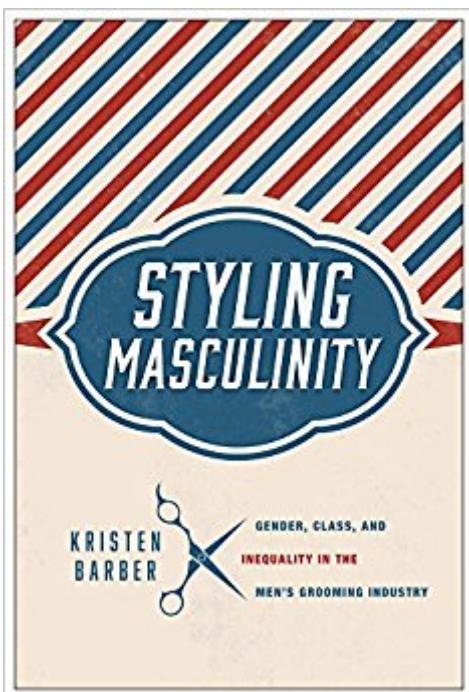


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# **Styling Masculinity: Gender, Class, And Inequality In The Men's Grooming Industry**



## Synopsis

The twenty-first century has seen the emergence of a new style of man: the metrosexual. Overwhelmingly straight, white, and wealthy, these impeccably coiffed urban professionals spend big money on everything from facials to pedicures, all part of a multi-billion-dollar male grooming industry. Yet as this innovative study reveals, even as the industry encourages men to invest more in their appearance, it still relies on women to do much of the work. *Styling Masculinity* investigates how men's beauty salons have persuaded their clientele to regard them as masculine spaces. To answer this question, sociologist Kristen Barber goes inside Adonis and The Executive, two upscale men's salons in Southern California. Conducting detailed observations and extensive interviews with both customers and employees, she shows how female salon workers not only perform the physical labor of snipping, tweezing, waxing, and exfoliating, but also perform the emotional labor of pampering their clients and pumping up their masculine egos. Letting salon employees tell their own stories, Barber not only documents occasions when these workers are objectified and demeaned, but also explores how their jobs allow for creativity and confer a degree of professional dignity. In the process, she traces the vast network of economic and social relations that undergird the burgeoning male beauty industry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A deep examination of the rise of male beauty culture." (The New York Times) "Though the grooming work and shop floor are evocative, Barber's attention moves beyond hair to the

social exchanges that take place [bringing together emotional labor, aesthetic labor, and physical labor, all the while highlighting the role of sexuality.] (Gender & Society)"A well-researched contribution to the sociology of work, gender studies, and consumer culture [Highly recommended.] (Choice)"Barber's book innovatively combines theories of work, gender, and culture. It makes a significant contribution to masculinities research. Anyone teaching or conducting research on gender, social class, qualitative methods, work, inequalities, and culture will find this book to be compelling. It is nuanced and rich in detail." (Men & Masculinities)"What does it mean that [contemporary men are going to salons, getting their nails done, or dyeing their hair?] Kristen Barber [examines how these practices are intimately related to shifting definitions of masculinity, and actually buttress gender, race, and class inequalities. A compelling and colorful read.] (C.J. Pascoe author of *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*)"Barber [provides excellent insight into how women groom men while upholding their gender and class identities, and how masculinity and beauty are not at odds with each other.] Truly a pleasure." (Jamie Mullaney author of *Paid to Party: Working Time and Emotion in Direct Home Sales*)How it became OK for guys to take care of themselves: an interview with Kristen Barber [<http://goo.gl/o3qExa>] (NPR's Marketplace)Why barbershops are disappearing: And what it means that some still thrive [by Kristen Barber] [<http://goo.gl/mN4nWW>] (The Houston Chronicle)The End of the Barbershop?: An Interview with Kristen Barber [goo.gl/CgX0Zv] (Word of Mouth New Hampshire Public Radio)"Barber's book innovatively combines theories of work, gender, and culture. It makes a significant contribution to masculinities research. Anyone teaching or conducting research on gender, social class, qualitative methods, work, inequalities, and culture will find this book to be compelling. It is nuanced and rich in detail" (Patti Giuffre SAGE Pub)

KRISTEN BARBER is an assistant professor of sociology and a faculty affiliate in the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program at Southern Illinois University [Carbondale.]

Recommend to anyone studying, or teaching, gender sociology.A compelling analysis of gender dynamics of the booming industry of men's beauty services.

Focus too narrow on two salons, does not survey the changing freedom of men to wear hair longer, in tails, in buns, in curls. Ultimately boring.

I bought for my friend.

Every time I go get my haircut, I now think of this excellent book. In it, Dr. Babar highlights how gender and class play a part in (re)producing inequalities within the men grooming industries. One of my favorite parts of this book was Dr. Babar's analysis of how interactions and encounters take place within the sphere of a men's salon. I have new insights about the labor work that is performed within this space. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested in studies of gender, beauty, masculinity, and labor work. This was a great read.

An absolutely brilliant look at how gender inequalities are enacted and reproduced in men's grooming establishments. Will be a go-to book for anyone interested in a sociological take on bodies, masculinities, care-work, or qualitative methods. The writing is lively and engaging to boot.

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