Hochschild 1983). No matter where their branch was located, my interviewees indicated that formal dress was a must for building their professional image. A senior manager noted:

> In Hong Kong, the dress code for bank staff is more or less similar. The requirement is high. I usually wear a suit, as formal wear. My previous bank didn't allow staff to dress in casual wear. Even in the hot summer time, I also always had to be in a suit. I didn't feel comfortable sometimes. (Case HK13, Senior Relationship Manager, Consumer Banking, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong)

HK13 moved from a bank located in the commercial area on Hong Kong Island to another in an old industrial area in Kowloon, but maintained a similar dress style. Banks in Hong Kong do not require their managerial staff to wear uniforms but to dress formally and modestly. The general impression they give is of a conservative style, something borne out when none of my interviewees dressed in bright colours when we met. Gender-neutral colours favoured by my respondents, like black, grey, dark-blue and other low-key colours are paradoxically associated with masculinity. The symbolic power of these colours is socially constructed and associated with masculine characteristics favoured in the business world. By wearing these colours, women bankers are intentionally building an image of a 'career woman' – professional, calm, rational and decisive.

When asked if they used a number of business strategies when working in different areas, the women in Hong Kong did not talk about gender differentials. Rather, they

emphasised the district-based 'language and tongue' strategy in order to service different 'levels of clients'. Case HK13 stated:

> I talk very differently when working in different areas. In my previous job, I worked in Sai Wan Ho [西湾河 a residential area on Hong Kong Island] where I had a lot of housewives as clients. I could easily chat with them if I just read a newspaper before I started my day. We would chat about the tragedy of the tour in the Philippines (Manila Hostage Crisis[2]). We guessed which rumours might be true. We talked about the weather and their kids' school life. It was very easy to open a topic and get inside their heart. But after I moved here to Kwun Tong [观塘 a formal industrial area in Kowloon, which has now become a second-tier business area], the difference was obvious. My clients here never talk to you like my previous clients. They discuss the best time to withdraw from the stock market, they want to know your opinions about global economic developments, and they prefer you to give them updated market information. Here it is more analytical and market oriented. I have to say, I have been in two very different situations (Case HK13, Senior Relationship Manager, Consumer Banking, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

Language is not only an important symbol used for daily interactions with others, it also reflects one's cultural identity and intimacy with a particular country or place (Tan 2004), and serves as a sign of authenticity (Ang 2001). Language has two aspects: the form and the content. Form is about voice level, pace, tone, emotions, pitch and emphasis, and is equally important as content and substance. The form of language used and the content of the conversation reflect business strategies, which are based on the interpretation of social relationships between women bankers and their clients in

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[2] The Manila Hostage Crisis, officially known as the Rizal Park hostage-taking incident, occurred when a disgruntled former Philippine National Police officer named Rolando Mendoza hijacked a Hong Kong tourist bus in Rizal Park, Manila, Philippines on August 23, 2010. Eight of the hostages were killed and several others injured in this incident.

different areas. This selection also mirrors clients' preferred identity when dealing with business issues. Daisy describes how she uses language as a strategy:

> My [current] tongue and my language are very different compared with when I worked in Tsuen Wan [荃湾 a former industrial area now transformed into a mixed-use area of residences, industry and commerce, located west of the New Territories]. Now I am working in Wan Chai [湾仔 a commercial area with many government offices on Hong Kong Island]. When a district manager plans to move an 'army' and send a 'general' to a branch located in Central, he will not consider a person who has been working in Sai Wan [西环 a very old residential area on Hong Kong Island]. He knows that there will be different client groups in different areas and your level of persuasive power (ya chan gan 压场感) will [need to] be different. The client group in Central is different. If you look like a housewife, what will your clients think about you? Or, if you shift a staff member who has been working for 10 years in Sheung Shui [上水 a New Territories new town near the border], he or she will be so stressed out when he or she works in Central. Location is an important matter. Your tongue and your language need to change significantly. Otherwise, you'll put yourself under a lot of pressure. A manager who does well in a residential area may not be suitable for Wan Chai. He or she may not have enough power to control the clients here. (Case HK7, Senior Branch Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong)

After she had been working in different banks for 17 years, this senior branch manager in charge of two branches concluded that the level of persuasive power (*ya chan gan* 压场感) is one of key factors for success. To convince clients to do business with a bank and a banker and to build confidence in a banker, that banker has to 'perform' according to each client's expectations. When she worked in Tsuen Wan, the majority of her clients were housewives or retired people, but in Wan Chai her main client group consisted of elite professionals working in government offices or commercial corporations whose offices were in the same area. The median monthly domestic

household income in Tsuen Wan is about half that of Wan Chai. Deciding what identity to perform, how to construct it, and when and where to display it to interact with clients is a complex and intricate process involving understanding clients' expectations, and using evaluative interpretation and relationship projection (Chan & Chan 2011). Most of the women bankers I interviewed in Hong Kong said that they were careful and tactful in communicating with their clients in different branches. Two women bankers with senior managerial positions made the following observations:

> In this area, our clients prefer to use a different way to communicate. In my previous bank, I contacted my clients mainly by calling them or meeting them face-to-face in my office. In this industrial-commercial mixed area, the majority of my clients are businessmen. I only contact them by email or WhatsApp. I realise that they prefer to communicate using high-technology tools so they can read the message or reply when they have time. My clients in two different areas are indeed two distinct types. This is interesting (Case HK13, Senior Relationship Manager, Consumer Banking, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

> In my previous bank, I had many clients in their 40's. Being a mother was helpful to build some common ground for conversation with my clients. I even brought my daughter or my husband with me for business dinners with my clients. Now I work in a private bank, the emphasis for my clients is professional service, not personal relationships. Now, my identity as a mother no longer functions in developing a good conversation with my clients in this private bank (Case HK10, Director of Client Relationship Management, Private Banking, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

For most Chinese societies, business relationships will only come about after a personal, social relationship has been established (Chan 2005b, 2010; Chan & Chan 2007, 2011; Chan & Chiang 1994; Wong 1985, 1988; Zhou & Lin 2005). In other words, the social bonds between individuals play a key role in building business relationships, especially in an open market where successfully closing business interactions is so difficult to

achieve. Social bonds are built upon two fundamental processes – intrinsic and extrinsic (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna 1985; Rusbult 1980). Intrinsic attraction occurs during an individual's interaction with someone similar to himself/herself, where pleasure is aroused from the discovery of similar intrinsic traits between the two parties. Extrinsic attraction comes from complementary relationships based on a reciprocal exchange of material resources between two parties. When dealing with a group of clients who are housewives, most women bankers, intentionally, prefer to display their 'master identity' as a 'woman' in order to nurture a feeling of 'we', to get into the hearts of those housewives, to present themselves as one of the 'in-group'. They can be solicitous about the personal matters of their clients. The intrinsic attraction associated with similarity here creates a feeling of closeness and so shortens the psychological distance between the individuals. But when dealing with high-level clients who have large amounts of money to invest, with the understanding that the customers themselves also seek distinction in the service setting (Hanser 2005), women bankers strive to use extrinsic attraction by demonstrating their ability, knowledge, expertise, insight and competence. Their emphasis is more on their identity as a 'banker', a professional service provider.

When quantifiable achievement is the key merit for promotion in the business world, then working at a branch in a key financial area like Central, or a richer residential area like Wan Chai, provides a better platform for meeting high-level clients who have more money to buy the bank's products, ultimately leading to better social resources. In the context of opportunity structures, such resources influence the career development of individual women bankers. Consider the following statements:

> I have worked in many different branches located in Mong Kok (旺角), Tsim Sha Tsui (尖沙咀), Tai Po (太埔) and Central (中环). In terms of account amounts, there is a big difference between areas. The money value in Central is extremely high. For example, it is very rare to have a client who has $100 million in our Mong Kok branch, but there are a lot of clients who have more than $100 million in our Central branch (Case HK10, Director of Client Relationship Management, Private Banking, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

Originally, our bank was a family-owned retail bank. Our Central branch always serviced many important clients who are our big boss's well-known friends or old, loyal clients. We often get good referrals from our clients. One client introduces another client to us. Therefore, our clients know each other very well indeed (Case HK 14, Vice-President, Hong Kong team, French private bank in Hong Kong).

The banking industry as a service industry involves social recognition and class distinction (Hanser 2005). The woman bankers I interviewed in Hong Kong indicated that they adjusted their performance based on their understanding of clients' perceptions and expectations. The interaction between them is a process associated with the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley & Schubert 1998). 'The production of class meanings and distinctions can be a key aspect of what service work is organised to produce. Managers of service organisations recognise themselves in a competition for customers who themselves seek distinction in the service setting' (Hanser 2005, p. 596). Identity display is according to client orientation and class-inflected performance in which both the women bankers and their customers seek distinction in the service setting. At the end of the day, business relationships, to some degree, are social relationships in which there are complex connections between emotions, affections and business deals.

Place-based Stigma, Identity Politics within a Nation and the After-Colonial City
Although banking is a result-oriented industry, it is not merely about individual ability; it also involves power struggles that are interwoven with national- and ethnic-based politics. Close observation of Daisy's career development path reveals irony and a paradox (Figure 2). There is a gap between her perception and the reality concerning working in a foreign-owned bank in Hong Kong. Daisy believed there was equal opportunity for everyone that worked hard and was creative, regardless of sex or ethnicity, and that she would shine in such an open-minded environment. But the reality was that, despite her diligence and awards, she was unable to attain her goal at an American, British or a European bank but did so only after job-hopping and, ironically, finally achieved the position of branch manager at a Chinese bank.

According to Heidrick & Stuggles, a global executive employment agency, among the top 10 international banks only 30 percent of chief executives in Asian offices were Asian or people of Asian origin (*Oriental Daily Malaysia*, 25 August 2013). The senior management and top executive positions in international corporations are still dominated by professionals who share the same race or similar cultural background as the banks' chief executive officer (CEO). Therefore, Asians or people with Asian origins face obstacles in moving into the top layer of managerial teams, and this may be even more so for Asian women.

Daisy indicated that she changed her job to a Chinese bank merely to take advantage of a good opportunity. She did not want to believe that there were race issues in the foreign banks where she had previously worked. Although she obtained a master's degree in the UK and she could speak English fluently, she faced a two-layered barrier: that of race and gender. Hence, it was difficult for her to climb up to a top position in foreign-owned banks in Hong Kong.

In addition, the identity of being a 'non-communist Hongkonger' has emerged as another invisible barrier, a political condition or limitation for Chinese women professionals working in Chinese state-owned banks. The challenge of the 'Beijing boss' lacking trust in local Hong Kong bankers is thorny. Daisy stated:

> In [Chinese] state-owned banks, for sure, the top leader will be a man, a Chinese man. It is impossible for it to be a foreigner, no matter male or female, to be appointed as our top leader. They will assign a man from Shenzhen or another city in mainland China. They will definitely not promote any Hongkonger to be the top man. All the top leaders are sent from mainland China. (HK7, Senior Branch Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong.)

There is a hierarchical stratification of Chinese identity. In Chinese state-owned banks in Hong Kong, Chinese citizens with Communist Party membership have more opportunity to reach the top managerial team. This story from a woman banker who had worked 'inside' a Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong illustrates this situation:

I was the personal assistant to the CEO of the investment banking section of a Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong. I got this job because my mother was a friend of this CEO. In the beginning, I experienced a big cultural shock. First, there were differences between foreign banks and Chinese banks. Second, this Chinese bank was very special as it was a state-owned bank. Their whole operation system is like their Head Office in China. They still had some very traditional things – like [they were from] ancient China. For example, they had some 'red head documents' (*hong tou wenjian* 红头文件). Only party members were allowed to read them. They had a special phone line which couldn't be monitored by other people. It was directly connected to Beijing when you picked it up. There was an inner circle and even my boss hesitated to introduce me to them. … There were many political orders. Many decisions were made not based on commercial consideration but political concerns. My boss was also a party member (Case HK8, Managing Director, private owned investment company in Hong Kong).

Although the state-owned banks in Hong Kong are registered as independent local companies and they are legally separate entities from their parent companies in mainland China, they are still closely related to each other in term of administration management and cross-border core business activities. HK8 indicated that in state-owned banks in Hong Kong, their executives are also Party officials. Chinese state-owned banks are still heavily reliant on central government-directed business models, which puts their respective political objectives ahead of profit maximisation (Subachi et al. 2012, p. 8). The politics between mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese is invisible but real and blocks Hong Kong women professionals' upward mobility in Chinese state-owned banks. The colonial historical background is an existential index and hidden label for Hong Kong people, that is, there is a notion that a Hongkonger is another kind of Chinese. For these banks to appoint someone who is a holder of a passport of 'The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China' to a managerial position, is viewed as an unnecessary risk. Between Hong Kong and mainland China, this politics of ethnicity and place of origin is always interwoven with gender to create a 'triple jeopardy' for local Chinese women bankers in Hong Kong.

3.3 Power Hierarchy of City and Personal Recognition in Mainland China

Biographical Profile from Guangzhou

Case:	Lily (Case CH5)
Age:	43
Place of origin:	Hu Nan Province, China
Education background:	Bachelor's Degree in Finance (Senior Accounting)
Marital status:	Married with one son
Years in the banking industry:	21 years
Number of previous banks employed at:	One
Highest position attained in a bank:	President of sub-branch
Current bank of employment:	One of the 'big four' Chinese state-owned bank
Current position:	President of sub-branch

Lily was born and grew up in south-east China, gaining her bachelor's degree from a well-known university in Beijing before joining the current bank of her employment, one of the 'big four' state-owned banks, on graduation in 1992. In over 21 years, Lily has never thought of leaving this bank. Amongst the respondents from mainland China in my study, Lily's devotion to one bank is unremarkable: 12 of the 18 women interviewed who were employed by a state-owned bank, remained with the same bank. Lily's attitude reflects the idea of *tie fan wan* (iron rice bowl 铁饭碗), that the state-owned bank represents a guaranteed job and income security.

In Lily's bank, promotion is closely related to a person's cross-territorial work experience. Although Lily has only worked for one bank, she has shifted between three cities and five jobs, summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Branch Locations of Lily's Employment in Guangzhou Province

1. 1992-2006: Zhaoqing (肇庆), mid-level managerial position (level 2 branch)

2. 2006-2008: Foshan (佛山), Vice-President of sub-branch (level 2 sub-branch)

3. 2008-2011: Zhaoqing (肇庆), Vice-President of branch (level 2 branch)

4. 2011-2013: Guangzhou (广州), President of sub-branch (level 1 sub-branch)

5. 2014-present: Zhaoqing (肇庆), President of Zhaoqing branch (level 2 branch)
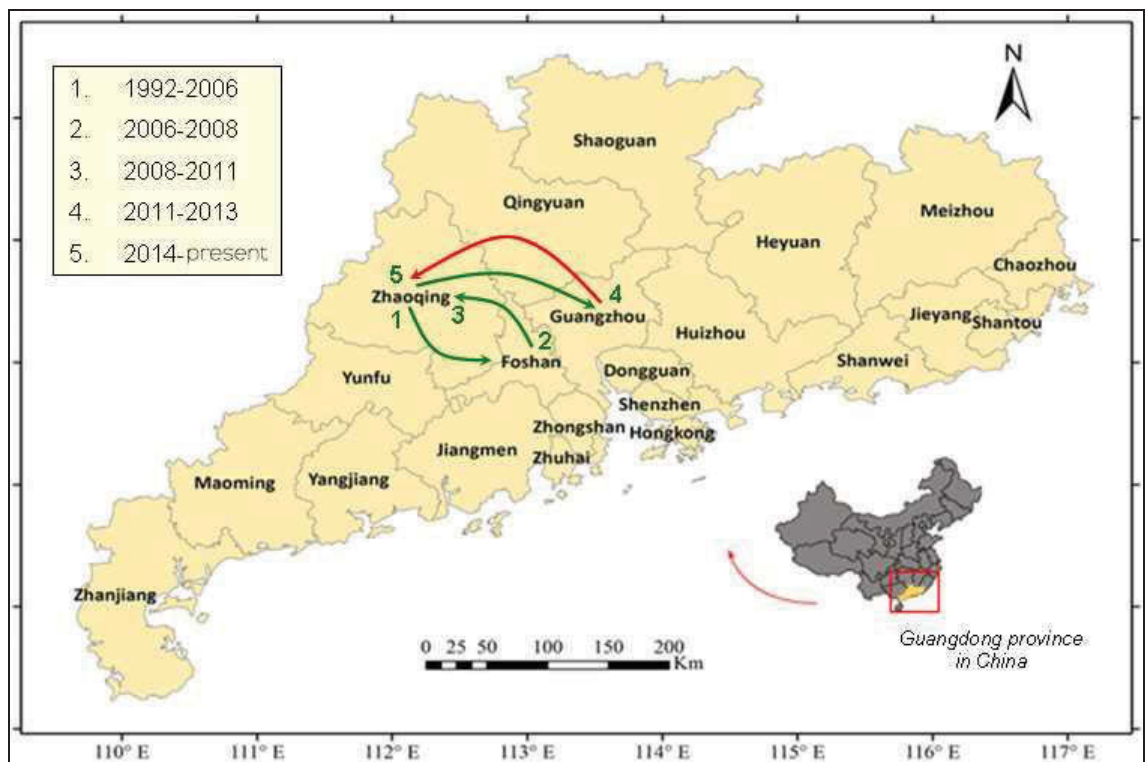
(The source of original map of Guangdong province: http://www.nature.com/articles/srep05972)

The first branch Lily worked at was in Zhaoqing, a second-tier city in Guangdong province. In her 14 years there, Lily shuttled between Zhaoqing and two other cities in Guangdong. After this, she moved to Foshan, a larger city in the same province, and this proved to be the turning point for her as she gained important exchange experience across regions (*yidi jiaoliu* 异地交流). From 2006 to 2008, she lived in Foshan, where

she was the vice-president of a sub-branch, and travelled back and forth at weekends to Zhaoqing where her husband lived. From 2008 to 2011 her family was reunited and she worked as the vice-president of a branch in Zhaoqing which was much larger than the previous branch she worked in there. Then, from 2011 to 2013, she once again moved away from her family to take up a promotion as president of a branch in Guangzhou, the provincial capital. In 2014 she returned home accepting the position as president of the branch in Zhaoqing.

Table 10 gives some brief statistical information about the three cities Lily worked in up to the time she was interviewed for the study in 2013. Lily's first cross-territorial movement was from Zhaoqing to Foshan, to take up her appointment as vice-president of a sub-branch. In 2013 Zhaoqing had a population of less than 4 million and a GDP ranking of 12 out of 22 cities in Guangdong province. Foshan is much larger and more important, with a population of 7.26 million and GDP ranking of third in the province. In 2011, Lily was promoted to president of a sub-branch in Guangzhou. Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong province and the historic mercantile capital of south China. Its provincial GDP ranking is always number one.

The move to Guangzhou was significant for Lily's career. Although market competition was intense, women were more accepted in high managerial positions. With a more cosmopolitan population, where there is a high level of civilisation (*wenming chengdu* 文明程度) and a more open-minded attitude, the city seems to hold greater opportunities for women. In Zhaoqing, a relatively less-developed city, it is relatively more difficult for women to be promoted to a high position. Lily was the only female

vice-president at the sub-branch level (*zhihang* 支行), but on moving to Guangzhou she found about 65 percent of the presidents at the sub-branch level were women.

Table 10: Statistical Information on Three Cities Lily Worked In

	Guangzhou	Foshan	Zhaoqing
Population (million)	12.84	7.26	3.98
GDP (RMB Billion)	1355.1	661.3	146.2
Ranking (within Guangdong province)	1	3	12

(Resource: Guangdong Statistical Yearbook 2013)

Working in a big, developed city like Guangzhou was good for Lily's career. However, it caused tension with her husband, a lawyer based in Zhaoqing. He refused to move with her when she was promoted. When she first moved from Zhaoqing to Foshan, Lily took her son with her, but living apart from his father upset the nine-year-old boy. When she moved again in 2011, this time from Zhaoqing to Guangzhou, her son did not want to go with his mother and this hurt her a great deal.

Lily struggled with the dilemma of where home for her son should be, and where her husband and she herself should live. She wanted her husband and son to join her in Guangzhou as she believed that this city was a better place for her and her son's future. But it would have been difficult for her husband to start a new career as a lawyer there. Finally, in 2014, Lily decided to move back to Zhaoqing, which she once called 'the undeveloped, mountain city'. Regarding her career development, from an outsider's

perspective, she was 'promoted' to the higher position of president of the Zhaoqing

branch. But hierarchically, Zhaoqing is a far less important branch than the Guangzhou

branch, and so in returning to Zhaoqing, Lily put an end to any further career

development. Lily observed that in China, it is the women who more often sacrifice

their careers to support the men's.

City Positioning and Power Hierarchies

Cities and bank branches are locked in hierarchies of economic and political power. In

China, the 'central state has explicitly highlighted the urban scale as a means of driving

economic growth under reform' and cities are the 'basis of economic organization and

social formation for larger urbanizing regions' (Cartier 2005, p. 29). Cities in China are

defined as levels of government in hierarchical rank order, which also correspond to the

ranks of state-owned enterprises—banks—and the ranks of Party officials who hold

leadership positions in the banks. In addition, uneven economic development within at

all levels has contributed to hierarchical distribution of power among different cities.

The city as a place is a 'site in the flow of social relations' (Agnew 2005, p. 91). Thus,

in China's rank-oriented system, having work experience in a branch located in a big

city or a big sub-branch in an important district correlates with understandings of level

of individual ability. The higher the political and economic power of the city and the

branch, the higher the recognition of an individual's personal ability and managerial

power. To understand an individual's career mobility path in mainland China, we shall

first examine the complex internal structure of banks. State-owned banks, like the one

where Lily has spent her career, have five levels of branches. In the following list,

number one is the highest level, number 5 is the lowest, and number 2 is a similar level to number 1.

1. Level-1 Branch (provincial level, for example the Guangdong province branch)
2. Direct Branch (directly managed by head office in Beijing, for example the Shenzhen branch)
3. Level-2 Branch (city level, for example the Foshan branch)
4. Level 1 Sub-branch (suburb level, for example the Guangzhou Beixiu District Sub-branch, located in an area with many key government head offices)
5. Level 2 Sub-branch (usually called *wangdian* 网点, for example Zhongshan City, Xinshi Road Sub-branch)

The real significance of a branch is more closely associated with the political and economic hierarchy of its location, the city, or the district for example. Take Lily's second cross-territorial movement. When she moved from a sub-branch in Foshan back to a branch in Zhaoqing to take up the same position as vice-president: from an administrative point of view, it seems that her movement to a higher level of branch was a move up, but this is only half the picture. When we consider the difference between Foshan and Zhaoqing's GDP rankings (see Table 10), it is clear a sub-branch in Foshan has a higher stature. Lily's concern over her family led to her decision to return to Zhaoqing – a career sacrifice in Lily's mind and in effect a step down.

Branch Significance and Personal Recognition

Branch significance and personal recognition is not only affected by a particular city's political and economic power, but the specific location of a branch also plays a role. Territorial hierarchy occurs not only between cities but also within a city. The internal spatial patterns are associated with the disparity of economic development between suburbs. A manager said:

> I think there is a relationship between branch location, our daily working experience and career mobility. If your branch has a higher ranking in terms of profit making, then the branch manager will gain higher recognition from the top managerial team. They will listen to you more. Other branch managers will also respect you more. They think you are a manager in charge of a big branch, it means you must be very smart. You must know the business very well. Indeed, in a big branch, there are many more different kinds of clients, a much bigger volume of business deals, and many more and varied problems. All sorts of issues can happen in a big branch. In the end, it is a test of your ability (Case CH12, Deputy Manager, Level-1 sub-branch, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai).

CH12 was a manager in a branch located in Lujiazui (陆家嘴), Pudong New Area (浦东新区), which is the most important financial district in Shanghai. The powerful 'spatial coding' (Allen 2003, p. 163) of Lujiazui has significant symbolic meaning. CH12 indicated that the branch managers from branches with a higher ranking usually gain higher recognition from the top and more respect from their peer group. A manager in a branch located in a key financial district has more opportunity to meet both high-end

individual clients and make connections with significant corporations. The strategic geographical location of a branch enlarges an individual manager's business networks, which contributes to his or her personal achievements. Personal achievement enriches an individual's recognition by the top managerial team, which is vital for upward mobility. Once an individual has attained a high position, he or she gains more administrative power and resources to upgrade the branch where he or she works. This positive cycle benefits everyone working in that branch.

Dominant social groups in important financial districts like Pudong, influence the 'power of coding' (Allen 2003, p. 164) for higher social recognition. Networks, cultivated and maintained in 'contact zones' like cafés, bars and restaurants, are vital assets for business development. Working in a bank branch located in a prestigious area significantly contributes to a banker's chances of promotion. The banking system is a set of carefully defined systems of power and prestige. These cases of women bankers in China again indicate the interlocking relationship between city hierarchy, branch location and the opportunity of career mobility for an individual.

Level of a City's Civilisation and Gender Politics

Women bankers' career mobility is to some extent interlocked with differentiated politics within a geographical area. A city's 'complex layers of social history and social structure result in specific local forms of incorporation built on place-specific representations, legacies and expectations' (Schiller & Caglar 2009, p. 196). Lily's career path demonstrated the inter-relationship between a city's scale, personal life-chances and career opportunity for bankers. She stated:

There is a co-relationship between a city's level of civilisation, its openness and women's career mobility in banks. In a less-developed city, it is extremely difficult for women to be promoted to a high position. I realised that the percentage of women in top-layer managerial teams is getting higher and higher in well-developed, civilised cities. I think this is because of the social atmosphere and the degree of liberation for women. The number of women liberated from home in civilised cities is much higher than in less-developed cities (Case CH5, Branch President, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

In less developed or less civilised cities, like Zhaoqing, women bankers' career paths are obstructed by localised gender discourse and norms that discriminate against them. In these cities, gender tends to be the master identity for women professionals and it blocks them from exposure to and connections with more senior managers. Gender is an ascribed status that people cannot change by any kind of external force. Therefore, if women's mobility is closely associated to and hindered by their gender, then it is extremely difficult for them to achieve upward mobility. This kind of gender expectation or gender discourse is a powerful structural barrier that is often beyond the control of any individual. But in developed cities, like Guangzhou, women bankers' career ladders are less associated with gender than other factors, like education and job performance.

3.4 Conclusions

The career paths of Chinese women bankers in three research sites indicate two common themes. First, there are factors at work that transcend the boundaries of the individual microcosm. The three biographical profiles in this chapter not only reflect three life paths, but more importantly they provide a window to reveal the interlocking relationship between the firm, its place in the city and the rank of the city in the urban hierarchy, and ways that their relations of rank and power contour opportunities for professional career mobility. Second, this study, conducted at multiple scales and sites, reflects the spatiality of power associated with uneven economic development among suburbs, cities or regions. Of the women in this study, the career movement of all has involved geographical movement within a city or between cities. The image and social discourse of a particular place, like key financial district in a city or region, as 'coding', has symbolic power and can be used as a tool for business development.

The analysis of this chapter also addresses particular factors that contribute to career mobility in different research sites. In Sydney, the opportunities for Chinese women bankers as migrants is interrelated with immigration policy, the formation of ethnic communities and suburbs, banking service for the migrant market, and the rise of China in the world. In Hong Kong, women engaged in performativity associated with different identities in different locations as a result of their clear understanding of clients' perceptions toward and expectations of bankers in different sites. By using different impression management skills, women bankers emphasised their personal identity either as a 'woman' or as a 'banker', according to their evaluation of the preferred relationship and the class distinction that their clients were looking for. In mainland China, women

bankers' upward mobility is partly a result of place-based gender politics intertwined with the level of economic development and the degree of civilisation of a city.

The career paths of women professionals in this study also reveal variations in patterns of linkages among places. Domestic or within country career mobility indicates complex and multiple forms of mobility. The individual's capacity and ways of practicing domestic mobility differ from transnational strategies while the case studies in this chapter reveal that multiple-site movements play an important role in career mobility. The exchange experience across regions, the diverse on-site training in different levels of branches located in different cities/areas, and the insight gained from the high frequency of domestic or international business trips: all these contribute significantly to a person's career mobility. To deal with the high demands involved in remaining connected across a city, a region, or even countries in the globally connected banking industries, my respondents demonstrated a high level of adaptability and skill in performing in different business contexts. The ethnographic details in this chapter helps us understand how micropractices of transnationality interweave with the macropractices of economic transnationalism.

The city and the site of a bank or a branch within that city are embedded within hierarchical fields of power. The women made different choices and decisions in different situations, in reaction to life changes, and the difficulties they encounter. Some accept whatever it is and never try to change their situation; others try to make a change or fight back, but fail. Still others, exemplified by the women bankers I interviewed,

work very hard for advancement in their profession and become very successful in

banking and finance – fields that are embedded in capitalism, modernity and globality.

Chapter 4

City Connectivity, Mobility and Translocality

I know a number of people in our firm who don't live with their partners. It's astounding … Everyone is flying all over the place all the time, because the world is in mobile phones.

— Carmen, Head of Capital Introductions (Asia), American Investment Bank, Hong Kong

Carmen was Head of Capital Introductions (Asia) at an investment bank in Hong Kong. I interviewed her during one of her regular trips to meet her key clients in Sydney. Carmen grew up and graduated from a well-known university in Sydney. She obtained a Master's degree in applied finance. She worked in a leading investment bank in Sydney for three and a half years, and then she moved to Singapore and worked for an investment bank there for seven years. Recently, Carmen moved to Hong Kong where she was hired by a branch of a French investment bank. Like many of her colleagues, male or female, Carmen travelled frequently between Hong Kong and countries in the Asia-Pacific region, especially Japan, Korea, mainland China, Australia and Singapore. Her long-term boyfriend lived in Sydney, where she returned every four to six weeks to meet clients, and visit her parents and partner.

During her eight years in Singapore and Hong Kong, Carmen used technology to interact with her partner every day. This, together with her frequent visits to Sydney, was how she forged and maintained her long-distance relationship. When people often travel to a number of different places, the mobile phone becomes a means for gaining private space to maintain and nourish translocal relationships. For multiply located

people, like most respondents in my study, their intimate relationships are no longer solely face-to-face but flow between the physical and the virtual worlds, consolidated by tangible interaction and intangible personal imagination. Work and family no longer remain in separate spheres but now transcend boundaries.

'The world is in mobile phones' – Carmen's comment and her life trajectory vividly represent an emerging translocal life path of professionals in the service economy. In my research, this elite group are mostly young, single or married without children, well-educated, with rich cross-national work experience. Their work necessarily involves many cross-border business trips. They shuttle from office to office, city to city, and nation to nation. Accompanied by the flow of money, ideas, norms, practices, and identities within fluid social spaces, in an age of mobility, this group of professionals knits complex social geographies across different cities and nations.

Contemporary women bankers, like Carmen, are simultaneously embedded in multiple sites and different social fields in which they are working and living. Their life is marked by intermittent comings and goings, from place to place. Carmen's translocal life story is similar to all 51 respondents in this study. However her story is also unique, reflecting personal desires, strategies, scale and practices of her own translocality. Translocal life experiences are characterised by negotiation and bargaining among locals and non-locals, as well as struggle and tension in the process of individual exchanges. This chapter draws on insights from the concept of 'power geometry of time-space compression' (Massey 1991, p. 25) to analyse the roles and functions of Chinese women bankers in globally connected office networks of the financial services industry. In view of the complex dynamics of translocal connectedness, this chapter also

attempts to map the global-to-local and local-to-local connections, and the politics between local, non-local and translocal in the fast-moving, multidirectional world. At the core of this chapter, I intend to explore 'situatedness during mobility'(Brickell & Datta 2011, p. 3) in the lives of women bankers in my three research sites.

4.1 Globalised Economic Space, Transnationalism and Translocality

When capital moves, people move (McDowell 1997). The mobility of capital engenders globalisation of markets in services for finance, commerce and industry (Featherstone 1990). Mobility enables people to re-integrate social resources so as to expand their individual horizons or fields of activity (Wang 1995). The combination of spatial dispersal and global integration of financial services in the world creates new strategic command and control roles for cities (Sassen, 1991). At the apex of globalised economic space, social resources move between the global and the local, bound in a dynamic set of cross-boundary, circular relationships (Urry 2000). The increasing economic interdependence of national economies evolves through a rapid increase in the cross-border movement of goods, services, technology and capital (Joshi 2009). There is an increasing number of people able to live dual lives (Portes 1997). The tremendous compression of spatial and temporal distance compels various relationships between people and societies and between time and space.

For more than two decades, scholars have paid much attention to social interaction and connection associated with frequent cross-border activities among mobile migrants. Since the 1990s, migration studies have gradually adapted transnational approaches (Basch, Schiller & Blanc 1994; Faist 2000a, 2000b; Freitag & Oppen 2010; Guarnizo

1997a; Guarnizo 2000; Levitt & Jaworsky 2007). Basch, Schiller & Blanc (1994, p. 6) initially defined transnationalism as 'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that line together their countries of origin and settlement'. Transnationalism, as a new mode of migration, describes ways in which migrants live in 'transnational communities'. Portes (1997, p. 812) indicated that such migrant communities from:

> Transnational communities are dense networks across political borders created by immigrants in their quest for economic advancement and social recognition. Through these networks, an increasing number of peoples are able to live dual lives. Participants [that is, these immigrants] are often bilingual, move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and pursue economic, political and cultural interests that require their presence in both.

Transnational patterns among migrants take many forms in socio-cultural, economic and political arenas, and each form may be broad or narrow (Itzigsohn et al. 1999). Forms of transnationalism may vary over time, depending on the intensity of exchanges and communication (Vertovec 2001). Also, topographies of transnationalism can be affected by the variations of spatial extension and temporal stability (Faist 2000a, 2000b). The terms 'core transnationalism' and 'expanded transnationalism' indicate distinguishability between the degree of engagement among different cross-border activities (Guarnizo 1997b, 2000). But the literature on transnational patterns is often unclear, and does not demonstrate the existence of new patterns of linkage among migrants. 'Research needs to detail the current extent, structural and technical capacities,

and migrants' own desires, strategies and practices of remaining connected around the world, and exactly how these are continuous with, or distinct from, earlier patterns of linkage' (Vertovec 2001, pp. 576-7).

Over the past decade, the perspective of translocality has gained momentum. Translocality describes phenomena involving mobility, migration, circulation and spatial interconnectedness that are not necessarily limited to national boundaries (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013). Sometimes, translocality, translocalism and transnationalism are used interchangeably. Some authors identify translocality as a more general concept (Hedberg & Carmo 2012), but consider transnationalism as a special case of translocalism (Freitag & Oppen 2010). Insights gained from the study of transnationalism have led to growing concerns about the need for learning more about local context, internal migration (Trager 2005), global-to-local relations and local-to-local interactions (Guarnizo & Smith 1998; Núñez-Madrazo 2007; Smith 2001), and the expansion of analytical focus beyond the limits of the nation-state (Oakes & Schein 2006). Translocality perspectives capture 'complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-oriented and multi-dimensional understanding', and seek to 'integrate notions of fluidity and discontinuity associated with mobilities, movements and flows on the one hand with notions of fixity, groundedness and situatedness in particular settings on the other' (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013, p. 376).

Portrait: A Day in the Life of a Woman Banker in Hong Kong

Following is a portrait of a Vice-President of the Operations Department of a global investment bank in Hong Kong. This portrait attempts to give an intimate and detailed

picture of a day in the life of a woman professional in Hong Kong, not to generalise a specific pattern for all women working in the banking industry. Nevertheless, it both examines how life trajectories of female professionals reflect an emerging translocal life path among contemporary urban elites in financial service industries; and it helps us to re-evaluate both the contribution and the disruption of global connectedness in the work and lives of women professionals working in the finance industry.

Sally was in her early thirties, married without children and full of vigour and ambition. She was born in Hong Kong but educated for the most part in Australia, where her eldest brother and several cousins live. Sally felt that although Australia was a beautiful place to live, Hong Kong was a better place for her to develop her career. In 2001, after gaining a Master's degree in information system management, Sally returned to her place of origin and joined one of the most prominent international investment banks in Hong Kong. She began working as a junior analyst and was eventually promoted to Vice-President of the operations department with ten employees under her supervision.

Sally's day begins early, around 5 A.M. Although she arrives at the office about 8 A.M., an hour before her colleagues, she needs to be on stand-by at home in case New York needs to telephone with information concerning her Hong Kong clients. Also, her Hong Kong clients sometimes call her at home at around 6 A.M. Upon arriving at her office in a well-known building in Central District, she catches up on what has been happening in the New York office overnight, reading emails and assessing the latest market information that is relevant to her department. Her first scheduled meeting is with her own department at 9 A.M. Her next meeting is with colleagues from the sales and

business departments. After lunch, she attends the daily long-distance conference meeting with London, beginning about 3 P.M., 8 A.M. in London, which runs for four to five hours. Three nights each week at 9 P.M., she holds a long-distance call with New York, which is 12 hours behind. Sally's work day finishes between 10 P.M. and 11 P.M., when she rushes home to call her husband who is working in Shanghai, China, for his family business. They spend an hour to 90 minutes talking to each other. Figure 5 illustrates a typical working day for Sally.

Figure 5: Sally's Work and Family Networks and Daily Routine
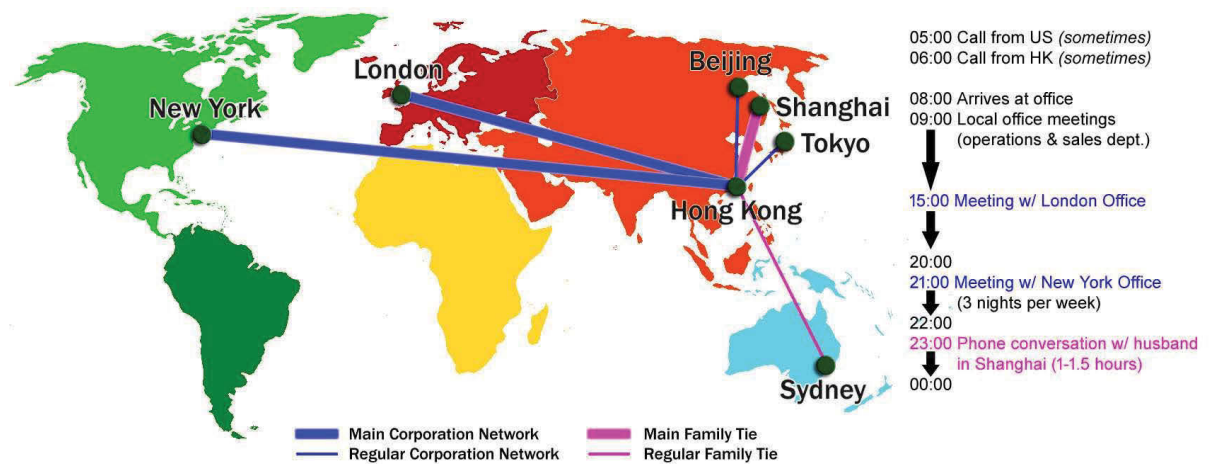
Source for basic world map:

http://www.wpclipart.com/geography/world_maps/world_map_basic_large_blue.png.html

As a key member of the managerial staff, Sally acted as a node connecting corporate offices in London, Beijing, Tokyo and the head office in New York. A team in New York prepared daily accounts reports for two of Sally's most important clients in Hong Kong, and the project manager and technical team in London provided detailed instructions for her projects. Beijing and Tokyo also had joint projects with Hong Kong.

These offices kept in touch mainly by email, long-distance conference calls and face-to-face visits at least once a year.

Hong Kong's location is often presented as one of the key factors contributing to its success as an international finance hub. But Sally indicated it has a negative side: like other women bankers in Hong Kong working in global office networks, she worked longer hours than her colleagues in London and New York. Her conference meeting with New York was usually at 9 P.M. in Hong Kong, 8 A.M. in New York. After 13 hours at work, Sally did not wish to be viewed on screen and preferred to use the telephone. She said that she needed to make a special effort to engage in small talk before getting down to serious business, and to speak loudly and clearly in order to be heard. However, the New York team often had animated discussions among themselves, forgetting that Sally was on the phone.

In addition to long hours, working in the Hong Kong office of an American bank presented real difficulties associated with recognition. The Managing Director of the New York office and his team gained a deeper knowledge of their colleagues located in same office and core managerial teams in the United States, and thus gave them more recognition. Although the Managing Director visited the Hong Kong office twice a year for a week each time, it was difficult for members of the Hong Kong team to display their abilities and project their personalities during such short visits.

Professionals working in an investment bank need to deal with stress and long working hours, but Sally felt happy to be part of the team in the Hong Kong office. Although

about 80 to 90 percent of her colleagues were from overseas with diverse cultural backgrounds, Sally felt everyone supported each other. From regular business trips to other overseas branch offices, Sally observed that interaction between colleagues in Hong Kong was different to the offices in New York and London. Colleagues in Hong Kong had more interactive discussions as they always met face-to-face. They were also more willing to seek help across different departments compared to colleagues in New York or London who seemed to view responsibilities as clear-cut and separate. Sally explained this difference mainly resulted from distinctive, local-based work culture and the fact that there was less spatial distance between different departments in Hong Kong. Because of limited land resources in Hong Kong, many companies in Hong Kong set up their departments on the same floor or in the same building, not in different buildings located over a wide area like branches in London or New York. Social relationships are partly affected by spatial and geographical settings. Sally was also satisfied with her high salary, about two million Hong Kong dollars or US$250,000 per year. In addition to all this, she enjoyed the variety of life in Hong Kong. Sally explained, 'Everyday, there is a fresh thing to do.' The global interlocked market is full of unpredictable factors and therefore investment strategy is full of uncertainty, which ironically can both generate stress and spark excitement.

Globally connected, cross-border business co-operation demands a huge amount of time and energy. The same is true to maintain a translocal marriage. Sally felt that living in different cities – she lived in Hong Kong and her husband lived in Shanghai – lessened tension between her and her husband and that their relationship was improved. This unexpected, positive side of living apart was because of deliberate efforts to

communicate, albeit cross-territorial communication. When both of them worked in Hong Kong, they were fully occupied with work and they did not talk very much after work. When they lived physically apart from each other, they realised they had to put extra effort into their marriage, so her husband returned home to Hong Kong each week and they communicated by phone every night. However, sometimes the calls were exhausting for Sally, especially after a work day of more than 12 hours and sometimes up to 18 hours. Her husband understood her situation, having worked at the same investment bank before moving to Shanghai. He was sympathetic, often gently reminding her she was talking to him, not a client, when her responses became simple and monosyllabic, like 'er … yes … ok …'. Sally, like many other busy professionals, was struggling with the concept of 'time bind', the time for work and family were intertwined and blended together (Hochschild 1997).

Sally's daily life was interwoven with both her instrumental corporation's networks and her expressive emotional ties, which crossed borders and countries. The corporation's networks included a main network with London and New York and a project-based one with Beijing and Tokyo. The transmission of information and ideas among offices located in different countries or cities strengthened the interlocking of global office networking and so contributed to the success of global co-operation in the fast-moving financial industry. As for emotional ties, the one she shared with her husband in Shanghai was strong. She also maintained family ties with her brother and cousins who lived in Australia through emails, phone calls and occasional visits. The strong emotional connectedness associated with intensive everyday virtual communication was

embedded into her translocal assemblages. This dynamic process of translocality was very important for forging and maintaining her marriage bond.

4.2   Global Connectedness: Women Bankers as Mobile Travellers

The vast multinational networks of service firms and the global integration of affiliates construct new patterns of local-global connection and thus, inevitably, affect an individual professional's working pattern, way of life, and everyday experiences. The new pattern of external economic co-operation and competition forces international and local firms to respond and adapt in order to survive in changing global and local milieus. Sally's life pattern reveals a part of how global offices are interlocked. In addition to a high frequency of long-distance conference meetings, overseas travel becomes an important part of building transcended connectedness. This is highlighted in the following comments of respondents:

> I've spent so much time travelling for work. I probably travel once a week to Japan, China, Korea and Australia (Case HK5, Head of Capital Introductions, French bank in Hong Kong).

> The region I cover is the Asia-Pacific, including Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan, and Korea. About 35 percent of my working time is travelling. I have to travel about 10 days every month. I've been working in this bank for only one year, but I've already been to Singapore 10 times, London twice, Berlin once, Beijing once and I'll go there more often next year. For each trip, I usually spend less than one week away, normally four

days for each trip. But sometimes the trip may be longer. For example, two weeks ago I was in London and Berlin for eight days. Because my husband and I have some very good friends who live in London, I went an extra day early and stayed an extra day after the field trip to catch up with different friends. When I go to Singapore, it's usually an overnight trip or for four days, maximum. If I go to Australia, I'll visit Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne together – all together three days and then I come back. The flights there work well. It's easy. Fly down by overnight flight, do three to four days' business, catch an overnight flight back. So, even when I went to New York and London, when I was with my previous investment bank in Sydney – I used to go to New York, probably once or twice a year – I would leave Sydney on Tuesday and get to New York on the same day. I would leave New York on Friday afternoon, then I'll (sic) be back in Sydney on Sunday morning, roughly (Case HK6, Director/Head of Relationship Management, German bank in Hong Kong).

I have to handle long-distance meetings with the New York office, probably at about 8 P.M. This phone meeting doesn't need to be held in the office … Working in a foreign bank, I need to oversee a big area. Therefore, we have to travel a lot (Case CH6, Vice-President, Corporate Section, American bank in Guangzhou, China).

I travel a lot. I plan to travel at least once a month (Case AU7, Head of Asian Segment, Australian bank in Sydney, Australia).

We travel a lot. Our Asian Segment Head will take us (the team managers) to visit our clients in Asian countries two to three times a year. Each of our Asian trips will last about three to four weeks and usually cover China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia (Case AU13, Senior Manager, Private Wealth, Australian bank in Melbourne, Australia).

Using the time-geographic perspective, studies found that women face a higher level of fixity constraint and they have lower levels of individual access to urban opportunities when compared to men (Kwan 1999, 2000). But in this study, all my respondents, no matter where they were located, had one thing in common: they were highly mobile across cities and countries. The Head of the Asian Segment of an Australia bank had clients that require her to shuttle between Sydney, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and elsewhere in Asia. The Head of Relationship Management (Asia-Pacific) of a French bank in Hong Kong had clients in Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan, Korea and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The globalisation of finance firms all over the world is parallel with the globalisation of human movement. The clients of banks are no longer only located in one particular country but are mobile and translocal persons. AU13 indicated that travel was extremely tiring as there were many formal meetings, business meals and entertainment which constantly infringed on her weekends. Her daily schedule included having all her meals with clients, from breakfast to dinner. The intensity of market competition is geared toward an increasing demand for more personal business relationships. Travel to meet clients face-to-face is an

important element for building a 'personalised relationship'. One manager who worked for a foreign-owned bank in Shanghai pointed out:

> Humans have affections. *Jian mian san fen qing* (If you ask him in person, he will show you 30 percent of his compassion 见面三分情). Even though we know our important clients very well, we still need to keep our face-to-face meetings at a certain frequency. We may not need to see them every week but at least once every one or two months. Besides meeting in person, of course, it is a must to regularly have phone conversations with them. If the client is new to us, we must meet in person before we discuss any business. Once we've met, trust will be increased. It's helpful if we know the characteristics of our clients by meeting face-to-face (Case CH13, Associate Director, Head of East China, foreign-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

The Chinese phrase '*jian mian san fen qing*' (if you ask him in person, he will show you 30 percent of his compassion 见面三分情) indicates the extended meaning of 'face' in the Chinese value system. '*Jian mian*' (见面) literally translates as 'seeing face' and can encompass the idea of 'giving face' (*gei mianzi* 给面子). The concept of giving face is to show respect, honour and dignity to a person; and is especially common in Chinese business practice. Another Chinese saying states: 'It's harder to be cold and detached when you look someone in the eyes.' Face-to-face interaction creates a better situation for building relationships. A senior manager in Melbourne pointed out that her cross-national trips to visit clients is an essential way of giving face to her clients:

These visits bring me a lot of profound experiences. Your feelings are totally different when you meet the client at their office in their own country, compared to meeting with the same clients in Australia. This is especially so for Taiwanese clients. If you fly to Taiwan to visit them at their place, they think you are giving them a lot of face. They treat you in a more gracious way. I found the relationship lasts longer and consolidates when we visit to our clients (sic.). If you fly over to meet them face-to-face, they think you really respect them. As a result, in the future, if they want to make new investments or get new loans, they'll think about you first (Case AU13, Senior Manager, Private Wealth, Australian bank in Melbourne, Australia).

International business trips are a business strategy used to give face to transnational clients. There are two forces at work here. Firstly, because clients are mobile, women professionals (like their male colleagues) also have to be mobile to cultivate and maintain close personal friendships with their clients leading to long-term business relationships. Secondly, international bank operations require consistent governance among their branches and so managers need to travel to meet each other. Female professionals in the banking industry and their colleagues are like ancient Chinese couriers travelling from station to station, across different societal borders. By travelling so much they continue nurturing the feeling of trust between banker and client; they weave strong, interlocked networks and contribute to the depth of global connectedness. The complex process of city connectedness is imbued with global, national, regional and local connectivity. The abstract concept of global becomes concrete through the practices of local entities. Women bankers are mobile travellers. To personalise

individual relationships and to implement standardised corporate policy are not oppositional but are multi-layered, criss-crossing forces associated with the hegemonic project of globality.

Local-to-local Connectivity: Chain Trip

The modes of company operation, management style, and business control mechanisms are affected or even determined by the nature of a bank, corporate ideology and social culture. Therefore, women bankers located in different types of banks may have very different travel patterns. In state-owned banks in China, on the one hand, the power hierarchy between branches is closely associated with the administrative level of the branch. On the other hand, each branch runs independently as it includes all the departments and services of the Head Office. Chinese use the metaphor of a sparrow to describe the running model of a branch: small as the sparrow is, it possesses all its internal organs (*maque suixiao, wuzang juquan* 麻雀虽小，五脏俱全). Another analogy is a circle: though small, it is complete. Under such a system, women in branch managerial roles in state-owned banks mostly travel within a district, and so daytrips are more common for them. Two such women state:

> I am in charge of 25 *wangdian* (网点 level-2 sub-branches) with a total of 524 staff. I have to shuttle between those *wangdians* in order to give timely instruction. Since each *wangdian* is close to each other, I can visit all of them within one day (Case CH5, Vice-President, Level-1 sub-branch, Chinese state-owned bank in Shenzhen, China).

If you are [a] branch manager, you have to travel to all towns managed by your branch. For instance, there are about 14 towns under our branch. If our manager has to visit every town two times per month, then he/she has to travel for 26 days every month. Most of the time, they have to travel at night-time. In the daytime, they have to handle the branch business, like meetings and training. When you travel between towns, for example, from X town to S town, it takes about one hour each way. That means you have to spend at least two hours for a return journey. Most of the time, the manager has to rush to meetings without taking any meals (Case CH18, Supervisor, Personal Relationships, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangdong Province, China).

A *wangdian* (网点) is the base unit for a bank, categorised as a level-2 sub-branch. The office size and staff number of a *wangdian* is small but the total number of *wangdian* usually reflects how big the bank is. Establishing more *wangdian* can help a bank to have maximum exposure to reach potential clients. Case CH5 was Vice-President at a level-1 sub-branch of a state-owned bank in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province. Most *wangdian* under her charge were in the same district of Guangzhou. Case CH18's branch was in a second-tier city in Guangdong. It is also a level-1 sub-branch, with *wangdian* in over 14 towns. The *wangdian* network under CH18's branch was much bigger and more dispersed, but CH5 was in charge of 11 more sub-branches than CH18. Both women had to spend a lot of time travelling in order to oversee business in different *wangdian*.

The business control mechanisms of foreign banks in China are different from those of state-owned banks. The women interviewed in China described the managerial model in foreign banks as: '*tiao xian jiehe*' (条线结合 combination of vertical lines). This term depicts internal managerial power as a line penetrating the headquarters, a regional area (e.g. the Asia-Pacific), a country (e.g. China), a district (e.g. South China), a province (e.g. Guangdong), a city (e.g. Guangzhou) and then a local branch. Therefore, besides the flurry of cross-national travel, most of these bankers at foreign banks are inundated with regional and district business trips. This is illustrated in the following quotes:

> I have high-frequency travel for both intra-and inter-provincial trips. The intra-provincial travels cover areas like Zhongshan, Dongguan or other cities in Guangdong province. I usually start my travel day in the early morning and then come back home at night, maybe around seven to eight P.M. For the inter-provincial travel, say, Fujian province, I usually travel by plane and it usually takes three days for each trip. Sometimes, I also need to attend some social events organised by my clients, for example, some events in Shanghai, Beijing or Hong Kong. In general, I have to travel every week. For intra-provincial travels, on average, I travel three days every week (Case CH6, Vice-President, Corporate Section, Foreign-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

> I have to look after several provinces located in South China, which include Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangxi … therefore, I have to travel a lot. The difference between peak season and low season is obvious. I am extremely

busy in the last month of every year. This week, I've already travelled four times. During peak season, half of my month is spent on travelling around the cities. Then half of my time is kept for paper work at the office (Case CH8, Department Head, Foreign-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

Women bankers in China demonstrate a dominant travel pattern known as a chain trip. Case CH6's daytrip had a ring-type route: from Guangzhou down to Zhongshan, then up to Dongguan and finally back to Guangzhou. Case CH8 planned her trips vertically from north to south: from Hunan, to Hubei, Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangxi. The pattern of these chain trips indicates an increasing local-to-local connectivity. It also demonstrates the importance of regions as managerial units. The internationalised transboundary regions in China, like South China, are 'intermediary spatialities between the local and the global' (Cartier 2001, p. 262). All my respondents in mainland China were working in the Pearl River Delta and South China. China's society, across a vast expanse and of great variety, is in transition, but while the experience of women professionals working in foreign banks in well-developed areas like Guangzhou and Shanghai cannot be generalised to all women professionals working in the finance industry, especially those in developing areas such as the inner west or northwest, it reveals fast-changing working circumstances in a country 'embroidered with the hegemonic eulogy of the "search for modernity" or the "quest for globality" and branded with the slogan *yu quanqiu jiegui* (与全球接轨 setting China on the track of globalisation)' (Pun 2005, p. 4).

With the banking sector at the core of the financial system, there is no doubt that mobile women bankers are contributing significantly to China's financial development. Building and maintaining local-to-local connectivity is an important part of the dynamic process of local-to-global connectedness. Yet, a valid question is, how much research attention is being paid to women professionals working in the finance and banking industry, especially those working in banks in second-tier cities in China?

4.3 Local, Non-local and Translocal Politics

Chinese society is 'composed of webs woven out of countless personal relationships. To each knot in these webs is attached a specific ethical principle' (Fei 1992, p. 78). The individual in this society is surrounded by a series of concentric circles. Each circle spreading out from the centre becomes more distant and at the same time more insignificant. Everyone's circles are interrelated, and one touches different circles at different times and places. Therefore, general standards have no utility in traditional Chinese society. Society is characterised by a 'differential mode of association' (*chaxu geju* 差序格局) (Fei 1992). Thus we must first understand the specific context: who is the important figure, and what kind of relationship is appropriate with that figure. Only then can one decide the ethical standards to be applied to that context.

Most of the Chinese women bankers in this research were located in middle or upper managerial positions. In this era of globalisation, they need to be women who 'walk on both legs' (*liang tiao tui zoulu* 两条腿走路): on the one hand, they need to travel frequently to maintain and forge business relationships with clients in multiple cities, while on the other they need to build and strengthen local relationships that are rooted in

their home territory. Studies of Chinese people doing business overseas, or overseas Chinese doing business in mainland China, have shown that localised interpersonal networks play a substantially effective role either in daily business management or in charting future development (Dahles 2004). Interpersonal networks are like sets of interconnected nodes: they are dynamic, open structures in which the nodal interactions are inextricably linked (Castells 1996). The construction of interpersonal networks is dependent on the type of social bonds that exist between individuals. As discussed in chapter three, these social bonds are built upon two fundamental processes: intrinsic attraction, and extrinsic attraction (Blau 1964). While quantitative calculations are always of value to banking clients, non-quantitative considerations like *jiang renqing* (favour consideration 讲人情) and *gei mianzi* (giving face 给面子) also play a significant role in building social and business relationships, and particularly so in China (Huang 1989).

Spatial Connected Trust

In Chinese societies, apart from widely-practised nepotism, the bonds that arise from geographical connections have been important in building interpersonal relationships which are then used to develop business relationships. The pleasure that arises from two parties discovering they share similar intrinsic traits is always associated with place and human geography. For example, three women made the following comments:

> Many banks in this city prefer to hire local high school graduates instead of
> university graduates from other provinces. This is a practical concern. We have
> our own local culture that if they know you, they will come to you and put

money in the bank you are working in. If you are a local resident, you know groups of local people. If they want to take out a loan from a bank, they will find someone familiar to them. If they have money to invest and they know you are working in a bank, they will come to you first. … The client networks, or your *renyuan wan* (人缘网 net of personal popularity), is the key to success in the banking industry (Case CH2, Head of Regulatory Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangdong Province, China).

Most of our current staff are (sic.) Shanghainese. The ratio between local Shanghainese and non-local people is about eight-to-two or maybe seven-to-three. We hire more local people because they can better fit in when they communicate with local clients as the difference between them is not obvious … the non-local staff may have to cope with difficulties of adjustment. Their values and beliefs are different to our local clients (Case CH11, Manager, Sales Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

In our bank, we have very few non-local colleagues. Maybe by tradition, most banks in Shanghai are there to service the local people. The local colleagues have better communication with our local clients as they speak the same language and have similar habits. The non-local staff (sic.) firstly have to integrate into the local environment, and then they have to learn to understand the local people's way of thinking. Therefore, they lack any advantage in communicating with local clients. I think, except for foreign banks, banks in

Shanghai mainly service local clients (Case CH17, Deputy Manager, Chinese

state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

Employees of banks in Shanghai whom I interviewed stated that their banks preferred

hiring local people. They felt that the localisation of personal popularity, the *renyuan*

wan was the key to success in business deals. This local-oriented recruitment pattern is

in contrast to the image of Shanghai as China's hub, and as an international, modern,

open, well-developed city whose population comes from all over China. In the

recruitment process, local origin, or native place ethnicity, is an unwritten, unspoken but

real and powerful selection criterion. This criterion is a dominant preference in banks in

China, regardless of whether it is a state-owned or a foreign-owned bank, and is

arguably the case in many other cities besides Shanghai. Banks prefer local-born staff

for 'spatial-based trust', as is illustrated in the following quotes:

In 1999, I joined the banking industry. Although it was not 100 percent … more

than 90 percent of bank staff at that time were local Shanghainese. … I heard

there is [a] non-written regulation that they preferred to hire Shanghainese. They

thought in dealing with money the local Shanghai people have more integrity. It

is easier to have their background checked as [they] are local people and [their

official] dossier is kept here by the local Shanghai government (local

governments keep personal information on individuals, and these records follow

them wherever they go to study or work). If you are an outsider, it is not easy to

get to know you well. They thought it is safer to hire local Shanghainese to take

positions related to company finance issues, especially for the jobs dealing with

cash. Even now, this preference is still the case in Shanghai. They are afraid that if non-local staff get cash and run away, then they will have no way to know where the staff are and how the money was shifted around (Case CH13, Associate Director and Head of East China Section, Foreign-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

The *waidi ren* (outsiders 外地人) have higher chances of committing illegal activities, as it is easier for them to run away. The local people cannot escape easily as their homes are here. The outsiders may get a very bad reputation here, but they can leave and go back to work in their hometowns. Who knows what happened to him/her here? But if local people damage their own reputation, then *quan tianxia* (the whole world 全天下) gets to know this, unless they leave. … *Bendi ren* (locals 本地人) trust me more because I am *bendi ren* too. No matter how hard my *waidi ren* staff tried to persuade our clients to buy finance products, our clients do not truly trust them. But if I come and join the conversation, they trust me. This is especially true for our big clients. Even *waidi ren* clients trust our *bendi ren* staff more (Case CH2, Head of Regulatory Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangdong Province, China).

Place-based formation of trust and connections were formed through trust epitomised by prejudice displayed against people who are classed or viewed as *waidi ren, wailai ren* (外来人) and *waisheng ren* (外省人). Mainland China developed a household registration system (*huji zhidu* 户籍制度) as a national policy for population management, under which an individual's *hukou* (household register 户口) is attached to

his or her place of birth or origin. *Wailai ren* literally means 'people who come from other places' and *waisheng ren* means 'people who come from other provinces'. In contrast, *bendi ren* are local residents with local *hokou*. Hence, one of important considerations to be treated as a 'local' means a person must possess local registration status. The difference between locals and non-locals has further been reinforced by the social discourse characterising outsiders as a 'backward, narrow-minded, unsophisticated and unassimilable lot' (Zhou & Cai 2008, p. 240). Although the negative stereotype originally targeted the migrant workers from rural areas who moved to cities, many local residents have generalised this image to all people who had moved from less developed areas. Non-locals have difficulty in building close friendship networks with locals because they are stigmatised and excluded by local residents. They are 'marginalized into a disadvantaged "non-citizen outsider" group' (Zhou & Cai 2008, p. 240).

The social divide between non-locals and locals not only happens in blue-collar factories but also in professional, white-collar work places like banks. CH2 worked in a state-owned bank in Guangdong province as head of the Regulatory Department. Her stated concerns about *waidi ren* were not personal bias, but an indication of the bank's collective managerial culture. CH13, who worked in four foreign banks in Shanghai, confirmed the non-written regulation in each of them that local candidates are more trustworthy than others. When banks evaluate the integrity of an individual, they not only consider their character, but also their local-bounded interpersonal networks. Family members, schoolmates, local friends, former colleagues and other local network members all, to a certain degree, function like the previous system of '*danwei*'(单位) in

the state's national surveillance system, that is, a 'checking point' for an individual or a gauge of trustworthiness. It is believed that the social costs associated with committing a crime are much higher for local staff than others, and therefore, a local hire is held by banks to be a guarantee, especially for daily business involving a lot of cash.

Non-locals are stereotypically imagined as negative and at times stigmatised, as being of lower integrity and more at risk of committing illegal acts. Local people tend to question the motive of non-local people in applying for a 'local job', as the head of a regulatory department described:

> Non-local youth came here for university education. After they graduated, their dossier had to be relocated. Only those big companies or well-established corporates have the resources and power to help these newly graduated youths to keep their dossier here in this city. Therefore, the status and the size of a company are key concerns for these non-locals. They try hard to get a job in a big company, like a state-owned bank. Once they get such a job, they have a chance to plan for their future. Most of the staff who left the bank after two years were people with this kind of intention. In my bank, we have about 60 to 70 percent of staff who are non-local people. This group of people has a much higher turnover rate. … In the mind of our local people, they trust local people more. We recruited too many non-local staff. That's why we have a lower capability in market competition. It is difficult for my bank to compete with other banks (Case CH2, Head of Regulatory Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangdong Province, China).

Fresh university graduates from out of town are especially viewed with suspicion, as someone who views a position at a large bank as a short-term proposition and a stepping-stone to somewhere else. They and other *waidi ren* are also more likely to be the target of blame should a bank under-perform: as CH2 commented, having too many *waidi ren* has a negative impact on a bank's capability in a competitive market. More than race, religion, or nationality, a person's local origins have come to define their identity, level of trustworthiness, stability and integrity. The group distinction between *waidi* and *bendi* was originally discerned by geographical-related dialect, dress, and food preference, but now appear to be the distinction between trustworthy and untrustworthy. It might have been safe to consider finance and banking, among the most globalised industries, to be immune to attachment to geographical location, yet in spite of their great mobility, there are neglected considerations of inertia still at work – the invisible power of immobile or unchanged attitudes. Trust is still strongly attached to the place and this place attachment has, ironically, become for the banking industry in China an informal risk-control mechanism in contradiction to the tenets of globalisation.

Extended Ethnic Capital

My research has highlighted that the social construction of ethnicity in general, and in the banking industry in particular, is a hidden way to justify discrimination and prejudice against non-locals. In other words, it is an unspoken protection for local people in the labour market. The identification among local people results from a utilitarian need in life. The place-based identity of 'outsiders' or 'from outside the province' (*wailai ren* 外来人 or *waisheng ren* 外省人) stresses the 'difference'

between local and non-local. By creating a belief that non-local people have certain features in common which are always associated with negative and undesirable characteristics, local people set up an invisible barrier to competition from non-locals. However, while this negative identity attributed to 'outsiders' is a stumbling block on one hand, on the other it can also be turned into an opportunity, as one manager from a bank in Shenzhen noted:

> My clients are my business partners. Most of them are *waisheng ren* (from outside Guangdong province). It doesn't matter which province they come from, but they are from places outside Guangdong province. My hometown is Hubei. I am an outsider too. I have some similar experiences as those clients from other provinces and this helps me to find an entry point to build a relationship with them at the very beginning. Of course, after that, the long-term relationship is based on our mutual benefit. … I think the common identity as 'outsiders' among my non-local clients and me is very helpful for building up a closer relationship between us (Case CH4, Manager, Mortgage Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Shenzhen, China).

CH4 was working in Shenzhen, the first special economic zone under Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms that started in 1978. In China, Shenzhen is considered a migrant city. In 2003, only 30 percent of Shenzhen's 10.6 million residents held household *hukou* or *huji renkou* (户籍人口) (Nanfang Daily, 2 March 2015 南方日报). Ethnic differences throw up similar barriers as racial discrimination in day-to-day interactions in China, and while they are less obvious, there effects are substantial. Indeed, in large migrant

cities like Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Shanghai, the non-local population has become the majority. Also, although '*bendi ren*' and '*waidi ren*' in this study had a different point of origin, they were racially identical. Nevertheless, in a market-oriented city like Shenzhen, the competition over scarce economic resources (in this case, clients for banks) was severe, and so prejudice and even hostility became the norm. Prejudice against outsiders was similar to racial hostility where differences were 'magnified to the point where they became quasi-ethnic, and the focus of hostility' (Granovetter & Tilly 1986, p. 58). The territoriality, prejudice, and ethnic conflicts among local people and non-local people (in this case, people from places outside Guangdong province) contributed to network building which excluded or marginalised those who were perceived as outsiders from main society (Honig 1992). However, the external force of exclusion enhanced the ethnic bonds among non-locals. CH4 indicated that one non-local would help another. In fact, individuals may have come from many different provinces and know nothing about each other before meeting in Shenzhen, but they shared being an outsider. Pan-ethnic identity (here it refers to people outside Guangdong province) emphasised the connotation of similarity. 'Similarity' stressed the 'sameness' of people, in CH4's case being labelled as an 'outsider' for both her and her non-local clients. This 'sameness' is not built on the same place of origin but it is an extended ethnicity. At the end of the day, the stigma of '*waidi ren*' has transformed into an internal and inner force to nurture 'extended ethnic capital', which is reciprocal for women professionals and their clients.

Translocal Auditing: On-site Visiting

Although trust is still mainly attached to place, especially at the beginning of a relationship, once a woman professional working in a bank has been promoted to a managerial position or higher, her job requires a lot of travel, which in a way detaches her from a particular place. She is forced to be mobile and translocal. She is a multiple-located actor, shuttling between cities. The translocal working pattern, paradoxically, is a mechanism to deal with clients and distrust. The head of a marketing department said:

> Why do I have to travel around to meet my clients face-to-face? It's because I have to make an evidential investigation. I must talk to my clients in person. If my clients provide me some written documents, [they] can prepare them carefully before the information is to be submitted to me. But when you talk to someone, [their] immediate reaction provides some real information. For example, if you talk to a financial manager first, then you talk to the general manager, you will get to know how consistent the information is from different people working in the same company. Then you can compare written information to the real situation. … Travelling is very important to collect key evidence. If people lie to you, if they provide fake information to the bank, you will know it when you go to the site and talk to them directly. It is human nature, if you lie, when you repeat the thing, you will forget what you said before. But if you speak the truth, whenever you talk about it, the information is consistent. Therefore, if I talk to my clients three times, and all the information they give me is consistent, then I'll conclude that [they] did not lie. This is very important

to our bank as a way of risk control. … I must say, travelling to meet my clients
is extremely important to my job. I need to meet every one of my clients face to
face, no matter what kind of relationship we have. If the business transaction is
big, I even have to ask my boss to come with me, to fly over to meet my client
together (Case CH8, Vice-President, Marketing Department, Foreign-owned
bank in Guangzhou, China).

CH8 was Vice-President of a marketing department in a foreign bank in Guangzhou.
When I interviewed her at a coffee shop on the ground floor of the bank tower, she had
just returned from a domestic trip and had an overseas business trip the next day.
On-site visiting for her was, in fact, an evidential investigation, a cross-check or on-site
audit. In the context of China, when dealing with authorities or governmental units, it
has been said that 'those above have policies while those below have their own ways of
getting around them' (*shang you zhengce, xia you duice* 上有政策，下有对策). While
China has been opening up its domestic market to foreign banks, the social atmosphere,
especially the 'trust system', in general still follows traditional Chinese ways. Many
businesses in China are still affected by deep-rooted unspoken cultural rules (*qian guize*
潜规则), in contrast to societies based on capitalism and individualism. Each age has its
unique business strategies, and in this age of translocal life, it is not the choice of an
individual woman banker but rather a corporate business strategy to minimise risks
associated with an open capitalist market. The life of women bankers fully demonstrates
how women need to work through local practices within the globalising capitalist
system.

Cooperation and Competition between 'Brother Branches' (***Xiongdi Hang*** 兄弟行)

Besides external relationships with clients who may live in different cities, internal relationships in the firm with bosses and colleagues in different branches also play a role in an individual's career mobility. In this study, many respondents stressed that, in addition to visiting clients, they also needed to meet their colleagues in person by travelling to bank branches located in different cities and countries. One manager in Shanghai and another in Melbourne indicated the same concern:

> We, *xiongdi hang* (brother branches 兄弟行), know each other well as we quite often go and get together for meetings and to exchange experiences. We also want to hear observations from our brother branches to learn of new and better ways for business development (Case CH 11, Sales Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

> When we make our Asian trips, besides our clients, we also have to visit some of our colleagues. We want to know if there is any business that we can work on together. For example, some of our colleagues' clients in China want to invest in or migrate to Australia. If we have good communication with and truly understand our colleagues in China, they will refer their clients to us because they've already got to know us. … Face-to-face office visits and keeping in touch with my overseas colleagues can help me to get business done in a smooth way. At the end of the day, private banking is a global business. We have to line up Asia, Australia and New Zealand together. I found that you have no choice

but to work together (Case AU13, Senior Manager, Private Wealth, Australian bank in Melbourne, Australia).

In the globalised market, in order to survive fierce market competition, *xiongdi hang* (brother branches 兄弟行) need to work together as partners. Besides sharing market information and exchanging business ideas, cross-territorial client referral is the most common form of cooperation between bankers situated in different cities or nations. AU13 indicated that getting to know her colleagues in other countries helped gain future client referrals. The brother branch is a partner, and it is also a competitor. This is particularly evident in *guanxi* politics with headquarters – that is attempts to build relationships with influential managers situated in the head office of a bank. Two managers in Shanghai related the following situations:

> Our headquarters is in Shenzhen. It is certain that *jian mian san fen qing* [is important]. Many branch managers fly to Shenzhen to directly report to their bosses. If there is a way to meet, managerial colleagues will surely want to meet a big boss in person. We couldn't talk things over in much detail and in a profound way through the telephone line (sic.). People may talk about completely different things when they meet you face-to-face (Case CH11, Sales Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

> Compared to my colleagues close to the Head Office, we have less opportunity to demonstrate our potential. In fact, we still need to get final approval from Head Office for some of our business proposals. Colleagues in Shenzhen are so

close to Head Office. If there is anything that needs to be discussed, they'll go to Head Office and talk to the boss face-to-face. The outcome when talking on the phone and when meeting in person is always different (Case CH 17, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

Guanxi, as the existence of direct particularistic ties between two or more individuals (Farh & Tsui 1997), with Head Office and strong connections with other branches, are important elements contributing to an individual's career development. The belief in the importance of face-to-face meetings not only applies to relationship building with clients, but also to building and reinforcing internal relationships. The Chinese proverb: *jinshui loutai xian deyue* (those on the waterfront are the first to see the rising moon 近水楼台先得月) highlights the importance of being geographically close to Head Office. One Deputy Manager indicated this by stating:

> We can't get first hand information right after our Head Office releases a new policy or some new ideas. Market competition is so strong and new products emerge one after another. If we are one step behind, we'll miss an opportunity. That's why the colleagues in Shenzhen have such an advantage over us (Case CH17, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

CH17 clearly pointed out that her colleagues located in Shenzhen office access first-hand information faster than colleagues in Shanghai. She indicated that time is an opportunity – if you are one step behind, you will miss out on the opportunity. There is cooperation between branches, but there is also competition between them. Many

trans-territorial trips to meet bosses face to face, are motivated by an individual's desire to cultivate better *guanxi*, and to garner favourable attention from their bosses and become more visible than their colleagues. At end of the day, all relationships are social relationships. As well as approaching women bankers and their business strategies from the perspective of the macrocosmic social framework of their time, we also need to move inside their hearts, to the microcosmic world of their innermost feelings.

4.4 Conclusions

Local-global and local-to-local connectedness produced both opportunities for and constraints upon women bankers in their life trajectory and career mobility. Their work was interlocked with many cross-border business trips, and visible and invisible, or real and virtual, interactions. They shuttled across fluid social spaces, knitting dynamic and complex social geographies. Translocality emerged as a dominant feature among the women bankers in my research, no matter their location, in Sydney, Hong Kong, Shanghai or other cities in Australia or China. Pursuing economic interests required the presence of women bankers in many different sites in order to nurture multi-stranded social relations. The 'Portrait of one day in the life of a woman banker in Hong Kong' revealed the importance of women in forging nodes of connectedness among cities. Building and maintaining cross-boundary, circular relationships with diverse clients over many countries or cities demanded enormous amounts of time and energy. The women's daily lives were shaped by global and local connectedness. Although the forms and scales of translocal practice among them varied, the intensity of business travel for all the women was similar. To survive in the fast-changing finance and banking industry, women, like other professionals, had to adapt their internal, private

life to work with their external, public life. This mobile life had its costs, but those associated with high-frequency travel were atomised by the glamorisation of their managerial positions.

This research confirms the variation in transnational patterns and how they closely relate to individual and an institutional business strategies. Women professionals in this study have demonstrated their cross-cultural competence and willingness to practice transnationalism in their daily lives. But more importantly, the analysis in this chapter highlights an emerging trend of complementary, intertwined hyper-mobility and solid attachment to a particular place. Relational experiences and   politics of local, non-local and translocal requirements mean we need to pay more attention to the paradoxical resistant encounters between mobility, grounded ties and translocality.

At the intersection of global capitalism and the foundations of trust in Chinese society, the service economy invoked a strategy of 'walking on two legs': to be spatially detached and to be spatially connected. Local, non-local and translocal politics were embedded into an individual's everyday tactics. The articulation of place-based identity and extended ethnicity was very much a performance used by professionals in the urban service industries as a tactic to cope with the stigma attached to being a non-local. They cultivated a trait of 'one face, many masks' (Chan & Tong 1999). This mask-shifting was the result of a person's reading and judgement of, and interactions with, the environment she was in and the people with whom she came into contact with. Human beings are meaning-making, collectively attaching meaning to their interactions, thus meanings are not inherent but engendered by human interactions with one another.

Chapter 5

Workplace, Culture and Career Mobility: Gender Dynamics in Banks

We, women in middle managerial positions, are '*nü hanzi*' (tough ladies 女汉子). Those women at top management are '*nü qiangren*' (superwomen 女强人). Why *nü hanzi*? In the eyes of our bosses, there is no difference between men and women during business entertainment. In the banking industry in China, if you want to make a deal successful, you have to drink a lot of strong wine to make your clients happy, no matter if you're a man or a woman!

— Anne, Vice-president, Marketing Department, Foreign bank in China

Traditionally women have been considered inferior in a bank workplace dominated by men, which until the 20th century has been an environment exclusive to men (Prather 1971). 'For jobs were not just jobs, it seemed: they were gendered' (Massey 1994, p. 187). But the role of women in the banking industry has changed significantly in the past three decades. 'Who does a job depends on how it is socially constructed, valued and concomitantly rewarded' (McDowell 1999, p. 127). The cultural values of work 'are shaped, contested, and defended in different domains of power relations' (Ong 1991, p. 281). Gender at work is a complicated, dynamic process in which power hierarchy, social norms and business culture have entwined to create a complex structure of gender interaction for women to negotiate.

Anne, the Vice-President of the Marketing Department at a foreign bank in China, described herself, and many women like her, as *nü hanzi* (tough ladies 女汉子). In Chinese, '*nü*' (女) means 'female', '*hanzi*' (汉子) refers not only to a male, but a 'brave,

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tough man', thus the expression *nü hanzi* reflects a new perception toward professional women in urban service economics. This perception is intertwined with emerging gender desire for hybrid characteristics of both femininity and masculinity, functions of in-betweenness and ambitiousness. This is especially obvious in the business culture of 'no wine, no business', which is an unwritten but real rule for doing business in China.

'Business entertainment', the informal socialising in out-of-office settings, is crucial to the success of any sales representative. It is one of the key ways of cultivating relationships with clients and is 'goal-oriented and instrumental for the sales representatives and the companies for which they work' (Morgan & Martin 2006, p. 113). In the Chinese business world, alcohol is central to entertainment, it is particularly consumed by men to maintain good relations between supervisors and employees and to promote camaraderie among colleagues (Hao & Young 2000; Hao, Young & He 1995); and to reduce tension and facilitate social exchange during business meetings (Hao, Chen & Su 2005). When it comes to business entertainment, without exception, women – like tough men – are also expected to drink with clients. This new requirement for women professionals in the service industry stands in opposition to traditional Chinese culture where women are not expected to drink alcohol. Nevertheless, although it creates inner conflicts for many women professionals, an ability to be flexible and even changeable plays an important role in their career mobility.

This chapter examines gender dynamics at work and discusses how gendered performance plays a significant role in gaining success in feminised urban service industries. I argue that in banks gender attributions are embedded in a patriarchy – a

division of labour favouring men. The commercialisation of femininity has been utilised for personalised business relationships. Gender inequality in the workplace is reinforced by gendered discourse as part of the workplace culture. It has also been reproduced through gendered practises by women professionals themselves.

5.1 Gender Identity and Gender Politics

'Gender is a way in which social practice is ordered' (McDowell & P.Sharp 1997, p. 44) while 'we cannot understand class, race or global inequality without constantly moving towards gender' (McDowell & P.Sharp 1997, p. 48). Gender identities are fractured and shifting as multiple discourses intersect in any individual's life (Hollway 1984). As an identity, gender is tenuously constituted in time and instituted in exterior space through a stylised repetition of acts (Butler 1990). 'There is no abstract total woman' as 'women must think of themselves and they must act in reference to identities fractured not only by gender but race, class, and world positions as well' (Lemert 1994, p. 273). To examine the interconnections between work and gender, we should also take space, place and local gender cultures into account. Spaces and places are 'gendered in myriad different ways, which vary between cultures and over time. And this gendering of space and place reflects on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live' (Noon & Blyton 1997, p. 186).

In the past, merchant banks were significant sites for the social construction of feminine and masculine identities (McDowell & Court 2008). The banking culture indeed focused on entrenched practises of bankers. 'In merchant banking, as in other interactive service occupations, corporeality – in the threefold sense of anatomical sex, gender

identity, and gender performance – is a crucial part of selling a service, in this case monetary advice' (McDowell & Court 2008, p. 465). Body image as a disguise for the brain is a palpable tactic used in business. The skill of manipulation of body image and emotions is an integral part of selling a product (Hochschild 1983). In merchant banks, success in dealing, trading, and selling are conventionally associated with masculinity, aggression, tough behaviour and ruthlessness (McDowell & Court 2008). Appropriate gender performance, or ways of 'doing gender', plays a key role for entering powerful positions in the workplace. The 'feminine masquerade' is a common phenomenon in merchant banks (McDowell & Court 2008, p. 462). In interactive service work, the ability to adopt different stereotypical images of femininity deliberately to suit certain circumstances and specific locations is a key strategy for building business relationships (McDowell 1997).

Merchant banking is largely male-dominated, especially in the top level of managerial teams, and advancement in this field is closely related to age and gender (Zulauf 2001). Although banking has fairly structured career routes, at the managerial level, promotions occur more informally and selections tend to be based on the discretion of senior management. Career progression in banking is clearly differentiated by gender. 'Male-dominated norms, behaviour and work practices are particularly strong mechanisms in slowing down women's career progression' (Zulauf 2001, p. 177). Women's 'structural power' is much lower than men as the vertical sex segregation is legitimised by masculine organisational culture (Nemoto 2013).

5.2 Gendered Attributes for Urban Service Economics

The role of women professionals in the business world is closely linked to the development of market economies and the growth of consumer societies. For the finance industry, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data[3], in 2013, 56.2 percent of finance industry employees were women, compared with 'other services' where 44.4 percent were women and the total workforce where 45.9 percent were female (Table 11). The curve of gender composition in the finance industry from 2000 to 2013 clearly indicates that there were more women than men working in finance in Australia (Figure 6). However, the majority of female employees in the banking industry are in support positions like clerical or administrative roles (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013).

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[3] The report is based on the website of the Australian Bankers' Association, http://www.bankers.asn.au/Banks-in-Australia/Facts-and-Figures; data provided below are from the same source unless otherwise stated.

Table 11: Finance and Insurance Industry Employment by Gender

Aug-13	Males	Females	Total
Health Care and Social Assistance	20.8%	79.2%	100.0%
Education and Training	29.2%	70.9%	100.1%
Retail Trade	42.7%	57.3%	100.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	43.8%	56.2%	100.0%
Financial and Insurance Services	**49.5%**	**50.5%**	**100.0%**
. Finance	**43.8%**	**56.2%**	**100.0%**
Administrative and Support Services	49.7%	50.3%	100.0%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	50.8%	49.2%	100.0%
Public Administration and Safety	52.6%	47.4%	100.0%
Arts and Recreation Services	53.8%	46.2%	100.0%
Other Services	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%
Information Media and Telecommunications	57.6%	42.9%	100.5%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	58.0%	42.0%	100.0%
Wholesale Trade	66.3%	33.7%	100.0%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	73.1%	26.9%	100.0%
Manufacturing	73.8%	26.3%	100.1%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	78.7%	21.5%	100.2%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	78.9%	20.4%	99.3%
Mining	84.4%	15.6%	100.0%
Construction	88.6%	11.4%	100.0%
Total	54.1%	45.9%	100.0%

Figure 6: Finance Industry – Gender Composition
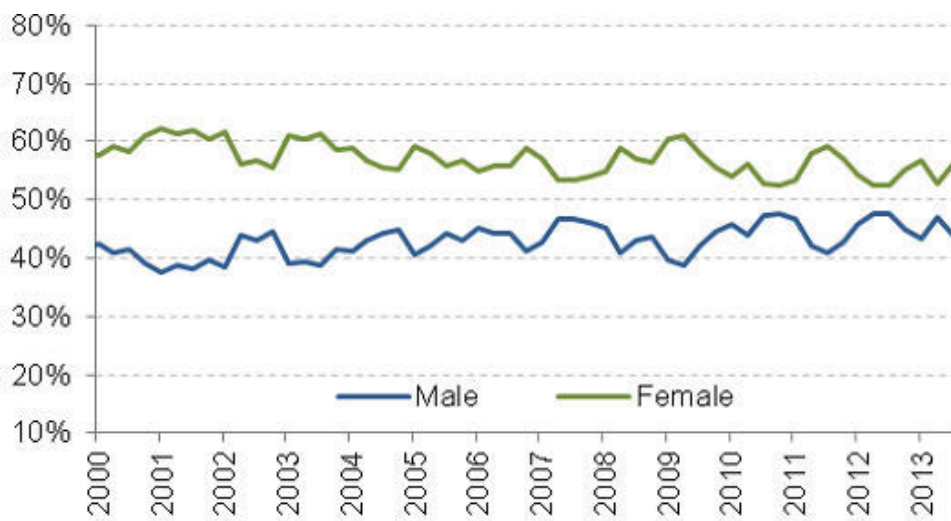
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013

In China, the proportion of female employment in the financial sector in urban work units was 50.9 percent at the end of 2012 (Department of Population and Employment Statistics & Department of Planning and Finance of China 2014). In terms of the total number of employees, the official statistical report indicates that men and women share similar ratios of employment in the finance industry. There are no official data on the number distribution of female employees in different levels of positions. Nevertheless, my respondents highlighted a dominant trend. For example:

In general, there are fewer males than females working in bank branches. I am in charge of the retail department. The gender ratio here is seven-to-three, seven female, three male. The gender ratio in front-line service is even higher. It can be eight-to-two (Case CH11, Manager, Sales Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China.)

We hire more women than men, especially for those front office positions (*qianxian yuangong* 前线员工). The gender ratio for teller positions is about seven-to-three, seven female, three male. Considering the gender characteristics, we are willing to assign more girls to work on the front counter. But the ratio is much lower in the higher positions (Case CH7, General Manager, Human Resources, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

In my branch, the gender ratio is nine-to-one, nine female, one male! Almost the whole branch is run by women. I know one sub-branch in my area, they don't even have one single male on their staff. All are female! This female preference is

common for grassroots-level sub-branches like us, as we serve as the *jiceng qianxian danwei* (base, front-line unit 最基层的, 最前线的单位) where the local people (本地人) can easily approach the bank (Case CH18, Supervisor, Sales Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Zhongshan, Guangdong province, China).

The total number of subordinates my respondents were in charge of varied – from fewer than 10 people to more than 500 people. CH11 worked in Shanghai, CH7 worked in Guangzhou and CH18 in Zhongshan city in Guangdong province. Although their banks were in different cities with varying economic situations, they pointed out one thing in common – the majority of their front-line staff were women. Many women bankers in this study explained that the general division of labour in the banking industry in mainland China could be categorised as *duisi yewu* (retail business 对私业务) and *duigong yewu* (corporate business 对公业务). Those working in the *duisi yewu* category were mainly associated with counter services in bank branches, which involved a high frequency of daily face-to-face interaction with individual clients. Concerning *duigong yewu,* the Chinese word 'gong' (公) can refer to 'gong si' (公司) meaning company, including commercial and corporate companies; or to 'gong jia' (公家) meaning 'public owned' – like state or governmental institutions and state-owned enterprises (SOE). Almost all of my respondents in China pointed out that the *duigong yewu* (corporate business) category is more important in the eyes of their bosses; and that high profit SOEs are especially important for a bank's development in China.

Women's domination in banks' *duisi yewu* reflects a parallel development within China's service economy. In the past 20 years, there has been a significant shift from employment in traditional industries such as manufacturing towards the service sector. For example, the percentage of employed persons in tertiary industries was 18.5 percent in 1990, 27.5 percent in 2000, and 38.5 percent in 2013 (Department of Population and Employment Statistics & Department of Planning and Finance of China 2014). If we look specifically at the financial sector, in 2003 there were about 3.53 million employed persons in urban work units, but 5.38 million in 2013 (Department of Population and Employment Statistics & Department of Planning and Finance of China 2014). The service industry traditionally employs more women, and the growth in their number engaged in interactive service work, such as in banking, is an indication of restructuring, with jobs moving from manufacturing industries to urban services.

When asked why their banks preferred to assign women to front-line positions which have much more direct interaction with clients, the key reason given was that women have more client-friendly personalities. Table 12 lists the top 10 gender characteristics mentioned by my respondents.

Table 12: Top 10 Female Qualities Best Suited for Front-office Positions

1. Careful
2. Patient
3. Tender
4. Empathetic (or strong affinity, *qinhe li* 亲和力)
5. Cooperative
6. Stable

7. Earnest
8. Law-abiding
9. Good at paying attention to detail
10. A good communicator

In service work, employees sell themselves as part of the transaction (Hochschild 1983). In the relationship between workers and clients, personal service plays an important role in cultivating a feeling of trust and ease between bankers and their clients. Female characteristics have been packaged as part of many commercial products. During the interviews, many female bankers – whether from mainland China, Hong Kong or Australia – pointed out that their bosses believe that women are by nature soft, patient, tender, careful and pay attention to detail, which contributes to better personalised service. It also reveals the hidden intention of selling femininity as a business tactic. One banker explained:

> In our counter service, 70 percent of staff are female. Why? It's because females are more stable. They are more patient, careful and have a higher affinity [empathy] for serving our clients. They have this kind of gender characteristic. When clients come to our counter, they feel much more comfortable if they meet our female staff with their big smiles. This is a kind of service. Service is the hallmark of our bank. We have a higher standard of service. We are not saying the male staff have failed in providing this kind of service, but they are not patient enough. Maybe male staff prefer to develop their business outside the bank. Therefore, with careful consideration of gender characteristics, we assign more female staff for front-line

work (Case CH7, General Manager, Human Resources, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

Chinese believe that success depends on 'right timing, right places, and right people' (*tianshi, dili, renhe* 天时, 地利, 人和). In banking, the 'right people' can be worked out by the administration. Female staff in service industries have been recruited for positions that require them to learn how to 'do their gender' to meet their boss's and client's expectations. Doing gender is 'a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures' (West & Zimmerman 1987, p. 125). This learned gender performance is an interactional achievement as 'gender does not exit a priori but is created through interaction' (Kelan 2010, p. 179).

Women bankers I interviewed in mainland China felt that their managerial team think of female staff as more earnest, cooperative, stable and law-abiding and so they are more 'controllable' in the eyes of administrative personnel. The Head of Regulatory Department in a state-owned bank in China said:

Working in a bank, you handle a large amount of money every day. Our leaders believe that compared to men, women are less likely to commit a crime. Women are not bold enough to illegally take our clients' money … our clients also trust our female colleagues more. They think that women staff won't cheat them (Case CH2, Head of Regulatory Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Zhongshan city, Guangdong province, China).

This perception of female nature is partly based on cultural discourse about Chinese women, and it also reflects the social situation in mainland China. Compared to Hong Kong and Australia, the legal system and banking regulatory regimes in mainland China are inadequate. To a certain degree, the social atmosphere in Chinese societies still emphasise relationships and *guanxi*. The gender stereotype of women being 'less likely to commit a crime' as indicated by CH2 who is Head of Regulatory Department in one of China's 'big four' state-owned banks, indeed reflects managerial teams' deep concern for security. The role expectation toward female staff has been institutionalised and this in turn reinforces the social gender discourse. What is more, women themselves internalise this perception and this social construction of women's 'nature' ultimately legitimises the gender-based division of labour in the banking industry.

5.3 The Feminising Middle-Managerial Layer

There is a prominent trend of women entering the formerly male-dominated field of management in banking. In China, although there is no official statistical report about the proportion of female managers in the banking industry, all respondents indicated there were increasingly more women managers at their banks. The following comments from women in two cities provide some insights:

> In 2004, we only had one female manager among our seven branches in this region. But the situation has changed. Now, things are the other way round; we have more female managers than male managers. We now have six female managers and only one male manager among our seven branches. This is very different compared to

some years ago (Case HK2, Customer Service Manager, Chinese state-owned bank, Hong Kong).

In the past, the male proportion in management teams was much higher. But I've observed changes in the past 10 years. Now, we have more and more females moving into managerial positions. In the past, the male and female ratio in the middle management level was eight-to-two. Now it is six-to-four, or even five-to-five (Case HK3, Customer Service Manager, Taiwanese-owned bank, Hong Kong).

In our Shanghai branch, we have a total of six people in our president and vice-president positions. The male and female ratio is half and half now (Case CH10, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

With full responsibility, I can tell you that there are more and more females moving into the managerial positions in the banking industry. To some extent, I must say, we have too many female staff in banks. The female ratio in top management teams has already increased. In my bank, three out of six leaders are women (Case CH17, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

In the mid-level managerial positions, many respondents indicated that the gender ratio now is close to 1:1 or even higher, and the trend towards more women is continuing. The significant rise of women into management teams has its roots in several

developments. An important one is the radical improvement of education among women over the past three decades, especially notable after the government implemented its one-child policy on urban couples in 1979. Under this strict population control policy, there were almost as many girls as boys in one-child families in cities. In line with the traditional perception of familial honour, Chinese parents typically 'Expect one's son will turn out as a dragon' (*wangzi chenglong* 望子成龙) and 'Hope one's daughter will grow up into a phoenix' (*wangnü chengfeng* 望女成凤), and provide the best educational opportunity for sons or daughters. Hence educational levels for both males and females in China have gained parity. According to the *China Statistical Yearbook 2014*, for the finance industry in mainland China, attainment of tertiary and post-graduate education reached 57.1 percent, with men at 57.7 percent. For bank staff who have postgraduate degrees, the female employees have a higher percentage (2.7%) than the men (2.5%) (Department of Population and Employment Statistics & Department of Planning and Finance of China 2015, p. 59). In general, a good educational background is a basic requirement for people with managerial ambitions, and all the respondents in mainland China held at least a bachelor's degree, while almost half had a master's (see Table 8 in chapter 2). This contributed to their confidence in taking up a managerial position. Being 'well-educated' provided for one branch president of a state-owned bank in Guangzhou the 'strong background' (*guoying beijin* 过硬背景) that made her impeccable in the eyes of both her superiors and subordinates.

Over several centuries (about 1,300 years), China's imperial examination system (*keju zhidu* 科举制度) was the primary way of selecting government officials while also

providing ordinary people with an opportunity for social mobility. The dream of rising from rags to riches by education and passing examinations was shared by the whole population. Although *keju zhidu* was abolished in 1905, Chinese society still holds higher education in high regard. The idea that: 'To be a scholar is to be at the top of society' (*wanban jie xiapin, weiyou dushu gao* 万般皆下品, 唯有读书高) still plays a key role in shaping Chinese families' expectations for their children. Such attitudes hold out hope for millions of young people that education can change their fate and help them in China's highly competitive market. All the Chinese women bankers I interviewed believed that a university degree served as evidence of their competence, provided a non-biased testimony contributing to opportunities for career mobility, and reinforced their confidence to cope with any challenge in their professional lives.

5.4 Desirable Womanhood in Middle Management

Instrumental and Expressive Functions

Having more women in middle management is a result of the significant development and the rapid expansion of the worldwide service economy. In the business world, the terms 'instrumental leaders' and 'expressive leaders' are used to distinguish different leadership styles. Instrumental leaders are more task-oriented in leading workers towards their goals, while expressive leaders pay more attention to group harmony and emotional stability. Male leaders are usually identified as instrumental leaders while female leaders as expressive leaders (Bass & Stogdill 1990; Etzioni 1965; Rees 1984). When I asked my respondents to describe the characteristics of Chinese women bankers, the answers varied from location and country as shown in the following three tables (Tables13–15). Also, some respondents simply described characteristics or qualities, whilst others compared male and female characteristics, qualifying their statements with words like 'more' or 'better'.

**Table 13: Positive Characteristics of Chinese Female Managers in Banks –
              Provided by Respondents in Australia**

1. Hardworking
2. Willing to do extra work
3. Willing to study hard for ongoing education
4. Easy to get along with
5. Good at accommodating others
6. Better at paying attention to human nature
7. Friendly and warm
8. More careful

9. More reliable
10. Strong and tough
11. Good at multi-tasking
12. Sensitive
13. Delicate
14. Better at showing personal concern
15. More sincere
16. Better at chatting casually
17. More moderate
18. Creative
19. Confident
20. Assertive
21. Efficient

Table 14: Positive Characteristics of Chinese Female Managers in Banks –
Provided by Respondents in Hong Kong

1. Knowledgeable
2. Totally devoted
3. More careful
4. Less threatening to male bosses
5. Good at demonstrating strong determination and perseverance
6. Very precise
7. Good at seeing things with a unique perspective
8. Good at using verbal communication skills
9. More confident
10. Better at strategic thinking
11. Hardworking
12. Observant and good at detailed observations
11. Empathetic (strong affinity, *qinhe li* 亲和力) and more approachable
13. Responsible
14. Good at maintaining flawless integrity
15. Better at demonstrating impeccable market-awareness
16. Less concerned with 'face' issues
17. Eager to make progress

18. Enterprising and more positive

19. Good at showing initiative

20. Multi-lingual with good overall communication skills

21. Good at exhibiting high levels of concentration and productivity

22. Tender and soft

23. Stable and less likely to job-hop

24. More tolerant and likely to accept criticism well

25. Law-abiding and well behaved

26. Of good moral character

27. More patient and calm

28. Better at showing personal concern and care for colleagues

29. Decisive

30. Good at understanding and expressing emotions (high emotional intelligence quotient, EQ)

31. Resilient

Table 15: Positive Characteristics of Chinese Female Managers in Banks – Provided by Respondents in Mainland China

1. Very trustworthy, in the opinion of bosses and clients

2. Skilful in policy implementation

3. Wholly devoted

4. Consistently of good moral character

5. Better at maintaining good interpersonal relationships with clients

6. Empathetic (strong affinity, *qinhe li* 亲和力)

7. More cooperative

8. More thoughtful

9. Hardworking

10. Responsible

11. Good at leading by example

12. More concerned about colleagues

13. Better communicators

14. More able to make use of front-line experience and a solid foundation in many aspects of the banking industry

15. Good at detailed observation
16. More practical
17. More stable
18. Better at maintaining a peaceful disposition
19. Better at entertaining and displaying positive social skills
20. More careful and cautious
21. Determined
22. Good at paying attention to detail
23. More enthusiastic and warm
24. Tenacious (*renjin* 韧劲)

The narrative explanations from Chinese women bankers have many things in common no matter whether they were working in Australia, Hong Kong or mainland China. The feminising of middle managerial teams in this study was expected to fulfil both instrumental and expressive functions in their banks. The expressive function was mainly related to positive female characteristics, for example, tenderness and softness, being more careful and thoughtful, cooperative, more observant and paying attention to detail, having more personal concern and warmth, and so forth. The instrumental function was attributed to a successful and competent person, such as better communication skills, efficient policy execution, resilient, responsible, of flawless integrity, and so forth. One notable description of ability referred to applying charismatic womanhood—the classic 'feminine' attributes—to contribute to success in the service economy. In attempts to explain, make sense of, and rationalise the feminising trend in mid-level managerial positions, these two functions are intertwined and mutually reinforce each other. They also help to define the merits and demerits of women and men.

But what is believed to be a good female manager is in itself socially constructed. 'Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculinity and femininity are produced and naturalized' (Butler 2004, p. 42). The respondents' descriptions about characteristics of successful female managers is a kind of self-reflection of gender perception in banks. Most women in this study were unconsciously reinforcing the gender stereotype. By internalising gender perception, women professionals in the finance industry themselves participate in the process of repeating gendered ways of doing work. The commercial influences casting women as objects of desire and sexuality (Hooper 1998) and the global service industry in general increasingly demand a strong emotional connection between service providers and their clients (McDowell 2009). Female bankers' appearance, facial expressions and social skills have been evaluated as essential attributes to good work performance. Their performance of womanhood plays an important role in nurturing an emotional connection with clients. As 'gender is continually performed through a process of identification' (Kelan 2010, p. 181) the womanhood that a female banker projects in her work is not the result of nature, but a learned behaviour absorbed during her long socialisation journey at home, in school and reinforced in the work place.

Business Tactic: Heterosexual Attraction and Heterosexual Sedative

Competition in the globalised finance market is severe and requires 'personalised service' to gain clients' loyalty. A good bank product offers a marketable instrumental value. But in the long run, the product itself has to assume a certain relation to feelings. Other banks can easily copy the product but the feeling and relationship between clients and bankers cannot be cloned. Selling 'heterosexual attraction', for many banks, is an

intentional business strategy to cultivate an expressive value with intention to gain the customer market. This is well explained by the following two quotes:

When planning our marketing strategies, we intentionally set a gender-based division of labour: let female serve male and male serve female. This is normal practise. I think my appearance is not bad. When I encounter my male clients, they have less resistance to me. When you talk to them, they are more passionate. This is very important for account management. Male clients are less hypercritical of female managers. But when we deal with female clients, we will definitely pick a handsome male colleague to serve her (Case CH14, Senior Manager, Marketing Department, China-Hong Kong joint bank in Shanghai, China).

In banking, we usually apply a strategy of heterosexual service. We will ask our female colleagues to serve male clients. This is because women work more carefully, more patiently, and more enthusiastically. The first image they present to our clients is better than that of male colleagues. Their temperament makes clients feel more comfortable (Case CH10, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

'Heterosexual attraction' is no longer solely for personal relationships, it has been adopted for commercial purposes (Hochschild 2003). Clients are less likely to be hypercritical but more passionate towards managers of the opposite sex. 'Doing gender' or 'performing femininity' has been requested as part of the 'sale of emotional labour'. Now, the developed warmth becomes an instrument of service work. By smiling more,

giving clients assiduous and thoughtful attention, lingering on ambiguous feelings between 'professional service' and 'personal intimacy', women bankers work skilfully with their 'managed heart' (Hochschild 1983).

The heterosexual attraction is not only a common tactic to gain more clients, it can also soothe internal conflict and tension, especially amongst men. Female managers in this study indicate that most of the women in managerial positions are more willing to use femininity as a tool to deal with office politics. Three Chinese women bankers in China and Australia stated:

> The presence of a woman can reduce the tension between one man and another man. It is a kind of balance. Yes, it does work. When [men] work together, the atmosphere is so serious [that] conflict occurs easily. But once there is a woman on site, somehow the tension is dispersed. Women's softness is a helpful tool to reduce the tension (Case CH2, Head, Regulatory Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province, China).

> When you ask a woman manager to communicate with the top male boss, the situation can be transformed from a hard to a soft one. The male heart is softer when [it] encounters the tender personality of a woman (Case CH14, Senior Manager, Marketing Department, China-Hong Kong joint bank in Shanghai, China).

Females use their femininity. At the top, usually there are men. They usually challenge one another. If there is a female there, they are a bit more polite, a bit gentler. Sometimes, they also like such a change if there are one or two females: the younger, sexy, dressed-up, more beautiful females. And also, for a Chinese girl, she is a bit fresher for them. Chinese women are especially soft for them. Yes, men always argue and argue with one another. But obviously, if there is a woman with them, they argue much less. Women also provide different views and so it balances men's thinking (Case AU2, Manager, Treasury Department, Australian-owned bank in Melbourne, Australia).

CH2 and AU2 point out that the presence of female colleagues can reduce tension between male colleagues. The tension between male peers at similar levels of position is a kind of horizontal tension compared to vertical tension between male bosses and male subordinates, as CH14 explained in her interview. The majority of female professionals in this study indicated that they believe women's 'softness' and their 'tender personalities' is a managerial tool used to 'soften' their male colleagues' 'heart'. The practise of this type of heterosexual sedative in the work place is associated with the individual's intention of 'presentation of self', or 'impression management' (Goffman 1959). People live their lives like actors performing on a stage according to their statuses and roles. Work provides people with a social identity, thus it can be a domain for the expression of gender (Noon & Blyton 1997, 2007). The presence of female workmates at executive board meetings and middle or upper managerial team discussions, which were traditionally male dominated settings, have unintentionally caused male colleagues' to create specific impressions, like being a gentleman, being

more professional, calm or rational, in front of female colleagues. The perception of excellent managerial skills was traditionally associated with masculinity. The notion of a skill being attached to a particular level of position is socially constructed for its own interest. So, men act as a social group, 'they have constructed the skill in such a way as to benefit their own gender and to disadvantage women' (Noon & Blyton 1997, p. 91). Many women bankers in their interviews simply attributed the reduction of tension to women's gender characteristics, like 'softness' and being 'tender', whereas it was men's intention to act according to the social construction of skills for justifying men's power at the top. Interactions in the workplace consist of hidden politics in which 'a form of social closure exists which centres not on occupational group, but on gender' (Noon & Blyton 1997, p. 91).

Efficient Policy Execution

Many respondents in mainland China and Hong Kong shared a common observation about female colleagues in middle managerial positions in banks: they execute policy efficiently, making them desirable employees. Women are more determined than men to achieve goals set by their senior managers. Some explained:

> When women reach middle-managerial positions, they are better at implementation. In other words, frankly speaking, they are more *tinghua* (obedient 听话). When a branch gives them a quota, they do not think too much but try their best to meet the quota. In contrast, men think more and look farther away. When I talk to those colleagues in branch manager positions, I realise that female branch managers are more practical. They are willing to share more detailed information with you. They

work very hard and fast to complete the task, they will carry out the task fully. But male managers often talk about something more abstract (Case CH7, General Manager, Human Resources, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

In Chinese banks in China, when your leader gives you a task, we have to try all [sorts of] ways to get the task done. Women are better in achieving the boss's tasks. Their ability in implementation is stronger, their dedication to work is deeper, their responsibility toward the job is better. … The bank sets many different tasks for us. There are too many small things that need to be managed. I think male presidents cannot handle so many small things and they may feel overwhelmed. But women vice-presidents are good at implementation and they are much more patient in following up those small things and achieving the goals one by one (Case CH10, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China.)

Women are good at implementation. They may not be good at creativity, but they definitely are good at carrying out the bank's policy. My boss is this kind of woman. She will get almost all of her tasks done. She will follow them all the way from the beginning to the end. She will strive to get results. She will try many different ways. She never fails to carry things through (Case CH6, Vice-President, Corporate Section, foreign-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

The workplace is a crucial milieu in which gendered subjectivities are constructed (Connell 1987). The expressions used to describe female colleagues in managerial positions, like 'better at implementation', 'more obedient', 'better in achieving the

boss's tasks', and 'she never fails to carry things through', reflect gendered social practises in the workplace in which women are supportive of their male bosses. When the mentality of 'those above have policies while those below have their own ways of getting around them' (*shangyou zhengce, xiayou duice* 上有政策, 下有对策) is prevalent in society, having women managers who are serious about carrying out policy is a kind of guarantee for policy implementation. Another popular Chinese saying is, 'If the upper beam is not straight, the lower ones will go aslant' (*shangliang buzheng, xialiang wai* 上樑不正, 下樑歪); in this way, women managers who closely execute company policy set a good role model for junior staff, and this helps the bank to better manage the large number of junior staff members that contribute to a smoother operation of the bank. All of this contributes to the success of the top leader – the man.

5.5 'Nü Hanzi' (Tough Lady 女汉子) and 'Business after Wine' Culture

'When you enter a village, follow the local customs' (*ruxiang suisu* 入乡随俗). This is a popular and practical way of doing business in China where interpersonal relationships have a crucial role to play to get a deal done. Although the 'rules of the game' may vary in different trades and places, 'business after wine' (*jiuhou shengyi* 酒后生意) or 'no wine no talk' seems to be a general rule across different business areas in Chinese societies. To be successful despite fierce competition, banks cannot rely on quality and service alone, they must resort to *guanxi*, especially to good *guanxi* with government officials and top managerial people in important companies and corporations. For many banks, state-owned enterprises in China are high-value clients and the majority of their top managerial teams are still males. In China, good *guanxi* or business networks 'are composed and forged and maintained through ritualized leisure—experiences of shared

pleasure in venues catering to the desires and enjoyments of elite men' (Osburg 2003, p. 38). Socialising and drinking profuse amounts of liquor is a must. This is exemplified by the following comments from women bankers in both the public and private sectors:

> Nowadays, many banks, no matter whether they are Chinese state-owned banks or foreign banks, they all view those big *guoqi* (state-owned enterprises 国企) as their main target clients. The *guoqi* has its own culture. They are very forthright and ebullient, especially those leaders from the North or from Shandong province. This also happens to *guoqi* in the South as their management may not come from the South but may have been shifted from the North. They like to drink liquor with you. They think this is a way to show their warmth and hospitality. If you don't take the liquor, they'll take your rejection of their wine as your rejection of themselves. They'll think you aren't treating them as friends; [that] you're not one of their close group; you don't save their face at all. … If you want to develop business relationships with *guoqi*, you must have good *guanxi* with them. If you don't have the stiff drink with them, they'll close the door to any business (Case CH8, Vice-President, Marketing Department, foreign-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

> In our China, the business culture is a kind of wine culture. You have to attend a lot of strong wine business entertainment sessions with your clients. This won't change as this has been deeply rooted in the culture of Chinese society and we have such a large number of Chinese who are doing things like this. It has always been like this. Those marketing people are pragmatists. They say, 'How much cash

I put into your bank is determined by how many glasses of liquor you drank tonight!' They did actually say this directly and frankly. In order to achieve those targets set by the bank, those sub-branch managers or business relationship managers have no other way other than drinking up the wine. The clients in China believe that if you have good ability in drinking strong wine (*jiupin hao* 酒品好), it means you are a straightforward and efficient person, and this quality is very important in getting business done (Case CH12, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

Heavy drinking is part of doing a business deal and is considered being motivated and purposeful, and is part of other business arenas in China as well as banking, fuelling the engine of business. As the saying goes, 'Wine in, truth out' (*jiuhou tu zhenyan* 酒后吐真言). Winning trust is one of the key factors in building *guanxi* networks and for business co-operation. Drinking alcohol stirs people's emotions and helps them to be more open-hearted and honest with each other, and consequently strengthens feelings of trust towards each other. Case CH13 said:

There are many ways to enhance trust between people. But it gets faster at night time, after wine. You can have business meals in the daytime, but the feeling is different. People talk so differently when having meals outside the office compared to conversations inside the office. In casual talk, we touch more on personal issues. Indeed, we need a kind of emotional resonance for human communication and face-to-face interaction. We not only exchange work information, we also need to exchange something valuable, like your life goals. The relationship will be much

closer if we have some kind of sentimental resonance. Drinking wine together helps people to be more open-hearted, they talk much more and feel much closer to each other (Case CH13, Associate Director and Head of East China Business, foreign-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

This emotional resonance nurtures a sense of trust. Drinking alcohol in a place with nice music after office hours creates a relaxed atmosphere for people to talk more about personal stories and share much deeper expressions about their inner feelings. Trust grows as the feeling of intimacy increases, strengthening the business relationship. Then the business of entertaining can 'transform relationships of cold calculation into particularistic relationships embedded in moral economies of sentiment' (Osburg 2003, p. 43). 'Wine-and-business' traditionally is a man's way to build a 'code of brotherhood' for business deals. Moving in traditionally male-dominated mid-level management teams, women have to perform as men in order to be accepted by this 'brother group'. Thus Anne, the vice-president of marketing department at a foreign bank in China pointed out that she felt that she needed to be a *nü hanzi* (tough lady 女汉子) to drink strong liquor, even to get drunk during business entertainment:

We, women in middle-managerial positions, are *nü hanzi*. Those women at top management are *nü qiangren* (superwomen 女强人). Why *nü hanzi*? It is because in the eyes of our bosses, there is no difference between men and women during business entertainment. In the banking industry in China, if you want to make a deal, you have to drink a lot of strong wine (lie jiu 烈酒) to make your clients happy, no matter if you are a man or a woman!

When women encounter this wine-and-business culture, they have to skilfully exhibit their 'manhood', their 'learned gender'. While entertaining, they are expected to be a man, to be one of the brothers, to be part of the 'we'. Drinking is a means of giving face to clients, and the more you drink with them the more respect you give them. A strong determination to have alcohol is seen to be an indicator of your personal ability and efficiency. The hope associated with this style of business entertaining is that the clients or government officials can return to their work 'with an embodied memory of shared pleasure and a latent sense of fondness, or *ganqing* (感情)' (Osburg 2003, p. 43). Do as the men do! Drinking alcohol is not only to make male clients happy, it is also treated as an indicator of loyalty and supportiveness in the eyes of male bosses. Two department heads stated:

> The big boss in charge of marketing is a man. He doesn't like to take any female colleagues who cannot take strong wine out of the office for business development. If you don't drink strong wine, then you cannot get close to your boss. If you cannot stand in line with your boss by drinking a lot wine with clients for him, then he will not treat you as one of his team. He will give you some assignments but he will not treat you as a trusted colleague. My body has a strong, bad reaction to wine, therefore, I cannot take wine. In the beginning of my work in head office, my boss got very angry when he saw me not drinking with clients. He tried to pressure me, but I really couldn't take wine. After he realised that I will not take wine any way, he never took me out for any business trip to develop my career and enlarge my social network (Case CH9, Department Head, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

Those male leaders do think they need at least one female beside them when they are entertaining clients. I discovered, to my surprise, that in the past two years the male bosses needed female companions even if they only have glasses of wine with a client. They feel more comfortable if a female comes with them and is at their side all the time. The soft and tender feeling from female companionship can reduce the tension between them (Case CH2, Head, Regulatory Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Zhongshan city, Guangdong province, China).

Drinking alcohol is not only for building external relationships with male clients but also for enhancing internal popularity within the bank. Drinking wine for your male bosses has strong and important symbolic meanings: you are totally supportive of them, you are standing by for them and you are willing to sacrifice your body and your health for your work. This is also an exchange. You then get your boss's trust, you get his recognition, you get his permission to enter into his close, exclusive group, and ultimately, you get the opportunity for career development. In banks, like many other institutions, promotions occur more informally and selections tend to be based on the discretion of senior management (Zulauf 2001). Upward mobility is related to your degree of devotion to your job, including business drinking. Hence, it is a paradox that on the one hand, women have to be good at 'being men' by drinking when they are entertaining clients outside the office, and on the other hand they must be good at 'being women' inside the bank to support their male bosses. This exchanging of roles is embedded into the process of evaluation and interpretation of gender expectation in different social contexts. Women bankers as *nü hanzi* demonstrate well the multiplicity

in relation to gender. Gender performance in the business world is dynamic and complicated. 'Much work remains to be done on understanding both doing and undoing gender' (Kelan 2010, p. 190).

5.6   The Top: Men's Club

During interviews, many women bankers pointed out that they believe in the idea of 'one is not tired if men and women work as partners' (*nannü dapei, ganhuo bulei* 男女搭配, 干活不累). The phrase '*nannü dapei*' (men and women work as partners) refers to the ideal division of labour between men and women in which the man is in charge of the job and the woman has a supportive role. Although women have made inroads in gaining managerial positions, rising to positions as a deputy manager or a department head, men still largely dominate the top management roles such as bank president or regional head. In Chinese, the man at the top is called, '*diyi bashou*' (first man 第一把手), but women are referred to as, '*fushou*' (second hand 副手), acting in supportive roles to male bosses. The 'men's club' is barely open to women bankers, as illustrated by the following comments:

> In the top layer, they call it, 'The Men's Club'. The men's club will always be comfortable working with men. They are happy with women down there reporting to them, because women tend to do all the work and women are happy doing that. The men's club is hard to penetrate. Even white women find it hard to do so. This issue has been around for the last ten years (Case AU5, Head of Taxation, British-owned bank in Sydney, Australia).

When I was a corporate director, we had very few female colleagues in this level of position. In the junior level, the female and male ratio was six-to-four, then gradually it changed to three-to-seven in middle-level positions, then at the top layer, Senior Managing Director, it turns out to be two-to-eight or even less (Case HK8, Managing Director of a privately-owned capital management company, former Corporate Director in a foreign-owned bank in the Hong Kong).

No matter in which bank, males are still in the majority of top management level positions. More than 80 percent of the top leaders in my banks are men. Maybe it is about 80 to 90 percent. Once [we talk of] positions getting [towards] the top, we have fewer and fewer females. It is a rare case that a woman can get an opportunity to reach the top because of her ability. If one woman gets the top position, she must have a special relationship with the top official of local government, who usually is a man (Case CH4, Manager, Mortgage Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Shenzhen, China).

[At] the provincial level, female leaders are as precious and are as rare as phoenix feathers and unicorn horns (*fengmao linjiao* 凤毛麟角). Why is it extremely difficult for women to reach the top? I think to a certain degree, it's because the majority of top leaders in other banks in China are also men (Case CH7, General Manager, Human Resources, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

AU5 has been working in banks for 26 years. At the time of the interview she was working in a British bank in Sydney. Although she was in an upper-middle managerial

position as a department head, she felt that the top layer of management in banks was still a 'men's club' and very difficult to penetrate. HK8 had been working in banks for 14 years before she opened her own financial and investment company. The last bank position she held was corporate director in a foreign bank in Hong Kong. She observed that the female ratio in managerial teams is a kind of pyramid shape: women occupied the majority of junior levels but only a few of them could reach the level of director. CH7 had been working in a state-owned bank for 22 years; she fully supported the idea that it is extremely difficult for women to reach the top.

The situation of women being blocked from the top bank positions is a microcosm of the reality of traditional gender inequality in society. In June 2012, McKinsey & Company, a global management consultant company, released a report entitled, 'Women Matter: An Asian Perspective', which indicated that the proportion of women sitting on corporate boards and executive committees in the majority of Asian companies is strikingly low compared with companies in Europe and the United States. On average, women account for six percent of seats on corporate boards and eight percent of those on executive committees (Süssmuth-Dyckerhoff, Wang & Chen 2012). In 2013, *Catalyst*, a non-profit organisation with a mission to expand opportunities for women in business reported that women held only 1.1 percent of the leading positions among chief executive officers and chief financial officers in Asian countries (Soares, Mulligan-Ferry & Kun 2013). Another report entitled, 'Standard Chartered Bank, Women on Boards in Hong Kong 2014', released on 4 March 2014 in Hong Kong, indicated that women are still facing many strong barriers to their upward mobility, especially to the top positions such as on boards of directors. This report looked at the

representation of women on corporate boards of Hong Kong's top listed companies, as included in the Hang Seng Index (HSI). Hong Kong is making little progress in bringing women into the boardroom – even though it has the highest ratio of women board members compared to other Asian financial centres. In 2014, women made up 9.6 percent of board members of HSI-listed companies. This is a small increase when compared with the ratio in 2013, 9.4 percent, and in 2012, 9.0 percent. The ratio is much lower than the United Kingdom, 20.4 percent, and the US, 16.9 percent, in 2014 (Kotecha & Vernon 2014).

The low percentage of women in boardrooms shines a spotlight on the lack of gender diversity at the top positions in the banking industry. But the paradox is that most respondents, especially those who have not yet been promoted to senior managerial posts, such as regional branch heads or directors, believe banking is a gender-fair industry. They trust that as long as they have ability, they will have the opportunity, leading to such statements as:

> I do not see there is any difference between men and women regarding the opportunity of career mobility here in Hong Kong. As long as you have capability, ability, you are likely to be promoted. … I absolutely believe that the seats are always reserved for the capable person in the retail banking industry in Hong Kong (Case HK4, Manager of Client Relationships, Hong Kong-owned bank, Hong Kong).

In our Shanghai branch, we have a total of six leaders, one president and five vice-presidents. Three of the vice-presidents are female. I think there are more and more opportunities for women now (Case CH10, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

At that time, there were not many women bankers. I think banks don't consider whether you are male or female. If you have good knowledge and rich experience, then they will recruit you. The most important factor is your own ability, not your sex (Case AU2, Manager, Treasury Department, Australian-owned bank in Melbourne, Australia).

Compared to previous research on women's career mobility in banking industry in America, Britain and European countries (McDowell & Court 2008; Prather 1971; Zulauf 2001), now the barriers to women's upward mobility caused by gender discrimination no longer primarily affect women in junior positions, but are a challenge for those women who are in senior management positions, above branch manager level. If career progress can be simply put as five stages – junior, lower-middle, middle, upper-middle and senior – then the glass-ceiling for women in the 1990s and 2000s began between the lower-middle level positions and the mid-level positions. With increasing awareness of gender equality resulting from the improvement of women's education and massive social interaction globally, the glass-ceiling has been pushed upward, positioned beyond the upper-middle positions. However, the nature of this invisible barrier remains the same: gender discrimination. The glass-ceiling is there blocking women's career mobility to the top layer of managerial positions. But most

respondents seldom talked about gender discrimination at their bank, rather they strongly believed that ability was the key to promotion, and justified the lack of gender diversity in top management, maintaining the hope that the institutional opportunity structure was fair.

5.7 Discrimination Against Women Moving to the Top: Women's Collusion of Gender Inequality

Although women are desirable for mid-level management, the glass-ceiling is real and exerting its impact. Women as a group are one of the main sources of discrimination against women moving into top management. Almost all of my respondents prefer to have a male as their direct boss. Women managers resist having female bosses. Indeed, compared with men, many women are more likely to discriminate against other women – whether consciously or not. This is highlighted in the following quotes:

Women are more conservative. It is much more difficult to impress women. Because they are petty. This is general. I don't say every woman is like this. Because most women work so hard to get there, it is harder to impress them. And they are very petty. Little things, they count and they'll remember. That's the disadvantage, that's the really bad thing about women. They somehow don't know how to let things go. And to find a woman, pushing up another woman, is rare. I find that more men are willing to push up others. This is general (Case AU5, Head of Taxation Department, British-owned bank in Sydney, Australia).

I hope my boss is a man. It's because men focus on the result, not the process, and so he gives you more autonomy. But women tend to monitor you all the time. You

need to report to her for every little thing. You have to speculate what's on their mind. You have to consider whether she wants this or not. You feel it's more difficult when you work for a female boss. That's why those big bosses prefer to find women to be middle-level managers. I think women may be capable of middle-level managerial work, but it will be more difficult for them to go further. I think men have broader vision. A real male leader will watch the whole world, but women only pay attention to a bunch of things in front of their eyes. Men have a broader international view (Case HK3, Customer Manager, Taiwanese-owned bank in Hong Kong).

If I have a choice, I prefer to have a male boss. As a female, I wish I could have more room to explore my potential and have more autonomy in my work. The male boss usually executes 'extensive management' (*cufanshi guangli* 粗放式管理). They instruct you [on] what is the target result, they discuss with you the possible ways to get it, and then they allow you to be bold and innovative. The market competition is very strong now. If I have a male boss, he will only monitor the important things and control less of those trivial things. They will discuss with you about the methodological issues but they leave more room for you to be creative and flexible. Men, comparatively, are more courageous, no matter right or wrong, they are bold enough to give it a try. I need a male boss with a challenge-loving spirit, so he will allow me to be creative without fear. He will support me (Case CH18, Supervisor, Sales Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province, China).

AU5 was in her early 50s and had been working in banks for 26 years in Australia. HK3 was in her mid-30s and had been working in banks for 15 years in Hong Kong. CH18 was in her early 30s and had been working in banks for nine years in mainland China. Although each had a very different background and their job duties varied, they all had bad feelings towards female bosses and preferred to have male bosses. When asked why they preferred not to have a female boss, the majority of their answers were related to negative female characteristics, while contrasting these with positive male characteristics (Table 16).

Table 16: List of Negative Qualities of Female Bosses Compared with Positive Qualities of Male Bosses Provided by Respondents

The negative qualities of female bosses	The positive qualities of male bosses
Lack of confidence and fear of threats	More freedom and more comfortable
More conservative	Less subjective
Harder to impress	Not likely to hold a grudge
Very petty	Less picky
Pay too much attention to details	Have broader, international vision
Rarely recommend another woman	Less tough towards achieving quotas
Immature and emotional	Less emotional
Harbour bitter resentment for a long time	More generous

Not focused	Have control of the overall situation
Lack high level analytical ability	Decisive and straightforward
Want to control and know everything	Focus on the macro, the big picture
Emphasise the process	Emphasise the result
More difficult to please and more speculative	Allow more autonomy for subordinates
Focus on things at-hand, short vision	Have long-term, strategic perspective
Intensively monitor everyone	Extensive management
Nervous about everything	Have more courage to be innovative
Have menopausal challenges in 50s; lack energy, sceptical, personality change	Best stage in 50s: mature, experienced, courageous

When women workers are accustomed to being subordinate to male bosses, they tend to have a misogynistic perception of female bosses (Mavin 2006). The negative descriptions provided by women who were working in middle or upper-middle management positions reveal two different perceptions toward female bosses from same sex colleagues. First, there is a paradox in the discourse of women's personality traits. On the one hand, women bankers believe that positive gendered personality traits contribute to a woman's career promotion. But on the other hand, these valuable gender characteristics can also be interpreted as negative gender stereotypes – as weaknesses in

character. For example, women who are strong in implementation and carrying out orders and policies can be labelled as lacking in leadership; those paying more attention to detail can be seen as lacking broad vision; cautious women may be seen as lacking confidence. Second, many women create a gender-bias social discourse that is partly based on traditional gender narrative and partly based on their own self-knowledge. This self-discourse is a result of women internalising the traditional but hidden discrimination against women in male-dominated industries, like finance and banking. This self-debasement and the negative stereotypes of women bosses are hidden but strong barriers that slow women's upward mobility.

Crab Pot Mentality and 'Looking-glass' Self

Women dislike having other women as their bosses partly because of competition between the women themselves. The majority of women are in front-line and junior positions, and the proportion of women in upper-middle managerial positions is significantly lower. Competition for higher-level jobs can be extreme and they resort to creating barriers to other women in order to succeed. Two women bankers related the following:

> There is intense competition between women and women. I can even say the competition between Asians and foreigners is less fierce because there is an obvious cultural difference. But the fight within the 'in-group' is sharp. Those people from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia are less aggressive than those from mainland China. I have to be very honest to say that the internal fight is serious and it has been really notable in the banking industry for the past

ten years. I think this is not a trend. We are all Asian women. We should be united. We should help each other so we can have better opportunities to be successful. Now, some Chinese women are only concerned with their own interests and they step on each other's bodies to climb up. This is not good. The tricks they use, for many old Chinese migrants like me, [are] unacceptable. Those women unscrupulously use all their ways to get what they want, even by stepping on someone else's body. I think this is more or less a business culture problem. Those women from mainland China are so aggressive (Case AU12, Head, International Customer Services, Australian-owned bank in Melbourne, Australia).

Woman competes with woman. Those white women may not support another woman. They looked down on Asian women. In their mind, they thought they, the white women, are also facing a glass-ceiling, then, 'Who are you, Asian women? There is no queue for you, the Asian woman, to line up in!' Women are so jealous of other women. They want to climb up but I don't see why they don't want to sincerely promote other women. They compete with each other (Case AU7, Head, Asian Segment, Australian-owned bank in Sydney, Australia).

Women do not want to work for women, they compete against each other and harbour a 'crab-pot mentality' – crabs in a pot all want to climb up and out to freedom and mobility, but all they do is pull each other down so that in the end, tragically, none manages to escape; no woman escapes from a comparatively low position. Women are also afraid of women who are their bosses, because they know their weaknesses and deficiencies, such as the family pressure to have children, the traditional expectation

toward wifes to sacrifice for their family or their husbands; being too emotional in doing their work, performing gender and sexuality; not being as committed to their careers as men; and so on. Other women in the bank become their own 'looking-glass', their own mirror. Male bosses know less about women and therefore male ignorance can be and will be exploited by women.

Self-justification

When women bankers finally realise that invisible sexism acts as a barrier, and they only have limited mobility, they do not escape from the beliefs which were imposed on them and which they themselves internalise into their mind and heart – even after working in the banking industry for many years. Many women bankers, especially those who have been in the banking industry for more than 15 years, think it is acceptable and it is natural to be halted by these barriers. The following quotes highlight this:

> Most promotions to managerial positions were taken by my male colleagues. It doesn't matter too much. We take what we need. If you give me a management position, I may not take it. At the end of the day, I like to talk to my clients more. Maybe we have different goals, different characters and different circumstances. Men need to take care of their family. Career is their first priority. If there is a chance for promotion, they'll strive to get it. The most important thing to me is to take good care of my clients. My family is also very important to me. I accept this reality (Case HK10, Director, Client Relationship Management, private bank section, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

I don't think there will be more and more women taking top level positions. I think males are still in the majority as leaders. I don't think women should play the same role as men do. Of course, from the perspective of leadership, I think different industries need different kinds of leaders. For the finance and banking industry, I think it's still preferable to have male leaders (Case CH14, Senior Manager, Marketing Department, China-Hong Kong joint bank in Shanghai, China).

My feeling is, comparing those male presidents of sub-branches to females, male presidents are more aggressive. Females prefer to have a stable career. Female presidents think it's not easy at all for women to get such a high position. It's good enough for them. Therefore, they have much less desire than men to reach higher positions. This is women's mentality. They are satisfied with their current positions (Case CH7, General Manager, Human Resources, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

Facing gender discrimination, visibly or invisibly, as victims of socially constructed gender perception, some women do not realise the extent to which this gender discrimination exists, while others try to justify and internalise this social discourse. 'Career is their (men's) first priority', 'I don't think women should play the same role as men do', 'They (women) are satisfied with their current positions', 'It (women's leadership) is not necessary', 'Men need the promotion more', 'Female managers do not have broad vision', 'Male leaders have a better international perspective'. This self-justification of the phenomenon of women being blocked from upper level

management is a kind of cooperation and collusion of gender inequality in the banking industry.

5.8 Conclusions

This study examines the gendered contexts and feminisation of mid-level management in the banking industry, which parallel changes in the globalised service economy. The desirability of woman bankers in banks reflects the increasing demand for female professionals globally in the service industry. Most of these well-educated female elites are middle aged. They are competent in fulfilling both instrumental and expressive functions which contribute to the banks' success in the highly competitive business world. On the one hand, woman bankers are required to be professional, knowledgeable, tough, and decisive like a modern man. On the other hand, they are expected to be tender, soft, supportive and cooperative like a traditional woman. The commercialisation of intimate life (Hochschild 2003) has blurred the boundary between public work and private life. Work is no longer only a job involving 'cold, hard power' – such as budgets, cash-flow, accountancy, and legality – but it asks for much more emotional attachment that traditionally belongs in the family, for intimate feeling like affection, attention, care and loyalty. Women bankers seesaw between performing womanhood and learned manhood; they need to be tactful, manipulating their performance in order to attain both power and trust for long-term business development.

Although mid-level management in the banking industry has quickly become feminised, we cannot conclude that this is a victory for women's rights or a new sense of equality in the banking industry. Women first moved into banks as tellers and later became the

majority of junior staff serving customers, revealing the changing state of economic structure; and also indicating that banks sought and capitalised on the cheapest source of labour available (Prather 1971). The feminisation of middle management has a similar nature. Among the women bankers I interviewed, it was common that they had worked more than 10 hours per day, or even more than 60 hours per week. Working while exhausted is, in fact, a fierce 'self-exploitation' to cope with those barriers which are the consequences of the intersections, and sometimes collusion, between gender discourses, racial/ethnic politics, business or capitalist interests and social norms. But at the end of the day, the corporation itself, not the women banker, is the ultimate beneficiary.

Compared to women professionals in studies in other countries like the United States (Hochschild 1997, 2003), the United Kingdom (McDowell & Court 2008; McDowell & P.Sharp 1997), European countries (Zulauf 2001), and Japan (Nemoto 2013), women professionals in this study do have the same 'fate' as women in other settings. Chinese women professionals also face barriers to their upward mobility caused by gender discrimination. The glass-ceiling for women is deeply rooted in the power structure and is not limited to specific kinds of economic systems or political governance. Nevertheless, this study finds that women professionals commonly utilise tactics of 'gendered performativity'. They seesaw between performing womanhood and learning manhood. They carefully examine social expectations in different settings and tactfully 'perform' in order to attain both power and trust for long-term business development and career mobility. This skill may not be unique to Chinese women professionals in the banking industry, but it does provide a new view of 'modern Chinese women professionals'. Their career paths give solid evidence that rather than 'gender

ambiguity', 'gender transbility' has become an asset for women's survival and success in a highly globalised and competitive industry like banking.

Chapter 6

Work and Family: Cooperation and Resistance

On the weekends, male branch manager colleagues of mine go back home to rest as if they were the heroes of their family. Their wife has cooked the meals and boiled the soup for them. But for me, going home provides me with no rest at all. When I go back to the city where my husband and son are living, I have to fulfil my responsibilities as a mother, as a wife and as a daughter-in-law, by cooking the meals and cleaning the house for them, [even though] I've been away for a long time. This situation is brought about by a Chinese woman's own conscience; it's not forced on her by other people.

> — Lily, President, state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China

Most women bankers I interviewed in China found 'coming home' brought them mixed feelings of pleasure and pressure. Lily, President of a level-1 sub-branch at one of the big four Chinese state-owned banks, drove an hour and a half from Guangzhou to her home city every weekend to see her husband and son. After working hard for five days, often into the night in what she described as a 'highly competitive place', Lily went home to hug her only son, to see her husband and to serve her mother-in-law, who looked after the home for her during the week. On the one hand, Lily said she felt excited in anticipation of spending time with her beloved son and husband, but on the other felt trepidation at the thought of becoming exhausted from all the housework required of her in order to fulfil her duties as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law.

Gender discourses create social expectations for women including women in the higher echelons of the services industry. These expectations include carrying out 'duties' as a daughter, sister, wife and mother. Nevertheless, these expectations 'are not simply given and unproblematic, they always require an interpretation' (Moore 1994, p. 93), in which 'the interpretation of right and needs is always bound up with the constitution of social identities' (Moore 1994, p. 98). A discourse is 'a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs' (Scott 1994, p. 284). Social expectations toward women, and the socially constructed meaning of a woman's work at home, often involve conflict and power relations.

Studies on dual-career households found women face more space-time constraints in their non-work hours than men. The domestic division of labour is still gender-role-related. Women's full-time employment has not reduced their household responsibilities when compared to men with the same employment status (Kwan 1999, 2000). Working women, especially a wife and a mother still do most of the housework after they get home from work; it is as if they are doing a 'second shift' at home (Hochschild & Machung 1989). In addition to this, they have to take care of the emotional needs of family members, which has been termed a 'third shift' (Hochschild 1997). A professional working wife and mother is indeed like an actress who plays two leading roles in a play, 'two managerial roles – corporate manager and family manager' (Davidson & Cooper 1992, p. 132).

Studies found that in Chinese families there were higher expectations of female family members, no matter what their marital status or employment status is, to view family

obligations as immutable prerogatives (Honig & Hershatter 1988; Salaff 1981; Wong 2005, 2009). Although China has undergone massive changes and its economy has experienced rapid development since the market reforms beginning in 1978, China's social ideology concerning gender equality at home lags far behind its fast-paced economic development (Edwards 2000; Fincher 2014; Ong 1991; Wylie 2004). Traditional Chinese cultural perceptions like being 'a virtuous wife and a good mother' (*xian qi liang mu* 贤妻良母) still exerts influence in the private sphere and in the public conception of ideal womanhood (Tang et al. 2000). The cultural discourse of women constructs female family members as innate carers whose legitimacy hinges on providing 'womanly' care for the family; and Chinese media 'is increasingly transmitting a message of domesticity and servitude when depicting women in advertising' (Wylie 2004, p. 60).

A study on gender role identity in Hong Kong found that role models in the family, school textbooks, magazines and advertisements in media reflect, create and reinforce gender stereotypes associated with both occupations and division of labour in the family (Cheung et al. 1997). Concerning housework allocation, there are gaps between an individuals' ideals and reality. Although spouses negotiate with each other about familial work, a dichotomy between a 'breadwinner' versus a 'home-maker' remains the dominant pattern (Choi & Ching-kwan 1997). Studies on the division of labour in family eldercare in Hong Kong also found that families still expect women to be the main care providers who look after daily, micro caring tasks. This socially assigned obligation on the female remains strong even among the younger, better educated and financially better off generation (Wong 2005, 2009). One notable phenomenon in Hong

Kong is that there is a steadily increasing number of never-married women. Study on single women with full-time employment in Hong Kong found that work provides a strong sense of identity and becomes the central focus of life for these single career women. They have a strong sense of affirmation and assertiveness about their singleness which has gained wide social acceptance as an 'alternative life choice' (Ng & Ng 2008). Recent research on university-educated women in Hong Kong indicated that there is an increasing reluctance to sacrifice self to do work related to caring for the family (Partridge 2013). But when facing familial decisions, like migration issues, daughters do much to promote family unity. Women in the family are more likely to accept family expectations. They are more flexible in modifying their goals or even to expend themselves in order to meet family goals (Salaff & Greve 2013).

In this study, my interviews found that the master identity for many female professionals in Chinese societies is still closely associated with traditional gender perceptions. This deeply cultural-rooted gender identity is intertwined with class, ethnicity, age and place. Therefore, we can only truly understand a woman's experience by putting her into her social context. The life experiences of women working in the retail banking industry in China, and their personal perceptions of family and work, are not homogenous. 'Lives are lived through time; they are also lived in place and through space' (Pratt & Hanson 1993, p. 30). The rich variety of personal stories associated with different places, various life stages, and distinctive degrees of tension between work and life all add to the complexity of the family life of professional women. A researcher's attention to 'change' through the life course is important as it 'suggests a more careful

analysis that admits both the diversity of women's experiences and social changes'
(Pratt & Hanson 1993, p. 30). Thus, this chapter examines the intersectionality between
an individual's career in banking, her stage in life, spatiality of social resources, social
norms, and personal perceptions of quality of life. I analyse the dynamic relationship
between the professional women's work and family, the challenges they face and the
coping strategies they employ. I argue that gendered discourses, circulating in society
and among the women themselves, play a role in creating constraints and pressures in
women's lives. In this chapter, I also reveal how individual coping strategies are shaped
by national policy, family resources and local culture.

6.1 Life-stage and the Family

The pressure of developing a career while living under experiences of traditional
expectations is telling for Chinese women. To understand the effect of work on family
life, and family life on work, we must consider the intertwined relationship between the
stage of a woman's career in banking and her stage in life. The bankers I interviewed
included women at various life-stages. Table 17 summarises the age groups and sites of
field research. While the highest percentage of respondents was in the 30–39 age group
in all sites, the age group distribution in each place varied. The average age of
respondents in Australia was higher than those in mainland China. Twenty-nine percent
of respondents in Australia were in their 50s while none in mainland China was in that
group. The majority of Hong Kong respondents, 47 percent, were in their 30s, with 41
percent in their 40s. The mainland Chinese were younger in general with 67 percent
concentrated in the 30–39 age group.

Table 17: Age Group of Respondents

(Number and Percentage[4] of Respondents According to Age and Site)

Research Site	Under 30 years of age		30–39		40–49		50 or above		Total per Site
Australia	0	0%	6	**43 %**	4	29%	4	29%	14
Hong Kong	0	0%	8	**47%**	7	41%	2	12%	17
Mainland China	1	6%	12	**67%**	5	28%	0	0%	18

Differences in marital status were notable (Table 18). In mainland China, the majority, 83 percent, of respondents were married with children, while none were single. In Australia, 64 percent were married with children and 21 percent were single. In Hong Kong, far more, 41 percent, were single, and 18 percent were married without children.

Table 18: Marital Status of Respondents

(Number and Percentage of Respondents According to Marital Status and Site)

Research Site	Single		Married with Children		Married without Children		Divorced with Children		Total per Site
Australia	3	21%	9	**64%**	1	7%	1	7%	14
Hong Kong	7	**41%**	7	**41%**	3	18%	0	0%	17
Mainland China	0	0%	15	**83%**	2	11%	1	6%	18

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[4] In this chapter all percentages have been rounded up.

Fulfilling responsibilities at home was especially challenging for those working mothers with young children. Table 19 places their children into four age groups by site: five years old or younger, six to 11 years old, 12 to 17 years old, and 18 years or older, corresponding with the age groups when children attend preschool, primary and high schools and those legally defined as adult. This study only takes the youngest one of two or more children as reference since this child had the greatest impact on the respondent's career development. In mainland China, the majority of working mothers, 63 percent, had a child five years of age or younger. In Australia, 36 percent of working mothers had adult children, 27 percent had preschool children, and the same percentage had children of high school age. In Hong Kong, none of the working mothers had children younger than five, though 43 percent had adult children, and those whose children were of primary or high school age made up 29 percent each.

Table 19: Age Group of Respondents' Children

(Number and Percentage of Respondents According to Youngest Child's Age and Site)

Research Site	Children under 5 years old		Children from 6–11 years old		Children from 12–17 years old		Children 18 years old or above		Total Number of Working Mothers
Australia	3	27%	1	9%	3	27%	4	**36%**	11
Hong Kong	0	0%	2	29%	2	29%	3	**43%**	7
Mainland China	10	**63%**	1	6%	4	25%	1	6%	16

These age patterns may not represent a general pattern for the whole banking industry in China, Hong Kong and Australia but nevertheless they do reflect some different social

situations and labour market characteristics in each research site. In Australia, there was a group of Chinese women bankers in their 50s who have been working in banks for more than 20 years. These women slowly gained promotions over that period of time. In contrast, there was also a group of managers in their 30s who joined the banking industry less than 10 years ago and gained promotion much more quickly. Many women bankers I interviewed in Sydney and Melbourne pointed out that Chinese women were able to move into middle-managerial positions in Australia partly as the result of Australia's policy encouraging Asians to migrate, which in turn created an emerging Asian migrant market. In response to this emerging market, women bankers in this study felt that their banks had intentionally created opportunities for Asian professional immigrants to gain managerial positions in banks. The upward mobility of Asian women is associated with both the Australian banking industry opening up to the Asian market and to increased business from local migrants from Asian countries.

In Hong Kong, the percentage of single women bankers and those married without children was the highest among the three research sites. The majority of Hong Kong women professionals in this study indicated that they felt less pressure being single, or living with their partner without formal marriage registration, or being married without children, as these kinds of life patterns have gained general acceptance as 'alternative life choice' and 'normal deviance' (Ng & Ng 2008). Study on younger females growing up during the period of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in Hong Kong found that they experienced 'the interpenetration of their own culture with male-favoured great tradition'. During this time of 'Westernization and cultural exchange', they acted as intermediaries in 'this community of hybridism'. Women in Hong Kong were 'cultural

and subcultural bearers and transmitters, as well as reshapers of the tradition' (Yip 1997, p. 332).Understandings of gender roles have modernized in Hong Kong, where expectations have become less patriarchal compared to society in mainland China. Cultural constructions of a Chinese wife as a '*xian nei zhu*' (good domestic helpmate 贤内助), which still exist in the Mainland, have weakened in Hong Kong. This can be attributed to complex interaction among a number of factors, like the expansion of educational opportunities for women (Mak & Chung 1997); the growth of the service sector in Hong Kong; the mechanisation of domestic chores (Ngo 1997); the steady supply of affordable, domestic help from neighbouring, developing countries (Mak & Chung 1997; Venter 2002); the trend towards late marriage and low fertility (Mak & Chung 1997); tolerance and acceptance of never-married career women (Ng & Ng 2008); and women's new interpretation of marriage (Partridge 2013).

In mainland China, the majority of women bankers were younger and all were married. More than 90 percent of them had non-adult children when interviewed – in fact only two did not have children, one of whom had been married for only three years when the interview was conducted and was planning to have a baby, while the other had health problems and found it difficult to fall pregnant. Indeed, the majority of mainland respondents still held the view that giving birth is a 'must' to be a 'complete women' (*wanquan de nuren* 完全的女人). The idea of: 'There are three forms of unfilial conduct, of which the worst is to have no descendants' (*buxiao you san, wu hou weida* 不孝有三，无后为大) still exerts a strong influence in many Chinese families. With the media increasingly promoting women's domesticity (Fincher 2014; Wylie 2004),

professional women in China are in a similar situation with blue-collar women workers, facing extreme pressure from their extended family to produce a child.

6.2 Challenges and Difficulties at Home

Descriptive Lists

Women at different stages in their lives may face the same or similar challenges but with different effects. Table 20–22 list challenges and difficulties faced by women in the banking industry in different research sites. The first five items were mentioned more frequently in the interviews and other items in the lists are in no particular order, with some challenges faced by an individual respondent and others by more than one respondent. Although the problems and challenges vary in degree, cause and effect, all the women indicated that they found it most challenging 'to strike a balance between work and family obligations'.

Table 20: Family Challenges Faced by Women in the Banking Industry in Australia

1. Finding it hard to strike a balance between work and family obligations
2. Not having enough time to enjoy family life
3. A lack of support from extended family
4. Feeling stress when required to stay at home alone to care for a young child
5. Feeling pressure to fulfil traditional Chinese expectations and roles as a professional
6. Feeling guilty because of not spending enough time with children
7. Feeling pressure to be the central figure within the family
8. A husband who is too traditional and does not take the initiative to share housework

9. A husband who is chauvinistic and thoughtless
10. A husband who is not willing to look after children
11. Conflicts with parents about ways of raising children
12. Feeling anxious about returning to work after giving birth
13. A need to sacrifice a full-time job and work part-time for a few years after giving birth
14. Feeling that children are neglected due to fulfilling work commitments
15. A need to work from home in order to pick up children from school
16. A need to work much harder from home in order to maintain a good business performance record
17. A need to sacrifice personal life for work
18. A need to disturb family life for business trips
19. Feeling pressure as the core economic contributor for the family
20. Feeling tension because the children are 'pampered' while the respondent faces constant work-related pressures
21. Experiencing a strained relationship with adult son

Table 21: Family Challenges Faced by Women in the Banking Industry in Hong Kong

1. Finding it hard to strike a balance between work and family obligations
2. A need to make extra effort to maintain a long-distant relationship with husband who works in a different city
3. Feeling anger and shock to discover son had been sexually abused by a domestic helper
4. Feeling unhappy to discover children had been physically punished and mistreated by a domestic helper
5. A lack of emotional intimacy with adult son and daughter
6. Unconsciously displaying a tough work attitude in day-to-day family life
7. Transferring work tension to the home by being irritable and argumentative with family members
8. A strained relationship with partner whose income is lower (in one case 20 times so)
9. The loss of a long-term partner (boyfriend)

10. Feeling exhausted during pregnancy and lacking energy to build relationships with clients

11. Feeling pressure to remain in current, unsatisfactory employment in order to prepare for pregnancy

12. Feeling anxiety over unplanned pregnancy

13. Feeling pressure from mother who insists a woman's duty is to help her husband and teach their children (*xiangfu jiaozi* 相夫教子)

14. Feeling worry and anxiety and facing disruptions to work in order to care for chronically ill family member.

15. Facing an emotional breakdown after mother's death

16. Feeling the need to prove herself to parents by achieving a successful career

17. Facing pressure from father who has unreasonable expectations

18. Feeling pressure from father who continually pushed respondent to find a boyfriend

19. Feeling pressure because of servicing a heavy home loan as a single woman

Table 22: Family Challenges Faced by Women in the Banking Industry in Mainland China

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1. Striking a balance between work and family obligations

2. Feeling guilty because of neglecting duty as a mother

3. Feeling hypocritical and guilty for asking aged mother to take care of her child

4. Feeling sad because of not spending much time with her child

5. Conflicts with husband who demands wife to be more family-oriented

6. Quarrelling with husband over division of housework

7. Feeling upset and quarrelling with husband over his traditional and conservative mind set and chauvinistic attitude

8. Being constantly criticised by husband for working too hard to advance her career

9. Feeling disappointment over husband's perception of life

10. A husband who is unhappy about over-time meetings

11. Having to please husband in the same way respondent has to please clients

12. Feeling stress as child's primary caregiver

13. Feeling upset because of living in a separate location from her family
14. Lacking opportunities for emotional and intellectual interaction with child
15. Deciding to have an abortion in order to keep a job in a state-owned bank
16. Feeling embarrassed and stressed about breast-feeding during business travel
17. Lacking time and energy after taking care of family members
18. A mother-in-law who is unhappy about respondent entertaining clients after work hours
19. Feeling pressure from parents to be content with current job
20. Feeling pressure because of more economic responsibility towards family after giving birth
21. Feeling that family members lack understanding and sympathy towards respondent
22. A monotonous social life after giving birth
23. Feeling discrimination from the boss during pregnancy
24. A lack of career progress after giving birth

Feeling Guilty

The women bankers faced three common difficulties related to family life. The overriding concern was the challenge of trying to balance work and family obligations and the strong feelings of guilt that resulted from not spending enough time caring for family members or spending enough time with their child or children. This was especially hard to deal with for those with young children. Two bankers described some of their most painful moments:

When my son was little, if he found that I was not home, he would keep on calling me. He called me once every half hour asking, 'Mum, when will you come home? Mum, when will you come home?' He kept on asking me until he fell asleep. I remember I once arrived home and saw my son asleep on the sofa with the phone in his hand. He was waiting for me to get home. I couldn't stand this

scene, I was so shocked! This had a big impact on me. I know I haven't done anything wrong. My job is good for my personal development and it is a big recognition of my personal value. But from the family point of view, my job results in a dereliction of my duty as a mother. At that moment, I felt very guilty and sorry for my son and for my husband (Case CH12, Vice-president, Marketing Department, foreign bank in Guangzhou, China).

I usually leave home around 8 A.M. and return home for dinner at about 7.30 or 8 P.M. At that time, my daughter has already finished her piano lesson, come back from the playground, and had her dinner with her dad. My job requires me to work very long hours every day. It is very difficult to arrange any time for activities with my daughter after I return home. And, as you know, working in a foreign bank requires a lot of travel, as we have to look after business across a big territory in China. Therefore, my husband takes care of almost all child-care work for me. Although people will not speak to you directly, no matter if it is at home or in another social setting, you can feel that they truly expect you to do all the work caring for the home. My husband has more time, but people expect child care to be Mum's job. They think he is helping me and doing things for me. I agree. Therefore, I always feel that I haven't done my job for my family very well at all (Case CH6, Vice-President, Corporate Section, Foreign-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

Long hours, business travel and entertainment were integral parts of their work, demanding a lot of their time. All women in this study often worked an average of 10 to

12 hours a day. Although the majority tried their very best to fulfil their obligations at home, as if it were a 'second shift' (Hochschild & Machung 1989), many still felt guilty for being 'not good enough' as a mother, wife or daughter. This second shift included tasks such as cooking and cleaning and washing if there was no domestic helper; or overseeing their children, helping them to finish school work if their parents (usually her retired mother) or domestic helper had completed the housework for them. This feeling of guilt is invisible and immeasurable. Nevertheless, it was a real form of internal torment.

Wives Ahead but Husbands Behind

The second difficulty common to all the women was tension over their careers with their comparatively more traditional Chinese husbands – an especially serious problem for bankers in mainland China and immigrant women in Australia. This kind of tension resulted in a clash of 'gender strategies' between the couples (Hochschild & Machung 1989, p. 204). Husband and wife each had their own ideas of what they should do at home and at work. Women in different cities indicated the same perception clash. Two managers said:

> When Chinese men *dapin shiye* (strive for career 打拼事业) outside, Chinese women generally support their men inside. So, men have no *hougu zhiyou* (troubles back at home 后顾之忧), they will not receive a complaint like, 'Why have you come back home so late again?' There is no non-stop criticism of men by their wives. But if a woman does the same thing, there are constant accusations from her husband. He criticises her saying, 'You are only

a woman! What's the point of working so hard?' … Women have to pay a much higher price for their career development. Men have no such problems. If a woman is successful, her husband thinks she does not take good care of their family. If a woman is more successful and powerful than her husband, he thinks he doesn't have *mianzi* (face 面子). So, he may decide to leave her. But if a man is successful, a woman is more reluctant to leave him, even if he does less and less to care for his family (Case CH4, Manager, Mortgage Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Shenzhen, China).

If women gain higher achievements than their husbands, their husbands will feel unhappy about this. Maybe this is Chinese tradition (Case CH17, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

This difficulty often occurs in two-job families on the move and in transitional societies. Transitional societies are those where economic development has progressed but social ideology concerning gender equality at home has not. Most families in mainland China today are in a transitional society (Mol 2006; Oi 1995; Watson 2015). In this study, families on the move refers to families of Chinese women in the banking industry in Australia. They are cross-border migrant families who have moved from mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. In these migrant families, it is notable that wives were more actively engaged in secular work in the new, host society; while husbands were taking on more responsibility for housework which was gendered as housewife's work. One reason for this new household division of labour between husband and wife was because women had more opportunities to find a job in cities led

by the service economy, like Sydney and Melbourne. One consequence associated with migration was that women gained new power to renegotiate gender stereotypes and construct their own new social spaces. This caused a gap between husbands and wives with wives moving ahead in their careers while husbands were lagging behind, and also the unintended consequence of familial tension. This tension was a common experience especially for the earlier generation of Chinese immigrant women professionals in this study.

Unintended Encroachment

The third difficulty common to all was an often invisible and unintended encroachment of the professional side of life on the private. This intrusion was related to expectations and aspirations toward work being transferred to life at home. Attitudes and behaviour like 'being aggressive', 'being efficient' and 'being goal-oriented' are commonplace and respected in highly-competitive banking industries. Following are examples of how two women admitted that they unconsciously transferred this business attitude to their family life:

> I think being *shuang kuai* (straightforward 爽快) is important for building business relationships. I also hope other people can be more straightforward with me. I don't like people to *niuniu nienie* (shilly-shally 扭扭捏捏) but prefer them to come straight to the point without the slightest hesitation. I am a hasty person. Maybe I have gradually been influenced by my work. I have even become more impetuous. I think I have to handle too many things at one time. Therefore, when I spend time with my son, my finger is too quick on the trigger when he is too slow.

Competition in the business world is getting stronger and stronger, I think I have

adapted a business mentality into my daily life. Our pace of life is getting faster

and faster. Also, our pressures are getting heavier and heavier. But there's nothing

we can do. This is what our social rhythm is. Everyone has to be faster. If you slow

down, you will be 'phased out' (*taotai* 淘汰) (Case CH12, Deputy Manager,

Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

I am ambitious at work. The personality difference between my husband and

myself is very big. What bothers me most is how to get along with him. The

pressure is enormous. Sometimes, I wonder why he hasn't done the thing that I

already told him very clearly to do! It is really annoying. He is so stupid! I can't

stand it that he is so stupid! This is already a big issue with me. I have

subconsciously transferred my ambitions onto my husband. I think, in my heart, I

am defiant because my husband is not ambitious enough. I don't ask too much of

him. But I am resisting him subconsciously. I often tell him that I don't want to

change him much. … I am not asking him to progress, but, at the very least, he

shouldn't get worse (Case CH 18, Supervisor, Personal Relationship Section,

Chinese state-owned bank in Guangdong, China).

Many women in the study admitted that on returning home from work they

subconsciously and unintentionally expected their husband to share their attitudes and

aspirations toward family members. For example, they might have wanted their children

to complete their school tasks efficiently, in the same way they would expect their bank

subordinates to complete their tasks efficiently. However, the reality was that most of

these expectations of family members were merely wishful thinking, and not a part of their husband's expectations of himself or the children. No matter how powerful and dignified a woman was in her office, her power did not automatically transfer to home. For example, Lily, the branch president mentioned above, said that when she came home from work, she came returned as a daughter-in-law, a wife and a mother. But when her male manager colleagues returned home from work, they came back as the family hero, a successful person to whom the family members showed deep respect. Thus, women needed to make a conscious effort to have realistic expectations of and aspirations for her family. This emotional work in their private life was a 'third shift' (Hochschild 1997), which was more difficult than the emotional work in her professional life. Hence, 'coming home' for many women bankers while, paradoxically, desirable, was also stressful, demanding, and emotionally draining. This was especially serious when it resulted in conflict between spouses or partners.

6.3 City-based Coping Strategies: The Tales of Professional Working Mothers in Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai

How well an individual copes with challenges and difficulties is related not only to her external economic and social resources, but also to her self-perception and willpower. This section focuses on a comparative analysis of coping strategies of married women bankers with non-adult children in Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai. I argue that to manage the triple shifts – work, housework and emotional work at home – successfully, women adopt strategies specific to their contexts. These different strategies are shaped by a combination of state policy, regional economic resources and historic social norms. The strategies can be exemplified by three different kinds of cooperation: that between a

banker and her husband in Sydney; between a banker and her female domestic helper in Hong Kong; and, between a banker and her mother in Shanghai.

Role Exchangeability: Banker Wife and Taxi Driver Husband in Sydney

Ling was a senior private wealth manager at one of the top-four Australian banks. At the time of this study, she was in her mid-40s and married with a 12-year-old son and a 10-year-old daughter. Ling had arrived in Australia at the age of 16 as a refugee from Vietnam, and found the following eight years in her new country difficult as she adapted to a new culture and language. She hoped to pursue a career in banking, following her father who had been the president of a French bank in Vietnam. She believed this would provide a stable, rewarding career. She started as a part-time teller, and later worked full-time processing data in the back office. As a member of an ethnic minority in the bank, she strived to impress others with her diligence. Step by step she was promoted – to become the assistant manager to the business banking manager, the branch manager of a small branch, and finally the branch manager of the biggest branch in Sydney. Next, she moved laterally, and began to work in the Asian segment of the private-banking section, a role that required a great deal of travel. Ling's clients, Asian businessmen, lived all over Australia as well as overseas, and so to nurture and maintain good relationships she met them in Sydney, elsewhere in Australia and overseas. By 2013, Ling had been working for the bank for 22 years, and indicated clearly that she loved her job and was passionate about her work.

Ling's husband was a taxi driver in Sydney. His normal shift was 12 hours starting at 3 A.M. He had also left Vietnam, and they met in English classes when she first arrived.

Although Ling's parents lived with her and helped with the housework, they were limited in what they could do to help with the children's school work as they could neither speak English nor drive. Thus, parenting fell mostly to Ling's husband, especially as his job afforded him a degree of flexibility. He could pick the children up from school, shop for the family and do other chores while Ling was still at the bank or on a business trip. He was also the stand-by person ready to deal with any family emergency. Thus, he took care of most family duties, a situation which is not common in Chinese families.

Ling related that many of her clients expressed surprise when they learned of her husband's occupation. However, Ling felt grateful towards her husband for being so helpful. Though her social status was considered higher, she never felt ashamed of him for driving a taxi. A common question asked by her clients was: 'You are a successful banker. Is your husband also a banker?' Ling would answer without any hesitation that he drove a taxi. She explained her point of view:

> Behind every successful family story, there is always another person. Behind the upward mobility of a great career, there is always a person at home willing to sacrifice his or her own career. Without my husband, I would not have such a fine family and my career would not be as successful as it is right now. I have never felt inferior because he is taxi driver. I have to respect my husband. I am proud to have him. (Case AU10, Senior Manager, Private Wealth Section, Australian bank in Sydney, Australia).

Do families help or hinder migrant women bankers' upward mobility? In Ling's case, the role flexibility and exchangeability between husband and wife was the key for her success in coping with full-time work and caring for her family. Role flexibility and exchangeability is the ability to re-define and re-work the traditional sex-role stereotypes and the division of labour between husbands and wives at home. The traditional Chinese sex-role stereotype followed the 'private patriarchy', constructed with reference to Confucianism that advocated 'a man is responsible for the outside, a woman is responsible for the inside' *(nan zhu wai, nü zhu nei* 男主外, 女主内) (Fang & Walker 2015). In other words, a husband should take charge of external matters while his wife should take care of domestic matters. In Ling's family, the roles were the other way round: she focused more on developing her career while her husband focused on the home and was satisfied with no ambition beyond driving a taxi; and Ling earned much more than he. This role exchangeability was successful because they could reject any causality between ability to earn and self-esteem. Her husband's acceptance of the changing role of women and his willingness to take up what traditionally has been the 'wife's job' at home significantly contributed to Ling's career mobility. Ling explained this as her personal 'good luck' in marrying a good man.

Paying for Housework and Childcare: Workaholic Wife and Busy Husband in Hong Kong

Nancy was in her early 50s and was a vice-president of a private French bank in Hong Kong. She began in the industry in 1984 as a management trainee at a British bank in Hong Kong. During her almost 30 years in banking, Nancy has experienced some challenging times, including the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the global financial crisis of 2007-09. Nancy has worked for 10 companies and banks, five of which were

large European investment banks that were annexed by other institutions during the 'merger wave' in the financial industry in the 1990s and early 2000s. Nancy believed that in Hong Kong's open, free and highly competitive financial market, only hard-working, highly capable people could survive. She had full confidence in herself, backed by outstanding performance records from school and in all her jobs. She said that her job in banking brought her wholehearted satisfaction, and described herself as a person who 'works extremely hard, is capable and is a workaholic'.

Nancy was married with two teenage sons. Her husband was a marketing manager at a large chemical company. Both he and Nancy made frequent business trips to cities in China. When their sons were still young, Nancy, like many professional working mothers in Hong Kong, hired Filipina domestic helpers to look after her boys. She hired two helpers, as her children were only a year apart. During the week, Nancy's mother-in-law would visit and watch over the two workers to ensure they did their jobs properly. With her retired mother-in-law as a domestic supervisor, everything seemed under control. However, her mother-in-law learned that not only were the maids disappearing after picking up the boys from school, one was having an affair with a man during her work time. This maid received a stern rebuke from Nancy's husband, since his mother could not speak English. Some months later, Nancy discovered that her four-year-old had been sexually abused by one of his caregivers, and she believed it was in revenge for her husband's severe, unkind words to her. Nancy was furious and instead of reporting the incidents to the police or taking other legal action which may have cost them a lot time, Nancy and her husband decided to immediately fire this domestic helper and replace her with someone she hoped would be more dependable.

Nancy felt that the sexual abuse resulted in her little boy suffering deep psychological trauma. He often cried out from bad dreams at night; and she was convinced her son's small handwriting style reflected inner fear, deep obsession and a hidden self-defensive attitude. For Nancy, women executives like her take a risk by paying others to care for their children. This risk is a kind of sacrifice that must be made in order to work in a high-powered job. Nevertheless, she remains passionately obsessed with her work. She said that she was not willing to leave her job to return home for her boys, explaining:

> I have never ever thought about stopping my work. I am too much of a workaholic. I cannot stay at home to look after my children. I am not that kind of person. I would feel dead bored at home. It requires much more patience to be a caregiver at home. I am not this kind of mum. If you asked me to stay at home, I would jump out of the window. I would feel down and drowsy. My first reaction toward the sexual abuse issue was shock, but at that time I didn't have any feelings of guilt. I've never, ever thought of staying at home 24 hours a day to take care of my sons. This is totally out of the question. I wouldn't do it. … Also, my husband has never asked me to stay at home. My working performance is much better than his and my money earning ability is much higher than his. He won't ask me to come home to be a housewife!

Many Hong Kong families subcontract housework and child care to women from developing countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. Compared to society in mainland China, the traditional perception of women needing to be 'submissiveness, dependent and self-sacrificing' (Tang et al. 2000, p. 189) is weaker in Hong Kong.

Women are no longer expected to be housewives and dual-career couples in nuclear families are becoming predominant in Hong Kong. Hence, migrant domestic helpers mitigate the problem of 'care deficit' (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003, p. 8) for working couples like Nancy and her husband. At the end of December 2014, there were approximately 330,650 foreign domestic helpers working for Hong Kong families (*Hong Kong Immigration Department Annual Report 2014*). All the women from Hong Kong with non-adult children in this study hired at least one domestic worker to do housework and care for the children. By buying home care and child care from live-in nannies and housekeepers, Hong Kong's professional women release themselves from traditional unpaid familial roles to join in the intensive but high-reward job market. Live-in help is well within their financial reach, with the legal minimum pay a fraction of theirs at HK$4,110 (about US$530) per month. Nancy indicated that women working in investment banking section in banks in Hong Kong earn an annual fixed salary starting from HK$500,000 plus bonuses and that they can earn as much as HK$3 million per year. The average income for vice-presidents of finance at investment banks in Hong Kong consists of HK$1 million (about US$130,000) in fixed salary and HK$0.8 million (about US$80,000) in bonuses (PayScale, 2015)[5]. Hiring a domestic helper is financially viable. Women from developing countries are hired to move in to do the 'women's work' for professional, affluent women. The 'global re-division of women's traditional work' (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003, p. 11) is a common coping strategy for women bankers to balance their work and family obligations. But this seeming cooperation between women at opposite ends of the economic spectrum is not an elixir for the challenges faced by Chinese women bankers in Hong Kong. Behind

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[5] http://www.payscale.com/research/HK/Industry=Investment_Banking/Salary

closed doors, there are a lot of unspeakable stories – such as Nancy's story of her son's abuse.

Ken Lao Zu (Elder Devouring Clan 啃老族): Weekday Elites and Weekend Parents in Shanghai

At the time of this study Alice was senior manager of the marketing department of a bank in Shanghai owned jointly by Chinese and foreign interests. She joined the bank after obtaining her master's degree in English literature in 2003. For the first year and a half Alice worked in the foreign affairs department at the bank's head office. Later, she was assigned to be the personal assistant of the CEO of a new credit card centre, which started with a staff of 20 and in eight years grew to employ 10,000 in a large number of offices nation-wide. In the beginning, nothing was easy. For the first few years, Alice often left home for work about 7.30 A.M. and returned after 8 P.M., but during the peak season like before a big festival period, returned as late as midnight. After two years as the chief executive's personal assistant, Alice was promoted to become the Corporate Account Manager, a move that required extensive travel. A few years later, Alice was promoted to a senior management position and focused on premier customers. Alice's rise paralleled the rapid expansion of the credit card centre, and although her latest promotion meant less business travel, her work pace never slowed down, and work still dominated her life, something she and many women bankers in Shanghai had in common.

Alice's husband worked at the same bank in a different department. This busy, elite couple had a five-year-old daughter who lived with Alice's retired parents on weekdays and with Alice and her husband on the weekends. Alice's mother initially offered this

arrangement because she realised her daughter was exhausted by her work, leaving limited time for the little girl. Alice's mother had been a salesperson and, with good communication skills and a tough personality, provided 'strong authority' in almost all family issues. Alice admired her mother's way of caring for her little girl and she believed that the child would get proper discipline under her mother's care. Every Friday night, Alice picked up her daughter from her mother's home, which was about three hours' drive from her office. Alice hoped that her daughter would enjoy feelings of intimacy – of 'we three, Mum, daughter and Dad' – back at her own home during the weekends. Each Sunday night, Alice would drive her daughter back to her mother's house, where she would usually stay overnight to maximise the time she spent with her daughter. Early on Monday mornings, Alice would drive the three hours straight to work.

Alice found it difficult to fully describe the complex and contradictory feelings on sending her daughter away each week. On the one hand, she was grateful for her mother's help, which released her from the worry and pressure associated with spending time developing her career and the conflict this created with her child care duties. On the other hand, Alice was heavy hearted, she felt guilty over the absence of her daughter from home during the week. In contrast, Alice's husband was satisfied with the arrangement of only spending weekends with his daughter, and thought they were adequately fulfilling both family obligations and work responsibilities. Alice had more complicated emotional entanglements as a 'weekend mum'. She described herself as feeling 'lost' and said the desire to see her little girl was especially strong when work

was not that busy and when she went home early. To cope with this emotional suffering, Alice kept herself busy and worked even harder.

Alice, like almost all in the study in China who used their retired mothers as the primary caregiver of their non-adult children, admitted that she was one of the *ken lao zu* (elder devouring clan 啃老族). The Chinese term transliterated *ken lao* (literally 'bite old people') is similar in one aspect to the concept of NEET, or not engaged in employment, education or training, that was originally used in the 1999 UK report entitled, *Bridging the gap – New opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training,* by the Social Exclusion Unit under the office of the Deputy Prime Minister. In mainland China, the term *ken lao* has been modified to refer to the unemployed aged from 23 to 30 years who seemingly have the ability to work but instead depend on their parents' economic resources. A common characteristic of members of the elder devouring clan is that they are 'grown up physically but lack ability to be independent adults' (*zhangda er bu chengren* 长大而不成人) (Li 2006, p. 28). But for the women in this study, *ken lao zu* has a different significance. Rather than taking material or economic resources from their retired parents, they devour the time and physical energy especially of their mothers to look after their children and support their personal career development. Unlike Hong Kong, in the mainland the domestic helper service industry is not well developed. Additionally, there is a general lack of trust and confidence in the practice of hiring *baomu* (保姆 maids), who mainly look after children. Working couples in this study are willing to hire someone to do housework, but most feel it unsafe to allow a maid with no blood relationship to look after their only child. For a 'time-starved mother' (Hochschild 1997, p. 233), help from their mothers is the best and

safest solution. In this study, it is clear that the cooperation between two women – the old, retired mother and the professional, high-income daughter – is the common family strategy among women bankers in mainland China to cope with their roles of corporate manager and family manager.

6.4 Expected and the Unexpected Consequences: Three Contradictions and Ironies

The tension created by family and work pressures, and the dilemma of juggling commitment to one's individual achievement and family obligations, exemplify life's paradoxes and complexity. The women's stories in this chapter demonstrate contradictions and ironies: an individual is restricted by society while refusing to be restricted. By understanding the contradictions and ironies embedded in the life trajectories of Chinese women working in the banking industry, we can gain a deeper understanding of the interdependent relationship between society and the individuals within that society. Following are three situations representing contradiction and irony that emerged from the study.

Being Single: Freedom or Burden?

Being single allows a woman banker a great deal of freedom, yet it can also be burdensome. Singlehood can set women free from time constraints experienced by married women, allowing them to devote themselves to work, including overtime. However, others may draw on it as a negative condition to manipulate office politics. For example, two women in Guangzhou explained:

The societal pressure is heavy once they know your marital status is single or divorced. They talk so much about you behind your back. You carry such a huge, invisible, psychological burden. Our society doesn't mind the 'level of pureness of women' (*nüxing de chunjie du* 女性的纯洁度), but people still pay so much attention to your marital status, like whether you are married or not, or have you given birth to a child or not. If you are of mature age but still single, there will be a lot of gossip about you. We have a female colleague in a very high managerial position. She got divorced and has remained single. People always talk about her using swear words. People discriminate against women of mature age if they are not married (Case CH9, Department Head, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

Most of the time, if a female boss reaches 30 to 40 but still hasn't got married, her personality is very harsh. She is single and so she will treat her subordinates as if they are single too. She doesn't need to rush home after work and she always expects her subordinates to work at the office as long as she does. But if female bosses are married and have their own family, they will encourage their colleagues not to do much overtime. I prefer it if my female boss is married, like me. Currently, I have a female boss who is older than me. She doesn't like going home after office hours, as she will be alone at home. She enjoys staying in her air-conditioned office until 9 or 10 P.M. If you leave earlier, she thinks, 'I'm still here, why do you dare to leave earlier?' Many of my colleagues believe that she stays in the office not for work, but to gossip over the phone (Case HK2, Customer Service Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

CH9 worked in Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong province, which is relatively progressive city in China. Guangzhou was named a 'National Central City' in 2010 and a 'National Civilized City' in 2011 (Cartier & Tomba 2012, p. 41), but CH9 felt that the role expectation toward women in this city is still tradition-oriented. Although a single female professional is not viewed as being 'abnormal', she is viewed as not having 'a complete personality' (*wanquan de renge* 完全的人格). HK2 blamed her boss's harsh personality on reaching mature-age and remaining single, which meant she lacked understanding of and empathy for women with families. The unmarried women of mature age in China are commonly referred to as *lao gu po* (spinsters 老姑婆). This term is usually used in a derogatory manner and is associated with negative characteristics, like being unconcerned, cold, eccentric, lonely and strange. In mainland China, another ironic title for this group of women is *miejue shitai* (savage nun 灭绝师太), after a well-known fictional character in Jin Yong's (Louis Cha 金庸) famous novel, *Yitian tulong ji* (*The Heaven Sword and Dragon Sabre* 倚天屠龙记). In the novel, *miejue shitai* was a third generation *zhangmen ren* (proprietor 掌门人) of the Emei Sect (*Er Mei Pai* 峨嵋派). She was a tough, strong, cold-hearted nun. In recent years, the Chinese state intentionally created the term 'leftover women' (*sheng nü* 剩女) through China's mass media in a campaign to stigmatise urban, educated, single women (Fincher 2014). These terms for mature, unmarried women reinforce the socially constructed discourse of what 'normal' women should be. HK2 attributed her female boss's unkind management style to her unmarried status. While she might not have intended to simplify that individual's behaviour, she nevertheless reproduced the negative social discourse on mature unmarried women. In fact, the explicit and implicit

discourses of unmarried female bosses' character flaws involve deep-seated gender-role norms and the complicated office politics strategies exhibited by women themselves.

In this study, women who were single, due either to never being married or through divorce, were expected by their families to be more devoted and flexible for family duties, especially when their parents were in need. Many respondents stressed this point, for example:

> My mum got sick. Therefore, I preferred to work at a branch close to my mum's home. Being a woman, I had to take care of my mum while I was working hard at my bank job. I even went back home for lunch with her. I was always rushing to go back home to be with my mum as I knew she was waiting for me at home. My boss joked that I was *guixin sijian* (bent on returning home like an arrow 归心似箭) (Case HK11, Senior Relationship Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Hong Kong).

> I have to take care of my father. I have to support his life financially. I am the only one to bear this economic burden. My sister is already married and she has two children. She does not give money to my father as she has already 'retired' from her job to take care of the children. I am under economic pressure as I have a family member to look after. I cannot afford to be unemployed (Case HK 17, Assistant Manager, Taiwanese-owned bank in Hong Kong).

The family role of 'dutiful daughter' often becomes exaggerated when a female is single – HK11 has a younger brother, and HK17 a married older sister. Both in mainland China and Hong Kong, families placed higher demands on daughters than sons to care for elderly parents (Hong Kong Council of Social Service 1994; Salaff 1981; Wong 2005, 2009). Similarly, unmarried daughters were expected to be more dedicated to family duties than married ones. Under such a culture, one consequence for single women professionals was that they were plagued by a double burden (Croll 1983; Milwertz 2009; Salaff 1981; Wolf 1985). At home, they were expected by their male or married female family members to take on a larger share in caring for their elderly parents, and at work they were expected to be more flexible to do overtime or take business trips. This double burden was a tough challenge that caused a lot of pressure on women bankers in this study.

Being a Mum: Career Breakdown or Bridging-up?

The commodification of the female body for use in the service industry in China is common and is known as the *qingchun fan* (rice bowl of youth 青春饭) phenomenon (Zhang 2000). Although the banking industry is comparatively less concerned about a woman being young, age is still an important factor in her overall opportunity for career development and gaining promotion in mainland China. For example, two respondents from mainland China made the following remarks:

> Those *lingdao* (leaders 领导) in banks in China are now much younger. The
> majority of female managers are in their early or mid-30s while male managers are

between 30 and 40 years old. It is rare to have a leader older than 50 nowadays (Case CH10, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

Age is one of the key considerations for promotion in many banks in mainland China. If you are promoted to a certain position, you have to be around 30, or under 35. For a few particular levels, the maximum age is 40. Most of the middle managerial positions are assigned to colleagues below 35. If you are older than this age-line, they will not consider you. For top managers, they are usually aged between 40 and 45 years old. Forty-five is the maximum (Case CH4, Manager, Mortgage Department, Chinese state-owned bank in Shenzhen, China).

Thus, reaching 35 years of age has two meanings for women bankers in mainland China. First, it is the invisible, informal cut-off for middle management. Second, it is a key stage in her fertility. Many mainland respondents experienced strong pressure to have a child from two important sources, parents at home and bosses at work. Elderly parents tried to persuade their daughters (or daughters-in-law) to have a child before it was too late; bosses pressured a woman with high expectations to have a child, but not too early. In banks, there was strong discrimination against pregnant professionals, as described by a married banker without children:

When I applied for a new bank job in Guangzhou, they asked me to sign a 'No Pregnancy' statement, a written guarantee to not become pregnant within the first year and a half of employment if they hired me. I refused to sign it and so they decided not to recruit me. They even called me later asking me to reconsider their

offer. I hate such a guarantee letter. … Now, I am facing a tough situation. I have just been promoted to Department Manager. Since I've already been married for three years but still haven't had a child, my boss keeps on asking me if I have any plans to get pregnant or not. He won't give me any important project if I have plans to get pregnant. My boss once publicly indicated in a meeting that he was very unhappy and upset by a woman colleague because she got pregnant six months after she joined the bank. Another pregnant colleague got a very low job evaluation although her workload had not been reduced and her contribution was similar to other colleagues. I heard that the bank cuts at least 50 percent of your year-end bonus if you take maternity leave. One of my female colleagues experienced such a cut. She tried to make a formal complaint but it didn't work. Indeed, if you make a complaint, everyone in the bank would think you are a *yi lei* (alien 异类). After working in banks for many years, I've heard of more and more cases about unfair treatment toward pregnant colleagues. Although I'm now used to such a thing, I still think it's unfair, but my feelings of indignation have lessened. I have no choice but to accept this situation (Case CH9, Department Head, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

CH9 indicated that the 'no pregnancy' time period clause was an informal but real requirement for female employees in many mainland banks. Women are expected to be totally devoted to their work, to be on stand-by for any assignment, to be available for any high-energy business trip, and to be flexible to do overtime. The contract indicates that being pregnant is considered failing to fulfil these expectations. Pregnant women are stigmatised as 'incapable', 'distracted' and 'unable to work with all their strength'.

As a result, as CH9 pointed out, their year-end bonuses are automatically cut, showing how much less pregnant women are thought to contribute to the bank. This discrimination is tangible in the form of 'punishment': negative evaluations on job performance, fewer bonus rewards, and no opportunity to take on important projects. Nor is such unfair treatment isolated; they are common practice in banks in China. There is no sufficient institutional mechanism available to bankers who fall pregnant, to protect their rights. Instead, if a pregnant woman makes a formal complaint, she will be labelled a trouble-maker and in the case of CH19's colleague, an 'alien'. Some women even commented that pregnancy created an extra burden for their colleagues. One manager in Shanghai said:

> I think all people know that female staff are more troublesome. They need to get married and give birth. Our bank recruits many young graduates. They join our bank at a young age, usually about 24 to 25 years old and they get married after they have worked in the bank for two to three years. Then, it is very likely that they want to give birth. Once they are on their maternity leave, their work has to be redistributed to other colleagues. This is a burden for the whole department. We call this a *fei zhandouxing caiyuan* (non-combat layoff 非战斗性裁员). Because of a colleague's pregnancy, the workloads of all other colleagues have to be increased. … When women come back to their job after their maternity leave, they usually resume their previous job but they are distracted. They need to look after their new-born child. They have to take time off for breast-feeding. I think most of my bosses are not willing to have this kind of situation in their branches. It happens everywhere in China. They all think that women are more troublesome.

Many branches are facing this problem. In my department, there is one colleague already pregnant, one is planning to have a baby, and another one will get married next month. It will be no surprise if she gets pregnant soon after her marriage. This is a headache for me (Case CH17, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

In China, the state maintains a crucial role in planning its urban territory and economic structure, especially in Shanghai at Liujiazui, the state-promoted international financial centre (Cartier 2015). In state-owned banks in China, 'non-combat layoff' is a term commonly used to ridicule women on their maternity leave. Using the military term 'non-combat' is in line with the Communist Party's mass ideology campaign for mobilising people effectively to support the government's national policy. In his speech in the Central Caucus on 16 January 1980, Deng Xiaoping, the most influential market-reform leader in China, stressed that the Chinese Communist Party should be combat troops (*zhandou de duiwu* 战斗的队伍) and 'only if the whole party rigidly obeys central government, then the party will be able to lead all party members and all Chinese people to combat, in order to achieve the great task of the modernisation of China' (只有全党严格服从中央，党才能够领导全体党员和全国人民为实现现代化的伟大任务而战斗) (Deng 1980). Prior to 1995, all Chinese banks were state owned and were treated as 'administrative arms of the Chinese government' (Hawes & Chiu 2007, p. 208). With the implementation of the PRC Commercial Banks Law in 1995 aimed at improving the performance of Chinese banks, the Chinese government attempted to transform Chinese banks 'from policy lenders to commercial institutions' (Hawes & Chiu 2007, p. 208). All Chinese banks, apart from a handful of designated policy banks, were

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required to restructure themselves in order to survive the stiff competition present in the open market. The challenge became more severe after China joined the World Trade Organisation in December 2001 (Hawes & Chiu 2007). The Chinese government used nationalistic development rhetoric to target women urging them to mobilise and cooperate with the government's plan (Edwards 2000). The military term 'non-combat' used in state-owned banks fabricates an atmosphere where employees are closely aligned with the government. The term 'non-combat layoff' describes the temporary status of women on maternity leave, insinuating that due to their falling pregnant, they have no value to the company and that they create a burden for the bank. Nevertheless, ironically, many women bankers in state-owned banks in China in this study have no negative feelings towards this term. Rather, they followed and cooperated with the state's ideology.

CH17 had a two-year-old son, yet being a mother did nothing to make her sympathetic towards pregnant colleagues. On the contrary, she held the prevailing negative point of view shared by other managers, without antipathy toward the discourse of 'women are more troublesome'. She agreed that pregnancy was a burden to the company. In this study, the internalisation of institutional discourse to ridicule pregnancy is common among women bankers in mainland China. They feel a strong sense of guilt if they fall pregnant soon after promotion, and work much harder to reduce the 'costs' to their bank and to reduce their bosses' disappointment. This self-stigmatic view of pregnancy is a collusion of discrimination against pregnant women by women, surely a contradiction if ever there was one.

The life stage of an expectant mother can have two contrasting effects on her career development: it can cause a career break-down as result of negative labels being attached to the pregnancy and then to being a working mother; or it can be a turning point for further promotion. In the eyes of top managerial teams, women are more stable and reliable after giving birth. Following are explanations from two women bankers who addressed the reasons for this:

> I had no career progress or movement during those years of pregnancy and of caring for my baby. For about two years, my whole life was focused on family. It was very difficult to have any career movement. When my kids turned three, I started to take a leadership role. … I think my boss trusted that I would be much more committed to my job as I had already had my kids and also I'd already gone through the most attention-demanding period for my children. If you haven't had a child, your boss will think about when you are going to have your first baby. If you have your first child, he may worry that you will have a second one in the future. But I gave birth to twins. I've already got two children. So, my boss believes that I will not have any more (Case CH13, Associate Director and Head of East China, Foreign-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

> Most women colleagues work harder and perform better after they have given birth. It may be because they have more family responsibilities after they have children. To keep a good job and take up their family responsibility, they have to work harder and better than before (Case CH17, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

Under the one-child policy, the majority of women in cities are permitted to have only one child, but some cities have implemented a new policy that allows couples to have a second child if both husband and wife are from single-child families. None of the respondents in mainland China had more than one child, except for CH13 who had twins, and many indicated the one-child policy was strictly implemented in all state-owned banks; to have more than one child was to violate the policy and forfeit a job with the state. The stringency of the policy has been interpreted as an informal guarantee of no more pregnancy for women bankers who already have a child. CH13 stressed that her promotion to a leadership role was partly because of her status as a mother of twins. Her boss evaluated her chances of getting pregnant again as low. CH17 indicated that her colleagues worked harder to secure their jobs after giving birth. Under a specific social circumstance like China's one-child policy, the identity of being a 'mother' has two sides: it can be an obstacle blocking a woman's professional career movement, and it can also serve as a stepping stone for their career advancement – a contradiction and irony.

Grandmother as Half a Mum: Enhancement of Traditional Familial Roles or Empowerment of the Roles of Modern Professional Women?

A common coping strategy for Chinese women bankers, particularly for those in mainland China, is to use the children's grandmother as a reliable, trustworthy family carer, playing the role of 'half a mum' to the children while their own mothers are away from early in the morning to late at night. However, this inter-generation cooperation as a coping strategy creates another kind of tension between the traditional mother and her modern, professional, banker daughter. For example, one female Branch President said:

To be frank, my main family pressure is from my mother-in-law. My

mother-in-law lives together with us. She is a very traditional woman. From the

very beginning, she was not happy and complained about my coming home late

because of business entertainment. She doesn't understand my work situation. She

sees me drunk and she doesn't accept this. She said that she was concerned about

my health. She told me it was not good that women drink wine. I think she cares

about me (Case CH5, Branch President, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou,

China).

CH5 admitted that her mother-in-law greatly helped her. When she was fully occupied

by her busy schedule at the bank, or when she moved from the city where her husband

and son were living to take up her new managerial job, her mother-in-law became the

key care-giver of her teenage son and her busy lawyer husband. CH5 attributed her

career mobility partly to the great help she received from her mother-in-law, whose

presence relieved her of family duties allowing her to be more focused on her career.

This is an example of positive mother-daughter, inter-generational cooperation. But at

the same time, her mother-in-law was also the main source of psychological pressure.

CH5 explained that her mother-in-law had been a housewife for a long time and had a

traditional outlook; she had little understanding of the importance of business

entertainment for female professionals. She saw business entertainment and drinking

alcohol as a man's job, believing a good woman should not get drunk. CH5 interpreted

her complaints about drinking as concern for her health, which helped control her

response towards her mother-in-law. Nevertheless, the pressure was evident and tension

between them reflected a gap between the gender role perceptions of the two

generations: the mother-in-law with a gender role perception deeply rooted in culture and tradition; while her professional daughter-in-law accepted and adopted the business-oriented expectations of a capable female manager. The elder perceived women as needing to display modesty in the workplace. Other elders put pressure on their professional daughter-in-law to give birth as soon as possible. One manager who had been married for three years but had not yet had a baby pointed out the following:

> My parents-in-law placed a lot of pressure on me. They tried to persuade me not to work too hard. They wanted me to change my current job and get an easier and more relaxing one in order to take care of my family and to give birth to a child. My husband also works in banking but my parents-in-law think that I should be the one to sacrifice my career development in order to have a baby. It's very difficult to communicate with my parents-in-law. They won't accept my thinking. I don't want to have any conflict with them. So, I just listen to them without making any response. They won't force me to do anything but they grasp every possible opportunity to express their wishes (Case CH9, Department Head, Chinese state-owned bank in Guangzhou, China).

CH9 had a very good educational background, she obtained an undergraduate degree in international business and a master's degree in global economics from a famous university in Guangzhou. She originally worked at the head office of a well-known provincial bank in Shenzhen, while her husband worked in Guangzhou. In order to stave off problems associated with living apart, she made a sacrifice by transferring to a local sub-branch in Guangzhou so she and her husband could live together. Previously, at the

head office, CH9's department was a core unit of the bank overseeing issues in 26 branches in different cities throughout Guangdong province; but at the sub-branch, although she worked in the same department, it was not a core unit of that branch. For CH9, moving from Shenzhen to Guangzhou was a personal sacrifice for the sake of her family. Later, she was promoted to a new managerial position as a department head, but her parents-in-law, especially her mother-in-law, did not feel happy about her advancement and asked her not to be too aggressive in her career development. They kept on reminding her, as often as they could, that her most important life-goal was to have a child. Her husband, who had been her university mate, worked at the head office of another bank. His career progressed well and was he confident he had great potential to move further up in the bank. He had the same very traditional gender role expectations as his parents. As a single child he believed a woman should put family first and career second, and CH9 began to feel that, at the end of day, she was just a woman to him. Her husband was also reluctant to share the housework, and they often quarrelled at home. To CH9, making a second career sacrifice by having a child would mean she had failed as a well-educated professional.

Mothers with working daughters also hold the traditional idea that having a stable job and being loyal to one *danwei* (work unit 单位) is important. Among a total of 18 respondents in mainland China, 13 worked for only one bank, the longest being 27 years at the same bank, and the shortest five years. Most of the bankers in mainland China in this study were between 35 and 45 years of age, and their parents were in their 60s. They would have experienced being poor during the harsh years from the 1950s to the 1970s, and this may have influenced their view that job stability was the most

important consideration for building a good life. Jobs were rare, let alone career opportunities for women, hence, as one deputy manager put it, her parents' generation would persuade their daughters to stay in one bank to enjoy a more stable life. She added:

> My parents certainly want me to *anan fenfen* (stay within my bounds 安安份份) and work in one bank until retirement. They want me to be content with my current work status. I joined the bank right after I graduated from university. My parents told me it is not easy to reach my current position and so I should treasure it (Case CH12, Deputy Manager, Chinese state-owned bank in Shanghai, China).

Shanghai has received praise as China's 'modern metropolis' and it has been reputed as 'China's capital of fashion as well as of opinion' (Yeh 1995, p. 97). CH12 was born in Shanghai and she received her university degree in a Shanghai university. She thought of herself as a modern Shanghainese, but she admitted that her parents still highly valued traditional beliefs of loyalty. The expression, 'be loyal to your husband until your death' (*cong yi er zhong* 从一而终) highlights the importance of a woman's loyalty toward her husband in Chinese culture. Although the belief of being 'loyal until death' has already lost its power to constrain the love life of many women in contemporary Chinese society, loyalty is still regarded as a valuable virtue for employees in state-owned banks. CH12 has worked in the same bank for 15 years, and said she did not see herself leaving. Her determination to remain was strengthened by her parents, who encouraged her to stay at the same bank for a better and more stable family.

Mothers of women in the banking industry in China clearly have two influences on their daughters: while they can help empower the women in their career mobility, they can also encumber them by trying to promote traditional gender roles at home. One banker's mother kept telling her: 'Be simple, be stable, be relaxed. You don't need to earn a large amount of money. Let your husband earn the money!' Her mother was a great help at home, but she was also a great defender of traditional gender roles and gendered divisions of labour at home. Inter-generational cooperation was not a coping strategy without conflict, rather, it was entangled with stress and anxiety.

6.5   Conclusions

Women professionals in this study represent the concept of a modern woman (*xiandai nüren* 现代女人) in many ways: they are a group of female professionals working in a highly globalised service industry. In the eyes of the public, they have well-paid jobs and high, respected social stature; they are confident, independent and strong. But behind closed door, inside the family, they are like many other women who work for a wage: they face challenges involving being starved of time, a care deficit, and self-guilt. Facing tension generated by gender and generation perception clashes and the pressure of developing a personal career while under the patriarchal paradigm of family obligation, women bankers located in different social structures used different strategies to map their own career development. Cooperation between a wife and her husband, between an elite woman and her female domestic helper, and between a busy daughter and her retired mother demonstrate that these strategies involve negotiating with others, adapting roles and attitudes, and at times navigating through stormy seas.

Based on the experiences of my respondents and their families in Australia, migration can free people from traditional sex-role stereotypes. When people leave a country, they not only physically leave the place but also, to a certain degree, step away from a type of social control mechanism that is deeply rooted in social practices, cultural traditions, values and beliefs. The freedom that results from departure provides a foundation for role flexibility and exchangeability. This can be an important coping resource for migrant woman professionals in the banking industry like my respondents in Australia.

The discussion of three contradictions and ironies which were embedded in the life trajectories of my respondents brings to mind the metaphor of the double-edged sword (*shuang ren jian* 双刃剑). The identity of being single, married and a mother has both negative and positive effects either on a woman's family life or on her career mobility. This motivates us to rethink the social construction of gender and the power politic of interpretation.

Chapter 7

Conclusions: Gender, Negotiated Opportunities and Politics of Trust

This cross-national comparative study began with a timely question: what are the roles and work realities of women professionals working in rapidly developing, financial industries in world cities? The global world facilitates complex connections between financial centres in cities and nations. 'Financializing capitalism' is a dominant force behind the evolution of the global world (Pollard 2012, p. 416). Financial industries are among the most globalised and tend to concentrate in particular cities that serve as national and international business hubs.

My personal observation of female managers who provide financial services for family members in Hong Kong, and my understanding that more and more women are working in international banks in middle or upper managerial positions in cosmopolitan cities like Shanghai, Hong Kong and Sydney, motivated me to seek answers to this question. Economies are shaped by ideologies and practices of gender (Pollard 2012). Thus, the global phenomenon of the feminisation of service industries calls for a deeper understanding of female professionals who are quickly emerging as significant actors in service-driven economies.

A city is an important site in the flow of social relations (Agnew 2005). World cities are located in the most globalised economic space, and provide a platform to explore the intertwined social relations that exist in global to/from local space and local to local space. These include the relationships between public and private issues – external

forces and internal motivation, rational decisions and emotional devotion. The intersection between an individual's experiences, an institution's cultural environment and a city's macro political-economic situation produce a complicated reality for individuals in a globalised world. Therefore, a study on the roles of female elites in forming multinational networks in financial service firms, their collective work situation, and their daily challenges and coping strategies in the workplace and at home contributes to a re-examination of the nature of globalisation, modernity and capitalism itself.

The study focuses on Chinese women professionals working in the finance and banking industry during a time when China's economic power and influence increased, and a growing number of transnational Chinese worked and lived in metropolitan areas in developed countries like Australia, resulting in a new social, economic ecosystem for Chinese professionals working in the service industry. It provides a comparative study of a group of professionals located in different social-political-economic systems. It also identifies the stepping stones, barriers, and consequences of different career opportunities for women.

These conclusions summarise key findings from the empirical data. First, I outline the relationship between geographical location and opportunities for women's career development. Second, I explain spatial interconnectedness between cities and the politics of trust between local and non-local people. Third, I summarise gender politics in the workplace. Finally, I also reveal the conflict and cooperation between genders and among generations experienced by women professionals.

7.1 Geographical Location and Negotiated Opportunities

One interesting geographical finding is that my research shows how the location of the firm influences opportunities for career advancement. The location of a bank is embedded within hierarchical fields of power and leads to different client groups, and ultimately, to different opportunities for upward mobility. In Australia, working in a branch located in suburbs with large Asian immigrant populations, like Parramatta, Cabramatta and Chatswood in Sydney, plays a significant role in the career mobility of women professionals. The concentration of Asian migrants in these suburbs forms a vibrant cultural economy where ethnic capital is a vital resource. Professionals use this resource to advance their careers, and by banks use it to expand business. Many Chinese women professionals in Australia are like pioneers. They are at the forefront of developing business in new urban economies in world cities like Sydney and Melbourne that attract Asian immigrants,

Spatial politics within a city and between a nation and a city both influence the experiences of highly skilled women professionals working in banks in Hong Kong. Within the city, there is a hierarchical power distribution among different areas. Images and social discourses of the 'spatial coding' (Allen 2003) of particular areas, such as key financial districts in the city, have symbolic power and are used as strategic tools for business development. Work experience in a branch located in an important district correlates with an individual's perceived level of ability. In this city level of spatial politics, I explored two related aspects of relational geographical location. First, the economic power of Central District (Zhonghuan 中环) in Hong Kong contributes to the high social recognition of bankers working in this location. Second, bankers display

multiple identities by using differentiated styles of language and dialect when interacting with different client groups in different branches. This spatial strategy involves evaluative interpretation of perceptions because clients themselves tend to make class distinctions in different service settings.

The spatial politics between a nation and a city involve hierarchical stratification of identities. In foreign international banks in Hong Kong, politics of ethnicity, gender and race set an invisible barrier limiting opportunities for Chinese professionals to move into senior management positions. The top executive positions are usually dominated by non-Chinese with the same or similar racial and cultural background as the CEO and directors of each bank's country of origin. In Chinese state-owned banks, ethnic politics is an insurmountable stumbling block to the career advancement of non-Party member Hongkongers. The 'Beijing boss' views Hongkongers as another type of Chinese and displays a diminished level of trust in these non-Party members. In addition, such workplace politics informally introduce the Party to Hong Kong, which does not operate openly in the SAR.

In mainland China, women professionals in service industries are key players in fast-growing urban economies. However, this study finds that uneven political power and economic development among cities results in hierarchies of managerial power among branches located in different cities. Because the Chinese state decides the role of a particular city in the development of the national economic plan, a city's position in a province or region determines how much administrative power and what economic resources the central government distributes to a particular bank branch.

Thus, a woman gains advantages by working in certain branches. The career paths of women professionals working in state-owned banks have a common feature: cross-territorial movement is a prerequisite for promotion. The majority of female managers in these banks do not change employers but work in a number of branches with varying levels of rank, and in a number of cities with varying tiers of importance and 'civilisation' or development. A branch president in Guangzhou summed up the situation explaining that it was a necessity to have *yidi jiaoliu* (exchange experience across regions 异地交流). If you refused to go to *waidi* (outside places 外地), then you would not receive opportunities for promotion. Besides city positioning, the level of a city's development affects the career opportunity for women professionals in mainland China. In less developed cities, women's upward mobility is obstructed by localised gender norms and discourses that include discrimination against women. But in developed cities, like Guangzhou, Shenzhen or Shanghai, it is more acceptable for women professionals to work in upper-managerial positions.

The career development of elite women professionals in China, Hong Kong and Australia in this study indicates that we cannot understand an individual's external and internal life until we place an individual in her unique geographical location – her social position in a particular place.

7.2   Spatial Interconnectedness and Politics of Trust

Globalisation paradoxically merges 'presence' and 'absence' and brings together distant and local events. In this era of mass transportation, cross-boundary communications and

long-distance travel, urban professionals can, through frequent visits and cross-boundary business development, maintain and nurture their multi-site ties, simultaneously integrating social networks across different cities, even different countries. Globally mobile economic elites, including highly skilled financiers, are playing an important role in shaping the daily practise of transnationalism which has extended time and space in ways unmatched by any previous age.

Though the presentation of a day in the life of a woman banker in Hong Kong, I argue that globally interconnected economic forces have impacted the way of life of women professionals: their work patterns, their everyday experiences, and their public life, including encounters with clients, colleagues and friends living nearby or thousands of miles away. The movement of complex social resources between global and local has fostered dynamic cross-boundary, circular relationships (Urry 2000). The high frequency of international and local business trips forge global-to-local and local-to-local connectivity. Because of an increasing focus on cultivating business, short-term human movement is increasingly associated with the global expansion of financial firms. Hence, it is not surprising that being mobile is a common feature of all of my respondents in Australia, Hong Kong and mainland China.

The study also found that the concept of 'face' is still important in the Chinese value system. 'Seeing face' is correlated to 'giving face' in Chinese business culture. For example, a senior private wealth manager working in an Australian bank in Melbourne commented that her clients in Taiwan felt she had 'given them face,' when she and her colleagues flew there to visit them in person. Her clients talked in a more cordial

manner and the content of their conversation was different when they met in person. She felt her trip had definitely strengthened the business relationship. The Chinese phrase, '*Jian mian san fen qing*' (If you ask him in person, he will show you 30 percent of his compassion 见面三分情) implies that not seeing someone in person will result in less compassion which translates into less, or no business. Therefore, travelling across cities or countries to meet globalised client groups face to face – to see each other's face – is an important element in building, nurturing and maintaining a 'personalised relationship'. To be mobile or not is not a personal 'choice' but a 'must'. It is a necessary business strategy to cultivate a feeling of 'we' and to build and maintain the degree of trust needed for long-term business relationships.

Banks also require professionals to maintain translocal working patterns to meet clients and colleagues in other cities, and to implement two internal control mechanisms. First, managerial teams of international and national firms need to travel and meet regularly to maintain consistent governance among branches. Face-to-face discussions contribute to better communication among colleagues and more effective policy implementation across different branches located in different cities or nations. Second, travelling to meet clients is another way of implementing a 'translocal audit'. For example, the vice-president of a marketing department in a foreign bank in China, pointed out that talking to clients in person is crucial for a bank to collect key evidence needed to control or analyse risk. Similarly, the manager of a private banking section in an Australian bank explained that she had to visit her clients' factories or offices in China to carry out a type of 'on-site auditing'. By comparing the vocal information gleaned from clients and the written information submitted by the same clients, banks can better assess the

truthfulness of any claims, and the reality of a client's position or situation. These translocal working patterns had a profound effect on the Chinese women professionals in this study. As translocal and transnational travellers, they play significant roles in creating and maintaining strong interlocked networks, expanding global connectedness.

The interviews with women mangers in mainland China demonstrate a strategy of 'walking on two legs' (*liang tiao tui zoulu* 两条腿走路). On the one hand, global finance capitalism requires this group of professionals to 'move', to 'detach' from a particular place. On the other hand, the trust system in Chinese society emphasises spatial-connected relationships. This means bankers need to cultivate local relationships that are based on common roots or connections to a particular territory. Spatial networks of trust not only play an important role in building stronger relationships with local clients, but is also a hidden selection criteria used by banks for recruitment of professionals.

Interviews with experienced branch heads or senior managers in mainland China, who had worked in banking for more than 10 years, indicate that Chinese banks prefer to hire local people. This local-oriented recruitment pattern not only prevails in second-tier cities but also in Guangzhou and Shanghai, which are comparatively modern, open, well-developed cities. This widely-practised localism is actuated by the Chinese *hukou* system (household system 户口制度) and reinforced by the social construction of differences between ideas about *bendi ren* (local people 本地人) and *waidi ren* (outsiders 外地人). The managerial teams in many banks in this study transformed this social discourse into an unwritten institutional recruitment policy. They believe that

staff from the local *hukou* system have higher integrity because members of local networks maintain a degree of intra-group surveillance on their activities – keeping them honest. They also feel that they have a greater capacity to develop *renyuan wan* (net of personal popularity 人缘网) with local clients as they can communicate on the same level. In contrast, the stereotypical view of non-locals is negative: they lack understanding of local culture; and locals feel that there is a higher degree of risk of them committing illegal activities in their work in the bank. The distinction between *waidi* and *bendi* in the banking industry appears to be a distinction between trustworthiness and untrustworthiness, and an ability to create local networks and an inability to do so. The politics of ethnicity, in parallel with the politics of ethnicity and gender, is apparent in the increasingly diversified working environment in international banks.

7.3 Place and Space: *Nü Hanzi* and Desirable Womanhood in Banks

Jobs are gendered (Massey 1994) and the division of labour is socially constructed, valued and rewarded (McDowell 1999). Gender dynamics at international banks is complicated by and entwined with social and cultural norms and values. The study found that although mid-level management is rapidly becoming feminised, banks still favour men in top managerial positions. Moreover, women professionals working in the finance industry in general, and in international banks in particular, are expected to manifest an ambidextrous gendered performance, shifting between femininity and masculinity. For example, in the culture of 'business after wine' in mainland China, women bankers have to act like a '*nü hanzi*' (tough lady 女汉子), and exhibit their 'manhood' by drinking profuse amounts of alcohol. This helps them to gain entry into

the 'men's club' and build *guanxi* with top government officials and top corporate managers. Heavy drinking is viewed as important for maintaining a relationship between banker and client because it stirs people's emotions allowing them to share personal stories and express deep, inner feelings, and this strengthens the trust a banker and her client feel toward each other. This is in line with the Chinese idiom, 'Wine in, truth out' (*jiuhou tu zhenyan* 酒后吐真言). Heavy drinking is also viewed as important for maintaining relationships between bankers and their bosses. Drinking without hesitation during business meetings is thought to be an indicator of a person's determination to give her best, and to show her loyalty and supportiveness towards her boss. Thus a woman can enter into the boss's inner circle, she can be part of the 'insider group' – something vital for future career mobility.

Although evidence from this study demonstrates that performing the role of a 'hanzi' (brave man 汉子) to build a 'code of brotherhood' with male clients and bosses contributes to a good job evaluation, the interviews show that many women professionals also attribute their upward mobility to what they view as womanly characteristics: such as being careful, empathetic (literally, showing strong affinity, *qinhe li* 亲和力), soft, tender, good at policy implementation and paying attention to detail. Selling femininity (Hochschild 2003) appears to be a common business tactic in developing personalised relationships in the financial industry. Women professionals sell themselves as part of the transaction. They use charismatic womanhood and harness heterosexual attraction and ambiguous feelings between professional service and personal intimacy as intentional business strategies to contribute to their success. Traditionally women are viewed as carers in the family, or as people who display

personal concern for others. The women in this study made use of this in their work, in their public life, to 'add value' to their business service.

The study also found that women use femininity as a tool to deal with office politics. Women managers in male dominated offices believe that their presence reduces tension and stifles arguments between men; and that men act more politely when there is a female in their presence. The majority of female professionals in this study believe that a woman's softness and tender personality functions as a 'heterosexual sedative' in the work place – 'softening the male heart'. But these perceptions result in collusion between these women and a stereotypical gender discourse. Men as a social group have constructed a particular perception toward particular skills to benefit their own gender and to disadvantage women (Noon & Blyton 1997). If male colleagues acted more politely or gently when they participated in management meetings, it was because they intentionally chose to perform in a more rational, calm, professional way to benefit themselves and to create the social construction of excellent managerial skills associated with masculinity, which justify men's power at the top.

The social discourse on feminine qualities or characteristics does not always benefit women managers, especially when facing limited opportunity for upward mobility into the male-dominated, upper-management levels. In fact, almost every woman I interviewed discriminated against women managers, resisting the idea of having a woman boss. They tend to have a misogynistic perception of female bosses (Mavin 2006), claiming that female bosses are too conservative, too emotional, pay too much attention to details, and intensively monitor subordinates. Conversely, they praised male

bosses, stating that they have broader vision, give more freedom and autonomy to subordinates, and have better management skills.

When women managers competed against one another for promotion, a paradox occurs: women interpret what they had previously described as valuable, female personality traits, as a negative gender stereotype. Women prevent other women from gaining higher positions. This reflects a 'crab-pot mentality': it is as if women are pulling each other down, like crabs clambering over each other in a bid to get out of a pot. The result is that women face additional difficulties to move into top-level positions. Not many women professionals in this study admit to this kind of collusion with the discourse of gender inequality. Rather they try to justify their situation by reinforcing the gender perception that family should be the most important thing for a woman and men are more suitable for top positions. This is especially common among women professionals in mainland China.

7.4 The Intersection of Work and Private Life: Conflict, Confrontation and Cooperation

The study reveals a common scene: the majority of women professionals I interviewed in Australia, Hong Kong and mainland China work 'triple shifts'– that is, professional work at a bank, housework at home and 'emotional work' toward family members (Hochschild 1997). This situation widely exists irrespective of country or place. They take on managerial roles in public, as corporate managers, and act as family managers in private, at home. These two 'managerial roles' inevitably cause tension as they attempt to balance personal career development and family obligations. They devote much time and energy to keeping up their daily work routine and high frequency of local and

international travel to provide personalised service to clients in the fast-moving, highly globalised financial industry. Then, they spend more time and energy fulfilling family obligations. This is especially difficult for those who have minor children or elderly or sick family members at home. While their work yields public recognition and feeling of personal value, it also spawns feelings of guilt because of a 'dereliction of duty' as a mother and wife. The strain of trying to balance these two roles is more severe because of the intersection of two forces: the service economy is increasingly providing opportunities for women to move into higher managerial positions, while the traditional Chinese gender discourse of 'being a virtuous wife and a good mother' (*xian qi liang mu* 贤妻良母) exerts significant influence.

The clash of 'gender strategies' between two-job couples (Hochschild 1989) is another invisible but real factor causing stress and conflict for women professionals. The different perception of what a husband and a wife should do at home and at work is associated with a gap between economic development and social ideology, particularly concerning gender equality at home. This social situation is more notable in the transitional society of mainland China. Empirical evidence in this study indicates that when Chinese men '*dapin shiye*' (strive for career 打拼事业) 'outside', in the workplace, Chinese women generally support their men 'inside', at home. Families feel proud to have a successful son, husband and father and there is no demand on a career man to help with housework. But when professional women are successful in their careers, their husbands and their mothers-in-law complain and even accuse them of not taking good enough care of the family. Some husbands feel that they lose *mianzi* (face 面子) because their wife has attained a higher social status or a more successful career

than them. Comments like, 'You are only a woman! What's the point of working so hard?' are often the prelude to a quarrel in such relationships.

Many women in this study find 'emotional work' at home, the third shift, to be a particularly difficult task. Their private lives become entangled with their public work, and their business mentality intrudes on and even replaces their family mentality. Ambition and efficiency gradually become prerequisites for family life. They act impetuously, displaying a lack of patience because they subconsciously expect their husband to be proactive like their colleagues and their children to be efficient in doing chores and homework like their subordinates. This unintended encroachment of work attitude into private life paradoxically turns the desirable home coming into stressful confrontation and conflict. The third shift becomes emotionally draining.

The comparative analysis of women professionals in three key research sites reveals an intricate and complex lineage between coping strategies, state policy, an individual's resources and spatial-based norms. Most women professionals interviewed in this study successfully cope with working triple shifts, including the challenging third shift, by employing various strategies. Many also manage to balance work and family obligations in such a way that they are not constantly feeling guilty. The women professionals in Hong Kong and Australia are generally more successful in dealing with a clash of gender identities. All of the various strategies these women use to cope with these challenges involve cooperation within the family, and in the case of many in Hong Kong, with female domestic helpers.

Many migrant women I interviewed in Australia successfully use role flexibility and exchangeability between husband and wife as a coping strategy. When people move from one country to another, they often liberate themselves from sex-role stereotypes rooted in cultural norms and value systems. Some respondents in Australia explained that they are lucky because they married a 'good man' who is willing to care for domestic work. However, this study argues that this was not a matter of personal luck. Rather, it is a consequence of families on the move adopting new social recognition present in the receiving country. Such cooperation is also achieved through an ongoing process of negotiation between the migrant wife who has opportunities for career advancement in the urban service economy and the migrant husband who finds it difficult to enter the workplace, or to establish (or re-establish) a career in the new country.

In Hong Kong, cooperation between women professionals and their female domestic helpers is a common coping strategy. Women professionals outsource housework and child care to other woman to mitigate the problems of care deficit within the family and time starved working parents. All respondents with non-adult children in Hong Kong have at least one live-in nanny or housekeeper. The service provided by comparatively lowly-paid women from less developed countries like the Philippines and Indonesia opens the way for women professionals to advance their careers in the highly-paid financial market. I call this cooperation between two women, 'horizontal cooperation'. It is an emerging urban trend 'liberating' young, well educated women, allowing them to pursue their career as '*xiandai nüren*' (modern women 现代女人).

Most respondents in mainland China use a different kind of family cooperation as a coping strategy – cooperation between professional daughter and her retired mother, including, in many cases, her mother-in-law. I call this type of cooperation, 'vertical cooperation'; and in China people call adults who still depend on their parents' resources in some way, *ken lao zu* (elder devouring clan 啃老族). In fact, many respondents identified themselves as *ken lao zu*, dependent on their parent's time and physical energy for child care, rather than their material or economic resources. The majority of respondents in mainland China make use of this inter-generation partnership, but in two different ways. Some retired mothers move from their home to become a live-in grandma-nanny. Sometimes they are accompanied by their husbands and sometimes not. Other grandparents take care of grandchildren in their own homes and the respondents become 'weekend mothers' – they take their child home to spend weekends together as a nuclear family. Respondents view grandmothers as the most reliable and trustworthy carers, and there is a general lack of trust in *baomu* (nannies 保姆) who do not have any blood relationship with the family. Although this arrangement helps women professionals to be more focused on their careers, constant, close contact with their mothers, ironically, also emotionally encumbers many of them because the older women incessantly urge them to be more family focused and to slow down in pursuing their careers. The older women are great defenders of traditional gender roles. Nevertheless, respondents in mainland China use this vertical cooperation as their key coping strategy.

Increasing feminisation of mid-level management in the banking industry characterises Australia, Hong Kong and mainland China. Nevertheless, we cannot conclude that this

is a victory for women's rights or a new sense of equality in the banking industry. It is no longer frontier women staff, but women in much higher levels of management, beyond the branch manager level, who face barriers impeding women's upward mobility. The career paths of women professionals working in the finance and banking industry indicate that there are factors at work that transcend the boundaries of the individual microcosm. The glass ceiling is real and continues to exert its invisible, negative impact. The informal barriers deeply embedded in the social structure and culture of both local society and international companies often block the upward mobility of women professionals. The intersection and sometimes collusion of ethnic politics, business or capitalist interests and social norms create structural barriers for women's upward career mobility. Factors and structural forces such as ethnicity and gender are intertwined with and compounded to produce deep and far-reaching effects that are often beyond the control of the individual actor. Understanding the work of women in banking and finance helps us to understand how social contexts continue to matter in this highly globalized industry, and how they incrementally advance better lives for themselves and their families at the crossroads of capitalism, globalising modernity.

Appendices

Appendix A

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Invitation to Participate in a Study
of Chinese Women Bankers in Australia and China

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My name is Vivien Chan Wai-wan and I am a PhD candidate at Chinese Research Centre, University of Technology Sydney. I am conducting a study of the Chinese women bankers in Australia and China. The target respondents of my study are Chinese female bankers who have worked in international banks for at least three years at the middle- management level or above. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with these Chinese women bankers.

Chinese women bankers are making some important breakthroughs in the financial and banking industry but research on this group of professional still lags far behind studies of other issues in Chinese studies. Specifically, my study aims to : 1) analyse the difficulties and challenges encountered by Chinese women bankers; 2) collect, analyse and offer policy suggestions and recommendations toward maximizing women's strengths and contributions in the industry.

My study would contribute to a mutual understanding between the non-Chinese portion of the Australian population and the Chinese women professionals in the banking industry. Such mutual understanding, I believe, would enhance Australia's social harmony and economic development.

I should be most grateful if you would kindly support my research project by granting me an interview and/or referring me to other appropriate target respondents. A typical interview takes about 45 minutes to one hour, and is held at a place and time at my respondent's convenience.

I want to assure you that the identities of my respondents and the contents of the interviews will be kept strictly confidential at all times. The research data gathered from this project will be used for my PhD dissertation and may be published in the form that does not identify the interviewees in any way. I am happy to share with you the findings of my study upon their completion.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have on my study and the interview. You can contact me at vivienwwhk@gmail.com or call me at 0424536188. If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772. My UTS HREC Approval Number is 2013000227.

Thank you so much for your support and assistance.

Yours truly,

Vivien Wai-wan Chan

China Research Centre

University of Technology Sydney

关于在澳洲和中国的女性银行家的研究

我是来自澳洲悉尼科技大学中国研究中心的博士研究生陈惠云。我目前正在进行一个关于在澳洲和中国的中国女性银行家的研究。是次研究的对象主要是那些目前或曾经在零售和投资银行工作超过三年，并且出任为中级管理层或以上的中国女性银行家。研究采用面对面深入访谈的方式。

中国女性银行家对于银行和金融业作出了不少重要且具有突破性的贡献，但是相对于其他关于中国方面的研究，我们对中国女性银行家的研究还十分不足。是项研究的主要目的包括 :1)分析中国女性银行家目前在职业发展方面所遇到的困难和挑战；2)收集有关政策方面的意见和提议,从而让中国女性银行家的专长和贡献得以最好的发挥。

我深信是项研究能够促进澳洲社会中非华人群体和华人女性银行家双方面的深入了解，从而促进我们社会的和睦共处，也为澳洲经济的长远发展有所贡献。

得悉您能够在是项研究中提供非常宝贵的意见和资料，如若得蒙您的协助，接受我的访问或者推荐适合的人选给我,将不胜感激。访问维时约 45 分钟到一个小时，访问的地点和时间可根据您的方便来安排。

我們保证会严格保密受访者的个人资料，而经采访的所有内容只用来做学术用途（包括我的博士论文撰写及相关学术文章的发表），但您的个人身份将绝对不会被公布出来。我也非常乐意在将来和您分享有关的研究成果。

我非常乐意解答您对是项研究的任何疑问，您可以直接和我联系，我的手提电话是：0424536188，邮件信箱：vivienwwhk@gmail.com。如果您想和校方负责研究批核的同事进一步了解情况，您可以通过电话 02 9514 9772 和我们学校的"研究伦理部门"联络，我的伦理申请编号是 2013000227。

衷心感谢您对我是项研究的支持和协助。

祝：
安康！

陈惠云
悉尼科技大学中国研究中心

Appendix B

**Interview Guide for Research on Chinese Women Professionals
Working in the Finance Services and Banking Sector**

Daily Work

1. Job entry: When, why and how did you begin working in the banking sector?
2. Job description: What are your main tasks? Who are your key clients (what are their profiles, age groups, gender, race)? What different practices do you employ to deal with various clients in different branches (based on different racial/ethnic background, gender, class, age group, marital status, occupation, education level)?
3. Transnational practice: What type of travel are you involved in (within country, cross-border)? Where to? For what reasons? For how long and how often? What (if any) difficulties do you face?

Challenges/ Difficulties and Coping Strategies

1. Challenges and difficulties at work: What? Why? How do you cope? Who do you go to for help?
2. Family responsibility versus career development: In what ways are you struggling and coping? Describe your life course.
3. Identity as a Chinese and as a woman: What are the advantages and disadvantages?
4. Conflicts at work: Do you face any conflicts with colleagues? What and why?

Culture and Career

1. Gender ratios in management teams: What are the ratios where you work? What is your interpretation of these numbers? What is internal promotion and work evaluation mechanism? What effect do these numbers have on upward mobility for women?
2. Managerial culture: Describe the managerial culture where you work? In your workplace, are there conflicts because of cultural misunderstandings? Explain.

3. Managerial style: A female boss vs a male boss: what are the similarities and differences? Which do you prefer and why?
4. Future career development: How do you foresee your future career development? Do you foresee any big changes in the banking industry? What future trends do you anticipate?
5. Work satisfaction: How would you rate your work satisfaction? Do you want to leave your bank, why or why not? Do you want to leave the city where you currently live, why or why not? If so, where do you want to go?

Transnationalism and Social Life

1. Connections: What are your connections with your hometown, your former or present colleagues/friends in other countries, cities or professional organizations? How often? How do you keep in contact with them and how often do you do so?
2. Social life: Does your after-hours social life include your colleagues? What is the gender ratio and racial background of those you interact with socially?
3. Social network: Who are the 10 key members in your social network? What is their gender, race and country/city of residence? What type of relationship do you have with them?

Other Questions

1. Do you have any suggestions: for other women professionals working in the banking industry? for banks? for the government?
2. Personal information: What is your age, education, marital status, country of origin, income? Where do your family members live?

中國女性銀行家訪問大綱

日常工作：

1. 簡述一些個人工作背景(來悉尼前後，離開的原因)及入行的經過和管道.
2. 描述在銀行的日常工作流程，主次為何？主要的客戶是什麼人(中國人/亞洲人/本地白人/非亞洲移民)？服務不同的客戶是否需要不同的技巧和策略？
3. (transnational practice in everyday life) 工作上是否需要經常出差(與中國的來往情況)？若是的話，去哪裡？主要做什麼？不同地方的跨區合作及聯繫頻率怎樣?(總行和分行的分別)？

挑戰/困難與應對策略：

1. 你的工作中最大的挑戰和困難是什麼?你是怎樣應付的？和在不同國家/城市比(若適合)，差異何在?傾訴和求助人是誰?現在身居何地?
2. 女性在職業發展和家庭責任(婚姻狀態,家人居住地)是否面對更難以兼顧的困難?主要的挑戰是什麼?是否有階段性?你的情況怎樣?你的應對策略是什麼?

3. 中國人身份(來源地,溝通語言)和女性身份(外表打扮,婚姻子女狀態,興趣話題)在銀行工作有什麼優勢和劣勢(客戶關係/生意招攬/同事關係/職業升遷)?為什麼?

文化和職業發展：

1. 在公司管理架構中，男女性別比例為何?你怎樣理解這種情況？銀行的管理架構，評估標準和升遷機制是怎樣的?
2. 銀行的工作文化？在工作中是否出現因為文化差異而導致的誤解和衝突?
3. 男上司和女上司在管理風格上有什麼異同之處?你個人的取向是什麼?
4. 怎樣評估在西方的個人事業發展前景？銀行過去出現過什麼大的變遷嗎?未來銀行業的發展方向是怎樣的?
5. 工作給予你的最大樂趣/滿足感是什麼？是否有離開銀行業/悉尼的念頭？有的話，想去哪裡發展(香港,上海?)為什麼?

跨境聯繫和社交生活：

1. 你和你的家鄉/過去居住或者工作過的城市，海外的舊同事/朋友，專業組織保持著怎樣一種形式的聯繫?頻率?主要活動?

2. 公司中同事之間(男與女，女與女，不同族群/來源地之間)社交往來是怎樣的?是否出現過衝突? 原因何在?如何解決?具體例子?
3. 你社交網路中最主要的十個成員是誰(性別,種族,認識途徑)

其他

1. 建議: 對女性，對銀行業,對政府.
2. 個人的背景：年紀，教育水準,婚姻,來源地，家人居住地，大概年總收入.

Glossary

Chinese Terms

Pinyin	Chinese	English
anan fenfen	安安份份	stay within my bounds
baomu	保姆	female maids who mainly look after children
bendi ren	本地人	local residents with local hokou
buxiao you san, wu hou weida	不孝有三，无后为大	there are three forms of unfilial conduct, of which the worst is to have no descendants
chaxu geju	差序格局	differential mode of association
cong yi er zhong	从一而终	be loyal to your husband until your death
cufanshi guangli	粗放式管理	extensive management
danwei	单位	work unit
dapin shiye	打拼事业	strive for career
diyi bashou	第一把手	first man
duigong yewu	对公业务	corporate business
duisi yewu	对私业务	retail business
Ermei pai	峨嵋派	Emei Sect

faji	发迹	to gain fortune
fei zhandouxing caiyuan	非战斗性裁员	non-combat layoff
fengmao linjiao	凤毛麟角	as rare as phoenix feathers and unicorn horns
Fenhang	分行	Level-1 branch
fushou	副手	second hand
gei mianzi	给面子	giving face
gong jia	公家	public owned
gong si	公司	company
guixin sijian	归心似箭	bent on returning home like an arrow
guoqi	国企	state-owned enterprises
guoying beijin	过硬背景	strong background
hong tou wenjian	红头文件	red head documents
hougu zhiyou	后顾之忧	troubles back at home
huayi	华裔	overseas Chinese
huji zhidu	户籍制度	household registration system
huji zhidu	户籍制度	registration system
hukou	户口	household register
jian mian san fen qing	见面三分情	if you ask him in person, he will show you 30

		percent of his compassion
jian mian	见面	seeing face
jiang renqing	讲人情	favour consideration
jiceng qianxian danwei	最基层的，最前线的单位）	base, front-line unit
JinYong	金庸	Louis Cha
jiuhou shengyi	酒后生意	business after wine
jiuhou tu zhenyan	酒后吐真言	wine in, truth out
jiupin hao	酒品好	good ability in drinking strong wine
kaifang chengdu	开放程度	degree of openness
keju zhidu	科舉制度	China's imperial examination system
ken lao zu	啃老族	elder devouring clan
lao gu po	老姑婆	spinster
liang tiao tui zoulu	两条腿走路	walk on both legs
lie jiu	烈酒	strong wine
lingdao	领导	leaders
maque suixiao, wuzang juquan	麻雀虽小, 五脏俱全	small as the sparrow is, it possesses all its internal organs
mianzi	面子	face

miejue shitai	灭绝师太	savage nun
nan zhu wai, nü zhu nei	男主外，女主内	men outside, women inside
nannü dapei, ganhuo bulei	男女搭配，干活不累	one is not tired if men and women work as partners
nei	内	inside
niuniu nienie	扭扭捏捏	shilly-shally
nü hanzi	女汉子	tough ladies
nü qiangren	女强人	superwomen
nüxing de chunjie du	女性的纯洁度	level of pureness of women
qingchun fan	青春饭	rice bowl of youth
qinhe li	亲和力	strong affinity (empathetic)
quan tianxia	全天下	the whole world
renjin	韧劲	tenacious
renyuan wan	人缘网	the net of personal popularity
ruxiang suisu	入乡随俗	when you enter a village, follow the local customs
shang you zhengce, xia you duice	上有政策，下有对策	those above have policies while those below have their own ways of getting

		around them
sheng nü	剩女	leftover women
shuang kuai	爽快	straightforward
taotai	淘汰	phased out
tiao xian jiehe	条线结合	combination of vertical lines
tie fan wan	铁饭碗	iron rice bowl
wai	外	outside
waidi	外地	outside place(s)
waidi ren	外地人	outsiders, people who have come from other provinces without local hukou
wailai ren	外来人	outsiders, people who come from other places
waisheng ren	外省人	people come from other provinces
wanban jie xiapin, weiyou dushu gao	万般皆下品，唯有读书高	to be a scholar is to be at the top of society
Wangdian	网点	Level-2 sub-branch (literally, 'point of net')
wangnu chengfeng	望女成凤	hope one's daughter will grow up into a phoenix
wangzi chenglong	望子成龙	expect one's son will turn

		out as a dragon
wanquan de renge	完全的人格	a complete personality
wenming chengdu	文明程度	level of civilization
wu yi leiju, ren yi qunfen	物以类聚，人以群分	things of a kind come together, people of a mind fall into the same group
xian nei zhu	贤内助	good domestic helpmate
xian qi liang mu	贤妻良母	a virtuous wife and a good mother
xiandai nuren	现代女人	modern woman
xiongdi hang	兄弟行	brother branches
ya chan gan	压场感	persuasive power
yi lei	异类	weird person
yidi jiaoliu	异地交流	exchange experience across regions
Yitian tulong ji	倚天屠龙记	The Heaven Sword and Dragon Saber
yu quanqiu jiegui	与全球接轨	setting China on the track of globalisation
zhandou de duiwu	战斗的队伍	combat troops
zhangda er bu chengren	长大而不成人	grown up physically but lack ability to be independent adults

zhangmen ren	掌门人	proprietor
Zhihang	支行	Level-1 sub-branch
zhihang	支行	sub-branch level
Zhishu Fenhang	直属分行	Direct branch
zhiyou quandan yange fucong zhongyang, dang cai nenggou lingdao quanti dangyuan he quanguo renming wei shixian xiandaihua de weida renwu er zhandou	只有全党严格服从中央，党才能够领导全体党员和全国人民为实现现代化的伟大任务而战斗	only if the whole party rigidly obeys central government, then the party will be able to lead all party members and all Chinese people to combat, in order to achieve the great task of the modernisation of China
zhongguo ren	中国人	a national Chinese

Names of Places

Causeway Bay	铜锣湾
Central District	中环
Foshan	佛山
Guangzhou	广州
Kwun Tong	观塘
Lujiazui	陆家嘴
Mei Foo	美孚

Mong Kok	旺角
Pudong New Area	浦东新区
Sai Wan	西环
Sai Wan Ho	西湾河
Sheung Shui	上水
Tai Po	太埔
Tsim Sha Tsui	尖沙咀
Tsuen Wan	荃湾
Wan Chai	湾仔
Zhaoqing	肇庆
Zhaoqing City Branch	肇庆分行
Zhongshan Eight Street Branch	中山八路支行
Zhongshan Xiaolan County Branch	中山小榄支行

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