

# More Than Just a Haircut: Sociability Within the Urban African American Barbershop

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## Abstract

This ethnographic study investigated the social interactions that occurred in an African American Urban barbershop located in a Southern city. The results of this study indicate that, unlike previous studies, the urban African American barbershop can be a place where African American men congregate and establish social bonds. Specifically, this study addressed the interactions that take place between barbers and patrons. This study found that there are four levels of interactions that occur and each level reflects a different degree of intimacy. The four levels discovered were: customer, cool, partner, and boys.

## Introduction

Some of my oldest and fondest memories are of "hanging out" with my grandfather in the barbershop where he worked. I remember sitting at his side while he and his friends played cards and checkers by themselves for extended periods of time. Instead of being home alone, the retired or disabled men came to the barbershop and socialized. Current world events such as inflation and the hostage crisis in Iran often dominated their conversations.

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For the first thirteen years of my life the barbershop was my world, my reality. By the age of fifteen I had spent nearly as much time in the barbershop as I had in school. I couldn't wait for the school bell to ring and signal the end of the day. I knew that when the bell sounded, I was free to go to my granddad's barbershop around the corner and "hang out" with him. Even as a child I knew there was something interesting going on in the barbershop. I knew there was a story to be told.

The African American barbershop is one of the most important social settings for African American men. The barbershop is a place where African American men interact and discuss topics important to them. A community's barbershop often contains many secrets and stories about the neighborhood and its people; however, most conversations focus on sports, women, and politics. Visiting the barbershop, patrons have an opportunity to renew contacts within the community, if they live outside the area, and sustain bonds already established, if they live in the community. For many African American men the barbershop represents an extended family, a place to buy merchandise, have meaningful conversation, escape the madness of the "outside world," and/or a place where they can get a haircut. For whatever reasons, many African American men are as comfortable in the barbershop as they are at home. The primary purpose of this study is to provide an analysis of the levels of social interactions that transpire between barbers and patrons in a southern urban African American barbershop.

### Review of the Literature

Only two articles, to my knowledge, appear in the scientific literature that specifically investigates the African American urban barbershop. These articles do not provide sociologically meaningful insights into the social interactions of ordinary African American men. Instead, one study presents a "car window" sociological view of an urban African American barbershop and the other focuses on the alleged negative language used in the barbershop. Because of these weaknesses, this study presents a different and more comprehensive, understanding of an urban African American barbershop.

Louis Williams' (1993) study has a limited methodology, makes broad generalizations, and lacks an analysis of the social interactions of the men in Dennis' Barbershop. This study also lacks a thorough description and/or analysis of the urban African American barbershop.

Williams' methodology is limited because he conducts only "observation[s] over several hours over several days" (p. 29). From these limited observations he concludes that the "black man's barbershop is the last place that a black child can go to become a black man, and a black man can go to bond with other black men" (p. 29). Williams' assertion that the barbershop is the last place where a black child can learn how to become a man is overstated and based on limited information. His assessment is also questionable because it is based on a single interview

with one barber. He did not interview kids, young adults, or men who frequent the barbershop to determine if and what they learned while in the barbershop. This study implies, if only remotely, that all black men relinquish their fatherly duties and that there is no male role model in the home or family of young African American men. Williams' study should be supplemented with an additional investigation of the barbershop experience.

Williams is correct with regard to the barbershop being a place where African American men go to bond with their fellows, but with one exception. The barbershop is not the only place where African American men congregate and enjoy the company of their peers. This activity can just as easily be found in churches, the front porch of a home, community centers, pool halls, or local businesses. What the barbershop provides is a mostly homogenous setting that permits men to engage in activities and conversations that could be looked upon unfavorably by individuals not familiar with the patterns of social interaction that take place within the barbershop. Consequently, the absence of many women and European Americans give the men who frequent barbershops the feeling that "this place is theirs." Clyde W. Franklin, II in his (1985) article argues that the urban African American barbershop provides an environment where sex-role stereotypes and sexist attitudes against women are encouraged and promoted while filtering to young kids, who always seem to be present, in barbershops. Franklin's two month study, that is more methodologically sound than Williams', is plagued with problems from his data in which he concludes that "consistent exposure to such a setting can have harmful effects on growing and vulnerable minds" (p. 978). For this reason, Franklin decided to end his patronage of a barbershop he had frequented for fourteen years. The primary objective of Franklin's study is to assess the negative impact that the black male urban barbershop has on young kids and adolescents. Franklin's narrow focus provides an opening for additional research in this area.

Franklin's study leaves a void in the literature on African American barbershops because of his lack of a focus on the social interactions that transpire within the barbershop and the broad generalizations he makes. His study focused primarily on the language used in the barbershop and the "harmful" effect it has on children. Despite this limited focus and the absence of empirical data citing the essence of barber-patron social interactions, Franklin overreaches his data by making sweeping statements such as, "Few social settings in America today are more misogynist than the Black male urban barbershop, based on conversations observed in Bob's barbershop" (p. 973). Franklin condemns every African American barbershop as a haven for haters of women by making such statements. His conclusions are tenuous and highly problematic because they are based on the observation of one barbershop. There may be some barbershops where patrons discuss women unfairly in conversations, yet it is also possible that there are others where the clientele are sensitive to and aware of the injustices experienced by

African American women and therefore do not engage in demeaning epithets. Ultimately, these individuals may discuss topics other than "why we hate women" and "what it means to be a bitch" while getting a haircut.

The observations of Williams and Franklin, although important in highlighting the sociological significance of the African American barbershop as a social institution, fail to discuss the urban African American barbershop in a manner that provides a comprehensive and systematic investigation because of the limited nature of their studies and their limited sample. Specifically, neither study attempts to describe the social interactions that transpire in the barbershop. Williams conducts a car window sociological study that produces data which could be gathered by an untrained observer. His study falls short because it lacks a rigorous methodology and analysis. Franklin's study is also inadequate because its basic premise, that every African American barbershop is a conveyor of hatred against women, limits the nature of his study. Furthermore, Franklin's study never attempts to describe the patrons who frequent the barbershop or discuss the social bonds that may be established between the men. Instead he focuses on the sensational activities of "ghetto life" while ignoring the ordinary social relationships established in the barbershop.

This study is designed to add to the existing literature on the urban African American barbershop by providing a systematic investigation into the lives of the patrons and barbers of one African American barbershop that is more comprehensive than the studies reviewed. The results of this study are not generalizable, yet they do signal the complexity and diversity of urban African American barbershops.

**Setting.** This study was conducted in Southern City.<sup>1</sup> Southern City is located deep in the American South and has a population of nearly one million people. It is the home of a major urban university, and relies on its "old South" dependence upon a major river, agriculture and commerce to stimulate its economic growth. While most inner city structures in Southern City are deteriorating, the suburbs are experiencing an increased population and economic boom. The inner city, specifically, an area between the Mississippi River and a thriving highway, can best be described as dilapidated and in ruins. Although these facts persist, Peannut's Barbershop is the social center of an area affectionately known as "Funky Town."

In Southern City, individuals who are "high" on drugs are often described as being in Funky Town. Some residents of this neighborhood use the term Funky Town when asked where they live because, according to drug dealers that come into the barbershop, this area has the highest amount of drug usage in the city. Despite knowing the negative meaning associated with the concept Funky Town, many residents use the term endearingly while inside Peannut's Barbershop and outside the community.

Peannut's Barbershop is surrounded by several businesses and condemned houses. Across the street from Peannut's is a thriving chicken restaurant, an auto parts store, and a church. To the left and right of the barbershop are condemned houses that will be destroyed, according to the owner of Peannut's, the proprietor of some of the homes.

Peannut's Barbershop is a two story building which has an arrangement of brown bricks and wood constituting the facade. There is a small patch of grass in the front of the building that the barbers use as a parking lot. To the left of the building is the patrons parking lot. This parking lot is made of rocks and poorly laid concrete that can cause major damage to your car if one enters the lot at a wrong angle.

Inside Peannut's Barbershop are seven barber chairs stretching down an aisle about fifteen yards in length. Fifteen chairs are lined against the opposite wall for waiting patrons. Hair style posters are plastered across the walls of the shop. The barber's working areas are filled with a loose arrangement of clippers, combs, scissors, and other professional tools. The wall behind the area where patrons wait is filled with flyers promoting past and upcoming community events. The floor is made of red tile except for about ten white pieces that form a cross in the middle of the aisle between the barber and patron chairs. The cross symbolizes the owner's religious faith. In a corner, near the back of the barbershop, is what is commonly known in the African American community as a juke box. During a regular visit to the barbershop you are likely to hear songs by African American artists such as Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, or Chaka Kahn. For one dollar, a person can listen to six "classic" songs. It is not uncommon for the entire barbershop to join together in song while a favorite record, such as Al Green's "Love and Happiness," is playing.

**Methods.** In this study triangulation is used (Denzin, 1970). Triangulation is a concept that utilizes a combination of methodologies to study the same research setting or question. Triangulation is useful because it helps researchers "partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one method" (p. 300). Consequently, triangulation provides the researcher and others greater confidence in the results of their study because of the opportunity they have to cross check their information. A researcher may compare data collected from an interview with observations made in the setting. This allows researchers the opportunity to note common themes in their study. The qualitative research methods used in this study are systematic sociological introspection (Ellis, 1991), field observations, and in-depth interviews.

Systematic sociological introspection is a research method that allows a researcher the opportunity to use her/his memory for research purposes by reliving the emotions of a certain experience and discussing how she/he felt during the moment. According to Ellis, introspection also "permits us to prompt and collect

our own and other people's stories about the lived details of socially constructed experiences" (p. 45). This is important for two reasons. First, it allows one the opportunity to relive and possibly manage memories of a traumatic event in a therapeutic manner (Ronai, 1989). After an adequate length of time has passed, a person who has experienced some kind of abuse/trauma could feel safe to talk about, write, and/or relive the experience. Second, introspection does not penalize the researcher because a certain event occurred years before their research began. One should not be penalized because their actual lived experience does not parallel the time of their research. The author, through a reconstructed chronology of field notes,<sup>2</sup> reconstructed five years of experience as a barbershop regular and retrospectively took into account conversations, incidents, and activities that occurred in the barbershop during this time. The reconstructed field notes were recorded during a five hour span in which the author typed everything he could remember about the interactions and activities that took place in the barbershop during his time as a patron – not a researcher. This data source is useful because information was obtained that could not have been gained in a regular one year study as a participant observer.

Field observations<sup>3</sup> were conducted from October 1996 to April 1997. During this time the author traveled to the barbershop about once every ten days to get a hair cut and collect data. Visits to the barbershop usually lasted about one to one and a half hours. A conscious effort was made to visit the barbershop on the busiest days of the week (specifically, Friday and Saturday) and on days when business was slow (Monday and Wednesday). Employing this strategy enabled the author to collect data that reflected the barbershop environment at different times and with different clients.

The author began and finished this research project as a "complete member researcher" (Adler and Adler, 1987). This method of participant observation requires researchers to "immerse themselves fully in the group as a 'native.' They and their subjects [then] relate to each other as status equals, dedicated to sharing in a common set of experiences, feelings, and goals" (p. 67). Current research indicates that being a native is very important in gaining the trust and friendship of your subject(s) (Anderson, 1976, 1990; Ronai, 1989). While a complete member researcher, I collected detailed field notes on patrons, barbers and children that hung out in the shop, community activities held in the area and any other activity that caught my attention. The field notes averaged 3 \_ typewritten pages per visit and were transcribed within two days after the actual observation. None of the subjects were aware of my status as a researcher until a few weeks prior to the end of formal observations. After being informed of my researcher status all of the subjects were willing to provide additional data and/or insight into the barbershop environment.

In-depth interviews were conducted with four members of the barbershop: Pete, an African American man approximately 55 years old who is the

owner of Peanut's Barbershop, Walter, my 32 year old African American barber, and Chris and John, two African American male barbershop patrons aged 26. An in-depth interview is a "guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis" (Lofland and Lofland, 1995, p. 18). The taped interviews that were gathered after my research status was known lasted from thirty to forty-five minutes each. The interview questions focused on the community in which the barbershop exists, friendships established in the barbershop, the perceived class of the people who frequent the barbershop, and events that took place in the barbershop (e.g. What has been the biggest change in this community? Have you ever become friends with someone as a result of being his barber? What type of jobs do your customers have? Describe any interesting activities or events that have taken place in or around Peanut's Barbershop). Also, the interviewees were allowed to discuss other issues that they believed were important to understanding the urban African American barbershop (e.g. community service by the owner of Peanut's, ways that the barbers handle unruly patrons, and other possible interviewees).

Pete, Walter, Chris, and John were selected because they were able to provide four distinct outlooks on the barbershop environment. Pete was interviewed because he owns the barbershop and has been a member of the community for a very long time. His barbershop is the focal point of much of the development and community uplift programs that take place in the area. Walter was interviewed because, according to Chris and John, he "knows everything about everybody at the barbershop." Also, the fact that he was my barber elevated his chances for selection. Chris and John, two friends of mine, were chosen because they were able to provide information about events and activities that occurred in the barbershop when they were present and I was not. Also, their experiences with their barbers was an essential factor in their selection. Essentially, these four interviews combined to provide detailed data concerning patterns of social interaction within the barbershop.

The combination of systematic sociological introspection, field observations, and in-depth interviews provide this study with a diverse range of methods that make it possible to collect data that would have been neglected or, perhaps, misinterpreted had only a single methodology been used. The use of multiple methods generated a wealth of data and formed a solid foundation for the findings discussed in the following sections.

**"How Many You Got ?"** In Peanut's Barbershop, where haircuts cost ten dollars and a wait can last up to an hour, one of the first things a patron does upon entering is to ask a barber how many haircuts he has to give before his turn comes. The atmosphere of the barbershop is "laid back" and is conducive to the implicit rules of order and organization that take place within this setting. Specifically, since appointments are not made in Peanut's, and many other African American

barbershops, people wanting a haircut are served on a first come first serve basis. Chris, a slender six foot patron, describes the process of coming into the barber-shop and finding out how many people are waiting on his barber:

Once you get in you look around the barbershop to see who is all there. Mainly to see if your barber is there. If he's there, you want to know how many people you have in front of you. Once you've established that....if it's not too many, you decide if you're gonna wait in line.

My field notes provide an example of what Chris describes. One Saturday morning a patron came into the barbershop and asked Bobby, a barber, "How many you got?" Bobby responded, "Four." "A-ight," said the patron, "I'll hit 'cha back." This means that the patron is going to leave the barbershop and return when the barber has fewer waiting customers. In most cases the patron returns a few hours after peak business time – usually, this is around five or six o'clock in the afternoon. Sometimes a barber will tell his patrons of their place in line through facial expressions and other nonverbal cues. These cues are sometimes used when letting one patron "skip over" another while waiting for a haircut.

One afternoon the author went to the shop at a time when it was very crowded. He entered in and silently took his seat because Waiter, his barber, was busy cutting someone's hair. No interaction took place between the author and his barber because he was engaged in a conversation with someone else and because he saw me enter. One of the unspoken rules of the barbershop is not to interrupt when a barber is talking to someone else. You wait for a break in the interaction before engaging the barber in conversation. Consequently, he knew that I wanted to get a haircut from him and leave the barbershop as quickly as possible. There is another unspoken etiquette in the barbershop that permits certain patrons to have privileges such as skipping ahead of others. While waiting to get my haircut, two men were saying that they had been waiting on Waiter for about forty-five minutes and that they were in a hurry. After overhearing this I thought I would have a comparable waiting time. After Waiter finished the haircut that he was giving when I entered the shop, he sent me a nonverbal cue that told me to hurry up and get into his barber's chair. With a nod of his head to the back, my barber informed me that it was my turn to get a haircut. The men who had been waiting did not seem to be angry at my barber's sleight of hand. Instead, they waited patiently until I was finished and then proceeded to get their hair cut by my barber.

In Peanut's Barbershop there are implicit rules about the order in which patrons are served. Most of the time they are served on a first come first serve basis as previously stated. But, there are times in which some barbers will allow their favored customers and/or friends to get their hair cut before someone else that they are not too familiar with. This is an unspoken rule of the barbershop. Barbers may have made a commitment to one of their regulars unbeknownst to the person waiting. As a consequence, those waiting accept this behavior without

objection because they do not know the rules of the barbershop and/or they know the rules and accept the barber's decision assuming "fairness" on the barber's part. Usually, this situation is met with little resistance. Patrons, for whatever reasons, usually allow their barbers the liberty to make such decisions.

**Barbershop Sociability.** This study discovered four levels of Barbershop Sociability: customer, cool, partner, and boys. Sociability is defined as the ways by which people are friendly and cordial with one another. The sociability levels identify patterns of interaction that take place between the barbers and their patrons. The only thing that limits a person's ability to move from customer to boys is the patron's and barber's own willingness, or lack thereof, to form a bond, or friendship. With each stage, the level of intimacy and contact between the men intensifies. It must be stated that although the stages are defined (customer, cool, partner, and boys), they are not rigidly set; some characteristics attributed to one level may be found in another, or a level may be completely skipped.

**Customer.** In this stage, the individual who comes into the barbershop has no general preference as to who will cut his hair. His goal is to get a haircut and be on his way as quickly as possible. This person is usually new to the barbershop. As a result, he doesn't know which barber is able to cut his hair to his satisfaction. Usually, a customer will evaluate all of the barbers to determine who is doing the best job, according to their particular taste. Because of his unfamiliarity with the barbers, the chances of a customer receiving a bad haircut are greater than the chances of him receiving a satisfactory one.

Being new to Peanut's can sometimes cause a customer to become "lost in the mix," or ignored because of their lack of importance, if he doesn't make his presence and desire for a cut known. According to field notes one patron told me that he had been waiting to get a haircut for about thirty minutes before I came into the shop. After I got my haircut, one and a half hours later, the guy was still waiting. Because so many activities take place in Peanut's Barbershop it is often unknown whether the patron is there to get a haircut, lounge, or take advantage of and/or participate in the underground economy. Therefore, it is to the benefit of the new patron to make his specific desires known once he has surveyed the barbers' performance and decides which one he wants to cut his hair.

At this level, when outside the barbershop, a customer may or may not acknowledge the presence of the barber who cuts his hair. If there is a verbal exchange it is nothing more than a polite "what's up." At this level the customer has no loyalty to the barbershop or a particular barber. The goal is to get a haircut as quickly as possible. The next stage is characterized by a higher degree of intimacy, sociability, and commitment to the barbershop.

**Cool.** This stage is characterized by an individual's desire to get his hair cut

by a particular barber when he comes into the shop. Although the individual may like the way his barber cuts his hair, his loyalties lie more with the barbershop and not the barber. This means that his connection with the barbershop, and possibly the community, are greater than the tie or bond that has been established with the barber. If the cool person's barber stopped working at the barbershop, he would not follow the barber to his next place of employment. He would merely find another barber in the shop and form a relationship or sociable bond with him.

When I first visited Peanut's Barbershop I always got my hair cut by Stan. Stan and I were cool. Later, Stan left Peanut's to establish his own barbershop. My loyalty at that moment was with the barbershop and not with Stan. Consequently, I found another barber in the shop and bonded with him. By the time Stan decided to leave Peanut's I was close to switching barbers, anyway, because I wasn't satisfied with the cut he gave.

When outside the barbershop, a cool person will acknowledge the presence of their barber. They may also engage in light conversation. Usually, this interaction lasts only a few minutes.

One afternoon Bobby, a barber at Peanut's, told Waiter, my new barber, that he saw a guy who got his hair cut by him at a party the previous night. "Hey, I saw Tim at the party last night. I talked with him for a minute." Waiter responded, "Yeah, Tim's cool. He comes in all the time and gets his hair cut." In this stage there is a preference for who cuts your hair, there may or may not be an acknowledgment of the other outside the shop, the interactions are more intimate, but the loyalty primarily resides in the barbershop and not the barber. Loyalty to the barber and increased friendship are major characteristics of stage three.

**Partner.** At this level, an individual goes to the barbershop to get his hair cut by a particular barber. This level differs from level two in that the loyalties of a patron lie with the barber and not the barbershop. If a partner's barber leaves the barbershop he also goes because they have an established social bond. If a barber knew that he was leaving the shop, he would tell his customers where his job would be going. This accomplishes at least three goals: First, the barber would lose less money while making the transition between shops; secondly, his patrons would not have to get a haircut by someone unfamiliar with their likes and dislikes; and thirdly, it speaks to the intimacy level the barbers assigns the patron.

If a partner notices his barber out in the streets he is likely to stop and talk to him for a while. It is even possible that they'll hang out. This stage differs from the previous two in one distinct way. A partner and barber have a relationship that can exist outside the barbershop.

An interview with Chris, a barbershop patron, provides an example. Last Spring, Chris and some of his friends vacationed in Florida. While there, Chris ran across his barber, Bobby. Bobby is considered to be a ladies man by most of the

men in the barbershop because of his muscular body, wavy black hair, light brown skin, and his ability to charm women. After seeing each other in Florida, Chris and Bobby spent some time hanging out together. If the two had merely a customer or cool relationship their interactions would have been limited perhaps, only to a level of acknowledging each other's presence. Because they were partners and shared a social bond, no informal rules prevented their getting together.

One day Waiter, a robust yet jolly barber, and Bobby were discussing a mutual acquaintance who frequents the barbershop. Bobby asked Waiter if the guy was "straight" (an honorable person). Waiter said, "Man, that's my partner there. We go back like rocking chairs." This means that the two men are very good friends and have known each other for a long time. The next level, Boys, will illustrate the highest level of Barbershop Sociability.

**Boys.** This level is characterized by an individual who goes to the barbershop to get his hair cut by a particular barber. The loyalty of an individual in this stage, just as the previous level, is with the barber. Partners and boys are different only because of the strong bond they maintain outside of the barbershop. It can be stated that boys are "real friends." They have regular planned, and intentional contact with each other outside the walls of the barbershop. As boys, they often "go out on the town" together and call each other's home regularly. They do not happen to meet by chance. Their encounters are planned yet without the rigidity found in secondary relationships. Being boys gives them the opportunity to get together and do certain activities with each other.

Bobby and George are boys. George is a barbershop regular and Bobby is his barber. Whenever George comes into the shop he and Bobby always discuss what they did the previous night. They go together to football games, basketball games, gentlemen's clubs, and dance clubs. They have a solid friendship that began in the barbershop and led to their becoming boys.

One morning Waiter came into the shop telling everyone that would listen what he did the previous night. Before telling his story to Bobby, he commented on a patron who frequents the shop. "Hey, Bob," yelled Waiter, "I saw your boy last night." In an excited tone Bobby responded, "Really. What was he doing?" Waiter answered, "Man, your boy is a straight fool." This exchange provides an example of the nature of a "boys" friendship in Peanut's Barbershop.

### Conclusion

The typology presented in this paper clearly highlights the importance of studying the subtleties and nuances that transpire in an urban African American barbershop. Statuses are not automatic and must be gained through mutual connection between the participants. In this paper I have provided a thorough description of an urban African American barbershop, the methodological issues involved with conducting this study, and patterns of social interaction. Additionally, I

have discussed how the subjects actively use a lexicon that describes the bonds established in the barbershop (customer, cool, partner, boys). Specifically, I found that the level of intimacy between the barber and patron dictates the nature of their interaction. For example, as presented in this paper, a patron entering the barbershop for the first time, who has no or limited knowledge of the rules (unspoken), will perhaps wait a long time to get a haircut because others who are more familiar with the nature of barbershop interactions can use this information to their advantage. Thus, getting a haircut from the barber of his choice in a timely fashion.

In addition to the overt objectives cited in this paper, a covert aim was pursued. A circuitous objective of this paper has been to present a qualitative study of African American men which does not judge their behavior. Such a focus currently saturates current academic and mainstream literature. Consequently, this paper presents data that illuminates friendship bonds and patterns of social interaction established among African American men within a context that does not define their behavior as deviant, underclass, or "ghetto specific." The exclusion of a deviant theoretical perspective places the focus of this study where it should be – on issues such as the importance of social interactions within the African American barbershop.

Although a lot has been learned from this study, there are weaknesses. This study was conducted at one barbershop, in one city, and during one particular time frame. Therefore, the data presented in this study are suggestive, not definitive. Additionally, people unfamiliar with the unspoken rules of barbershop interactions should have been investigated to determine their feelings about what happened to them while in the barbershop. Lastly, the sample size was small. Perhaps had I spoken to a different group of people, a different picture of the urban African American barbershop would have emerged.

There are several areas where additional research is warranted: 1) the role African American men who frequent black barbershops maintain in their community and beyond through this institution; 2) the exact processes which influence one's status – particularly, the mechanisms by which one moves from one level of intimacy to another; 3) similarities and differences between rural and urban African American barbershops to ascertain if similar processes exist; 4) the urban African American beauty salon to determine if social interaction processes are similar to urban African American barbershops; and 5) a comparison between exclusively white barbershops and urban African American barbershops to note similarities and differences.

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- <sup>1</sup> All names and locations identified in this study have been changed to provide anonymity.
- <sup>2</sup> A reconstructed chronology of field notes refers to the recording of a person's memory to be used as data. This can be accomplished by documenting one's lived experiences through either an in-depth interview or by recording his/her experiences on paper or a computer.
- <sup>3</sup> Approval from the university to conduct this research project was not required.