

Abstract: This paper investigates facework ethnographically, in relationship to strategic action in financial markets. It argues that financial facework, understood as identity-constitutive, expressive displays undertaken by professional, specialized groups, is consequential with respect to mobilizing capital flows in markets and provides a strategic resource for groups competing for such flows. Facework subordinates expert financial knowledge to expression and emotionality, and aims at producing likeable professional identities. Financial facework sheds light upon the link between the financialization of everyday life and the financialization of media industries, and upon the latter's role in capturing capital for investments. The empirical case underlining the argument is provided by financial actors, who are a distinct, professional, institutionalized group in Hong Kong's financial services industry, and who act in financial shows on TV, radio, and the Internet. These shows are distinct from financial news and analysis, and emphasize expressive expertise. They highlight how the financialization of media industries generates professional hybridization, which can be used as a strategic resource in advancing careers in finance and in competing for capital flows. Financial actors use expressive expertise to signal likeability to audiences. This, in turn, enables them to steer and capture capital in the form of fund investments.