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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

Gendered Informality in Egyptian Beauty' Salons
Egyptian Female Manicurists Who Cannot Afford the Beauty Price

A Thesis Submitted to

the Cynthia Nelson Institute for Gender and Women's Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Gender and Women's Studies
in Middle East/ North Africa

Specialization in Gendered Political Economies

by Hager Faisal Amer

under the supervision of Dr. Martina Rieker
May 2013

The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs & Public Policy (GAPP)

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Specialization: Gendered Political Economies

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DEDICATION

إهداء

أود إهداء هذه الرسالة إلى والديا

نبيلة و فيصل

بفضلكما تعرفت على قيمة العلم
الذى منحنى القدرة اليوم على إجراء هذا البحث العلمى

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents.
Faisal & Nabila

Who introduced me to the value of education,
enabling such a study to take place today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Allah, whose many blessings have made me who I am.

This thesis grew out of a series of dialogues with my thesis advisor, Professor Martina Rieker. I would like to thank her for her patience, guidance, encouragement. I am also most grateful for her faith in the study and its outcomes. Thank you Professor for your continuous support, for answering endless questions, emails and phone calls. I would also like to thank my two readers, Dr. Hanan Sabea and Dr. Jennifer Terrell for their time and their guidance.

I would like to thank all the participants in my study who have willingly shared their precious time during the process of interviewing.

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I owe so much thanks to my fiancée, Ayman. You deserve the greatest acknowledgments. Words cannot describe how lucky I am to have you in my life. Thanks for listening to me and bearing with me. Thanks for making me laugh at hard and stressful time of writing my thesis. Thanks for always being there for me. I love you.

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ABSTRACT

Gendered Informality in Egyptian Beauty' Salons Egyptian Female Manicurists Who Cannot Afford the Beauty Price

Hager Faisal Amer

The American University in Cairo

under the supervision of Dr. Martina Rieker

This thesis analyzes the social world of beauty salons and the lives of Egyptian female beauty workers. Through an ethnographic analysis of the everyday interactions inside the beauty salons, this thesis presents the dynamics of labor relations and class formations. The aim of my research is to bring the social world of the salon into life. I hope to demonstrate a move away from the traditional studies of the beauty industry that highlight women insecurities about their bodies and their experiences in meeting the beauty standards. It is also not my intent to investigate the relation between physical appearance and women's chances in securing better jobs. As a result of the two previous mentioned reasons, women desires for beauty services have increased dramatically.

My goal then is to learn about the female beauty workers who serve those women in meeting the standards of beauty. It is my attempt to show how the gendered spaces of salons are used as sites of reproducing feminized social divisions. I am particularly concerned of the new identities that beauty female workers construct in the beauty salons and what influence does the salon location have on shaping those new identities. Studying beauty salons offers a rich site of observing gendered labour power relations inside the workplace. I analyze labour dynamics and hierarchy of authority inside the beauty salon. Labour dynamics are analyzed through the investigation of patterns of interactions among female beauty workers, clients and employers.

I want to move beyond theoretical debates about service work in general to a more concrete analysis of the everyday lives of beauty workers. I decided to focus my study on those workers in particular not only because they have been overlooked by theorists but also because workers themselves do not comprehend the importance of engaging their labor dynamics in public debates. In addition, studying the dynamics of work in Egyptian beauty salons, offer new ways to think about different gendered meanings that are projected in the workplace that favor male workers while devalue female workers. Since female beauty workers' services are always perceived as doing the dirty work, it is thus essential to explore their strategies of coping and resistance.

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Chapter One

The Servicing Work of Beauty Salons

Introduction

This thesis analyzes the social world of beauty salons and the lives of Egyptian female beauty workers. Through an ethnographic analysis of the everyday interactions inside the beauty salons, this thesis presents the dynamics of labor relations and class formations. The aim of my research is to bring the social world of the salon into life. I hope to demonstrate a move away from the traditional studies of the beauty industry that highlight women insecurities about their bodies and their experiences in meeting the beauty standards. It is also not my intent to investigate the relation between physical appearance and women's chances in securing better jobs. As a result of the two previous mentioned reasons, women desires for beauty services have increased dramatically. My goal then is to learn about the female beauty workers who serve those women in meeting the standards of beauty. It is my attempt to show how the gendered spaces of salons are used as sites of reproducing feminized social divisions. I am particularly concerned of the new identities that beauty female workers construct in the beauty salons and what influence does the salon location have on shaping those new identities. Studying beauty salons offers a rich site of observing gendered labour power relations inside the workplace. I analyze labour dynamics and hierarchy of authority inside the beauty salon. Labour dynamics are analyzed through the investigation of patterns of interactions among female beauty workers, clients and employers. I want to move beyond theoretical debates about service work in general to a more concrete analysis of the everyday lives of beauty workers. I decided to focus my study on those workers in particular not only because they

have been overlooked by theorists but also because workers themselves do not comprehend the importance of engaging their labor dynamics in public debates. In addition, studying the dynamics of work in Egyptian beauty salons, offer new ways to think about different gendered meanings that are projected in the workplace that favor male workers while devalue female workers. Since female beauty workers' services are always perceived as doing the dirty work, it is thus essential to explore their strategies of coping and resistance.

Literature Review

The conditions of waged labour have undergone major changes in the last two decades. To begin with, earlier studies of the labour market have marked certain characteristics in organizing the bodies of wage labourers in the industrial era. Space and time were two basic elements in the process in controlling workers' bodies. In explaining the importance of space, Shilling (2005) explains that Foucault stressed "how modern factory production enclosed, partitioned, and ranked bodies in order to facilitate their functional productivity" (p.79). Similarly, the notion of time was central to Marx analysis of the working day and the ability of the worker in using his/her body to produce more in a shorter time (Harvey, 2010). Later, the Fordist era started on the premise of deconstructing job tasks in order to consume wasted energies by limiting the working body to a specific space. As a result, Shilling (2004) demonstrates that workers' bodies were strongly affected by the repetitive working patterns which resulted in painful bodily experiences (p.83). This was followed by the post-Fordist era which marked the rise of service employment. Flexibility, feminization of labour, low wages, physical appearance and emotional labour are the most distinguishing aspects of the service industry in the

post-Fordist era. Chris Shilling and Linda McDowell have analyzed those aspects in details. Their work is particularly helpful in analyzing the nature of beauty salons as part of the service economy and the body work performed by beauty workers. I will set the scene demonstrating women's entry to the service sector in general and the beauty industry in particular.

Flexibility is the first aspect of service work. Workers are expected to be flexible in accepting extra working hours and irregular schedules (Shilling 2004). McDowell (2009) explains that this is due the fact that "services on offer must be delivered as they are generated. They cannot be stored or used later" (p.30). The stability notion of securing a particular job for many years is no longer guaranteed in the post-Fordist economy. Due to the fact that many women have always been accustomed to irregular working conditions and part-time jobs due to the double labour inside and outside the household and the limited types of jobs available to them, women were more able than men in adjusting to the flexible nature of work. The flexibility effect is strongly linked to the informalization of many jobs where workers work for low wages without legal contracts, fixed working hours and insurance. Since men are "...accorded priority access to the formal labour market" (El-Solh 8) because of the stereotypical gender roles within the households in addition to the image of males as the breadwinners that entitle men a higher status, a large number of women were automatically channeled to the informal service sector. This leads us to examine the feminization of the service sector. One major reason for the dominance of women in the service sector is indicated by Shilling (2004) which is "the normative idea that women's embodied being was 'naturally' suited to domestic and caring work..." (p.87) which associates women with service employment.

In addition, a direct result of the what McDowell (2009) calls the commodification of services previously freely provided at home is the feminization of the service sector. For example, women who used to cook food for the households are now able to sell food for working women who have no time to cook. Similarly, beauty services such as manicuring, hair removal and facial threading, previously done by individuals or offered as a free service by female relatives, are now available as purchased services. However, McDowell (2009) stresses that the very idea of natural services and their previous free production within the household make those services poorly paid. The fourth aspect is the importance placed on workers' physical appearance. Since service workers in most cases deal directly with the client, they are expected to be physically appealing. "The physical attributes of the body providing a service are a part of the exchange that occurs at the point of sale" (McDowell, 2009, p.8). This has resulted in the "proliferation of jobs which maintain and care for all aspects of people's bodily being..."(Shilling, 2004,p.88) such as beauty salons. Building on the above aspects, I will demonstrate proliferation of the beauty industry as part of the service economy.

'The Hairless Ideal' (Basow, 1991), 'Gender and Body Hair' (Toerien & Wilkinson, 2003), 'Hair and the Politics of its Globalization' (Berry,2008), 'Men are real, Women are made up' (Black & Sharma, 2001) are all parts of titles of articles acknowledging beauty practices and which in return demonstrate the significance of the beauty industry. A closer look at Egyptian advertisements explains the proliferation of the beauty services in Egypt. Numerous advertisements used Egyptian, Arab and Western celebrities to advertise for their products. The ideal female image popularized by the media is almost impossible to reach without the professional help of beauticians. Services

like hairstyling, hair dying, hair straightening, full-body hair removal, facial treatments, skin whitening and skin tanning need not only the work of professionals but also their guidance. This has resulted in the excessive need for both individuals and spaces to provide such services. Thus, the Egyptian beauty industry has widely expanded and huge numbers of male and female workers were attracted to the sector. The workspaces of salons were also altered to meet clients' expectations and a great emphasis was put on the structure of the salons and the technologies embedded within. Scholars have studied the experience of beauty salon clients in elevating stress by using beauty salons as sites of pampering (Black, 2002) and shaping clients' perceptions of beauty (Black, 2004; Wolf, 1991). Yet criticism followed spotting the failure of capturing the role of beauty workers and the focus on receivers rather than providers of beauty services. Recent studies have focused on beauty salon workers rather than the salon clients. Gimilin (1996) focuses on classed power negotiations inside the beauty salons. In Gimilin's view, by submitting to clients' wishes, beauty workers fail to keep their professional identities as experts in the field of beauty and thus clients are able to forge classed identities. Godwyn (2006) offers a counter perspective reflecting upon the emotional labour in the service sector which provides an illuminating perspective. The study shows how salespeople and hairdressers can use the workplace to generate and maintain self-respect rather than feeling emotionally alienated. The worker's contribution in creating customers' social identities "establishes the service worker as artisan" (Godwyn, 2006, p.490). This notion is particularly important in assessing beauty workers' job satisfaction and sense of achievement. Willet (2005) study of manicurists in the twentieth century examine manicurists' struggle for autonomy and respect. Although the study

offers an overview of American nail salons and depicts the shift towards employing Asian manicurists, this work has fruitful links with analyses of Egyptian beauty workers. Willet explains that before the entry of Asians in the American beauty industry, a large number of African American women preferred to work as manicurists to escape working as domestic servants for upper-class white women. In addition, the stereotypical image that Willet highlighted of manicurists being marked as “petty thievery” and “gossip monger” are similar to images projected in the Egyptian society about beauty workers. Moreover, Willet explains that the reason why manicurists are poorly paid is that they are placed in the lower hierarchy of the beauty shop and their work is perceived as unskillful. Toerien &Kitzinger (2007) highlight the idea of multiple involvement . They study a hair removal session and the strategy of performing emotional labor that requires both “being ‘multiply involved’ in performing the task and chatting with the client and “navigating appropriately between these involvements” (p.163). It is useful to extend on this study by showing the value of beauty workers’ techniques that many take for granted. In addition, the research by Terrence D. Hill & Christopher Bradley (2010) focuses on the impact on emotional labor on the well-being of beauty workers. The research shows that worker’s feelings of pride and feelings of sadness rest on clients’ evaluations. Kang (2010) study of Korean salons in New York City articulates the nuanced context of class, gender, race, and unequal power relations between women in beauty salons. Kang’s major contribution is offering an analysis that combines both emotional and body labour. In examining three different types of beauty salons, Kang highlights three different forms of body labour: “pampering body labor”, “expressive body labor” and “routinized body labor”. The comparative approach of Kang’s study is particularly helpful to my research

in expressing different forms of body labor according to the classed background of every salon.

The notion of body labor is central to the analysis of jobs available in the service sector. Unlike male hairstylists whose work is limited to touching the clients' hair, female beauty workers offer services that are more complex. The term *beauty* service mask the real labour invested on the body. It is important to stress that reaching beauty is the ultimate goal. However, in working on the bodies of others, female beauty workers have to deal with issues of "...bodily boundaries, intimacy, privacy, touch and sexuality, odours, smells, disgust and visceral emotions...(as) part of the social construction of the work of adornment and bodily modification and part of the interactive exchange between workers and clients" (McDowell, 2009:185). Thus, physical labour that involves the nakedness and the touching of the bodies that are worked on is highly important to address. Although Twigg's (1997) research is focused on providers of bathing and washing services for the elderly, the study is of relevance to services that require working on the bodies of others and in particular beauty services. The notions of both nakedness and touch are highly stressed as Twigg (1997) explains "The link between nakedness and closeness is both aliteral one, in that nakedness permits direct physical touch and closeness, and a metaphorical one, in that to be naked is to divest oneself of protection and disguise" (p.65). This draws the attention to the vulnerability of beauty services' clients and beauty workers' practices in performing services that involve nakedness. Wolkowitz (2002) study highlights the gendered division of labour that involves body work. Working on bodies has been perceived both as a prestigious job (for example work done by doctors) and degrading job (for example work done by nurses and caregivers)

depending on the nature of work and the body parts. Drawing on this study, I will show the gendered meanings of assigning male hairstylists prestigious status as doctors, while assigning female beauty workers a degrading status. In following the work of Wolowitz and Twigg, Purcell's (2009) study is focused on massage work to analyze two key issues which are touch and (in)appropriateness. Cohen (2011) examines jobs that take the body as the site of labor to show the relationship between body worker and the body worked upon. Cohen's study is important because it highlights constraints of rationalizing work that is based on body labor.

Conceptual Framework

Although the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu had little to say about women (Adkins, 2004; Thorpe 2009), contemporary feminists have critically engaged his social theory to theorize a number of issues such as classed femininities (Lawler 2004), gendered workplace identities (Adkins & Lury 1999), gendered capital (Huppertz, 2009), aesthetic and embodied labour (Witz, Chris & Nickson 2003; Pettinger 2005) and working mothers emotional labour (Reay, 2004). Drawing on the original work of Bourdieu and feminists engagements of his theory, the aim of this thesis is to provide an analysis of Egyptian female beauty workers' identities and the labour power relations within beauty salons. Theoretically informed by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, this thesis draws on Bourdieu's three pillar concepts, habitus, field and capital. The thesis demonstrates the usefulness of using these concepts in studying the under examined field of beauty salons. I follow Bourdieu's (1984) formula: “ {(habitus) (capital)}+ field= practice” (p.101). Bourdieu uses the concept of habitus to theorize the construction of the self which orients future actions based on early dispositions. Since habitus affects individual's aspirations, it

is useful in explaining beauty workers' decisions to join the beauty industry. Central to Bourdieu's theoretical framework is the concept of field where power relations take place. Individuals possess basically three forms of capitals: economic capital, social capital (networks of relations with others), cultural capital (forms of knowledge including education). In order to understand power relations inside a specific field, the habitus of agents and their mobilized capitals in this specific field have to be analyzed. The workspaces of salons in this study will then act as the field and a detailed analysis of beauty workers' habitus and forms of capitals will be studied. The struggle in power relations inside the field (the salons in our case) is a reflection of the struggles in the social world among different class fractions in which the dominant class reproduce what Bourdieu calls their "legitimate culture" upon the dominated working-class. In this study, power relations inside the salon among employees, employers and clients will be analyzed in the light of Bourdieu theory of social distinction.

Structure

The structure of the thesis reflects the experience of stepping into Egyptian beauty salons that are located in low-income, middle-class and upper-class neighborhoods across the city of Cairo. The aim of the second chapter is to introduce the readers to the Egyptian beauty industry. The first part will look at the organizational characteristics of Egyptian beauty salons. The second part, deals with the key research questions. I observe gendered labour power relations inside the workplace between workers, clients and salon owners. I start with exploring salon owners' techniques in controlling workers and the labor process. Then, I assess the strategies adopted by beauty workers to manipulate the system. I look at unequal power relations between workers and clients. I critically

engage with Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital in order to understand the process of constructing the identities of workers inside the workplace. In chapter three, I will investigate the factors underlying women's decisions to join the beauty sector. And how does working as a beauty salon worker affect their lives? By employing Bourdieu's concept of capital, I look in more detail at the cultural, economic and educational backgrounds of my informants. I then rework the concept of capital in order to examine how female beauty workers use their female and feminine capital (Huppatz, 2009) as an asset. Chapter four addresses politics of the body. In the first section, I observe how employers use the laboring bodies of the workers to promote for their services. What are the prerequisites of joining the beauty industry? What are the aesthetic bodily routines that allow some female workers to work at high-classed salons while others get rejected? Then, I examine the general patterns of body labour services offered by employers, male hairstylists and female beauty workers. I explore how services offered by female beauty workers reproduce gendered inequalities at work. On the other hand, I show that certain types of services that require the nakedness and touch of clients' help in diminishing classed boundaries between beauty workers and their clients.

Methodology

I have identified the following Cairo sites for fieldwork: Nozha-el Gdeda, Masakn Sheraton, Naser City and El-Qorba. My choice of these salons is based on their location and size. The location of the salon is highly important since it relates directly to the type of customers, the prices offered for services and the kinds of wage-relations and labour contracts offered. In clarifying this further, it is important to look at the type of female clients to analyze the class relationships between them and the female workers. The type of clients also affects the daily wages of the employees by adding the amount of

daily received tips. At the same time, the size of the salon tells us about the owner's background and specialty in the field, the types of services that are offered, the technologies that are incorporated in the workplace and the number of female and male employees and their legal status. By the owner's background, I mean to investigate a number of common factors and explore their relation to my study. The first factor is the gender and the nationality of salon owner since salons are mostly owned by men in Egypt. The second common factor is that the owner is always a professional male hairdresser and rarely just an investor. However, I have also included sample of salons owned by women to explore if there are any significant differences regarding labor relations. The legal status of workers is also affected by the size of the business.

This study uses observations, in-depth interviews and focus group interviews as primary sources. In-depth interviews averaged one hour to two hours. I interviewed twelve beauty workers. In most cases, I had to interview the workers more than one time because it was hard to justify my reasons for conducting the research from the first time. Most of my informants were surprised and I was asked questions like "What made you think of us? Is our job really important and deserve to be studied?" I also received funny and satirical comments such as "Have you exerted all this effort in the educational field to end up doing your Masters on beauty workers?" Although those phrases might sound disappointing, they pushed me every single time to put more effort in studying the lives of those workers. It was even more motivating when my informants got interested in my research and I received phone calls from them to follow up on my progress and check if I need any further help. Although focus group interviews was not initially on my list, beauty workers in Kriss beauty salon were very excited in the idea of my research that

they gathered in one room inside the salon by the end of the working day and locked the room and insisted on having a group conversation which in return was very useful in the course of my research.

Chapter Two

Symbolic Struggles: Power-Relations inside Beauty salons

The Beauty Salon Industry in Egypt

I never saw my mother, who is a housewife, going to a hairdresser. By the age of fifteen, I started to have huge fights with her to allow me to visit hair salons. My mother believes that there is no need for hair salons and that traditional method for hair removals are the best. She also stresses on the natural look and that women should not change their features by getting tattooed eyebrows or changing their hair color. My mother says “Back in our time, only ugly women and celebrities used to go to hairdressers, beautiful women do not need to do so”. In addition, she always expresses how uncomfortable it must feel to let someone work on your body. Besides, the offered services in the hair salons back then were limited to hairstyling and men were dominating the industry. Female beauty workers had then no spaces to work so those who used to offer services like hair removal were offering home services. However, the beauty standards and women’s needs are now tremendously different than those of the sixties. With the increased female labor force participation, women have less time to take care of themselves and use the traditional time consuming and sometimes painful techniques. Thus, women engaged in new beauty routines in order to maintain a professional and attractive look. Bourdieu (1984) highlights the profound effects on the beauty industry as a result of the female participation in the labour market as he says:

The fact that certain women derive occupational profit from their charm(s), and that beauty thus acquires a value on the labour market, has doubtless helped to produce not only a number of changes in the norms of clothing and cosmetics, but also a whole set of changes in ethics and a redefinition of the legitimate image of femininity”. (p.153)

Not surprisingly, the demand for beauty services has increased tremendously and the beauty industry has started to attract both male and female workers. Reasons like the noticeable increasing number of veiled Egyptian women in the last two decades, and the changing nature of services inside the salons have resulted in the over demand of female beauty workers because they offer services that cannot be performed by men. In addition, Egyptian female hairstylists started to establish their own salons. Even the setting of hair salons is different since it has to offer closed areas for veiled women and for special services such as hair removal. In addition, a closer look reveals that the media changed the perception of beauty and had set unrealistic standards. Lebanon had the biggest effect in changing Arab women perceptions of beauty with the representations of Lebanese female singers who have undergone several cosmetic surgeries such as Nancy Ajram, Hayfa Wahby and Myriam Fares, etc. Lebanon has then become very famous for trendy hairstyles and the beauty industry in general. Consequently, Lebanese hairstylists are very welcomed among the elite and upper class Egyptian women, who can afford to pay for their highly expensive services, and became major competitors to Egyptian hairstylists.

Egyptians use the French word ‘coiffeur’ to refer to male hairdresser for women. They also use the same word to refer to the hair salon itself. Only the elite and upper middle class who are privileged to study French at schools can pronounce the word correctly. In lower classes, both the clients and the workers mispronounce the word. Egyptian male coiffeurs typical job is hairstyling while some others are also make-up artists at the same time. While the female French word for hairdresser is ‘coiffeuse’, Egyptians do not use it to refer to a female hairdresser. Instead they do use the same

French word 'coiffeur' but they simply add the feminine ending for Arabic words 'taa', so the word becomes 'coiffeura' and the plural is 'coiffeurat'. . It is also important to mention that the term 'Beauty Salon' has been recently used for elite and upper-class hairdressers. The term indicates that further advanced beauty services are offered in the salon such as body massage. Unlike their male counterparts, female hairdressers do wide range of activities such as hairstyling, make-up, hair removal, eyebrows threading, Henna, facial and body massage, manicure and pedicure. Since women play a vital role in that sector, it is not logical any more to hold the traditional view of hairdressing salons as relaxing sites where female clients are pampered and are able to maintain an attractive physical appearance. Unfortunately, this view overlooks the workers who work inside these salons and the fact that they do belong to the service sector. It is my intent to address the contributions of those women in the gendered service sector of the beauty industry. In the next section, I will show gendered nature of the industry by explaining the gendered tasks offered at beauty salons.

Men for Hair, Women for Nail

The history and character of beauty salons reinforce particular stereotypical patterns. The fact that female beauty workers outnumber male hairstylists in most of the beauty salons does not necessarily guarantee female workers a better or an equal labour value. When female workers were attracted to beauty salons, they were employed to perform tasks such as hair removal, threading, pedicure and manicure. These tasks perceived to be easy and simple since women have always been known of their ability to perform such tasks in the private spheres of homes either individually or with the help of someone in their feminine network of family and friends. Hair on the other hand has

always been perceived as a social marker which needs special care and a skilled hairstylist. Thus, offering hair services have always took place in the public domain of the salon by male hairstylists because it is complicated and requires skilled workers while other tasks as body hair removal and threading require unskilled labor that can be accomplished in the private sphere. Thus, female beauty workers have always been perceived to perform unskilled labour compared to their male counterparts. In McDowell (2009) words, “As women workers self-evidently were seen to rely on their natural talents (variously defined as dexterity, empathy, a caring heart) at work, then it was clear that they should not expect equivalent rewards to men, whose skills had been honed by experience or training”(p.13). However, it is important to look at two things here: Can tasks performed by female beauty workers be classified as natural talents? And why are male hairdressers more dominant in the beauty industry for offering hair services? To begin with, if we take it for granted that tasks performed by female beauty workers are natural feminine talents, then why is there a large demand on these services? And why do clients prefer one female beauty worker to another? One of the most common mistakes is to answer by claiming that the high rate of female participation in the labour market has left them no time to do such services at home. While this is a valid reason, it is not the chief one since many salon clients especially high class salons are housewives. The high demand then reflects the specialty of those tasks and the fact that clients are mindful about who provides the services proves that a skilled worker is essential here. A useful example of this in my study is the case of Neama. Although Neama is the owner of her salon, she is particularly famous for threading eyebrows. Although she has a number of female beauty workers who are highly skilled and provide the same service, clients insist

on Neama and stay for hours waiting for their turn. Neama masters the skill of shaping eyebrows by threading without resorting to tweezers. In addition, clients accept to pay an extra charge in getting their eyebrows done by Neama. But the question remains, why female beauty workers in general and even female salon owners like Neama are not famous for hair rather than other services? To answer this, we have to look at the gendered constructive employment patterns in beauty salons.

Many feminists have contributed in engaging Bourdieu's theories to study gender issues. For example, McCall (1992) criticizes Bourdieu of overlooking gender as a form of capital and as considering capital to be gender neutral. Thus, she calls for the centrality of gender capital to understand "the role of gender in social relations of domination". Similarly, Huppatz (2009) argues that it is essential to understand the distinction between female capital and feminine capital. In her words,

Female capital is the gender advantage that is derived from being perceived to have a female (but not necessarily feminine) body; whereas feminine capital is the gender advantage that is derived from a disposition or skill set learned via socialization, or from simply being hailed as feminine (this occurs when one's body is recognized as feminine). (p.50)

In adapting McCall and Huppatz interpretations in studying Egyptian female beauty workers, two things should be stressed. First, the gendered nature of beauty salon workers allow men to employ their gender capital and maintain their standing as prestigious and skillful hairdresser while excluding female beauty workers since they possess a different gender capital. Second, the female capital of female beauty workers guarantees them an easy access to their jobs since as Hanan, one of the beauty workers, points out "Egyptian female clients can hardly accept, if ever, a male worker to give them a pedicure or manicure not to mention to providing other services such as body hair removal"(personal communication, August, 2012). To illustrate this further, it is useful to

provide an overview of the entry of both male and female beauty workers to the beauty industry. When male workers pursue a career in the beauty industry, they start by getting training on hairstyling. Thus, after a while they get to be hairstylists. However, female workers start as shop cleaners and act as observers until they get promoted to offer other services such as hair removal, pedicure and manicure. Their chances to learn and get efficient training on hairstyling are thus low compared to their male co-workers. In getting a statistical image on a minor scale, Noha states that “In the CityStars branch of Ahmed&Abdou salon, there are twenty-five male hairstylists and ten female beauty workers, only two of the female workers provide hair services” (personal communication, September 2012).

Manal Kriss who is hair specialist explains:

Fear and lack of confidence are key factors in hindering female beauty workers from mastering hairstyling. I had to struggle in order to prove myself as a professional female hairstylist in what was in the past considered a male dominated field. Another reason is the ignorance of many Egyptians who blindly believe that men are better just because they are men. (Personal communication, February,2013)

Neama adds:

Many women assume that men are better in doing hair because they appreciate the feminine beauty more than women do. Also, a client might think that a female beauty worker might be jealous of her and thus will not provide her the best service. I believe that this is totally wrong. I provide the best service to satisfy my client and that what makes me feel a sense of achievement. It is also not a matter of being a man or a woman, it is the skill you have. (Personal communication, March, 2013)

Although the female capital of female beauty workers act as an asset in

performing tasks with no competition with men, their femalenesses restrict them from

being appreciated by their clients in doing other tasks. Huppatz (2009) asserts that,

“When women pursue the most powerful and well paid positions gender power relations and the doxic order de-legitimate feminine and female capitals and

nullify their strategic usefulness. This is where masculine and male capitals continue to prevail – in the struggle for money and power”. (p.59)

Holding this view that favors men over women is what Wright (2006) justifies as femininity being “The principle marker of the untrainable subject” (p.80). In rare but significant cases that help in reinforcing this view is what Huda and Noha state when some veiled clients enter that salon and still ask for male hairstylists because they cannot trust female beauty workers. Thus, what Manal Kriss describes as the “Backwardness of the Egyptian female clients mentality” contributes to the underestimation of the labour done by female laborers.

This culturally imagined lack of proficiency has recently started to change. Both Manal Kriss and Neama assert that many women are as good as men in doing hair. The high rate of veiled women in Egypt has resulted in a dramatic change in the spatial layout and organization of salons. The enclosed veiled sections inside beauty salons have allowed female beauty workers the opportunity to offer hair services without men being their competitors. In that sense, female beauty workers became more advantaged than their male counterparts who are restricted to unveiled clients while female workers can offer their services for both veiled and unveiled women. As a salon owner, Neama stresses “Female beauty workers are more valuable to me than male workers because they can provide all types of services. However, I have to employ workers from both sexes for the salon’s image and to satisfy different types of clients”(personal communication, March, 2013). Although Neama is a female owner and she believes in the power of women to do all types of work, the male figure is still an essential component to complete the professional image in the workplace.

The logic of locations

Although beauty salons might appear very similar since they all provide beauty services, the salon's location construct distinguishing aspects. The salon's location determines the type of clients, services provided, range of prices. Consequently, power relations between subjects inhabiting the space of the salons are formed in a localized manner. McDowell (2009) argues that, "In all types of work, however, but especially interactive service employment, the labour relation is a place-specific, localized one" (p.217). Also, the location and the space of the salon affect patterns of service consumption inside the salon. Since the purpose of my ethnography is not to get generalized findings, I analyze the socio-spatial particularity of each salon. My comparative analysis of five different beauty salons in Cairo traces distinctive labour practices.

The first salon in my study is called Magdy and Sayd , known as M.S, coiffeur. The salon is named after the hairstylists who are brothers. This salon has four branches in Cairo and since it is a family business, branches are managed by family members who are also specialist in the beauty industry by inheritance. The salon is located at one of the main roads of Sheraton neighborhood, off Salah Salem street. The exterior banner of the salon has the name of the salon in Arabic and English. The main entrance is a see-through glass door that has the name of the salon and the following statement in English "Change your life". The salon has four basic areas: A reception area, hairstyling and coloring area, veiled ladies room which includes a waxing area inside with a shower tab. The space is inviting and has six working stations with the red color that complements the white color of the wall and the tiled floor, and one backwash shampoo unit. The

reception area is not only used as a waiting space but is also used for pedicure and manicure as well since there are no pedicure units or manicure tables. Instead, the beauty workers use traditional methods; buckets of warm water. There is no particular receptionist but the owner's daughter and her son take rotations in managing the reception desk and the cashier. If the owners are not available, then Mr. in Arabic "*Aam*" Farouk, the oldest hairstylist in the salon is responsible for the cashier. While the regular presence of the owner or a family member representative is stressful for the workers, it gives a sense of causality and space for the clients to negotiate prices. The salon has six male hairstylists and four female beauty workers. There is no uniform for the workers which mean that their personal tastes are reflected in their choice of outfits. Although the veiled ladies room is always occupied with a large number of clients that it is hard to find an empty chair, it is very small compared to the outside area and is poorly ventilated. Consequently, the pace of work is very fast and clients are very oriented in getting their needs and leaving quickly. Located in the residential area of Sheraton, most of the clients are upper and middle-class clients who live in the neighborhood or nearby.

The second salon in my study is Amal El-Asar Beauty Center which is located in the middle class area of Nasr City. The one distinguished thing about this salon is that it only employs female workers and the owner is of course a female. The gendered space of the salon that does not allow male workers affect the type of clients who visit the salon to be mostly veiled and makes of it an inviting space to clients who feel uncomfortable in seeking bodily services in the presence of male figures in the salon.

Neama Beauty Center is the third salon in my study. It is located in the upper class residential area of Ard-El-Golf in Masr el Gdeda. The salon is also named after the

salon owner. Neama comes from a working-class family. She started to work as a coiffurist at an early age then she started her own business around fifteen years ago. Although it is located in a side street, the coiffeur is very famous and is always full of clients. Free valet parking service is offered by the salon since most of the clients come with luxurious cars. The exterior banner of the salon has the name of the salon in English. The salon has five basic areas: Eyebrows threading area, hairstyling and coloring area, veiled ladies room which includes a waxing area inside with a shower tab. The main area and the veiled ladies room is used for pedicure and manicure since there are no special units available for these activities and thus traditional methods are used. Services are documented manually in a notebook. The salon has ten female workers and seven male workers.

The fourth salon is Ahmed & Abdou beauty salon. The salon has three branches in Cairo, one branch in Sharm-ElShiekh and one branch in the North Coast in PortoMarina. Cairo branches are located in the following areas: Heliopolis, City Starts Mall, Mohandseen. My fieldwork took place in the Heliopolis and City Starts branches. Heliopolis branch is located in an upper-middle class residential area. The space is inviting and well equipped but the pedicure and manicure are performed using the traditional methods. On the other hand, City Starts branch is highly equipped. It has three fancy Pedicure units that function with a simple touch of a button. The units have chairs and electric massage basins with noiseless water pumps. The chair ensures maximum client convenience with adjustable heights. Beauty workers write down each client's services on a receipt signed by the worker's name and handle it to the cashier unit where the client receives a print out of the receipt.

Kriss is a Lebanese hairdresser and the salon is named after him. The salon offers services for both men and women but in separate spaces. The salon has a website, Facebook and Twitter pages. The Facebook, which has more than eight thousands members and the Twitter page offer professional beauty tips for women and post all the updates and offers. English is the language used in presenting all the flyers, advertisements, and website, Facebook and twitter pages. The salon has four branches in Cairo and one branch in the North Coast. The fieldwork was conducted in the El Korba branch, a very prestigious neighborhood in Masr-El-Gdeda. The salon is located in the central commercial street that has luxurious restaurants, cafes, and designer clothing stores. The salon is located in the first floor of a classic building. The space is air-conditioned and the existence of wide windows allows free air circulation. The salon is luxuriously furnished. A coat closet is placed right next to the entrance for the clients. The salon has T.V screens and multi-room music system where you can hear the same music in all rooms. The songs are all in English. The salon uses high quality exported products. The appearance of the salon is even more enhanced with the professional manicure tables and the pedicure units. The salon has an automatic cashier system in the reception area where three employees are standing in formal black suits. Beauty workers wear a uniform. Clients have to set appointments before visiting the salon. The salon operates from 10:00 a.m. till 9:00p.m.

Labour Power Relations between employers and employees

The idea of having a ‘job for life’ is almost impossible to find. While stepping into the most famous beauty salons in Egypt in fancy malls suggest a complete image of professionalism, most of the beauty workers inside those salons do not have employment

contracts. In fact, none of my informants has an employment contract. Besides the fact that many employers refuse to offer their beauty workers contracts to escape paying taxes, workers themselves reject the idea of having a contract. The temporality of employees is one of the main characteristics of what Bourdieu (2001) calls the “neoliberal utopia”. The notion of freedom is what attracts workers to this utopia.

For example, Amal explains:

I would never accept to sign a contract. The good thing about our job is our freedom. Imagine how bad my situation will get if an employer can further control me. A contract in Egypt does not save you, instead it enslaves you. I mean you can see people who have contracts in the public sector and they still complain about many things. (Personal Communication, September, 2012).

Similarly, Huda adds “If I know for sure that having a contract obliges the employer to give me my rights, I would definitely agree. However, the law is not applied anyways and there are no real benefits that are guaranteed” (Personal communication, August 2012).

When I asked Mona about the role of the state in licensing the salons without legalizing the status of workers, she says: “Well, the taxes representative passes by from time to time and the salon owner bribes him and that is it” (personal communication, September, 2012).

It is important to note here that female beauty workers take conscious decisions in staying or leaving their jobs. The above excerpts do not simply reflect individual cases or the opinion of people who work in the beauty industry. Instead, they reflect an Egyptian reality, that reality of the labour market in Egypt. The continuous demonstrations of laborers in the public and the private sector in Egypt assert that formality does not necessarily guarantee workers’ rights. Thus, a shift towards precarious where workers’ sense of freedom is maintained is more worthy than a contract.

However, some employers make use the naivety of less educated workers to control them. For example, Huda explains that the main reason for her to refuse signing a contract is an incident that happened with one of her male co-workers as she explains:

I have a male co-worker whose name is Nader. He is very skillful and the salon owner wanted to make sure that he will stay with them. Their strategy is that they offer buying a car for us and in return we should sign a paper four times higher than the real price of the car and then he pays the installments. Nader was in a need for a car so he agreed. He paid back the whole amount of money but they refused to give him the paper back as he wanted to leave the salon. He stayed for five years until he was finally able to resolve the problem and leave. (personal communication, August, 2012)

The above excerpt shows the power-struggles between employers and their employees that Bourdieu (2011) refers to as the Darwinian struggle. A struggle that is resulted from the employers' fear of losing skilled and well-trained workers and the employees' sense of freedom to move to different workplaces. Bourdieu (2011) mentions that "The ultimate foundation of this entire economic order placed under the sign of freedom is in effect the *structural violence* of unemployment, of the insecurity of job tenure and the menace of layoff that it implies" (p.4).

In another case, Manal expressed the salon owner's frustration when one of her female beauty workers left the salon,

Naglaa was a very skillful worker. She used to work for the salon for many years. When she left, the salon owner did know that Naglaa is going to open her own salon. Naglaa opened a salon in the same neighborhood and the problem is that many of our clients started to go to Naglaa's salon. When the salon owner knew this, she went to Naglaa's salon and had a huge fight with her in front of everyone. She considered that Naglaa stole her own clients. (personal communication, August, 2012)

From the above two excerpts, it appears that employers have their own strategies in controlling their workers. The symbolic struggle is also embodied in who do the clients belong to? Do clients belong to the salon or the beauty worker? The above case shows

that many clients are actually more attached to their beauty workers rather than the space of the salon.

Another symbolic struggle happens in the beauty workers' decision to be ethical and honest with the client versus satisfying the employer. In many salons, employers use cheap products while they convince their clients that they use more valuable ones. Huda explains that this caused her an internal conflict. She believes that this is against the ethics of work. Thus, she decided to be honest with her regular clients as she says:

The salon owner used to use Egyptian hair coloring products of very low quality. The products are very unhealthy and they damage the clients' hair. I could not lie to my clients. Thus, I used to tell them secretly to buy their own hair color products. After a while, the salon owner noticed that all my clients in particular come with their own products. In confronting me, I told her the truth and as result, she fired me. (personal communication, August 2012)

The internal conflict between satisfying the employer versus being honest to the clients is a complex one if the employer and the worker have contradicting perspectives about the meaning of service work. For Huda, service means being honest to her client, for her employer service work is about getting the maximum possible profit.

Another characteristic depicted by Bourdieu (2011) to ensure the self-exploitation of workers is the individualization of wage relationships. Individualized assessment of workers' performance doubles workers' stress. All of my informants complained about their long working hours and the hard conditions they have to face. All of them work no less than ten hours a day with one day off per week. None of the salons assign certain break time during the day. Workers then have to find any free time during the day to eat, pray or simply take a break. During my visits to one of the salons, I heard one beauty worker telling her coworker in a low voice in the corridor away from the clients and was making sure that the manager cannot hear them:

"You really need to eat. It is 6:00 p.m. now and you have not even taken your breakfast. I will take care of the clients and you go eat quickly".

Similarly, while I was waiting for my turn in the salon, Hend, the beauty worker that I have been her client for over four years, asked me if I can allow her to make herself some tea because she really needs a hot drink since she has a sore throat".

In the same salon, I have noticed that one of the beauty workers was not there during my last two visits. When I asked if she has left work, her coworkers said that: "You know she is pregnant. She has got a number of complications because of her poor diet. The doctor said she has to eat healthy food and you know that all what we eat here is junk food since we have no time to cook at home. Especially if you are pregnant, it is almost impossible to go back home after a very long day and cook for yourself" (personal communication, August 2012).

After encountering the three above situations, I realized that beauty workers' eating habits are greatly influenced by the nature of their work. Thus, I started to ask them about their eating habits and food consumption. The followings are examples of their responses.

"Work comes first. Clients are more important than your need for food or your urge to go to the bathroom"(personal communication, August, 2012), these are Huda's words quoting her salon owner.

Employee-Client Relationships: The Legitimate Taste

It tends to be forgotten that to appreciate the 'true value' of the purely symbolic services which in many areas (hotels, hairdressing etc.) make the essential difference between luxury establishments and ordinary businesses, one has to feel oneself the legitimate recipient of this bureaucratically personalized care and attention and to display vis-a-vis those who are paid to offer it the mixture of distance (including 'generous' gratuities) and freedom which the bourgeois have towards their servants (Bourdieu, 1984, 374)

The notion of field is crucial for Bourdieu's theory. Bourdieu (1984) explains that fields are structured spaces in which struggle over power-relations take place. Field struggles are determined by the possession of different forms of capitals such as economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital or any other form of capital. Swartz (1997) recognizes the importance of providing a field analysis in studying power relations as it "encourages the researcher to seek out sources of conflict in a given domain, relate that conflict to the broader areas of class and power, and identify underlying shared assumptions by opposing parties" (p.126). The experience of entering a beauty salon is dramatically different if a comparison is held between female clients and female beauty worker. Thus, studying beauty salons as a field demonstrates the classed experiences of female beauty workers. Bourdieu (1984) examines the role of taste in maintaining social hierarchies between the "dominant" and the "dominated". The title of Bourdieu's book *Distinction: A social Judgment of Taste*, suggests the role of taste in drawing boundaries between social classes. However, only the dominant can pass judgments and declare them to be valid by marking the taste of others lower than them. In passing such judgments, the taste of the dominated working-class is marked as vulgar while dominant's class taste is marked with its finesse. In the following section, I will examine the role that female clients' play in constructing distinctions between them and their female beauty workers and the effect of this on class antagonism. I examine the consequences of working for similar female others who belong to higher social classes.

Bourdieu (1984) asserts that women of the dominated class such as working class and petit- bourgeois women are more dissatisfied with their bodies in comparison to women of the dominant class. In the context of the beauty salon, women of different

social classes compete around meanings of the ideal feminine appearance. Classed power relations are more obvious in low-class beauty salons. Unlike high-class salons where beauty workers' bodies are used to reflect an image of the high-quality of services offered in the salons, the physical appearance of beauty workers in low-class salons is not of a much concern to the employer. Thus, the competition in reaching an equal footing in acquiring a feminine capital is stronger in low-class salons. For example, Huda explains:

Some beauty workers do not know how to deal with the client professionally. They just take it as a competition with another woman and this is a very negative thing about our job. I have two co-workers of this type. Shimaa is obsessed by imitating things that she likes about some female clients. For example, she sees a client with a trendy hair color, and then she goes the next day and changes hers. In many times, things do not even look nice on her, but she feels good that she is having the same thing as her client to the extent that she might be in debt in order to be able to get these things for herself. My other co-worker, Wafaa is so critical about the clients. When a good-looking female client enters the salon, she makes excessive comments on her and compares herself to the client. One time a client noticed that and was very annoyed that Wafaa was staring at her the whole time and she complained about that to me. (personal communication, March 2013)
The uneasiness that Shimaa feels towards her body and the critical eye that Wafaa

holds on female clients affects their perception of their own selves as less valuable than their female clients. Bourdieu (1984) asserts that

...the petit-bourgeois experience of the world starts out from timidity, the embarrassment of someone who is uneasy in his body and his language...and who by his desperate attempts to reappropriate an alienated being for others, expose himself to appropriating, giving himself away as much by hypercorrection and clumsiness. (p.207)

However, struggles in the field of beauty salons are not limited to the physical appearance. Bourdieu (1984) stresses on what he calls 'symbolic struggles'... over the appropriation of economic or cultural goods... to appropriate distinctive signs in the form of classified, classifying goods or practices...”(p.249). These symbolic struggles are predominant in the relations between beauty workers and their clients. Bourdieu demonstrates that to maintain a distinction and forms of the legitimate culture, the

dominant groups who are the producers of the legitimate forms of culture use the dominated groups as their “foil”. While to escape this foiling process, the dominated group “identify themselves with the group immediately above them” and in doing so, the culture of the dominant is more legitimized. I will demonstrate three narratives by female beauty workers that reflect this process.

Manal Kriss asserts that the power relations produced in result of the interactions between female clients and female beauty workers is not only restricted to the space of the salon but reaches out to interactions outside the workspace of the salon. In this narrative, Manal explains an encounter with one client, who she has met one day accidentally in the entrance of a luxurious building in Heliopolis,

I was getting out of the building where I live and one of my clients was entering at the same time. Back then I was working at Mohamed El-Sagheer Beauty salon. When she saw me, she said in a sarcastic tone: Manal!!, what are you doing here? I will report you to Mohamed.

Manal: why?

The client: Aren't you coming out of a client's apartment? You are then doing private work to Mohamed's clients

Manal: No, I was not, I actually live here.

She was shocked the moment I said so and it showed very much on her face.

The client: Are you kidding me?!

Manal: No, am not. Why is this so hard to believe?

The client: Because I am used that beauty worker live in poor neighborhoods

Manal: I have been living here for years, and by the way this is my car as well. (personal communication, February 2013)

The client's mocking tone and initial assumption that Manal is present in the place for serving another client is worth to investigate. In belonging to the dominant class in that sense, the client refuses to believe that a beauty worker can possibly have the enough economic capital that would allow her to live in a luxurious building. In addition, the remark of the clients in stating that beauty workers normally live in poor neighborhoods reflects the annoyance of the client and her insistence on using the

client as a foil and not as a peer or lives in the same building. Bourdieu (1984) explains that "...the social rank and specific power which agents are assigned in a particular field depend firstly on the specific capital they can mobilize, whatever their additional wealth in other types of capital" (p.113). In Manal's case, she was able to mobilize her economic capital and be in equal stance with the client, which is not the case inside the field of the salon where the clients' tip the beauty workers and pay for expensive service that put the clients' economic capital into practice and weaken the workers' capital.

During my observations, I found that many regular clients are comfortable in discussing their everyday routine (work-housework...), personal issues (marriage-pregnancy) and even political views. Although the process of breaking up the formality between the client and the beauty workers appears to be relieving, they foster class hierarchies. These class hierarchies could simply come to the surface in the clients discussions about their lifestyles. For example, at one salon this was the conversation between a client and a beauty worker:-

Beauty Worker: Do you need hair removal?

Client: Ohhh,, I do not need it anymore. I have finally started to have hair removal sessions with a dermatologist.

Beauty Worker: Nice. How much does it cost?

Client: I have started with my legs. I pay 500 EGP per session. I will need around 5 sessions.

Although the conversation is related to the beauty worker's profession, it is still abnormal for the beauty worker to identify with the luxurious life style of the client. Bourdieu (1984) explains, "One man's extravagance is another man's prime necessity..." (p.375). The beauty worker offers the same service for the hair removal and the whole body would cost only 80 EGP. For the beauty worker, spending such a large sum of

money on hair removal means that this is extra money and that there are more important things in life to do with money other than removing the body's hair. One of the very strong answers that I got when I asked one beauty worker about her opinion towards laser hair removal was answering me with an Egyptian proverb that says it all: "Those who do not know what to do with money, may purchase birds and set them free". The proverb reflects the beauty worker's judgment women who belong to higher class that do not know the value of money and thus do not care how to spend it. It is important to stress here the classed distinctions that come to the surface during such discussions between workers and their clients. In her study of representations of two different groups of working-class and middle class female protestors, Lawler (2004) shows that classed distinctions were articulated through implicit reference to women's femininity (114), which is achieved in this case by the client who is willing to pay extra money to get a hairless feminine body.

Female beauty workers' adaptation of the lifestyle of the dominant group to be embodied here in the clients is another form of the symbolic struggles reported in the discussion of Huda and Neama. For example Huda explains,

Most of the beauty workers look up to their classy clients as their ideal. They get to know a lot of personal details about the lives of their clients. Then, they believe that what their clients do is the most prestigious thing. The problem is when they do so, they imitate many inappropriate things. For example, we see many clients lying to their husbands over the phone and say they are somewhere else while we know that another man is waiting for her outside and that she is going out with him. In other cases, many female beauty workers agree on being second wives because again they see many clients do the same. Even worse, some clients are alcoholic and they smoke drugs which attracts many female workers as well. (personal communication, March, 2013)

Neama adds,

In our profession, beauty workers get paid well. Many of them who are still young and have few responsibilities look up to their female clients and their lifestyle. You know...they want to shop where they shop and go to restaurants where they

eat. Of course, they cannot filter the good things from the bad things which explains the negative reputation attached to female beauty workers. (personal communication, March 2013)

The symbolic struggles outlined in the above two narratives explain the behavioral changes of female beauty workers as a result of adapting the legitimate culture of the dominant class. The clients' lifestyle, tastes and behaviors are naturalized and perceived as the legitimate culture.

Gendered Racialized Relations

Throughout my fieldwork, racialized and gendered relations unfolded in two high-class salons, Ahmed & Abdo salon and Kriss salon. Kang (2010) states that, "Nail salons uncover forms of interaction that reproduce racialized, classed, and gendered discourses...". Service interactions between Egyptian female beauty workers and Arab clients have always been negotiated in terms of the high-tipping rates. However, this conceals the racialized power relations between workers and their Arab clients. Being the most famous beauty salon in CityStars, Ahmed& Abdou attracts affluent Arab clients who are residents in the InterContinental Hotel which is connected to the mall. Thus, the presence of Arab clients in the salon is highly appreciated from the salon administration's perspective because it gives good reputation to the place. In addition, Arab clients are secretly charged extra money as Noha explains, "In receiving an Arab client, beauty workers refer to them as "up" "فوق", a common agreed upon term between the cashier and the workers, which translates into extra money". Noha expressed that she does not really prefer to deal with Arab clients from Gulf countries because many of them are very arrogant:

Last week I had a Khaliji client. She asked for pedicure and manicure. She really got on my nerves because she was treating me as her servant. I asked her to sit properly so I can be comfortable as well during the pedicure session. She

answered back very rudely saying: I do not care about you, you manage yourself (Personal communication, September, 2012)

The second type of racialized power-relations is shaped by different dynamics among employees from different nationalities in the same salon. As I have point out earlier in the chapter, the presence of Lebanese hairstylists and recently Syrians is very much welcomed among Egyptian high-class clients for their reputation in the beauty industry. However, their presence among Egyptian beauty workers creates certain sensitivities as a result of their privileged status guaranteed by their nationality. Being a female hair specialist and working in a Lebanese beauty salon in Egypt are two factors that complicates Manal's job in challenging the racial expectations of Egyptian female clients who favor male Lebanese hairstylists. Manal Kriss explains,

Egyptians still suffer from what is called (The Foreigner complex) *Oqdet el Khawaga*. I encounter daily clients who enter the salon and the first question they ask is: Is there a Lebanese or a Syrian hairstylist? They do not care much about the capability of the hairstylist. All what they care about is to tell their friends proudly: I got my hair done by a Lebanese or Syrian hairstylist (personal communication, February, 2013)

Similarly, Noha explains her concerns as she mentions,

Clients look for an attractive Lebanese hairstylist and now...God saves us..Syrians are like rice...I swear that some of them are really not good at hairstyling but clients still insist on them just because they are handsome and they know how to flirt with the client and compliment her. Recently, I heard one Syrian hairstylist is making fun of Egyptian beauty workers with a client and I could not help to interfere into the conversation and defend Egyptians (personal communication, March 2013)

In the above two examples, it is clear that salon owners and Egyptian clients foster racialized practices in the beauty industry. Owners care about employing Lebanese and Syrian hairstylists to make sure that they are meeting their clients' expectations and that they are attracting elite and upper-class clients. The fact that some of them are less qualified than their Egyptian counterparts yet are more appreciated due to their

nationality along with clients' fostered expectations grant them superior status over Egyptian beauty workers.

In addition, the different religious backgrounds of both the client and the worker might sometimes shape their interactions. Religious holidays are considered as Huda describes them "High seasons". The most two dominant religious groups in Egypt are Muslims and Christians. It is commonly known that during holidays of each religious group, beauty salons become full of clients. Thus, clients of the other group mostly avoid visiting beauty salons especially the night before the holiday to avoid the crowding. Most beauty workers give priority to the clients who belong to the religious group that is celebrating a holiday. However, some conflicts do happen when some clients feel that their presence is not valued. For example, Huda mentions the following incident that turned into a huge fight with a client,

It was the last day of the fasting month of Ramdan which means that the next day is the Eid for Muslims. I was fasting and working from the early morning and of course on that day we stay very late because we have a lot of clients. Half an hour before the time of breaking our fasting, a Muslim client who lives nearby entered the salon, so I asked her to come after we break our fasting. While I was eating, a Christina client entered and she wanted me in particular to do her nails. I was inside so one guy told her that I am eating and then I take a break for thirty minutes. She waited for me. By the time I finished my break, the other client was there. So, I told the Christian client that I have to take the other client first because she has an appointment and that she came first. She burst and started shouting and said to me: You are not ill-mannered. The owner told the client that I am not a machine and that if she insists on me then she has to wait for her turn. Normally, owners do not defend workers but I guess because it was a Muslim holiday night, the Christina client was not welcomed anyways. (Personal communication, March 2013)

The above case stresses the very question of spaces and who gets to be welcomed and who is rejected. In a normal case, Huda would have been asked to apologize for the client. However, the fact that the client's presence was not welcomed helped in supporting Huda's position.

Building Rapport with Clients

At first glance, it might seem that the relationship between a female beauty worker and her client is limited to the physical interaction invested in the offered services. In doing so, there is a great risk to ignore the emotional labour of female beauty workers which is the basic element of retaining regular clients or what Egyptian beauty workers refer to as '*making a client*'. Female beauty workers consider making a client as an essential element for their success. All the salons in my study keep a daily record of the number of clients that each worker has served. If a worker has a high number of clients on a regular basis, it indicates that she is highly-demanded. Another indication is the insistence of clients on a particular worker and their willingness to wait while others workers might be available. Neama explains that "Clients must feel psychologically good about the salon and the beauty workers in order to become regular clients". To appeal to clients' emotions, beauty workers have to be able to control their feelings. This invisible labour is what Hochschild first coined as "Emotional Labour". Many feminist scholars of the service sector in general (McDowell 2009; Otis 2012) and on the beauty industry in particular (Kang 2010) have built on Hochschild's concept of emotional labour to show its significance to the service sector worker. Otis (2012) identifies emotional labour as the "mental adjustments service workers make in order to generate genuine expressions of sentiment that, in turn, induce desired responses among their customers" (p.11). For example, in order to maintain a good relationship with clients, beauty workers have to smile and complement their clients. Many of them also engage in conversations in order to get to know their clients. In order to do so, I will mention some of the probes and

questions that some beauty workers use to get to know their clients. Some beauty workers would start with questions like “Is this the first time to visit our salon?” The aim of this question is to know whether the client is new or not. Normally, a beauty worker has the ability to recognize the faces of the regular clients even if they are not her clients. Thus, when this question is asked, it is to make sure that the client is new. Then, beauty workers will try to ask “where do you live?” This will help them to know if the client lives in a close neighborhood or is coming intentionally for the reputation of the place and thus will be a regular client or she is just a passer-by and too much talk will be useless in such a case. Later on, some beauty workers will try to get into personal discussions such as “Are you engaged, married or single?, How many kids do you have?, What do you do?”. Establishing an informal relationship with the client is very important for the beauty worker for the above reasons. At the same time, beauty workers either will start to talk about themselves or some clients will actually be actively engaged in such casual talks and also start to ask them questions about their personal lives. One strategy reported by a number of the beauty workers in my study to do more work is to play on the clients’ insecurities. Huda explains,

When we see a client who is hesitant about her physical appearance and does not know what exactly to do, she becomes a prey. We start to convince her of doing extra services that she might not necessarily need. It is easy to do so with women who belong to older age groups because they are less secure about their bodies and not always updated with the latest trends so we can easily convince them. (personal communication, March, 2013)

Similarly, Neama explains,

I have a strategy with my employees is that when they feel that a client is open to new ideas but does not exactly know what to do, they come and tell me about her and then I easily persuade her to do extra stuff (personal communication, March, 2013)

In following the above strategy, female beauty workers get to provide the maximum number of services to the client.

Most of the female beauty workers in my study have stressed the importance of building long-term client relationships. In doing so, both the client and the beauty worker develop a sense of trust and respect. In many cases, both the client and the beauty worker get to share personal stories. This reduces the intensity of emotional labour that workers have to provide. Kang (2010) states that “These interactions do not suggest the equal footing of friends but rather the dictates of a generous but nonetheless demanding customer toward a beholder service provider”(p.59). For example, Noha explains,

With a regular client, I do not have to fake a smile if I am not feeling okay. It really helps when a client appreciates my feelings and checks on me. Also, in many cases I feel free to open up with my regular clients and get their advices. (personal communication, September, 2012)

Manal adds,

In discussing things about my children, I have gently asked one of my clients to help my son in getting a job. Three months later, she called me to arrange an interview for my son to work in a restaurant. (personal communication, August, 2012)

From the above excerpt, it is important to note that when these close relationships extends outside the service setting they do not reach the point of forging intimate friendships. Also, approaching a client for favors outside the workplace translates into class hierarchies in which as the above example shows, the client’s social is of a great help in finding a job for a Manal’s son.

On the other hand, the client also gets the benefit of getting special and personalized services by dealing with the same beauty worker for a long time. Samar states,

One of my clients has a problem with getting her big toenails grow into her skin. It is so painful and she never trusts anyone other than me to do a pedicure for her. Doing this for her for years now, she never worries about getting hurt and she does not need to instruct me. In a different case, I have diabetic client who needs special care in giving her a pedicure. In that sense, knowing your clients and their personal needs is very important in developing relationships with your clients. (Personal communication, August, 2012)

Noha adds,

Sometimes, If a regular client had to do a lot of things in one day, I complement her by excluding one service when I am writing the final receipt which cuts down the overall price a little bit for her. (personal communication, September, 2012)
The above examples show that developing relationships between clients and beauty workers benefit both parties. The client gets to receive personalized and high quality services while the beauty worker enjoys a relief from doing excessive emotional labour. However, this does not suggest that class hierarchies and inequalities are diminished since they are still embedded within the services provided and the identity of clients.

In tracing the historical background of Egyptian beauty salons, I addressed the gendered nature of the beauty sector. As I have discussed, although some female clients still hold the old view that male hairdressers are more qualified than their female counterparts in doing hair, the high rate of veiled female clients and the new female only salons have helped in the gradual elimination of this belief. In addition, symbolic power-relations between salon owners and female beauty workers were highlighted. I have also provided an explanation of the power-struggles that take place between female beauty workers and their clients where the fact that women are serving other women result in classed femininities. In return, some workers are able to adapt techniques for straddling classed differences while others are highly influenced and cannot help to imitate the clients.

Chapter Three

Who Work At Egyptian Beauty Salons?

Let me start with the question of ‘Who work at Egyptian beauty salons’? This question is hard to find a definite answer for it. First, there are no studies that document the number of beauty workers in Egypt. Second, most of those workers are working informally so there are no official documents on their employment status. Most importantly, there are no beauty schools in Egypt so these workers are viewed as unskilled labourers and their work is undervalued. Thus, I was not able to offer rigid numbers of the ratio of workers in the beauty industry in Egypt. It is also important to note that I could not get a full picture of the male workers since my study is focused on female beauty workers. Thus, my only way to answer the question is to use my female informants’ backgrounds/identities to get a sense of the Egyptian female beauty workers. This chapter clarifies some of the factors that direct Egyptian women’s labor decisions to join the service sector in general and the beauty sector in particular. In the second section of the chapter, I want to explore the impacts of working in the beauty industry on various aspects of female beauty workers’ lives.

Hair salons are mostly dominated by working class and lower-middle class women. Five of my informants were originally from working class background while eight are from middle-class backgrounds. In terms of the academic qualifications, five of my informants have primary education, four are vocational/secondary diploma holders and four have university education. The reason that women with less academic qualifications are easily attracted to the sector is the easy access to the profession at an early age. In working at an early age with very low academic qualifications, Amal and

Wafaa both explained that they had no many alternatives. When I asked what was the other option, Amal said, “Girls in my neighborhood with similar circumstances used to work as domestic servants and I refused to do so because being a beauty worker is more prestigious. I take a special pride in being a beauty worker”. This prestigious status that places beauty workers in a higher social position compared to domestic workers equip beauty workers with what Bourdieu (1986) refers to as symbolic capital that provide the necessary “legitimate competence”. Alternatively, some of the beauty workers with higher academic qualifications or those who entered the industry at an older age stated that they had worked in more prestigious opportunities such as secretary jobs but they were not financially rewarding. In her discussion of Korean beauty salon workers, Kang (2010) explains a similar situation where beauty workers “start off with ambitious career plans but are derailed by the reality of educational challenges, legal barriers, and workplace discrimination”(p.84). Since most working-class beauty workers start to work at a very early age, their chances to get employed outside their urban poor neighborhoods are very low for a number of reasons. First, they have no experience at that age so they need to act as observers while working as floor cleaners for a while before the actual interaction with clients. Second, due to their age, most of their families do not allow their daughters to work in far away areas from their neighborhoods. Third, the familiarity with the salon owner and the salon itself is very important since many male salon owners are stereotyped for harassing their female workers. Those who hold vocational diploma share the same reasons but also highlighted other factors. They all stressed the fact that their years of education were pointlessness in the sense that vocational education does not prepare the student for the real Egyptian market. This resonates with Manos Antoninis’s

(2001) study of the failure Egyptian vocational system in his book “The Vocational School Fallacy Revisited: Technical Secondary Schools in Egypt” as he states that:

The young skilled worker is employable if he can show familiarity with the workshop environment, which can mainly be acquired during adolescent part-time employment rather than in school itself. This phenomenon of substituting less educated but more experienced workers for graduates of vocational schools is also mentioned by Dessouqi (1992) and represents the opposite form of the familiar model of the labour market, where employers hire preferentially more educated workers (p.10)

Most of my informants who started working at an early age stated that supporting their families financially was their main motive. Wafaa, who is a thirty-three years old beauty salon worker, has more than 15 years of experience in the field. She works at Magdy and Sayd hair salon located in Sheraton, Heliopolis. Wafaa had grown up in Elsalam, a poor neighborhood, for a working-class family. She started working at salons located at poor urban neighborhoods (*Shabia*) and gradually moved to work at better upper-middleclass neighborhoods. She dropped out of school at the age of fourteen. She says:

It was my decision to work at the age of fifteen. You know my education as a girl was not equally important to the education of my brothers. I have nine siblings. My father was not able to provide financial support for our family by himself. Thus, I felt that I have to cover my own costs and help my father. (personal communication, September 2012)

Manal, a forty years old beauty salon worker who has been working in the field for thirteen years, shares the same reason as Wafa. However, joining the beauty sector was not her decision. She explains,

I was such a failure at school. Thus, my father decided to force me out of school at the age of twelve and he decided to introduce me to the profession. My father had a simple job. He believed that my financial contribution to the family is more essential especially that there is no point of educating me because I am not good at school. I know I was not good. I wish I was. Thus, he took me with him to couple of salons in the neighborhood until a salon owner accepted to hire me as floor cleaner. I quitted when I got married and I became a stay-home mother with

three children. As a result of my husband's illness, I had to work again and became the main breadwinner. (personal communication, September, 2012)

I would like to push the discussion further and use Amal as an example of joining the beauty industry as a choice. Amal dropped out of school at the age of thirteen and has been working as a beauty salon worker for ten years. She is twenty five years old. She grew up in a working-class family. She started working at salons located at poor urban neighborhoods (*Shabia*) and gradually moved to work at better upper-middleclass neighborhoods. She works in Romany Coiffeur which is located in a middle-class neighborhood called Al-Nozha El Gdeda. What is interesting about Amal's story is the way she narrates her story and her early realization of the dynamics of the Egyptian educational system and the Egyptian labor market which encouraged her to take the decision totally by herself. She says:

I believed since I was twelve that there is no point of getting an education. Educated people do not get money. My teachers themselves at school were poor. Teachers were only good for the children whose parents can pay for private lessons after school time. My family could not afford to pay extra money for education. Thus, I felt unwanted in the classroom compared to my classmates who take private lessons. All unemployed men who stay for hours in coffee shops playing chess are also educated. Those who get money are skilled workers. Thus, I decided that I have to learn to do something with my hands. I asked for my neighbor's help who introduced me to the owner of a beauty salon in our neighborhood. My job was only to clean the floor. I started to skip school but without telling my family. My mother knew about it and I managed to convince her. I started to come home late after school time and my mother lied to my four brothers and told them that I take private lessons after school. My brothers knew after one year and they had huge fights with me because they believed it is a shameful job. After a while, they agreed when they saw that I gain money out of the job. I still believe that I took the right decision because my salary now is better than an educated employee in the public sector. (personal communication, September, 2012)

This excerpt reflects both the power of the educational system in reproducing social inequalities and the early socialization effect on Amal's future aspirations and her decision to be a beauty worker. The concepts of habitus and symbolic violence provide fine tools for understanding Amal's case. The early socialization process is what Bourdieu refer to as 'Habitus'. Bourdieu uses the concept of habitus to explain the construction of the self and the formation of individual's actions that translates into social relations and the external perception of the world. Bourdieu defines habitus as "...the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history (Bourdieu, 1977, 82). Thus, social actors develop their habitus as result of an internalization process from early socialization experiences. It is then important to note that habitus is constructed in class-specific term. Amal's early observations of certain aspects such as her 'poor teachers' and the 'unemployed educated men' are the main factors that contributed in taking her decision to join the beauty industry. Amal then had no future aspiration that she will have any different future than people around her. At this point, it is useful to link between how habitus affects the aspirations and expectations of agents. In his book *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu writes, " Dominated agents...tend to attribute to themselves what the distribution attributes to them, refusing what they are refused (That's not for the likes of us), adjusting their expectations to their chances...condemning themselves to what is in any case their lot" (p.471). Thus, the habitus instructs the actions of agents as they set expectations that correspond to their formative experiences. It can then be understood that habitus does shape the type of work that one might do in the future and in return affects labour decisions.

Amal is among those who emphatically pointed out to the idea of failing at school. The very idea of “That’s not for the likes of us” mentioned earlier by Bourdieu is what has stopped Amal, Manal and Wafaa from going to school. Phrases like “I felt unwanted in the classroom” says Amal, “there is no point of educating me because I am not good at school. I know I was not good” says Manal, “my education as a girl was not equally important to the education of my brothers” says Wafaa, are very important in the line of this discussion. In the case of Amal, her inability to pay private tuition for the teachers made her felt unwanted. While Manal’s father convinced her that she is a failure so she continued to fail until she dropped out. Being a female has made Wafaa prioritize the education of her brothers over hers. These are examples of what Bourdieu refers to as the symbolic violence exercised by educational institutions. In explaining Bourdieu’s educational theory, Danahay (2005) writes that “Inculcation at school through the PAu (Pedagogic Authority), which is invested in the teacher but also permeates the entire educational environment, works to exclude the children of the working classes” (49). Thus, the educational ideals that foster the notions that education is a legitimate equal tool for everyone is not real. The effect of this symbolic violence of educational institutions cannot be overlooked because it affects the overall structure of power relations. A detailed discussion of power relations is thus essential and will be tackled in the following chapter.

However, the entry of high academic-qualifications holders into the industry has changed the recruitment requirements and this is specifically obvious in elite and upper-class salons. For example, Manal Kriss is a forty years old beauty salon worker. She has a bachelor degree in Business from Ain Shams University. She lives in Masr-Elgedda and

was born to a middle-class family and her ex-husband was a Chemical engineer. Her daughter studies medicine at Ain-Shams University. Manal has an early passion for the beauty industry so she started working at the age of eighteen. She worked for Mohamed El-Sagheer, one of the best Egyptian hairdressers, who encouraged her to pursue a career in hairstyling. She worked for him over 15 years. She works currently at Kriss beauty salon. Since Manal is well experienced in famous beauty salons, she was the right person to ask about the requirements of employing female beauty workers in such salons. She says:

In the past, the beauty industry was open to any woman and required no specific qualifications. Most of the female workers were uneducated and belonged to the working class. Workers were hired even if they do not know how to do certain tasks such as threading, pedicure or manicure as they used to work as floor cleaners and assistants until they master the required skills. However, this is not the case anymore. In order to get a job at a famous beauty salon, workers have to be diploma holders at least. (personal communication, March, 2012)

On the other hand, Amal's words depict the situation from a different perspective.

Amal is the total opposite of Manal Kriss. When asked about her potential to work for famous beauty salons, Amal says:

I hoped that I could have access to those famous beauty salons. However, you have to present a professional resume and hold academic qualifications in order to apply in these salons. They do not just accept anyone, you know. They accept those with certificates which made it hard for someone like me to get an opportunity in better salons. (personal communication, September, 2012)

The above two narratives are good examples of the changing nature of the beauty workers. They are simply not those uneducated women who are desperately left without any alternatives in life and forced to get into the beauty industry. The beauty industry in Egypt is attracting female workers with educational qualifications. However, the effect of this shift can be clearly understood in the disappointing tone of Amal who is not able

move to better working place. This effect is clearly explained by Bourdieu (1984) as he says:

The devaluation of diplomas accompanied by the gradual extension of the monopoly held by academic-qualification-holders over positions previously open to the academically unqualified, which has the effect of limiting the devaluation of qualifications by limiting the competition, but only at the cost of restricting the career openings available to the unqualified and of reinforcing the academic predetermination of occupational opportunity. (p,134)

Thus it is clear that while diploma holders are currently advantaged to work at famous beauty salons, the less qualified as Amal pointed out are being rejected in these salons. It is important to note here that those academic qualifications are not related to the specific field of beauty, however, possessing them is still important from the employer's point of view. It is also very important to point out the effects of introducing female beauty workers who are highly educated to the beauty industry. Bourdieu (1984) explains that those newcomers in entering occupations that have been marked as low prestigious insist to escape what he calls "downclassing". Bourdieu adds that the higher the academic qualification and the social origin of the newcomers, "the less inclined they will be to accept the limited ambitions of petit-bourgeois agents looking for modest, predictable progress over a lifetime". This can be clearly seen in Manal Kriss case whose ambition was not limited to being a regular beauty worker but she excels in hairstyling and takes a special pride in being a female hair specialist in a male dominant specialization.

Cultural Capital

To the casual observer, Samar might typically appear as an independent single female beauty worker in her mid twenties who spends her whole day working in a well-known salon. During my interview with Samar, I realized that she is not rich in economical

capital but is trying her best to increase her cultural capital. Samar is twenty-four years old and she started working at the age of thirteen. She lives in Almaza, Masr el Gdedida, a middle-class neighborhood, and she is a sophomore student at Al-Azhar university. Samar has started working at coiffeurs in poor neighborhoods and later she was able to move to better salons after she mastered the required skills. Currently, she works at Ahmed&Abdou Beauty Salon, Heliopolis.

I have been enrolled in Azhari education since primary years. I am currently enrolled at Al-Azhar University. I am insisting on getting a bachelor degree. However, I have no time to study. I have been failing for two years now. I am twenty-four years old and still in my second year. I am looking forward for the day to get my certificate. I do not want to waste all those past years. Practically, I am thinking of transferring from my current university to another that is easier. Although the quality of education will be less but it is better than being dismissed because of my continuous failure. (personal communication, August, 2012)

In noticing how proud Samar was with her academic achievement, my following question was: Do you plan to change your career after graduation and look for a job related to your studies? To my surprise, the answer was "No". When I asked for the reason, Samar said:

Samar: I am not good at anything other than being a beauty worker. I also have eleven years of experience in the field and it is hard to give it up. Besides, I would get a lower wage if I work in a job related to my field of studies.

Me: Then, why is it important for you to continue your education?

Samar: I am doing it for the sake of being a certificate holder. You know..Egypt is a country of certificates, "*balad shahadat*". The second reason is to make my family proud of me.

This passage is revealing in many respects. It is clear that Samar is very oriented and her vision of the future is no way illusory. Her consciousness that it is hard to give up a long-term experience and pursue another career resonates with Kang's (2010) observation of Korean manicurists who "enter low-status nail salon work as a short-term means of supporting their ambitions, but once they become acclimated to this work,

staying on indefinitely becomes an easy path”(p.84). Samar is not seeking anymore the quality of education but rather an academic certificate to claim that she has a cultural capital. Although Samar admits that she is not going to make use of her studies in her career life, she still believes that being a university graduate might give her a better social status. In explaining the insistence on getting paper certificates that the holders know they are of no value in the job market, Bourdieu (1984) writes:

The value objectively and subjectively placed on the academic qualification is in fact defined only by the totality of the social uses that can be made of it. Thus the evaluation of diplomas by the closer peer groups, such as relatives, neighbors,...can play an important role in masking the effects of devaluation” (p.143).

Mona

Mona is thirty-five years old. She has a Bachelor degree in Business Administration. She started working as a beauty worker at the age of twenty-five after leaving her job as a secretary. She grew up in a middle-class family. Mona lives in Nasr City and works in Doaa El Asar Beauty Center.

Me: When did you start to work as a manicurist?

Mona: I have started to work as a manicurist five years ago but I have worked before as a secretary?

Me: Why did you change your job?

Mona: Well...I have a bachelor degree in Business. I worked as a secretary for two years and my monthly salary was 750 EGP (approximately 123\$). Then I got married and had my first baby girl. My salary was not enough to pay for my daughter's school. I decided that my daughter has to get better education than mine and I insisted to enroll her in a private school. As you know, public education is not good and I want a better future to my daughter even if it means that I will do a *degrading* job.

Mona: What about your husband?

Me: My husband's salary is enough to pay for the apartment's rent, electricity, transportation and food. My husband could not afford to pay for a private school. I had then to help him out. In order to get our daughter in that private school, we also had to move to a better neighborhood so that the private school would accept

her. As a result, we are paying a higher rent which is more than half of my husband's salary.

Me: Were you required to change anything else in your life in order to get your daughter accepted in the school?

Mona: Not exactly but I had to *lie*. I could not say that I am a manicurist. The school would not have accepted a kid whose mother is a manicurist. In the interview, I just said that I used to work as a secretary and they saw a copy of my bachelor certificate.

Me: Did the school interview your daughter?

Mona: Yes. They focus on the child's ability to recognize shapes and their knowledge of English as beginners. She passed it easily. I remember she recognized the names of animals in English and was able to count in English. She also sang a song in English.

Me: Does your daughter know what do you do?

Mona: She is still 6 years old. She does not exactly know because I am afraid she would tell any of her teachers. I will eventually tell her but when I make sure that she is old enough to understand. (personal communication, September, 2012)

Confronted with this situation, it is easy to assume that Mona's problem is simply

the lack of economic capital and that after all it was her choice to leave her formal job as a secretary and work as a manicurist. However, this conclusion cannot stand apart from other 'realities', and to be more precise, I will have to call them 'boundaries'. To judge whether Mona's decision is a choice or a necessity, I will discuss the limiting boundaries that she has encountered.

The first point that is worth discussing is the fact that using educational qualification to get a formal job does not necessarily mean getting an adequate salary. However, money was not Mona's main concern until her daughter went to school. Although, Mona, being highly educated, was not able to secure herself a good job, she insists that her daughter must get high-quality education. However, in order to raise the educational capital of her daughter, Mona had to lower her social capital by working as a manicurist which she described as a "degrading job". On the other hand, being a female beauty workers has increased Mona's economic mobility. Understanding how educated informal workers rationalize this conflict is vital to understand their contradictory

experiences. Mona is holding the belief of upward mobility to her daughter that could only be achieved through her down mobility. The social class is not thus determined only based on economic status but also by other's views and the specific stigmas attached to certain occupations. For example, the stigma attached to a beauty workers' job has led Mona to lie to her daughter's school administration as well as her daughter. I argue that changing economic positions does not guarantee changing social status. For example, while Mona is now financially better than before, she was not able to change her social status, instead, it became lower.

In the logic of Mona's narrative, the second boundary is the poor quality of education in public schools. It shows us unmistakably that the lack and poor quality of services in the formal sector is the chief reason for people to go to the informal sector. In her definition, formal education does not prepare students to the real market and the public school teachers are underpaid and as a result they are not willing to teach. Worse yet, most of public school teachers teach private lessons informally to get more money since their formal salaries are not enough. The school example is another site that more clearly explicates the symbolic violence of the educational systems. Strangely enough, the school site that is supposed to provide students with the cultural capital that would bridge the gaps among members of the different classes is the very same site that reproduces inequalities. Entry requirements of the private schools presuppose a certain cultural capital that the child should possess which could only be passed through parents. For example, if Mona is seen out of her work site, her educational credentials, way of talking (linguistic capital), and clothing all reflect her *legitimate* cultural capital. However, Mona's current employment status as being informal worker in a devalued

occupation as a beauty worker does not allow her to meet the criteria of her daughter's private school as her occupation suggests that she is unable to pass her daughter the *legitimate* cultural capital that her daughter's peers, who are enrolled in that school, already have. Unfortunately, Mona had to lie to the school's administration and her daughter as well to declare her daughter as being legitimate to enter the school. However, my question is: What if Mona had refused to lie? What will be the school's administration action if they found out after few years that they have a student inside their institution whose mother is a manicurist? What if Mona had failed to change her address? The answer is simple: her daughter would not have been accepted in the school. Children of the lower working class are thus denied access to high quality of education and they are left out with the public schools that offer poor quality of education. It is not my intent to provide an account of educational theory. Instead, I am looking at how does public education institutions prepare many to be in the informal sector and on the contrary how does private education maintains enclosed circles of homogenous students of the upper and middle classes? Bourdieu explains that: "The educational institution ... makes a critical contribution to the state's monopoly on legitimate symbolic violence, particularly through its power to *nominate*" (117). While Mona was somehow lucky to transmit a sufficient cultural capital to her daughter to pass the interview besides lying to the school's administration, most working-class children have no such cultural capital to pass entry private school requirements. However, Mona's case provides an evidence that cultural capital cannot be solely assessed by parent's occupation since being an informal worker in a degrading job has not stopped Mona from transmitting the legitimate cultural capital to her daughter. The problem does not then lie in the possession of cultural capital

since, some people possess it and are still denied access, it is mainly the fact that people are defined by others through the type of work that they do. Being a female beauty worker would not only disgrace the woman but her children as well.

Emotional Capital

Reay (2004) utilizes Bourdieu's concept of capital to include the realm of emotions. She develops a theoretical understanding of what she termed as emotional capital which "encompasses the emotional resources you hand on to those you care about"(p.60). In studying middle-class and working-class mothers' involvement in their children's education, Reay shows the impact of social class on emotional capital. By drawing on Reay's work, I address the extensive range of emotions that beauty workers have expressed in relation to their family life in general and children in particular. When asked to discuss their roles as mothers, the beauty workers gave notable complex narratives that highlight dilemmas of the balance between work and family obligations.

Amal:

Imagine that I used to work while I was pregnant for twelve hours until one day before my due date. My sudden pregnancy was not a good news for me and my husband as a newlyweds. Especially that we were engaged for four years due to financial problems. Anyways, I only stayed home for two weeks after giving birth to my baby. It was very hard to head off the house leaving my two weeks old baby behind to go to work. I used to picture his face crying. Choosing to bottle-feed my baby was the hardest decision. I simply felt I am depriving my baby from his natural healthy nutrition. Besides, the cost of the formula milk added an extra pressure on us. Eventually, I had no other option. Leaving work for more than two-weeks would have resulted in losing my job at a time that we could not afford to lose my income. In getting back to work two weeks after giving birth, I had no time to spend with my baby. His first walk, crawl, words, I have simply missed all of that. I used to feel terrible to see that my baby calms down faster when my mother holds him. The first time to feel that I am a real mother was two months ago when I had my annual vacation. It was seven days. I got really attached to my son during those seven days. My husband used to tell me the house feels different because of my presence. We got to go out at night after my husband comes back from work. We simply had a life for a week. (personal communication, September, 2012)

The dramatic quality of Amal's narrative, especially when tears welled up in her eyes, reflect the drastic effects that her type of work imposes on her personal life. Although Amal is a new mother of a nine-month old baby, she expressed a sense of guilt towards her husband and her baby. Her does have the right of getting a maternity leave. She asserts that "Employers do not care if they lose a female beauty worker because they know they will find plenty the next day". As Wright (2006) demonstrates in her study of Mexican female factory workers, "With the identification of the pregnant woman as a problem for the work process, her value as a worker plummets while her removal-her turnover-appreciates" (85). Knowing this as a fact and due to her financial need, Amal insisted on working until her due date and got back two weeks after her delivery. In doing so, Amal is haunted by the sense of guilt for not delivering the sufficient amount of emotional capital to her family.

Manal:

I simply did not imagine the high price of working as a manicurist until very recently when it was too late. I have no time to spend with my four children. As I am getting older, I started to lose my temper very easily. I come back home exhausted and not ready to listen to my children's problems. I cannot monitor them or develop a friendly relationship with them. Sadly, my son has failed five times in his high school while my daughter has failed two subjects twice. I always blame myself but what can I do? I am the sole breadwinner and my husband is always sick and staying at home and cannot control our children. I live with a constant sense of guilt. I know they would come back home to no body. Lately, it started to be difficult for me to cook meals for the whole week so they have to manage and depend on themselves. (personal communication, August, 2012)

The choice of words and tone in this part differs markedly from the rest of her narrative. Although Manal is responsible for the hard work in the family, she is the one to blame after all for the failure of the children. The husband is viewed as a guest in this context and Manal excused his passive role for his illness. The children then, as Manal refereed, have paid the price of her absence at work. Although Manal has not anticipated

that she will end up in such a miserable situation, she still had to work. Manal told me that her ultimate dream was to see her four children one day enrolled in top universities. However, all her dreams have diminished because as she said “I did not have time to discipline my children and provide for them the appropriate environment to study”. It is important to notice that emotional capital is gendered in the sense that mothers are those who are expected to provide it and their failure to do so is translated into the failure of their children at school. Since Manal works eleven hours per day, it is very hard to her to find time for providing her children with the necessary emotional capital to excel in their studies. It appears that the more beauty workers are in need for money, the less capable they are to provide emotional capital.

Alternatively, Wafaa has a different strategy in compensating her children of the shortage of emotional capital as she says,

I had many fights at the beginning of my second marriage because of that..but I insisted to set the rules from the beginning. One of my major problems with my first husband was that he was very demanding and he was expecting me to do too much of housework after I come back home. I was the sole breadwinner. He had his own mechanical workshop and he was extremely careless because he knew that I get good money so used to totally depend on me and work for only couple of days a week. I got divorced and shortly got married again and sent my two kids to live with my mother. I get to see my children in my day-off and I also buy them what they need. “My children need my money more than me being physically with them. My second husband also has children but we agreed that none of our children will live with us. I feel good as long as I get my children everything they need. They won’t get to see my anyways if they are to live with me. At least I do not have to worry about them when they are living with their grandmother. (personal communication, September, 2012)

Knowing that she has no time for her kids since she does not have the option to work as a part-timer, she decided to let her children live with their grandmother and she

feels satisfied in buying them what they need. Wafaa strategy is what Reay (2004)

explains as:

Working-class women find it more difficult to supply their children with resources of emotional capital than their middle-class counterparts because they were frequently hampered by poverty, negative personal experiences of schooling, insufficient educational knowledge and lack of confidence. (p.65)

Unlike, working-class women whose emotional capital is exemplified in giving their children as Reay cites a sense of “freedom from academic pressure”, Huda holds a strong belief that only mothers can take care of their children and she considers their scholastic attainment to be her greatest achievement. Being a single mother and the sole breadwinner for her children, Huda designed her own strategy to challenge the working conditions of her work to keep a balance between raising-up her children and getting money for them. Huda believes that her two daughters need her help and support in studying and in particular during exam times. Since the part-time option does not exist for beauty workers, Huda agreed with her past employer to give her two days off instead of one, the extra day is unpaid, in order to follow up school work of her daughters.

However, when it comes to exam times Huda said to me:

The exam month which is the last month by the end of the semester is the most important month for my daughters at school. My daughters’ education is what matters to me the most. Thus, no matter what, I take that month off and I stay to monitor and study for my daughters yet at the same time I study for my Bachelor degree. I used to save money because I knew from beforehand that I won’t have enough money to cover the month and sometimes I used to work at clients’ homes to get some extra money. Taking a month off is not accepted for a beauty worker which has resulted in many problems with my last employer. Thus, I had to leave work. A friend of mine who was a hairdresser in the salon that I used to work in owns now his own salon. It is a very small salon compared to the other one so the working load is lighter. Thus, I agreed with him that I work with him as a part-timer especially that he understands my situation. Besides, I go to my regular

clients' homes. Although I get less money than before, but I feel fulfilled. (personal communication, August, 2012)

Huda's case is exceptional. In order to be able to work as a part-timer, Huda had to give up her work in a well-known salon which in return affects her network of clients. However, unlike most my respondents, Huda thinks that working in a small salon for her now is much more convenient and she used the word "miserable" to describe the daily overload of work in famous salons. Huda stressed more than one time that dealing with less educated people such as her past-salon owner used to make her life harder. She explained that it is challenging to be employed for an uneducated employer in an informal job yet ask for days off because I have exams or that I have to help my daughters in their studies, "They simply do not understand what are you talking about", said Huda. Since Huda comes originally from a middle-class background and believes in the importance of education for herself and her children, she insisted on getting a bachelor degree in Law and in raising the educational capital of her daughters. In comparing the three cases of Manal, Amal and Huda, it becomes clear as Reay (2004) points out that, "Class differences also played a part in determining whether mothers could divert their emotional involvement into generating academic profits for their children"(p.65).

It is only when we understand the identities of laborers is when we begin to appreciate their experiences. I expected female beauty workers to be illiterate workers who resorted to the service sector as a result of their limited educational capital. However, in the course of my research and as I discussed in this chapter, female beauty workers have different backgrounds and many of them do possess excellent educational

capitals. They are not passive workers in the service sector. Conversely, they are active agents who have high potentials and for them beauty service is not merely they only available job. It is an occupation that they get sufficient financial rewards from and that they do have passion for and insights for a long-term career occupation.

Chapter Four Body Politics

I had an urge to have a haircut, but was not sure if there is anyone in Egypt who could do similar hair cut to the famous Hollywood actress. I saw that hair cut only on celebrity's heads, and kept my urge silent, till one day I entered one of the beauty salons to find that one of the beauty workers had that same hair cut. I looked around to find all the female beauty workers have trendy nail designs, perfect bodies and wearing the right makeup that complements their skin complexion. I was thrilled and asked her for the same cut. She did, but it wasn't as nice as hers. I wondered who did this to her? and is she aware that she is wearing the latest hair cut? Did she do it for herself or the beauty salon did it for her to propagate the new cut? Why do beauty workers in this salon look different than beauty workers in other salons?

After visiting that salon, I recognized why Amal, Huda, Manal were denied access to work at fancy elite and upper-class salons. The physical appearance of the workers is one key prerequisite in joining the service sector in general and the beauty sector in particular. In the realm of beauty salons, it is important not to miss the weight employers place on the bodily presentation of workers. Recent theories of the service sector has shifted their attention from the study of emotional labour to aesthetic labour (Adkins & Lury ,1999, Pettinger, 2005, Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003). In selling beauty services to female only clients, female beauty workers are asked to represent the style of their salons to attract the clients. This is not to say that male beauty workers are not asked to work on their physical appearance as well, however, priority is given to female beauty workers since their physical capital represented in their feminine bodies can be mobilized to promote for the services offered in the salon. In that sense, it is not only the body that matters but gender is clearly played out in the field of beauty salons. Thus, Adkins and Lury (1999) call this the 'labour of identity' in which women unlike men are "more likely to be the objects of self-accumulation that is their identity is (often) part of the product or service of this new regime" (612). The fact that workers are in

direct contact with their clients while their managers monitor the labour process impose certain bodily movements and behaviors to ensure the clients' satisfaction. Since most of the beauty workers are originally from the working-class, it is hard for them to meet the requirements of working at fancy beauty salons. Professional experience is not the only measurement that fancy salon employers are looking for. Bodily presentations represented in the type of clothes, tone of voice, gestures, language competency are indicators of the social class. Unlike low-middle class beauty salons, female beauty workers who apply for work at fancy salons go through professional interviews and tests. The interviews assess workers' linguistic competency, body shape, style. In passing this interview, workers' professional experience is evaluated and then they undergo job-related tests. In order to theorize aesthetic labour, many theorists have found Bourdieu's social theory useful in linking labour dynamics and the bodily changes that employers impose on the bodies of service workers. Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson (2003) use Bourdieu concept of embodied dispositions to show how workers are used as "hardwares" to portray the organizational aesthetic (p.33). In the following section, I will use Bourdieu's concept of bodily habitus in analyzing concepts that stop some female beauty workers from the upward mobility of working in fancy salons while privilege others. In addition, I will analyze employers' techniques in restyling workers' bodies and the effect of such techniques in shaping the identities of female beauty workers.

Techniques of the Body

Bodily habits are central to Bourdieu's analysis of class dispositions. In explaining how bodies are developed in accordance to individuals' habitus, capitals and taste, Bourdieu proves that bodies bare the traces of class. According to Bourdieu, bodily movements are not learnt but they are rather acquired since early childhood and internalized in the system of dispositions which make them become bodily habitus. Since habitus transcends the level of consciousness and could thus be very hard to control or direct, bodily movements are then considered as subjective experiences. In this line of this argument, Bourdieu (1984) explains that,

...the most automatic gestures or the apparent most insignificant techniques of the body-ways of walking or blowing one's nose, ways of eating or talking-and engage the most fundamental principals of construction and evaluation of the social world, those which most directly express the division of labour (between the classes, the age groups and the sexes) or the division of the work of domination...(p.466)

In linking what Bourdieu calls "Techniques of the body" to the division of labour in the beauty industry, the comparison between the body behaviors of beauty workers in M.S coiffeur and Kriss salon is instructive. In M.S coiffeur, beauty workers do not necessarily wash their hands in moving from one client to another; instead, they could just wipe their hands on their blouses and in the middle of work could wipe their face on their shoulder or scratch their hair. It is also normal to see beauty workers share gestures of elation where one person's upraised palm slaps the upraised palm of another person while working on client's bodies. In the absence of the salon owner, female beauty workers' sometimes have drinks while they provide services for the client or eat in the working space of the salon. Thus, the bodily odors of the workers and the working space itself are negatively affected. Kang (2010) recognizes the management of the foods of

Asian manicurists inside the salons as she notes, “The regulation of body odor through the control of ethnic food consumption in nail salons does not arise simply out of individual adjustments to new cultural norms but as a by-product of body-service work” (p.152). On the other hand, in Kriss salon, beauty workers are more aware of their body movements. Their voices are never louder than the background music in the salon. They never eat or drink at the same time of serving a client. They also have a high linguistic competency that they show by throwing job-related English vocabulary such as ‘client’, ‘service’, ‘moustache’, ‘eyelashes’. Being able to communicate in English is important since all the clients are either foreigners or Egyptians from the elite and the upper class who being educated in language schools can hardly resist inserting foreign vocabulary in their conversations. Language competency in the beauty service industry is not restricted to Egyptian beauty salons. Kang (2010) notes due to foreign language deficiencies and the unfamiliarity of the English language, Korean beauty workers get training in English language in order to be licensed and eligible to work at nail salons in the U.S.(p.53). Similarly, in her study of the reproduction of symbolic capital in terms of language in the Egyptian society, Haeri (1997) asserts that “It would be erroneous to deny that there is a strong tendency towards the adoption of foreign languages and that the labor market is more accessible to those who control foreign languages but this does not imply the exclusion of Arabic”(p.808). This also explains the reason behind the easy access of Lebanese and Syrian male workers who are known of their complementary and elite manner of using language in addition to the fluency of Lebanese in the French language. Thus, the familiarity of foreign language becomes essential to work at a fancy salon. This

comparison shows the bodily techniques of beauty workers and their influence on the type of salon they are eligible to work at.

Restyling Workers' Bodies

Bourdieu's analysis of the body is not limited to techniques of the body. He illustrates how individuals' taste affects their physical appearance. As Bourdieu puts it (1984),

It follows that the body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste, which it manifests in several ways. It does this first in the seemingly most natural features of the body, the dimensions (volume, height, weight) and shapes (round or square, stiff or supple, straight or curved) of its visible forms, which express in countless ways a whole relation to the body, i.e. a way of treating it, caring for it, feeding it, maintaining it, which reveals the deepest dispositions of the habitus. (p.190)

Many female beauty workers get rejected to work at fancy beauty salons for their physical appearance. For example, Huda states that one of her friends has got rejected because she is veiled. Although most of female beauty workers' main area of specialization is not hair, veiled workers are totally rejected in some salons and are not welcomed in others. Although it is true that many female beauty workers are rejected from the first glance for their physical appearance, it does not necessarily mean that those who are accepted perfectly meet the employers' expectations. Thus, after getting accepted, female beauty workers undergo what I call a process of *Body Restyling*. In the course of this process, female beauty workers make a complete make-over of their bodies. Otis (2012:9) explains that "To appeal to status expectations of consumers, service employers organize the bodies of workers as vehicles of signs, codes, and messages". In that sense, the body of the female beauty worker does not merely exist to provide body services, however, it is used as a free tool for propagating the services provided in the salon which is more effective than using displays and posters. The

hesitance that workers used to have in knowing whether a hairstylist or a make-up artists will give her the image in her head is no longer a problem since workers' bodies provide a real sample.

However, it is important to note that the process of restyling the body is a continuous one. While it is true that employers restyle workers' bodies from time to time according to the trends of the season, workers are responsible for their daily restyling. The process of daily restyling requires female beauty workers to come one hour early to work to take care of their bodies. The reason that they come early is to ensure finishing before the arrival of the clients and that clients do not get to see the workers using the tools and the space of the salon. Female beauty workers have to make sure that they wear suitable make-up, styled hair, trimmed and well-groomed nails. Those who fail to meet the daily routines of body restyling are subjected to warnings and deductions from their employers. In asking about her opinion concerning her body restyling, Noha says:

I actually feel good about my look. I am also proud that the owner likes me in particular and treats me like his daughter. Unlike other workers who get haircuts by male workers, I get mine by the salon owner himself which makes me feel proud and special as well. You know, women pay a lot of money to get their hair done with him while I get the same service for free. (personal communication, September, 2012)

In hearing Noha's response, It is clear that she perceives the salon owners' haircut free service as a compliment or an intimate gesture for a daughter. Although, it could be true that the owner gives Noha a special attention, this does not mask the reality that her body is used as a marketable object for the success of the business and in echoing Noha's words it is used 'for free'. Thus, Noha is not rewarded by the employer for using her body, instead, the process of aesthetic labour that requires (sexual) identity practices is being naturalized and not perceived as performative which in return make these women

being perceived as gendered workers rather than individuals. (Adkins and Lury, 1999: 298). It is important to note here that Noha is an example of what Adkins and Lury (1999) refer to as the ‘ideal subject of the employment contract’, “a self-transforming subject - who can constantly adapt his or her performance of self-identity and who can claim the effects of that performance of self-identity” (601).

Since it is hard to control the taste of female beauty workers in terms of their clothes, most fancy beauty salons reinforce a uniform. While uniforms are essential in protecting workers’ personal clothes from chemical substances, employers have other hidden motives behind using uniforms. For instance, Neama asserts,

I tried having no uniforms before and it was a disaster. I had daily fights with the female beauty workers concerning their choice of colors and the style of their clothes. It is either that they show up with old clothes because they want to keep their nice ones clean or they exaggerate and wear irrelevant colors. Thus, I enforced a uniform policy. If they would have a good taste, I would have left the choice for them, but, unfortunately, they lack the good taste. (personal communication, March, 2013)

From the above excerpt, it is clear that employers exert efforts to diminish signs of workers’ class origins. Bourdieu asserts that, “in the occupations involving presentation and representation, which often impose a uniform (*tendue*) intended, among other things, to abolish all traces of heterodox taste...”. The fact that salon owners do not wear those uniforms confirms that they are designed for protecting the clothes but for masking real identities of the workers.

The process of body restyling places these women in a dilemma. To undergo such excessive bodily changes, female beauty workers have to let go of their bodily habitus(es) established in the dispositions of their social class. However, this is not possible since in stepping out of the salons and going back to their families and neighborhoods, workers are required again to submit to their class practices. The problem with the body restyling

is that it leaves permanent marks on the bodies such as haircuts and eyebrows tattoos.

Facing such a dilemma, many workers have to find a way to split between their bodies at work and their bodies at homes. For example, Noha who has a tattooed eyebrow with colored short pixie crop hairstyle says:

Working here is totally different than other middle-class salons. I feel confident because I do not look inferior to female clients. In fact, I look better than many of them and my style influences them. However, I live in a local neighborhood. Everyone talks about everyone. I already have a bad reputation for being a beauty worker. People associate beauty workers with nurses and our physical appearance makes people think that all of us as sexually available. Since returning back home at 11:00p.m is already late for a female, I have to look modest and in addition to avoid sexual harassment. Thus, I put the veil on in going in and out of my neighborhood. (personal communication, August, 2012)

Noha's words refer to the links that she draws between her occupation and her body

image. In analyzing the peasant's perception of his own body, Bourdieu (1962:585)

points out that "He comes to perceive his body as a body marked by the social stamp, as

an *empaysanit*, 'em-peasanted' body, bearing the trace of the attitudes and activities

associated with peasant life". Similarly, female beauty workers perceive their bodies in

terms of the restyling practices induced by their employers.

Similarly Fatin adds,

I faced many troubles with my ex-husband because of my physical appearance. When we got married, I was working in middle-class salon that did not require changing my hair color and other stuff..Later one, I got this job and you know my salary is much higher now and I am dealing with better clients. I receive many compliments from my clients on my style. It feels good and I feel appreciated. However, I used to have regular fights with my husband because he was not accepting the changes and that they are against modesty. (personal communication, March, 2013)

In the above two cases, Noha and Fatin display a sense of confidence that they get out of their restyled bodies. While Noha does not have to worry anymore about a client looking her down, Fatin get self-assurance in receiving complementary comments from her clients. It is important to note then that the in doing so, female beauty workers are

able to mobilize their feminization capital by displaying feminine attributes. It is also remarkable that the classed hierarchies between workers and their clients in those salons are narrowed in comparison with their workers in low-and middle-class salons who do not get similar chances of body restyling. Yet, the restyled bodies of the workers are not perceived as modest and do not meet their class dispositions. In that sense, rather than focusing on the individual habitus of each worker, it is important to evaluate their restyled bodies against what Bourdieu (1977:81) terms as “class habitus”. The idea of class habitus is that it structures the objective view of the world based on collective practices from early childhood. As a result, “...the most improbable practices are excluded, either totally without examination, as unthinkable, or at the cost of double negation which inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway refused and to love the inevitable”(Bourdieu 1977:77). This explains why the restyled bodies of female beauty workers are unacceptable by their families and their neighbors while the same body restyling gives their clients a sense of honor and decency in their social network. In addition, the physical presence in the working space of the salon is perceived as morally wrong by most workers’ family members and neighbors.

For example, Manal states:

I get embarrassed to say that I am a beauty worker. People get you wrong when you say so. They think of us as whores, addicts and alcoholic...I told my neighbors long time ago that I work in a lawyer’s office as a secretariat. This is the only way I can escape the stereotyping of people. (personal communication, August, 2012)

In giving explanation for this stereotypical image, Mervat says:

Since we enter enclosed space, from the early morning till late at night, where our male family members do not have access to in order to check on our activities, people doubt what we might be doing inside...You know there are salons that have rooms inside used for prostitution. (personal communication, September, 2012)

Being in closed spaces, yet at work is a controversial position for those women. They are not in the private sphere due to Fraser's private and are not in the public due to their lack of visibility (1990). They suffer from not being seen and are thus doubted, privacy does not carry the equivalent of protection and security, on the contrary being in private spaces stigmatizes them. It also puts their work in inferior position, due to their invisibility. Thus doing work in an invisible space problematize their position as workers

The above struggles in adapting the newly bodily habits of the dominated class in opposition to the familiar practices of the working and middle class workers push them to what Bourdieu calls the state of 'pretention'. In Swartz's interpretation (1997), this pretension state affects the petit-bourgeois in which they are "...caught in the opposition between its upward mobility ambitions and actual possibilities..." (177). This justifies workers' actions is displaying their restyled bodies in the workplace while hiding them by different practices such as wearing veil in getting back to their homes. In the next section, I shift the focus from the bodies of workers to analyze the labour performed on the bodies of clients.

Types of body Labour

In her acclaimed study of Korean female manicurists, Kang (2010) traces three types of body labour that are defined according to different types of salons. While "Pampering body labour" is a type of labour that "involves extensive physical care, along with attention to the emotional needs of customers including engaged conversations", "expressive body labour focuses less on pampering and more on creating aesthetic nail designs while exhibiting community respect and reciprocity in the process" (167). The last type is "routinized body labour" which functional and focused on providing fast and

cheap services, however, clients expect to get pampered which results in clients' dissatisfaction (204). I draw on Kang's three concepts of body labor to explore the differences between body services in elite and upper-class salons, female only salons and lower-class salon. I will base my analysis in comparing between the following three salons: Kriss, Doaa El Aasar and Magdy&Sayd salons.

Pampering Body Labor

“It is not enough their bodies get pampered; they often want their feelings massaged as well” (Kang, 2010, p.135)

In Kriss Beauty salon, massaging the clients' feelings is the first step in providing successful beauty services. In getting directions for the salon, I made a phone call where the telephone operator answered me very professionally and asked me about the specific date and time of my expected visit and the required services and the name of the female beauty worker that I prefer. In addition, the operator requested my personal information such as my full name, cell phone number and email. Being overwhelmed with all those questions and since it is my first time to visit the salon anyways; I let him choose for me the female beauty workers. The idea of scheduling a phone appointment at least twenty-four hours before visiting the salon indicates the client's capability of dedicating free time during the day for her body. This prepares the client beforehand and put her in a state of mind that she is going to have her bodily treat and also assures that she has the luxury to choose her favorite female body worker by reserving an appointment with her. Two days later, on Tuesday, February 12, 2013 at 6:00p.m, I had my appointment with Fatin to receive a hand pedicure. In entering the salon, I was received by a male and a female receptionist who are dressed in formal black suits. The male receptionist gently took care of my coat and placed it in the coat closet right next to the entrance for the

clients. I was asked to wait in the waiting area which is luxuriously furnished. Lights were dim except for the spotlights directed on the working stations. The English songs played in the background were very relaxing that I did not feel that ten minutes have passed. Ironically, I got a nail cut during the pedicure, which I did not get at less professional salons. However, Fatin was very fast in apologizing and applied a special liquid that stopped the blood. I normally get very annoyed and scared of infections but Fatin's professional way in dealing with the situation has automatically calmed me down. Fatin asked me if I need more services and since we were into discussing my research topic, I asked for a foot pedicure and this is when I got to ask Fatin about the nature of her work. Fatin states that:

The most important thing we focus on is the client's satisfaction. You know..to be honest, our prices are high compared to other places providing the same services. However, we know how to give sufficient time to each client. Our aim is quality not quantity and if you think of it, it is the same at the end. Instead of working on two clients in half an hour, I spend it with one client and she pays the double. Also the relaxing atmosphere of the place make many clients feel at ease and ask for more services. In this case, even we have other scheduled appointments, the clients become willing to wait because they are already at ease. (personal communication, March, 2013)

The pampering body labour offered in Kriss salon and in similar elite salons ensures maximum satisfaction of clients. The scheduled appointments have two main advantages. They ensure saving the time of the clients' and at the same time keeping the working space of the salon organized and quiet. However, the disruption of this structured order causes conflicts between clients and the workers. For example, Manal explains that:

One time I had a client who came one hour late to her scheduled appointment. She came in and I was having another client after fifteen minutes. She did not even apologize for being late. I informed her that I have another appointment so there will be no time to do everything so I asked her to pick the most important thing or

otherwise wait until I finish the other client. She said that she wants her to get her hair done very quickly. By the time I gave her my back to prepare the station; she answered a phone call and kept talking for more than ten minutes. The next customer has arrived so I had to work with her. She finished the call and started to yell at me in a very loud voice saying that I am there to serve her and that I should respect my clients and that I do not deserve to be in this job. I controlled my temper and said to her: I will not answer you back. You came late. You have lost your turn. The manager supported me as well. (Personal communication, February, 2013)

Although pampering labour is the ultimate goal in providing services, respecting appointments is very important in ensuring a smooth work practice. Workers and clients are both expected to abide by the salons' rules. In keeping such a strategy, clients feel a sense of respect and professionalism.

Expressive Body Labour

“Expressive style of body labor can foster common gender identifications that challenge totalizing effects of racial conflict” (Kang, 2010,p.167)

Doaa El-Asar beauty salon is a female only space. The salon does not employ male workers. Thus, it offers a free space for both the beauty workers and their clients to be at ease from the presence of males in the working space. Concerning the workers' perspectives, Mona explains,

Since beauty workers are negatively marked for working on female bodies in the presence of male workers in the same space, it is really convenient to work at a female only salon. You know..my husband feels more safe that I work with women only. Also, I do not have to deal with male workers who in many times flirt with the female beauty workers and get into dirty conversations with them concerning clients' bodies. I also get to take my veil off unlike other places where I have to put on the veil for twelve hours everyday. (personal communication, September, 2012)

The above excerpt shows the freedom that workers get to enjoy at their workplace. Working in a female space allows the workers a space to express their real

identities at work. They do not have to deal with gender inequalities at work or be subjected to any type of harassment.

While Mervat explains the point view of the clients' as she mentions,

We get to receive two types of clients, veiled women who feel much freedom to get bodily services in a male-free space and unveiled women who do not like to be touched by male beauty workers. Some of them think it is religiously unacceptable, others simply do not feel comfortable while some clients' husbands refuse to let their wives bodies get touched by male hairstylists. (personal communication, September, 2012)

The expressive body labour that clients get in this salon is reflected by the setting of the place. Unlike other salons where the female area is always minor and enclosed space, female clients are more able to use the whole space of the salon. They do not get to be embarrassed in front of male workers by the time they are leaving the salons with red marks on their bodies that show the kind of services that they were having. Thus, Doaa El-Asar beauty salon guarantees a friendly atmosphere and ensures the delivery of expressive body labour.

Routinized Body Labour

“The routinized style of service provision often conflicts with the expectations of customers” (Kang 2010:214)

Working in a fast-paced environment such as the workspace of M.S salon is a challenging task to provide services with good quality. In entering the salon, it is easy to get annoyed by the loudness of the T.V mixed with the laughter of beauty workers and the clients. Clients are received on first-come- first-served basis which in return results in a huge number of clients stuffed in one small space with no enough chairs to sit on. The continuous usage of dryers, curling irons, steamers result in raising the salon's temperature. Little bits of cut hair can always be seen all over the salon's floor and the hairdryer's air blow them all over the salon. The possibility of getting fresh air in the

salon is very low since there is no healthy ventilation system. Being monitored by the salon owner and getting insulted in front of the clients for being slow, leaves no alternative for workers other than delivering routinized body labour. Huda explains,

Clients fight all the time for their turns. The first-come first-served technique does not really work for a number of reasons. Sometimes our regular clients call us on our personal cell phones and schedule an appointment. Since we can never expect when clients will come, it happens all the time that by the time our regular clients arrive, we are surprised with a new client. In this case, we are put in a hard situation because you do not want to upset your regular client who pays good tips while you cannot leave out the other client because they will complain to the salons' owner. The only way out then is to work on both clients at the same time. For example, leave the first clients' feet in the water while give a facial threading to the second client. (personal communication, March, 2013)

In that way, workers learn to work on multiple bodies simultaneously Cohen

(2011) explains that in a workspace where the number of workers are far less than the bodies worked upon, workers have to work in multiple bodies at the same time (p.193).

However, she stresses than in doing so one of the bodies is "temporarily not being worked upon" which allows "gaps" to work on the other body. However, "Bodies and their temporality are, however, frustratingly unpredictable" (Cohen 2011:193), the same idea that Huda stresses as she says: "Sometimes, I estimate that hair removal will take me thirty minutes then I can move to another client. However, I get surprised that the client is very hairy and it takes me double the time". In addition, Manal shows her frustration at demanding clients who ask for many details because working on the same body for a long time is translated by the salon owner as being slow. While routinized body labour let clients have cheap services, and give an opportunity for workers to get more tips for working on a larger number of bodies, it is stressful for the beauty workers and do not always meet clients' expectations. While types of body labour may vary as shown in the above analysis, basic services across all salons are almost the same and they are all based

on beautification or in other words *removing dirt*. In the next section, I will explore female beauty workers' impressions regarding working on the bodies of others but not in terms of beautification but rather on removing bodily dirt.

The Dirty Work of Beautification

A client opened the door with great zeal, perfume filled the place instantly, inviting everyone to look at her elegant, expensive clothes and jewelry. I was curious to know the kind of service she will ask for, and when she asked for a hair removal, I remembered Noha's words when she said "Being rich does not necessarily mean being clean".

Beauty is a product that its workers' carry the secret of what the body looks like and sometimes smells like. They share the pain that the clients go through, but not to reach beauty but to get earned. They share body pains added to it the disgust of discovering, what lies beneath the expensive clothes and jewelry. In interviewing female beauty workers, I noticed that they critically judge clients' bodies in a sense of disgust. Removing bodily hair whether in using the traditional homemade sugar based hair removal or waxing, parts of clients' bodies or their whole bodies have to be totally exposed to workers and the direct touching of clients' bodies is a must. While many clients get to choose carefully female workers who are going to see and touch their bodies, female beauty workers can hardly choose clean bodies to work on. In explaining Twigg's (2000) study of care workers who deal with bodies of elderly people, McDowell (2009) stresses on "the dual aspect of care work as dirty work and emotional labour" (p.171). McDowell (2009) shows that sense of disgust as a result of smelly bodies is a major problem that faces care workers (p.172). Similarly, Noha tells me that:

A client once asked me for a hair removal for her lower body part. In getting undressed, I found out that she was having her menstrual cycle. It was shocking for me that she was not embarrassed of me. I apologized and made up an excuse that I only do hair removal for bikini lines. I finished and I got out and I had to throw up in the bathroom. Since that day, I knew

that being rich does not necessarily mean being clean. (personal communication, September, 2012)

Noha's excerpt provides an insight on the bodily labour of beauty workers is always made invisible. While women of elite and upper-classes are always marked with their clean and beautiful bodies, female beauty workers get to see what is beyond their cloths that act as social markers. In doing so, beauty workers are able to break the norms of touch which is "associated with hierarchy and the expression of authority, with the powerful touching the less so, superiors touching inferiors. Touch is thus a vector of status, authority and dominance" (Twigg,1997,66). Female beauty workers in this case do hold the symbolic power of having authority over the bodies of their clients who belong to the dominant class.

In this chapter, I clarified how salon owners use that the bodies of their female workers as marketable tools for their services. This clarifies that besides the emotional labour that female beauty workers are required to do, they are also required to do aesthetic labour which translates into the labour of identity. This happens through the restyling of worker bodies to ensure the success of the business and promote for its services. In addition, different types of body labour have been highlighted to clarify how female beauty workers meet the expectations and demands of their female clients. The last section is devoted to analysis of the labour performed on the bodies of clients and how the politics of nakedness and touch may bridge classed inequalities by guaranteeing the workers an authority over the bodies of their clients.

Chapter Five

Conclusion: Beauty Workers' Aspirations

Throughout the previous chapters, I have tried to unpack the experience of Egyptian female beauty workers. I focused in the first two chapters on workers themselves to provide the reader a sense of who are they? How and why are they attracted to the beauty industry? What other work is available for them? The working routine of those workers and their daily interactions with their female clients uncover class inequalities that cannot be denied or ignored. It is important to note that when the type of services provided are more intimate, it becomes challenging to highlight unequal power relations. In addition, beauty services offered by female beauty workers have not received the attention it merits based on the assumption that those are unskilled laborers. Thus, the thesis is a part of a larger story about the challenges that intimate services providers face ranging from recognition and appreciation of their services, improving hard working conditions. The dynamics of body labour were discussed in chapter four. The female body of the beauty worker is used as a marketable device for the services offered in the salons. The process of what I called *Body Restyling* requires female beauty workers to adjust and acquire changes that some are able to adapt into their daily habitus while they others prefer to resist. I also focused on the different forms of body labour that take place in different types of salons which address the needs of different customers. Most importantly, I analyzed female beauty workers' perceptions and feelings of interactive body labour that require direct contact with the bodies of clients and what the feelings that it entails that varies from disgust, shame and anxiety.

Future Aspirations

This part is dedicated for giving an overview of female beauty workers' aspirations. Conducting a study on female beauty workers in Egypt was a challenging task for me. I got to hear Egyptian stories of female workers who have countless responsibilities and families to feed. Their stories are not unique to the beauty industry; instead, they echo a lot of other Egyptian female workers from in the service sector. Thus, I wanted to reflect upon their hopes for a better future.

I am looking forward to finish my Bachelor degree in Law, work as a lawyer and get my LLM in Law studies. I want to get my daughters into reputable universities and ensure that their future husbands are well educated. I wish that beauty workers become more aware of their workers' rights as I am now so employers won't be able to make use of their ignorance. If I am in a position to run a beauty salon, I would employ more workers and divide them into daily shifts so workers get to have a family life. I would rather get paid half of my salary rather than staying all the day outside (Huda, personal communication, March, 2013)

Huda believes in the power of educational capital and its role in securing a better cultural capital for her daughters. Her call for workers' rights is a popular demand shared by many workers in Egypt who are participating in daily protests for gaining their minimal rights but their hopes are all in vain.

Being in my forties, I feel that I am getting old and I am not able to perform as well as I used to be in my job. Thus, I wish I can have a contract to secure a pension if I stay home at anytime. I wish for my daughter a better life than mine. She wanted to work as female beauty worker during the summer but I totally refused. I do not want her to feel shameful of her job as I feel (Manal, personal communication, September, 2012).

Manal's fear of the vague future is a valid one since she might simply get laid off soon for physical problems without getting any compensation for the long years of hard work. Her fear about her daughter's future reflects the panic that her daughter might inherit her culture's capital and get trapped in the reproduced cycle of the service sector.

I hope that the mentality of Egyptian clients would change one day to value the female beauty worker. Many clients do not understand that we are not servants, we provide services. Without these services, those women won't be able to face the world and go their fancy jobs and marry rich men. I also look forward to a time when female beauty workers are trusted as hairstylists and make-up artists (Manal Kriss, personal communication, March, 2013).

Manal's words reflect a professional perspective on the view of beauty services in Egypt. She is concerned about female beauty workers status and the respect the community should give back to those workers who provide essential services for every woman in the society.

Final Words

I hope that this thesis offers a starting point to analyze labour dynamics inside Egyptian beauty salons. I tried to deliver what those women wanted the world to know about them. Many might assume that the primary demand of those women is to improve their working conditions. Although this is a legitimate demand, their priority is to be appreciated. They want their work to be recognized and valued. The widening gap between them and their female clients is a direct result of the underestimation of their work and the stereotyped image that the society imposes on them. I believe it is time to value Egyptian workers in the service sector in general. One way to achieve this is through scholars who should give particular attention to the service sector and in particular the beauty sector. Future research might tackle issues such as beauty services

provided for male clients by female workers and homes beauty services provided by self-employed workers.

Ethical Considerations

Taking into consideration the safety of the women with whom I have research related conversations, I ensured the following measures. To ensure credible results, I made sure that my respondents are aware that I am conducting a research and thus give me information under their consent. I was also aware not to risk the workers relation with the owners of the salons. Thus, I made sure not to conduct any interviews until I built a strong relationship with them by being a regular client. This allowed me to navigate class hierarchies as much as possible and ensure an open dialogue.

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