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W.E.B. Du Bois, Community Health Assessment, And Empirical Research: A Case Study of a Pioneer Sociologist

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Abstract

This paper examines W.E.B. Du Bois and his involvement with community health assessment and empirical research in the late 19th and early 20th century with special reference to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Atlanta, Georgia. It examines his empirical research on community health with a focus on health and physique in *The Philadelphia Negro* during 1896 to 1897. This paper also examines his empirical research on community health with a focus on health and physique in *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* during 1898 and 1906. It argues that Du Bois was engaged with community health assessments long before the term became popularized. Likewise, it argues that Du Bois utilized the middle level of analysis to conduct empirical research and community health assessments of Philadelphia and Atlanta from the framework of a beyond car-window sociology approach.

Introduction

During his long and fruitful lifetime, W.E.B. Du Bois engaged in a wide range of research projects. As a polyglot, Du Bois conducted research that touched on multiple disciplines, including history, sociology, political science, and anthropology. The research projects of Du Bois covered Black history

1. Before the transatlantic slavery trade
2. During the slavery the Trans-Atlantic slavery trade and
3. After the transatlantic slavery trade

In addition to historical research, Du Bois conducted a series of empirical research projects with a focus on sociology. The sociological empirical research projects were conducted under the auspices of academic institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania and Atlanta University. He also conducted sociological empirical research projects under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Labor

(1940, 1968). One of the first empirical research projects by *Du Bois* [1] focused on Black people in Philadelphia. From a systematic and careful viewpoint, Du Bois looked at various aspects of their lives through the lens of what is now called a community health assessment. He published his findings as *The Philadelphia Negro*, which has come to be regarded as a sociological classic by many scholars. Prior to the completion of the research for *The Philadelphia, Du Bois* [2] was asked to take over the Atlanta University Studies of the Negro and the Annual Atlanta University Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems. Du Bois embraced his task and developed a 10-year plan to be repeated over 100 years. Du Bois related that the plan involved: a recurring cycle of ten studies in succeeding decades; with repetition of each subject or some broader and more exact basis and with better method; until gradually a foundation of carefully ascertained fact would build a basis of knowledge, broad and sound enough to be called scientific in the best sense of that term" (p. 216).



The areas of study as goals in the 10-year-plan were

1. Population: distribution and growth
2. Biology: health and physique
3. Socialization: family, group and class
4. Cultural patterns: morals and manners
5. Education
6. Religion and the church
7. Crime
8. Law and government
9. Literature and art and
10. Summary and bibliography

In an 1897 presentation at the Academy of Social and Behavioral Sciences, *Du Bois* [3] explained that he intended to conduct his empirical research projects with a methodological approach that included

1. Historical study
2. Statistical investigation
3. Anthropological measurement and
4. Sociological interpretation

According to Du Bois, historical research would be used to explore archival material. Statistical investigation would be utilized to explore “the size and condition of families, the occupations and wages, the illiteracy of adults and education of children, the standard of living, the character of the dwellings, the property owned and rents paid, and the character of the organized group life” (p. 19). Anthropological measurement would be used for “a scientific study of the Negro body” (p. 19). Sociological interpretation would be used to: include the arrangement and interpretation of historical and statistical matter in the light of the experience of other nations and other ages; it should aim to study those finer manifestations of social life which history can but mention and which statistics cannot count, such as the expression of Negro life as found in their hundred newspapers, their considerable literature, their music and folklore and their germ of esthetic life-in fine, in all the movements and customs among them that manifest the existence of a distinct social mind. (p. 20) For Du Bois, this approach was a fruitful way to study Black people as “a social group” and to study their “peculiar social environment” (p. 18). This paper will examine W.E.B. Du Bois and his involvement with community health assessment and empirical research in the late 19th and early 20th century with special reference to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Atlanta, Georgia. It will examine his empirical research on community health with a focus on health and physique in *The Philadelphia Negro* during

1896 to 1897. This paper will also examine his empirical research on community health with a focus on health and physique in *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* during 1898 and 1906. It will argue that Du Bois was engaged with community health assessments long before the term became popularized. Likewise, it will argue that Du Bois utilized the middle level of analysis to conduct empirical research and community health assessments of Philadelphia and Atlanta from the framework of a beyond car-window sociology approach.

Review of the Related Literature

This review of the literature will focus on the comments and statements of statements by sociologists and non-sociologists on *The Philadelphia Negro* and *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*. Among the sociologists are Max Weber, Francis L. Broderick, Elliott Rudwick, Aldon Morris, and Earl Wright, II. Non-sociologists include Herbert Aptheker, David Levering Lewis, and Gerald Horne. Together, their statements and comments shed light on what others thought about the significance of *The Philadelphia Negro* and *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*.

The Philadelphia Negro

Richard Robert Wright [4] the second known Black person to earn a Ph.D. in sociology, stood on the shoulders of Du Bois and *The Philadelphia Negro* when he completed his study titled *The Negro in Pennsylvania: A Study in Economic Progress*. He used *The Philadelphia Negro* as a model when he scaled up to the whole state. Whereas Du Bois looked at one city, *Richard Robert Wright, Jr* [4] looked at a whole state. Using a research approach pioneered by Du Bois, *Richard Robert Wright, Jr.* wrote a powerful study that helped others, including *George Edmund Haynes*.

Haynes [5] the third known Black person to earn a Ph.D. in sociology, made it clear that he stood on the shoulders of Du Bois and *The Philadelphia Negro* when he completed his study titled *The Negro at Work in New York City: A Study in Economic Progress*. He explained that, “Conditions among Negroes in Philadelphia have been adequately studied in the work of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Dr. R.R. Wright, Jr.” (p. 8). *Haynes* also expressed hope that “similar inquiries in other cities-East, West, North and South-may be realized” (p. 8). Likewise, *Haynes* expressed hope that “provision may be made in this way for the guidance of the growing impulses of those who wish to better conditions in urban centers” (p. 8). *Haynes* pointed to *The Philadelphia Negro* and said: “Philadelphia is the only city which has had adequate study” (p. 42).

When he released *An American Dilemma, Myrdal* [6] declared that, “We cannot close this description of what a study of a Negro community should be without calling attention to the study which best meets our requirements, a study which is now all but forgotten” (p. 1132). He added: “We refer to W.E.B. DuBois’ *The Philadel-*

phia Negro, published in 1899" (p. 1132). Although he was given a position in charge of a study that should have been headed by Du Bois, Myrdal recognized the great research study Du Bois had conducted in Philadelphia. He made it clear that Du Bois had blazed the trail for empirical research in the USA.

In his study of what he termed "American sociology," Odum [7] stated that, "Negro colleges in the South have featured the teaching of sociology and have compiled a list of more than 100 teachers" (p. 33). He also said that: "Beginning with Atlanta University and W.E.B. Du Bois in the 1890's, these institutions have featured such leaders as Charles S. Johnson, Franklin Frazier, Ira Reid, Oliver Cox" (pp. 33-34). Odum preceded to list *The Philadelphia Negro* as a one of the "principal volumes" of Du Bois (pp. 339-340). That book was one of 16 works by Du Bois listed by Odum.

Broderick [8] related that Du Bois changed the direction of his scholarship from history to sociology with *The Philadelphia Negro*. He contended that Du Bois used Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* and Jane Addams and others *Hull House Maps and Papers* as "models" to conduct his research for *The Philadelphia Negro*. Broderick explained that Du Bois "conducted a fifteen-month survey of the 45,000 Negroes centered in the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia, a door-to-door inquiry on family status, morality, occupations, religion, social intercourse" (p. 37). The aim of Du Bois was to address "any pertinent facts about the Negro which might pierce existing generalizations which, he said, were based on 'fantastic theories, ungrounded assumptions, or metaphysical subtleties'" (p. 37). With *The Philadelphia Negro*, Broderick said that Du Bois also aimed to have it "pass the most rigorous tests of reliability" (p. 37). Broderick asserted that Du Bois wanted to have *The Philadelphia Negro* "be only the first in a series of urban studies which, when taken together, would 'constitute a fair basis of induction'" (p. 37). He also posed that, "Before and after the publication of *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois was working toward a theory of sociology" (p. 39).

For Broderick [8] the great strength of Du Bois was the fact that: "His block-by-block survey was exhaustive and imaginative" (p. 39). Broderick noted that Gunnar Myrdal regarded *The Philadelphia Negro* as "a model study of a Negro community" (p. 39). As for his theory of sociology, one aspect he focused on was Black leadership. Broderick pointed out that, "Du Bois stressed 'above all' the duty of the better classes of Negroes, frankly called 'aristocracy,' to reach down to help the retarded masses" (p. 38). It should be noted the term "retarded" was used by Broderick and not Du Bois.

Rudwick, et al. (1960) stated that, "The Philadelphia Negro is filled with Du Bois' leadership theories" (p. 31). He acknowledged that Du Bois believed that well-to-do Black people had an obligation and responsibility to help the Submerged Tenth. Rudwick also acknowledged that Black people as a race were excluded "from po-

sitions for which they were qualified" (p. 34). As Rudwick noted, Du Bois was also a victim of racial discrimination. Although he had a Ph.D. from Harvard University, Du Bois was not offered a position as an assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor. Instead, Du Bois was paid \$900 to conduct his study under the aegis of the University of Pennsylvania as an "Investigator of the Social Conditions of the Colored Race in this city" (p. 29). Du Bois expressed disappointment that his name was not included in the college catalog.

According to Rudwick, et al. (1960), Du Bois "evolved a methodology to fit the conditions which he found in the field" (p. 30). For his research in *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois "constructed a family questionnaire (number of members, age, sex, conjugal condition, birthplace, literacy, occupation, earnings, as well as other categories)" (p. 30). Du Bois also constructed "an individual questionnaire with similar questions" (p. 30). In addition, Du Bois constructed "a special one for servants who lived in the homes of their white employers" (p. 30). Rudwick reported that Du Bois "was received in all but twelve homes and considered that almost universally he had established a high degree of rapport" (p. 30).

Marable [9] related that *The Philadelphia Negro* was "the first sociological text on an Afro-American community published in the United States" (p. 25). He pointed out that, "Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal, author of *An American Dilemma*, described Du Bois's monograph as 'a study of a Negro community . . . which best meets our requirements'" (p. 25). In *The Philadelphia Negro*, Marable posed that Du Bois conducted 'an extensive study on the 'social condition of the Colored People of the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia'" (p. 24). For Marable, *The Philadelphia Negro* reflected a "comprehensive scope and intimate detail" (p. 29).

Aptheker [10] stated that, "Du Bois' *The Philadelphia Negro* was the first scientific in Afro-American sociology and the pioneer study in urban sociology in the United States" (p. 40). He also said that, "*The Philadelphia Negro* remains a classic not only for its pioneering quality and the abundance of its data and the scrupulousness of its research but also because of it is a passionate exercise in humanistic science" (p. 37). He pointed out that Du Bois lived in a settlement house while conducting his pioneering research for *The Philadelphia Negro*. Aptheker informed us that the settlement house was in the Seventh Ward, which was a "ghetto" at the time and "a center of the Black population" in Philadelphia (pp. 16, 21). However, Aptheker said some rich White people also lived in the Seventh Ward, including the Wharton family. As part of his research, Du Bois personally made "house-to-house visits 'to all the Negro families of this ward'" (p. 29). Du Bois "spent an average of about twenty minutes in each home" (p. 29). At that time, the Seventh Ward had 10,000 Black people. Aptheker explained that, "Du Bois made 2,500 visits, consuming about 835 hours, which-at eight hours a day-would come to about one hundred and four days, or roughly something approaching three and a half to four months of

working days" (p. 29). Aptheker based those figures on the fact that Du Bois worked alone and on the assumption that there was an average of four people in a household. He also explained that Du Bois had finished the research for *The Philadelphia Negro* by November 1897 and completed the actual writing of the book "the next year while at Atlanta" (p. 32).

Lewis [11] posed that, "*The Philadelphia Negro* was remarkable as an example of the new empiricism that was fundamentally transforming the social sciences at the beginning of the twentieth century" (p. 201). He credited *The Philadelphia Negro* with being "a breakthrough achievement, an important and virtually solitary departure from the hereditarian theorizing of the times" (p. 202). With *The Philadelphia Negro*, Lewis said that Du Bois avoided "armchair" sociology (p. 202). Instead, Du Bois chose to engage in "investigation, followed by induction-facts before theory" (p. 202). According to Lewis, this approach Du Bois used with *The Philadelphia Negro* helped him to "break ranks with Spencerian sociology's analogizing of social processes to the laws of chemistry and genetics" (p. 202). Lewis also said that, "More than any other leading American sociologist during the decade after 1898, Du Bois undertook for a time the working out of an authentic objectivity in social science" (p. 202).

Horne [12] referred to *The Philadelphia Negro* as a "pioneering sociological study" (p. 23). He asserted that Du Bois first "adumbrated the idea of the 'Talented Tenth'" in *The Philadelphia Negro* (p. 25). Lewis saw the Talented Tenth as a "the purported 'best' among African Americans-those like himself-who would lead the masses to the Promised Land" (p. 25). According to Lewis, Du Bois's "epochal study of Philadelphia mimicked a similar study conducted decades earlier by Frederick Engels" (p. 24).

Morris [13] stated that *The Philadelphia Negro* represents an outstanding example of "empirical research" (p. 46). He said that Du Bois used *The Philadelphia Negro* to pioneer "the multimethod approach" (p. 47). Morris said that Du Bois also pioneered a "social Du Bois'

Morris pointed out that: Du Bois lived in a poor neighborhood in that city. He visited all of those homes in the Seventh Ward, and he talked to people from all different backgrounds. Well, let me make a distinction. I think it is one thing to say whether a scholar mixes with people – that may mean that those were your friends and your social circle that you hung out with. But what I am saying is that as a social scientist, Du Bois was very involved in mixing with the man farthest down to study them, to collect data on them, to talk with them, to attend their churches, and to go to their funerals and weddings, because he was interested in producing scientific analyses of African Americans at large. So one of the thing I do in *The Scholar Denied* is to show that this so-called "Du Bois as elitist thesis" often overlooks the fact that Du Bois mingled very closely

with the man farthest down, and he also mingled with the women furthest down. They were a major source of the scientific data that he used to develop profound analyses of who black people were.

For Morris, *The Philadelphia Negro* helped Du Bois to become a pioneer of "scientific sociology" (p. 4). Nevertheless, Du Bois faced "marginalization" because of his race by White sociologists and has been denied his due recognition as a scholar (p. 54). Morris explained that, "Early in the twentieth century, whites viewed all African Americans as inferior, even black intellectuals such as Du Bois" (p. 4). He further explained that White sociologists "suppressed Du Bois's scholarship because it concluded that there were no scientific grounds on which to justify racial oppression and because they could not view Du Bois as an exemplary scholar who pioneered scientific sociology" (p. 4). Morris pointed out that Max Weber was an important exception to the White sociologists who sought to exclude or marginalize Du Bois.¹

After referring to *The Negro Philadelphia* as an outstanding example of empirical research, Morris (2016) proceeded to provide details to support his statement. He wrote:

Du Bois employed demanding scientific standards while researching and composing *The Philadelphia Negro*. In so doing, he broke sociological ground. The book was a study of the black population in the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia at the close of the nineteenth century. Its first seminal contribution was its empirical methodology. Departing from the armchair conjectures and flashes of intuition customary at the time, it rested on an empirical base: not only extensive interviews with all families in the ward but also surveys, archival data, and ethnographic data from participant observation. Indeed, Du Bois emerged from *The Philadelphia Negro* as the first number-crunching, surveying, interviewing, participant-observing and field-working sociologist in America, a pioneer in the multimethods approach. He cross-checked his quantitative and qualitative data to ensure accuracy by eradicating undetected errors associated with a particular method. Thus, he also pioneered the data-gathering technique known as triangulation. (pp. 46-47)

In the view of Morris, Du Bois did a great job of making an analysis of institutions and culture among Black people in the Seventh Ward. He also examined the class structure, stratification, social mobility, and gender relations in that group.

Wright [14] stated that *The Philadelphia Negro* was "a groundbreaking book that stands as the first urban sociological study conducted in the United States" (p. 17). He pointed out that Du Bois aimed to "establish a long-term program of research on Blacks to offset the biased and unscientific car window sociology studies littering the existing sociological and social science literature at the turn of the twentieth century" (p. 17). According to Wright, Du Bois used car window sociology to refer to the practice of White sociol-

ogists and other sociologists conducting “scientific investigations into the social lives of Blacks in America by causally observing their interactions from afar for brief moments then using that data to develop grand theories on the entire race” (p. 17). Wright explained that Du Bois intended for *The Philadelphia Negro* to be the first of his many empirical studies of Black people in the USA.

The Health and Physique of the Negro American

On May 1, 1905, Weber [15] to Du Bois and stated that, “The library of our university will certainly be very glad to have your university publications [and] I thank you very much for your useful information” (p. 1). Weber did not single out *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*, but Weber made it clear that the whole series was useful. Weber added: “I hope you will come to Germany then & visit us. I shall come to the United States I think, 1907 or 8” (p. 2). In that May 1, 1905 letter, Weber sent Du Bois the name and address of a German publisher. Du Bois had requested that information in his April 18, 1905 letter to Weber. Weber also made it clear that he had a high regard for Du Bois. He even asked Du Bois to take his sabbatical from Atlanta University at the University of Heidelberg.

When he wrote study of sociology in the USA, Odum [7] declared that Du Bois was a sociologist who rated “special priorities” for his “contributions to realistic sociology” and for his important role “in sociology as a college and university discipline” (p. 378). Odum credited Du Bois with being “the originator and editor of the pioneering Atlanta Sociological Studie from 1897 to 1910” (p. 378). He pointed out that Du Bois “was among the earliest to apply sociology to empirical inquiries, producing more than a dozen studies” (p. 378). Although he did not list *The Health and Physique of the Negro* in his list of works by Du Bois, Odum was aware of the theoretical and methodological approach used in the Atlanta University Publications.

Broderick [8] stated that *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* had an “impressive value” (p. 42). He pointed to two outcomes of the research in *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*. One outcome was that “the factual information caught the attention of the casual reader and led him on to Du Bois’s conclusions” (p. 42). A second outcome was that “scholarly material from the pen of a Negro raised the reputation of the race” (p. 42). Although he asserted that the “empirical inquiries” at Columbia and Chicago were “a few years ahead” of Du Bois at Atlanta University, Broderick was compelled to concede that: “Writing in 1951, Howard W. Odum listed twelve of Du Bois’s titles at the top of a chronological list of American sociological works in the area of race, ethnic groups, and folk” (p. 43).

Rudwick, et al. (1960) said that Du Bois “wanted to discover more about the Negro living conditions” (p. 293). Thus, Du Bois

proceeded to embark “upon a series of empirical studies sponsored by Atlanta University” (p. 293). Rudwick charged that, “These investigations were to possess the certified sanctity of science, and he appeared before the public as a skilled specialist—the man with research training, the objective observer who had amassed reams of information” (p. 293). It was asserted by Rudwick that Atlanta University Studies were plagued by “insufficient funds” (p. 293). Although he did not single out *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*, Rudwick credited the whole series to be a “forum” to (1) restate “the theories of the Talented Tenth and the segregated economy;” (2) contribute to “race pride by asserting that Negroes were rising; (3) emphasize “race prejudice to account for the fact that they were not rising as fast and as far as he wished; (4) attempt to “reform the world’s conception of Africa;” (5) depict “the natives as people who used iron and had developed complex tools;” and (6) present Black people “as victims of slave traders, geographical isolation, and oppressive climatic conditions” (p. 294). Rudwick argued that Du Bois used the *Atlanta University Publications* to provide “his race with a respectable pedigree” (p. 294).

Marable [9] exclaimed that, “At the 1906 conference on the ‘Health and Physique of the Negro-American,’ Du Bois brought together some of the leading scholars in the field” (p. 61). Those scholars included Richard Robert Wright, Jr., Monroe Work, and Franz Boas. Marable stated that, R.R. Wright, Jr., an A.M.E. minister who had published articles on blacks in the American Southwest, prepared a paper on Negro mortality rates in urban areas” (p. 61). He also said: “Monroe N. Work contributed to the final conference document, and Professor Franz Boas of Columbia University presented a brief paper” (p. 61). Marable reported that, despite any flaws, the *Atlanta University Publications* were “a major contribution to American sociology” (p. 61).

Aptheker [10] stated that the Atlanta University Conferences for the Study of the Negro Problems and their proceedings helped Du Bois “to bring his name prominently before the national and international community of scholars” (p. 44). However, as Aptheker noted, Du Bois was also publishing articles in many periodicals at that time. Aptheker pointed out that Du Bois used the conferences and proceedings to address his “concern about racism and its impact” (p. 129). Furthermore, Aptheker acknowledged that Du Bois used *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* to disseminate the research of him and others, including Franz Boas.

Lewis [11] stated that the 11th Atlanta University Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems achieved “considerable success” (p. 351). He praised Du Bois for providing a forum for Franz Boas and others to present their research. Lewis noted that the presentation by Boas addressed the “cultural basis of racial basis” (p. 352). Nevertheless, as Lewis pointed out, Du Bois was not able to overcome “the period of philanthropic cold-shouldering” he encountered from White capitalists (p. 351).

Horne [12] reported that Du Bois engaged in a “throwback” to the studies connected to the Atlanta University Conferences for Study of the Negro Problems upon his return to Atlanta University during his second stint (p. 134). He noted that Du Bois presided over those studies and conferences from the late 1890s until 1914. While presiding over those studies and conferences, Du Bois edited or co-edited the proceedings. In Horne’s view, that meant Du Bois sought to continue his previous work on the *Atlanta University Publications* with his subsequent work on the *Phylon*. Whereas the *Atlanta University Publications* was a series of annual conference proceedings, *Phylon* was a quarterly journal. Both involved the “publishing of original scholarship on a broad array of matters relevant to the culture and life of peoples of African descent, especially African Americans” (p. 134).

Morris [13] pointed out that the proceedings of the annual Atlanta Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems were published as the *Atlanta University Publications*. Following his arrival at Atlanta University, Du Bois took charge of the conferences and the proceedings. He also implemented the Sociological Laboratory.² Du Bois used the three to educate undergraduate and graduate students about sociology and how to conduct empirical research using a multimethod approach. Subsequently, Du Bois and the three initiatives brought attention and critical acclaim to Atlanta University. In the case of the conference, it attracted participants like Richard Robert Wright, Sr., Richard Robert Wright, Jr., Monroe N. Work, W.F. Penn, S.P. Lloyd, C.Y. Roman, John Hope, Booker T. Washington, Lugenia D. Burns Hope, Ola Perry, Jane Addams, Horace Bumstead, Franz Boas, Walter Willcox, and Frank Sanborn.³

As Morris [13] noted, the *Atlanta University Publications* edited by Du Bois proved to be a great asset to Atlanta University and Black people in the USA. Each issue contained the conference proceedings for that year, including selected papers and a set of resolutions. For example, Morris pointed out that, “The Du Bois-Atlanta school’s annual conference formulated each year to address racial oppression. A glimpse inside the Eleventh Conference, with the theme of ‘Health and Physique of the Negro American,’ reveals how the political and the scientific meshed” (p. 87). It was further noted by Morris that the resolutions of the 11th Conference were formulated by a committee composed of Du Bois, Richard Robert Wright, Sr., and Franz Boas. Morris reported that the resolutions included the following statement: “The Conference does not find any adequate scientific warrant for the assumption that the Negro race is inferior to other races in physical build or vitality” (p. 87). He said that the resolutions included the following statement: “The present differences in mortality seem to be sufficiently explained by conditions of life; and physical measurements prove the Negro a normal being capable of average human accomplishments” (p. 87). Those statements were based on the available empirical data and research presented at the conference, as Morris asserted. Among that empirical data included

in *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* was a research paper by Richard Robert Wright, Jr. titled “Mortality in Cities.”

Wright [14] related that Du Bois sought to use *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* to begin his second cycle of studies pertaining to Black people in the USA. He acknowledged that Du Bois sought to enlarge his inquiry beyond mortality rates addressed in the 1896 and 1897 studies. Wright pointed out that Du Bois utilized reports from the national census, life insurance companies, vital records of cities and towns, U.S. Surgeon General, Black hospitals and drug stores, medical schools, letters from physicians, and measurements of 1,000 Hampton University students. He also noted that Du Bois conducted “an examination of the general literature” (p. 45).

According to Wright [14] Du Bois used the census data to examine “the geographic distribution of Blacks, increases or decreases in the Black population, mortality, causes of death and birth dates” (p. 45). The census data was further examined “to determine the total number of United States citizens, their sex and age, number of ‘defectives,’ ‘mulattoes,’ and delinquents, and the causes and rates of mortality” (p. 45). Wright noted that Du Bois used reports from 34 life insurance companies to examine the “distribution of the economic burden” among those companies. He stated that Du Bois used the vital records of certain cities and towns to examine “death rates, causes of death and the social conditions experienced by Blacks in cities” (p. 46). Wright said Du Bois used the reports from Black hospitals and drug stores to examine “institutions that accepted Blacks as patients, the total number of drug stores in 25 states, the total number of dentists and pharmacists in the nation, capital held by those institutions and the number of workers employed” (p. 46). Wright related that Du Bois used reports gathered by Atlanta University researchers “to measure their head and cranio-facial skeletons, describe their racial types and obtain other descriptive and physical data that could be used in comparison with White Americans” (p. 46).

Wright [14] credited Du Bois with having published an empirical research study that revealed “a marked decline in the total number of deaths” from tuberculosis and infant mortality. He pointed out Du Bois reported that the overall health of Black people had improved and that the data revealed “lower rates of overall death and infant mortality, and decreased deaths from tuberculosis than were discovered in the 1896 and 1897 studies” (p. 46). Wright acknowledged that Du Bois and his fellow conferees developed several resolutions to improve the overall health of Black people in the USA. One resolution stated that Black people had improved their overall health. A second resolution recommended the “formation of local health leagues to address the health concerns and needs” of Black people (p. 47). A third resolution recommended a “special effort was needed to end tuberculosis in the Black community” (p. 47). A fourth resolution stated that there was “no evidence of the

physical inferiority of Blacks when compared to Blacks” (p. 47). Wright said those four resolutions were based on the findings generated by the empirical research of Du Bois and the other researchers. He posed that, “The significance of this study is grounded in the fact that it provided data to contradict commonly accepted myths concerning Blacks in the medical community” (p. 47). Wright also related that, “The 1906 investigation embodied Du Bois’s plan of systematic, objective and scientific inquiry as it challenged existing car window sociological analyses of Blacks that predominated the existing literature” (p. 47).

Du Bois and The Concept of a Community Health Assessment

Although he never used the term community health assessment, the actions of Du Bois for *The Philadelphia Negro* and *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* reflected the definition and principles outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (2022). According to the Centers for Disease Control, the term community health assessment refers to “a state, tribal, local, or territorial health assessment that identifies key health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis” (p. 1). The Centers for Disease Control explained that community health assessment is sometimes called a CHA. It also related that community health assessments use five principles. One principle involves: “Multisector collaborations that support shared ownership of all phases of community health improvement, including assessment, planning, investment, implementation, and evaluation” (p. 3). A second principle involves: “Proactive, broad, and diverse community engagement to improve results” (p. 3). A third principle involves: “A definition of community that encompasses both a significant enough area to allow for population-wide interventions and measurable results, and includes a targeted focus to address disparities among subpopulations” (p. 4). A fourth principle involves: “Maximum transparency to improve community engagement and accountability” (p. 3). A fifth principle involves: “Use of evidence-based interventions and encouragement of innovative practices with thorough evaluation” (p. 3).

Samuels, et. al [16] have defined community assessments as “a systematic way of identifying the needs and resources of a community by gathering statistical data, soliciting perspectives of community members and collecting information about service providers and other community resources” (p. 1). They posed that, “Community assessments help to empower community residents to create services and programs that respond to their challenges, concerns, and opportunities” (p. 1). Community assessments can also help to lay “the foundation upon which programs or services, as well as their organizational structure, will be built” (p. 2). In addition, community assessments can help people to “get the information needed to make decisions and plan for change in their community” (p. 2). As *Calgary* [17] has noted, community assessments can be a prod-

uct and a process. On the one hand, the product consists of “solid information about the community’s current condition including its needs and resources” (p. 1). On the other hand, the process “is one whereby information is shared so community members collectively learn about their community and become engaged in working together for change” (p. 1).

Community health assessments can take place at the middle level of analysis. For example, a researcher can look at one neighborhood, one city, one county, or one state. In the case of Du Bois, he looked at Philadelphia as a whole city and the Seventh Ward as one neighborhood for the research on his book titled *The Philadelphia Negro*. In contrast, for the research in his edited work titled *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*, Du Bois and his fellow researchers looked at Atlanta as a whole city as well as some other cities in the USA.

Du Bois, Community Assessment, Empirical Research, And the Philadelphia Negro

Du Bois and The Interpretation of Statistics

Looking at the available statistics on death rates, as well as, birth rates, before and after slavery, Du Bois [1] reported that they must be approached with caution. Du Bois stated that, “Reliable data as to the physical health of the Negro in slavery are entirely wanting” (p. 147). He posed that “there must have been an immense death rate” because of three key factors. One factor Du Bois pointed to was “the horrors of the middle passage” (p. 147). A second factor was “the decimation on the West Indian plantations” (p. 147). A third factor was “the bad sanitary condition of the Negro quarters on most Southern plantations” (p. 147). Nevertheless, there were reports of many enslaved people with high levels of endurance, physical strength, and phenomenal longevity, as Du Bois noted.

According to *Du Bois*, [1] many formerly enslaved people made a “rush to cities” (p. 147). In those cities they found surroundings that proved to be unhealthful and had a bad effect. Du Bois explained that the migration on a large scale was relatively recent, and the full effect was not yet apparent. However, Du Bois was optimistic that “the better care of children and improvement in home life has also had some favorable effect” (p. 147). In the conclusion of his study, Du Bois outlined some specific recommendations that he thought could lead to further better care of Black children and further improvement in Black homes. Towards this end, Du Bois listed several research questions related to statistics. They were as follows: (1) What is the meaning of a death rate like that of the Negroes of Philadelphia? (2) Is it, compared with other races, large, moderate or small; and in the case of nations or groups with similar death rates, (3) What has been the tendency and outcome? To address those questions, Du Bois utilized the secondary analysis or secondary data analysis approach of statistics from the following sources:

Dr. Emerson's reports, in the "Condition," etc., of the Negro, 1838, and from the pamphlet, "Health of Convicts." All the tables, 1884 to 1890, are from Dr. John Billings' report in Eleventh Census. Later reports are compiled from the City Health Reports, 1890 to 1895. (p. 149)

Du Bois pointed out that he also took data from *Mayo Smith, et al. (1895)* [18] and his classic book *Statistics and Sociology*.

Du Bois and The Statistics of The City

Du Bois [1] related that it was more important to know the absolute condition of Black people and their health instead of their relative status. Although he said the collection of statistics were not perfect in Philadelphia, Du Bois took the position that they did shed valuable light on Black people and their social conditions related to health. Du Bois reported that the average annual deaths per 1,000 Black people in Philadelphia was 47.6 for 1820-1830; 32.5 for 1830-1840; 31.25 for 1884-1890; and 28.02 for 1891-1896. In the case of the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia, the death rate per 1,000 Black people was 30.54 for 1884-1890. Du Bois attributed the high death rate to bad dwellings and poor food. However, Du Bois pointed out that these countries had the following death rates: Hungary (33.7), Austria (30.6), and Italy (28.6). Whereas the death rate for Hungary and Austria were higher, the death rates for Italy was lower.

For 1890, as *Du Bois* [1] has noted, the five major the five major causes of death for Black people were consumption (532.52 death rate per 100,000); diseases of the nervous system (388.86 death rate per 100,000); pneumonia (356.67 death rate per 100,000); heart disease and dropsy (257.59 death rate per 100,000); and still-births (203.10 death rate per 100,000). In contrast, for 1891-1896, the five major causes of death for Black people were consumption (426.50 death rate per 100,000); diseases of the nervous system (307.63 death rate per 100,000); pneumonia (290.76 death rate per 100,000); heart disease and dropsy (172.79 death rate per 100,000); and still-births (210.12 death rate per 100,000). Du Bois proceeded to compare the Black and White death rate for the period between 1840 and 1896. For 1830-1840, it was 32.5 for Black people and 23.7 for White people. In 1884-1890, it was 31.25 for Black people and 22.69 for White people. For 1891-1896, it was 25.41 for Black people and 21.20 for White people. Du Bois surmised that, "This shows a considerable difference in death rates, amounting to nearly 10 per cent in 1884-1890, and to 4 per cent by the estimated rates of 1891-1896" (p. 152). He posed that the variations were related to "different conditions of life" (p. 153).

Du Bois [1] stated that people in poor health often "neglect to take proper medical advice, or to follow it when given" (p. 162). For Du Bois, this leads to much harm" (p. 162). He said that people also often will receive temporary treatment at a hospital, but will not re-

turn to see a doctor until he or she is much worse. Du Bois said that this occurs more with Black people than White people. He surmised that this behavior by Black people "must have some foundation in the roughness or brusqueness of manner prevalent in many hospitals, and the lack of a tender spirit of sympathy with the unfortunate patients" (p. 162). Du Bois added: "At any rate, many a Negro would almost rather die than trust himself to a hospital" (p. 162).

In his analysis of the "social conditions," *Du Bois* [1] made a point to emphasize the impact of the environment on Black people (p. 162). However, he did acknowledge that "many generations of unhealthy bodies have bequeathed to the present generation impaired vitality and hereditary tendency to disease" (p. 162). Nevertheless, in the case of Philadelphia, Du Bois said that "the drainage is bad" and the "water is wretched" in parts of the city (p. 162). Du Bois urged that inequality between the health of Black people and White people "should then act as a spur for increased effort and sound upbuilding, and not as an excuse for passive indifference, or increased discrimination" (p. 163).

Based on his research, *Du Bois* [1] concluded that his research meant that death rate of Black people in Philadelphia was negatively impacted by the dominant group's passive indifference and increased discrimination. Du Bois also concluded the death rate of Black people in Philadelphia was higher when compared with White people as the dominant group in the USA. However, Du Bois concluded that his research indicated that the death rate of Black people in Philadelphia was lower than Hungary and Austria, but higher than Italy. In addition, Du Bois concluded that tendency and outcome of Black people in Philadelphia to have a higher death rate than White people in the city could be reduced as an inequality by improving the water, food, dwellings, and sanitary surroundings. Du Bois argued that Black people in Philadelphia who had good dwellings or good houses, good food, proper clothing, and clean streets tended to have better death rates when compared with those who did not. Likewise, Du Bois argued that Black people in Philadelphia who lived in a "bad part of the city" had higher death rates than who lived in the good part of the city. The bad part or worse part of the city included the Fourth Ward, Fifth Ward, Seventh Ward, and Eighth Ward. The good part or better part of the city included the Twentieth Ward, Twenty-Second Ward, Twenty-Third Ward, Twenty-Eighth Ward, and Twenty-Ninth Ward. For Du Bois, Philadelphia was a "large and progressive" city that could reduce the death rates for Black people and White people with "concerted efforts to root out disease" (p. 162).

Du Bois, Community Assessment, And Philadelphia

In his research for *The Philadelphia Negro*, *Du Bois* [1] conducted a local health assessment of Philadelphia that identified key health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis. By working with the College Settlements

Association and the University of Pennsylvania, Du Bois involved a multisector collaboration that supported shared ownership regarding community health improvement, assessment, planning, investment, implementation, and evaluation. Du Bois participated in a proactive, broad, and diverse community engagement to improve results. He defined and approached Philadelphia as a targeted community that encompasses both a significant enough area to allow for population-wide interventions, measurable results, and addressing disparities among subpopulations. Du Bois utilized maximum transparency to improve community engagement and accountability. As a researcher, he used evidence-based interventions and encouragement of innovative practices with thorough evaluation.

Du Bois, Community Health Assessment, And Empirical Research in The Health and Physique of The Negro American

Du Bois and Other Key Participants in the 11th Atlanta University Conference for The Study of The Negro Problems

The 11th Atlanta University Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems was held in Atlanta, Georgia on May 29, 1906. Among the participants were scholars, educators, medical personnel, and community workers. The first session of conference featured a presentation by Horace Bumstead, the president of Atlanta University, titled "Health of Students;" a presentation by Richard Robert Wright, Jr., a Ph.D. student at the University of Pennsylvania, titled "Mortality in Cities;" and a presentation by W.F. Penn, a medical doctor in Atlanta, titled "Tuberculosis."⁶ The first session of the conference was followed by a special session wherein W.E.B. Du Bois, a professor at Atlanta University and the conference organizer, made a presentation titled "A Talk to Boys." The official program noted that the special session was open to senior preparatory boys and college men [19].

The second session of the conference featured the Ninth Annual Mother's Meeting under the charge of the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association with Mrs. John Hope presiding. The theme of the meeting was "The Training of Children and Preventive Medicine." The meeting included an exhibit of work and exercises. For example, Mrs. J.P. Williamson made a presentation titled "Kindergarten No. 1;" Miss Ola Perry made a presentation titled "Kindergarten No. 2;" Mrs. P.J. Bryant made a presentation titled "Child Training;" and A.G. Copeland, a medical doctor, made a presentation titled "Preventive Medicine" [19].

The third session of the conference featured a presentation by Horace Bumstead titled "Physique, Health, etc." It also featured a presentation by S.P. Lloyd titled "Tuberculosis." Lloyd was a medical doctor in Savannah, Georgia. In addition, the third session of the conference featured a presentation by Franz Boas titled "Negro Physique." Boas was a professor at Columbia University in New

York City.⁷ Furthermore, the third session featured a presentation by C.Y. Roman titled "Seeing and Hearing." He was a medical doctor at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee [19].

In the preface of *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*, Du Bois [19] described the purpose and outcome of the 11th conference and used it as the proceedings. Du Bois explained that the 11th conference was the beginning of a new 10-year cycle which followed. He related that the first cycle of conferences covered mortality in 1896; homes in 1897; social reform in 1898; economic organization in 1899; education in 1900; education in 1901; economic organization in 1902; religion in 1903; crime in 1904; and a general review of methods and results together with a bibliography in 1905. In the case of the 11th conference, Du Bois related that he and his fellow conferees utilized the following sources of data:

- a. Reports of the United States census.
- b. Reports of the life insurance companies.
- c. Vital records of various cities and towns.
- d. Reports of the United States Surgeon General.
- e. Reports from Negro hospitals and drug stores.
- f. Reports from medical schools.
- g. Letters from physicians.
- h. Measurements of 1,000 Hampton students.
- i. General literature as shown in the accompanying bibliography.

According to Du Bois, the results of Atlanta University Studies of the Negro Problems were widely used. Nevertheless, Du Bois complained that the studies were hampered by the "meagre appropriations" allocated to the initiative (p. 5).

As for the 11th conference, *Du Bois* [19] reported that the data from the census reports revealed that the Black population was steadily increasing. Whereas the Black population was 7,488,676 in 1890, it rose to 8,833,994 in 1900. Regarding the Black death rate per 100,000 in 1900, Du Bois stated that the five the leading causes of death were

1. Consumption (485.5)
2. Pneumonia (355.8)
3. Diseases of the nervous system (308.0)
4. Heart disease and dropsy (221.0) and Diarrheal diseases (214.0).

Du Bois also provided a breakdown of the Black death rate per 1,000 for selected cities as follows: Atlanta, 33.57 in 1890 and 31.8 in 1900; Baltimore, 36.41 in 1890 and 31.2 in 1900; Boston, 32.04 in 1890 and 25.19 in 1900; Charleston, 53.94 in 1890 and 46.7 in

1900; Chicago, 25.79 in 1890 and 22.85 in 1900; Louisville, 31.98 in 1890 and 28.7 in 1900; Memphis, 29.97 in 1890 and 28.6 in 1900; Mobile, 43.75 in 1890 and 30.8 in 1900; Nashville, 23.92 in 1890 and 32.8 in 1900; New Orleans, 36.61 in 1890 and 42.4 in 1900; New York, no data in 1890 and 29.06 in 1900; Richmond, 40.80 in 1890 and 38.1 in 1900; St. Louis, 34.55 in 1890 and 32.2 in 1900; San Antonio, 23.24 in 1890 and 22.4 in 1900; Savannah, 41.47 in 1890 and 43.3 in 1900; and Washington, 32.68 in 1890 and 29.00 in 1900.

Du Bois [19] stated that the healthcare system featured both public and private hospitals in 1905 that would provide medical services to Black people. Atlanta had McVicker Hospital at Spelman Seminary. Philadelphia had Douglass Hospital and Mercy Hospital. *Du Bois* reported that there were 83 Black doctors in Georgia and 24 Black doctors in Pennsylvania during 1905. He reported that there were 15 Black dentists in Georgia and 1 Black dentist in Pennsylvania in 1905. Georgia had 21 Black drug stores and Pennsylvania had 2 Black drug stores during 1905. To get educated as a medical doctor or dentist, Black students could attend several Black colleges in the South and some of the White colleges in the North. The Black colleges in the South included Meharry Medical College in Nashville; Howard University Medical College in Washington; Leonard Medical College at Shaw University in Raleigh; Flint Medical College at New Orleans University in New Orleans; and Louisville National Medical College in Louisville. Some of the White colleges in the North that accepted Black students were the Detroit College of Medicine in Detroit; Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia; Ohio Medical University in Columbus; Northwestern Medical School in Columbus; and Harvard University Medical College in Cambridge.

In terms of insurance, *Du Bois* [19] reported that Black death rate led many White companies to discriminate against Black people. However, *Du Bois* pointed out that, "In fact the Negro makes a better showing than the Irish, nearly as good as the Germans, and better than the economic class of laborers in general" (p. 92). He added: "To be sure these Negroes were carefully selected, but this fact only emphasizes the injustice which would have been done them had they been discriminated against merely on account of color, as the insurance companies so often do" (p. 92). *Du Bois* said that Black people responded to that social condition by developing their own insurance companies. He stated that:

One result of this discrimination, particularly in industrial insurance, has been the rise of a number of Negro companies which are today doing millions of dollars' worth of business among black folk. One of these insurance societies is so important that a government report was made on it in 1902, which deserves printing in part, as the society has been called "the most remarkable Negro organization in the country." (p. 92)

Du Bois identified that Black organization as "The Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers." He explained that it was created in January 1881 by Rev. William Washington Browne, a former enslaved person from Habersham County, Georgia, as an incorporated joint stock company and "a fraternal beneficiary institution, composed of male and female members with a capital of \$150" (p. 92).

By 1901, that company had soared in value. *Du Bois* [19] applauded the increased value of the company and said:

Up to December, 1901, the last report of the organization shows that it had paid in death claims \$606,000 and in sick dues \$1,500,000 and that the membership was over 50,000, having increased 18,000 in the preceding year. The increase in twenty years from a membership of 100 and a capital of \$150 to a membership of over 50,000 with payments to members aggregating over \$2,000,000, and with real estate aggregating \$223,500 in value, constitutes an excellent showing.

But it is not the growth nor even the existence of the Grand Fountain of the True Reformers as a mutual insurance association, with its small army of employees, that causes it to be considered here; it is the affiliated by-products, to use an industrial expression, that are of interest and that may prove to be of great economic value to the Negro race. (p. 93)

According to *Du Bois*, the affiliated by products were "a savings bank, a real estate department, a newspaper, old folk's homes, co-operative grocery stores and a hotel" (p. 93).

Du Bois [19] reported that physical measurements of the 1,000 students at Hampton University were conducted as part of the research for the 11th conference. He explained those students could be divided into these four types:

1. Negro types
2. Mulatto types
3. Quadroon types and
4. White types with Negro blood

Du Bois further related that measurements of people could focus on the soft parts of the human frame (i.e., skin, nose, cheeks, and lips) or the cranio-facial skeletal characteristics. He asserted that the latter had become the guiding thread pertaining to anthropological research. Other factors related to measurements involved height, weight, and chest measurement. *Du Bois* included 24 photographs to reflect what Black people in the USA looked like circa 1906. According to *Du Bois*, "For Negro Americans, almost the only measurements on a considerable scale are those taken over a generation ago during the Civil war, and often since published and studied" (p. 40). *Du Bois* continued: "The best available figures to-

day are those from the reports of Surgeon-General of the United States army; subjoined are tables as to the examination of recruits, their height, weight and chest measurements" (p. 40).

Resolutions Committee

To report on the resolutions of the conference, a Resolutions Committee was formed. It was composed of three people. One person was sociologist W.E.B. *Du Bois*, a professor at Atlanta University and secretary of the conference. A second person was anthropologist Franz Boaz, a professor at Columbia University. A third person was sociologist Richard Robert Wright, Jr., a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania [19].

Resolutions of the Conference

As was the case with the previous 10 conferences, the 11th Atlanta Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, under the leadership of *Du Bois* [19] developed a set of resolutions. Those resolutions reflected its study of the physique, health, and mortality of Black people in the USA. After conducting a review of a similar study done under the auspices of the 2nd conference in 1896, conferees gathered the available data and analyzed it in a systematic and collective manner. In its proceedings, the conference released six resolutions that were written by the Resolutions Committee. They were as follows:

The Conference notes first an undoubted betterment in the health of Negroes: the general death rate is lower, the infant mortality has markedly decreased, and the number of deaths from consumption is lessening. The present death rate is still, however, far too high and the Conference recommends the formation of local health leagues among colored people for the dissemination of better knowledge of sanitation and preventive medicine. The general organizations throughout the country for bettering health ought to make special effort to reach the colored people. The health of the whole country depends in no little degree upon the health of Negroes.

Especial effort is needed to stamp out consumption. The Conference calls for concerted action to this end.

The Conference does not find any adequate scientific warrant for the assumption that the Negro race is inferior to other races in physical build or vitality. The present differences in mortality seem to be sufficiently explained by conditions of life; and physical measurements prove the Negro a normal human being capable of average human accomplishments. The Conference is glad to learn of the forty (40) Negro hospitals, the two hundred (200) drug stores, and the fifteen hundred (1500) physicians, but points out that with all this advance the race is in dire need of better hospital facilities and more medical advice and attention. The Conference above all reiterates its well-known attitude toward this and all other social problems: the way to make conditions better is to study

the conditions. And we urge again the systematic study of the Negro problems and ask all aid and sympathy for the work of this Conference in such study. (p. 110)

As was the case with the previous 10 conferences, the resolutions helped to develop a pathway for a forward direction. *Du Bois* played a major role in 10 of the 11 conferences by writing or helping to write the conference resolutions. He proved to be a man of ideas and actions as led Atlanta University into sociological innovation and institution building. The focus on health for the 11th conference was badly needed to help Atlanta, Philadelphia, and other cities deal with tuberculosis and other diseases.

Du Bois, Community Assessment, and Atlanta

In his research for *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*, *Du Bois* [19] conducted a local health assessment of Atlanta and other cities that identified key health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis. By working with Atlanta University, Meharry Medical College, and the Gate City Free Kindergarten Association, *Du Bois* involved a multisector collaboration that supported shared ownership regarding community health improvement, assessment, planning, investment, implementation, and evaluation. As was the case with his research for *The Philadelphia Negro*, *Du Bois* participated in a proactive, broad, and diverse community engagement to improve results. He defined and approached Atlanta and other cities as targeted communities that encompass both a significant enough area to allow for population-wide interventions, measurable results, and address disparities among subpopulations. Like he did with *The Philadelphia Negro*, *Du Bois* utilized maximum transparency to improve community engagement and accountability. Once again, as a researcher, *Du Bois* used evidence-based interventions and encouragement of innovative practices with thorough evaluation.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper examined W.E.B. *Du Bois* and his involvement with empirical research community health assessment in the late 19th and early 20th century with special reference to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Atlanta, Georgia. It examined his empirical research on community health with a focus on health and physique in *The Philadelphia Negro* during 1896 to 1897. This paper also examined his empirical research on community health with a focus on health and physique in *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* during 1898 and 1906. It argued that *Du Bois* was engaged with community health assessments long before the term became popularized. Likewise, this paper argued that *Du Bois* utilized the middle level of analysis to conduct empirical research and community health assessments of Philadelphia and Atlanta from the framework of a beyond car-window sociology approach. While employed as a professor at Atlanta University, *Du Bois* showed his concern for the health of Black people in two ways. On the one hand, *Du Bois*

published his research on the health of Black people in Philadelphia in *The Philadelphia Negro*. Although the book dealt with many other social conditions facing Black people in that city, Du Bois to his credit did not overlook or ignore health. In a very dynamic way, Du Bois shed light on the largest Black death rates and offered recommendations on how to reduce them. On the other hand, Du Bois published his research on the health of Black people in Atlanta and other cities in *The Health and Physique of the Negro American*. As part of his 10-year cycle of studies, Du Bois and the other researchers dealt with health as a social condition in a very dynamic way. To their credit, they rose to task and shed light on diseases with the largest Black death rates and offered resolutions on how to reduce them. In both research efforts, the key person was Du Bois as a pioneering sociologist going beyond car-window sociology to conduct important empirical studies. With his empirical research, Du Bois sought to turn “my gaze from fruitless word-twisting and facing the facts of my own social situation and racial world, I determined to put science into sociology through a study of the conditions and problems of my own group” (pp. 205-206). Du Bois reached that goal of putting science into sociology and he did it well.

Notes

1. On March 30, 1905, Weber [20] wrote a letter to Du Bois wherein he called *The Souls of Black Folk* a “splendid work” (p. 106). Weber also said that the book “ought to be translated in German” (p. 106). In addition, Weber proposed to Du Bois that he be allowed to write an introduction to the German translation of *The Souls of Black Folk*. Weber informed Du Bois that:

I should like to write a short introduction about Negro question and literature and should be much obliged to you for some information about your life, viz: age, birthplace, descent, positions held by you-of course only if you give your authorization. (p. 106)

He pointed out to Du Bois that, “I think Mrs. Jaffe would be very able translator, which will be of some importance, your vocabulary and style being very peculiar: it reminds me sometimes of Gladstone’s idioms although the spirit is a different one” (p. 106). Weber asked Du Bois to: “Please excuse my bad English-I seldom here had the opportunity to speak it, and realize a language in speaking and writing it is very different” (p. 107). Furthermore, Weber related that he was going to publish an essay by Du Bois in an upcoming issue of the *Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, a journal he co-edited with Albert Jaffe. The article was titled “Die Negerfrage in den Vereinigten Staaten” and appeared in the January 1906 issue of the *Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*. The English translation of the title is “The Negro Question in the United States.” On April 18, 1905, Du Bois wrote a letter to Weber and accepted his offer to help to coordinate a German translation of *The Souls of Black*. Du Bois also informed Weber that the copyright was held by his publisher A.C. McClurg & Company and that it was in the pro-

cess of negotiating a French translation of *The Souls of Black Folk*. However, Du Bois asked Weber to provide him with names of some German publishers that could undertake the publishing of a German translation of *The Souls of Black Folk*.

2. Du Bois [21,2] has detailed his situation at Wilberforce University, University of Pennsylvania, and Atlanta University. It was explained by Du Bois how he landed at Atlanta University after a teaching stint at Wilberforce University and a researcher stint at the University of Pennsylvania.

3. Morris [13] reported that participants at other Atlanta University Conferences for the Study of the Negro Problems included Eugene Harris, Kelly Miller, Booker T. Washington, Allen D. Candler, Charles William Elliot, Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, Florence Kelly, Mary White Ovington, Mary Church Terrell, and others.

4. For information on his stints at Wilberforce University and the University of Pennsylvania, see Du Bois [21,2].

5. Cf Bruner, et al. [22], Kretzmann and McKnight (1993, 1996) [23,24], Beverly, et al. [25], and Ohmer and Underwood [26].

6. In his presentation, Richard Robert Wright [27] stated that, “The Negro population of the North is chiefly an urban population; 70 per cent live in cities, and a large population of these in cities of 100,000 and over” (p. 82). Richard Robert Wright also said that, “The general opinion is that the death rate of Negroes is higher in the North than in the South. This is untrue. The crude death rates of the Negroes in the Northern cities are lower than those in the Southern cities” (p. 82). He reported that the Black population was in 1900, 4.9 per cent of the Philadelphia population” (p. 88). Richard Robert Wright, Jr. explained that “consumption” (i.e., tuberculosis) was the major cause of death among Black people in Philadelphia. He argued that the Black population in Philadelphia suffered from the following social conditions:

1. Lack of proper training
2. Bad water
3. Unskilled labor of men, which is hard and long and tends to exposure and
4. Work of women-66 percent of Philadelphia Black women work

Richard Robert Wright [27] presented the argument that working mothers lead to

1. Neglect of their children, often to care for others’ children
2. Unwholesome and improper feeding, which plays an extremely great part
3. Ignorance and
4. Improper education

However, Richard Robert Wright, Jr. surmised that the situation was not hopeless. Richard Robert Wright, Jr. concluded that the situation was “becoming better in nearly every city in the North. Ten years ago the death rate was twice the birth rate in New York, today they are about half the same, with the death rate steadily decreasing and the birth rate increasing. Ten years ago the birth rate of Philadelphia was less than the death rate, today it is six per thousand higher” (p. 90).

7. Instead of publishing a paper titled the “Negro Physique” by Boas in the proceedings, Du Bois chose to publish the commencement address *Boas* [28] delivered to the graduating class of Atlanta University on May 31, 1906. *Willis* [29] has related that the presentation Boas made at the conference on May 29, 1906 was composed of extemporaneous remarks. According to Willis, Boas revised his commencement address for the Atlanta University Leaflet series. Thus, the version Du Bois published of the commencement address in the proceedings is different from the version Du Bois published as *Atlanta University Leaflet, No. 19* and in *The Bulletin of Atlanta University*. For example, the three versions include a quote by Boas with different language pertaining to Africans smelting iron before Europeans. In the proceedings, it stated:

It seems not unlikely that the people that made the marvelous discovery of reducing iron ores by smelting were the African Negroes. Neither ancient Europe, nor ancient western Asia, nor ancient China knew the iron, and everything points to its introduction from Africa. At the time of the great African discoveries towards the end of the past century, the trade of the blacksmith was found all over Africa, from north to south and from east to west. With his simple bellows and a charcoal fire, he reduced the ore that is found in many parts of the continent and forged implements of great usefulness and beauty. Egyptian civilization was the result of Negroid Mediterranean culture, while to the south arose the ancient Negro civilization of Ethiopia, and still further south we find ruins of ancient Bantu culture. (p. 19)

The Leaflet Said

While much of the history of early invention is shrouded in darkness, it seems likely that at a time when the European was still satisfied with rude stone tools, the African had invented or adopted the art of smelting iron.

It seems not unlikely that the people that made the marvelous discovery of reducing iron ores by smelting were the African Negroes. Neither ancient Europe, nor ancient western Asia, nor ancient China knew the iron, and everything points to its introduction from Africa. At the time of the great African discoveries toward the end of the past century, the trade of the blacksmith was found all over Africa, from north to south and from east to west. With his simple bellows and a charcoal fire, he reduced the ore that is found

in many parts of the continent and forged implements of great usefulness and beauty. Due to native invention is also the extended early African agriculture, each village being surrounded by its garden patches and fields in which millet is grown. Domesticated animals were also kept; in the agricultural region's chickens and pigs, while in the arid parts of the country where agriculture is not possible, large herds of cattle were raised. It is also important to note that the cattle were milked, an art which in early times was confined to Africa, Europe and northern Asia, while even now it has not been acquired by the Chinese. The occurrence of all these arts of life points to an early and energetic development of African culture. (Boas, 1906b, p. 1)

The Bulletin of Atlanta University Related

Early inventions were made hardly consciously, certainly not by deliberate effort, yet every one of them represents a giant's stride forward in the development of human culture. To these early advances the negro race has contributed its liberal share. While much of the history of early invention is shrouded in darkness, it seems likely that at a time when the European was still satisfied with rude stone tools, the African had invented or adopted the art of smelting iron. . .

Even if we refrain from speculating on the earliest times, conceding that it is difficult to prove the exact locality where so important an invention was made as that of smelting iron, or where the African millet was first cultivated, or where chickens and cattle were first domesticated, the evidence of African ethnology is such that it should inspire you with the hope of leading your race from achievement to achievement (p. 3).

The leaflet version of the commencement address also appeared 10 years later as part of the *Select Discussions of Race Problems*, which was also known as *Atlanta University Publications, Number 20* and edited by Bigham (1916). [30] The commencement address was published as an excerpt and appeared under the title “Old African Civilizations” by *Boas, Cf Willis and McGowan* [31-33].

8. In a report titled “The Atlanta Conferences,” Du Bois (1904) stated that “at Atlanta University we beg annually and beg in vain for the paltry sum of \$500 simply to aid us in replacing gross and vindictive ignorance of race conditions with enlightening knowledge and systematic observation” (p. 86). However, *Du Bois* [34] declared in his third and final autobiography that he operated the annual Atlanta University Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems “on a budget of \$5,000 a year, including salaries, cost of publication, investigation and annual meetings” (p. 215).

9. In his analysis of some of the same data Du Bois examined, *Billings* [35] the deputy surgeon-general, reported that the death rate for the USA was 18.0 in 1880 and 18.0 in 1990. Billings stated

that, "At present the average annual mortality rate for the whole country should not exceed 16, or, at the utmost, 16.5 per 1,000. In other words, 100,000 deaths occurred during the census year which were in one sense unnecessary and preventable" (p. 12) [36-49].

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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