

Acknowledgments

This research would not have been possible without the financial support of a number of organizations. These include the Fulbright IIE program, the Social Sciences Research Council's IDRF program, as well as support from the University of California's Institute for Labor and Employment and its Graduate Division, both of which funded the writing stages of the project. Preliminary research trips were supported by the Institute for East Asian Studies at UC Berkeley.

In Harbin, there are more people to thank than space allows, but I would like to recognize the indispensable aid and support from a few. At the Harbin Business University, Xu Xiaofei, Lu Guangyuan, and their staff; at the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences, Zhao Ruizheng, Lu Rui, and their colleagues. Many supportive friends include Yi Yongwen, Shi Xiyang, Yang Yuanzhan, Li Jing and her family, Chi Yingge, Lin Lin, Teacher Zheng and his family, Lu Bo and her husband, and Wang Yanhong. In Beijing, thanks to Liu Fei for her friendly aid and Wu Xiaoying and her husband for their welcome and hospitality. I owe a tremendous debt to the managers and workers at both department stores I studied; Manager Liu and others from his cashmere sales office; and the people who welcomed me into *The Underground*. It is a gross understatement to suggest that this book could not have been written without their participation and help.

Teachers and mentors at UC Berkeley provided critical intellectual support. A Ph.D. student could not ask for a more patient, encouraging, and supportive mentor than Tom Gold, who read every chapter of the original dissertation with care, interest, and insight. Michael Burawoy challenged me to rethink my arguments in key ways, for which I am grateful. Raka Ray supplied critical insights as well as down-to-earth direction. Gil Eyal was somehow able to envision the core of the analysis long before I could. And Kevin O'Brien read and commented on the

entire dissertation and provided kind and welcome encouragement. This work is greatly strengthened by each of your contributions.

Earlier versions of some of the chapters have been published elsewhere. Portions of Chapter 3 appear in "Serving the State, Serving the People: Work in a Post-socialist Department Store," pp. 91–109 in *How China Works: Perspectives on the Twentieth-Century Industrial Workplace*, ed. Jacob Eyferth (London; Routledge, 2006), reproduced by permission of Thomson Publishing Services. Parts of Chapters 1 and 4 appear in "The Gendered Rice Bowl: The Sexual Politics of Service Work in Urban China," *Gender & Society* 19(4): 581–600, reproduced with permission from Sage Publications, Inc. And portions of Chapter 6 appear in "Sales Floor Trajectories: Distinction and Service in Postsocialist China," *Ethnography* 7(4): 461–91, reproduced by permission of Sage Publications Ltd. I am grateful for permission to include these materials.

This book has benefited from the generosity of many people, though I have often been too stubborn or obtuse to follow their advice. Tom Gold's cross-disciplinary dissertation writing group at Berkeley provided me with outstanding advice, even while I was still in the field! Thanks in particular to Eileen Otis, Ken Foster, Bill Hurst, Seio Nakajima, Jaeyoun Won, Jianjun Zhang, Emily Yeh, Maranatha Ivanova, and Kun-Chin Lin. Other fellow students of China who have supported and shaped this project include Zwia Lipkin, Terry Woronov, Dan Buck, Eddy Yu, Jennifer Choo, Leslie Wang, Chris Sullivan, and Suowei Xiao. At the University of British Columbia, the China Studies Group has provided a crucial forum to develop some of the ideas included in this book, and my colleagues in the Sociology Department have provided an excellent intellectual home. My thanks also go to Ching Kwan Lee, Jacob Eyferth, Rachel Sherman, and Christine Williams. Comrades at Berkeley who provided a warm and engaging intellectual environment include Jennifer Utrata, Allison Pugh, Manuel Vallee, Cinzia Solari, Malcolm Fairbrother, Harold Toro, Bill Hayes, and many others.

Equal and likely greater debt is owed to the writing group who for many years read (and re-read) every chapter of this work. Teresa Sharpe, Isaac Martin, Lynn Rivas, Chris Neidt, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen were all central to this project at different and in some cases at every stage. You have nourished me in mind and . . . stomach! I am more grateful than I can express. And thanks, of course, to Elsa Tranter, without whose aid graduate school would have been unthinkable.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to my family: Mom, Dad, Bridget, Kate, and Dan; and to Nathan, for your exquisite sense of perspective.