



# Deferred Legacy! The Continued Marginalization of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory

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## Abstract

Between 1895 and 1917 the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory made substantial contributions to the discipline of sociology, including the establishment of the first American school of sociology, institutionalization of method triangulation, institutionalization of the insider researcher, and institutionalization of the public acknowledgment of one's research. Despite these contributions that predate the Chicago School, the W. E. B. Du Bois led laboratory remains in the margins of American sociological discourse. This paper examines the contributions of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, offers explanations for the school's more than 100-year marginalization and examines its legacy in the discipline.

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Since 1996, there has been a concerted effort by some sociologists to uncover the accomplishments of scholars engaged in sociological activity at Atlanta University between 1895 and 1924, hereafter referred to as the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory (Gabbidon 1996, 1999; Wright 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2005, 2006; Wright and Calhoun 2006; Zuckerman 2004). Some of the conclusions reached by these scholars include the idea that the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory comprised the first American school of sociology; initiated the first program of urban sociological research in the USA; was the first American research unit to institutionalize method triangulation; and was one of the earliest research units to investigate the area of criminology and criminal justice. Without question, these claims challenge the foundation of the discipline in America that suggests that the University of Chicago was the location of some of the accomplishments highlighted above. While these particular challenges to the Chicago School have been made for nearly 10 years, to date, the existing literature includes no scholarly articles refuting the claims made by supporters of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory. If the conclusions reached by these scholars were flawed, would not supporters of the Chicago School submit a response? Again, to date, no such response exists. It is plausible that no supporter of the Chicago School deems it necessary to respond to yet another attack on legacy of the first 'named' department of sociology in the USA. Conversely, one may argue that no

response exists because such efforts would be futile. If one were to conclude that arguments supporting the sociological significance of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory are legitimate, why, then, is not this new sociological knowledge reflected in introduction, theory, or methods sociology textbooks? If one examines these sources they will find, at best, a cursory acknowledgment that *some sort* of sociological activity took place at Atlanta University during the tenure of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois and, at worst, no evidence that the sociological laboratory ever existed at the all-black institution in Atlanta, Georgia (now called Clark Atlanta University). The objective of this inquiry is to provide a review of the literature on a little-known research unit that comprised the first American school of sociology, the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory.

### **The Atlanta Sociological Laboratory**

Atlanta University opened in 1869 with a mission to educate Africans who were freed by Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Since it had been illegal to educate blacks in most states prior to the Civil War, the challenge faced by Atlanta University and its peer institutions seemed almost insurmountable as they embraced the task of instructing students with little to no previous school training. Not only did Atlanta University open its doors to those desirous of an education, the institution embraced a liberal arts curriculum that focused on the holistic development of students, not training in vocational education as proposed by men like Booker T. Washington. Washington, resolute in his belief that the immediate need of blacks after emancipation was economic independence, championed the establishment of vocational education programs that he believed would more quickly lead to economic independence and self-reliance than liberal arts programs. In opposition to Washington's program of vocational education, Atlanta University embraced a liberal arts curriculum with an emphasis on preparing students for leadership positions in their respective communities after graduation. The bond that developed between many students and school administrators lasted long after graduation and facilitated the establishment of the annual investigations into the condition of blacks in cities.

In 1895, Atlanta University president Horace Bumstead and trustee George G. Bradford obtained permission from the university to initiate a program of sociological research into the social, economic, and physical condition of blacks in America. Materializing from correspondence between university graduates and school administrators noting rapid changes in American urban society, including industrialization, urbanization, and the transition from slavery to freedom, Bradford's plan for the Atlanta University studies was to replicate for urban blacks the agricultural and industrial conferences held at Tuskegee and Hampton respectively. While Bradford was eager to conduct research on the condition of blacks in America, he was not the ideal choice to lead this unique program since

he lacked professional training in the area (Wright 2005). Bradford's weaknesses as a scholar were noted by his successor, Du Bois, who concluded that the studies conducted under Bradford's direction were tantamount to the collection of census style data with little to no scientific value (Du Bois 1968). The scientific direction of the studies changed when Du Bois was appointed director of the Atlanta University studies on the Negro problem in 1896.

Immediately after his appointment as director of the Atlanta University research program, Du Bois changed several aspects of the yearly investigations. First, he placed an 's' on the title of the annual research program to signify the emphasis on one specific problem per year, not the hodgepodge of issues included in each investigation as performed in the two studies conducted by Bradford. Second, and relatedly, he divided the subjects of investigation into 10 topics. One substantive topic (i.e., education, religion, work, etc.) would be addressed each year over a 10-year period. At the end of the 10-year period, the topic would be revisited to note any changes that may have occurred over the past decade. Third, Du Bois institutionalized method triangulation, the use of two or more methods of research to solve a research question. While Du Bois' intention was not to revolutionize sociological methods with his utilization of this technique, Wright (2002a, 31) suggests 'it is very possible that Atlanta University was the first school to institutionalize this data collection strategy'.

Not only were investigations conducted, Atlanta University hosted conferences between 1895 and 1924 where the findings of each year's inquiry were presented. The conference was usually attended by researchers who contributed to that year's study and scholars and citizens interested in the topic. Some of the noteworthy attendees include sociologist Jane Addams, anthropologist Franz Boaz, educator Lucy Laney, educator Booker T. Washington, and sociologist Monroe N. Work. The reports presented at the conference were published annually between 1896 and 1917 and comprise a 20-volume series on the social, economic, and physical condition of blacks in America in the early 1900s. While the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory was busily investigating the condition of urban blacks, the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago was establishing the foundation of a research unit that would become known as the Chicago School of Sociology and eventually become lauded as the first American school of sociology by supporters such as Martin Bulmer.

### **'Using the master's tools'**

In 1984, Bulmer wrote an article that listed nine criterions for the creation of a 'school'. The criterions were applied to the scholars engaged in sociological activity at the University of Chicago, c. 1915–1930, and Bulmer concluded that this research unit, the Chicago School, comprised the first American school of sociology. In a challenge to Bulmer's assertion, Earl Wright II

utilized Bulmer's criterion to assess whether or not the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory qualified as a school. Bulmer's (1984) nine criterion of a school, as applied to the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory by Wright, are:

- 1 There must be a central figure around whom the department is organized.
- 2 A school must exist in a university setting and have direct contact with a student population.
- 3 There must be interaction between those who work at the university and the general community in which the university is located.
- 4 A school must have as its key figure, someone with a dominating personality.
- 5 The leader of a school must possess an intellectual vision and have a missionary drive.
- 6 There must be intellectual exchanges between colleagues and graduate students (e.g., the existence of seminars) and the school must have an outlet for the publication of scholarship written by members of the school.
- 7 A school must have an adequate infrastructure (e.g., advances in research methods, institutional links, and strong philanthropic support).
- 8 A school cannot last beyond the generation of its central figure.
- 9 A school must be open to ideas and influences beyond its home discipline.

The first criterion is satisfied as Du Bois was the central figure around whom the department was organized. His tenure as faculty member lasted from 1897 to 1910; however, his service as director of the conference continued until 1914. Bulmer's second criterion is satisfied as the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, housed within the Department of History and Economics at Atlanta University, did exist in a university setting and courses in undergraduate and graduate study in sociology were offered. Additionally, graduate as well as undergraduate students were utilized as researchers for the yearly studies. That interaction existed between the school and the larger community, the third criterion, is evidenced in Du Bois and his colleagues' participation in local organizations such as the Sociological Club of Atlanta. The fourth criterion mandates that the key figure have a dominating personality. Du Bois' dominating personality can be gleaned, as discussed earlier, from his unflattering critique of the state of the investigations upon his arrival and the immense changes he made immediately thereafter. The fifth criterion, intellectual vision and missionary drive, is satisfied as Du Bois upgraded the scientific quality of the investigations and planned a 100-year course of study on American Negroes. Had his 100-year plan of research on blacks in America come to fruition, according to Du Bois, the result would have been a treatise on 'The Economic Development of the American Negro Slave'. Bulmer's sixth criterion mandates intellectual exchanges between colleagues and graduate students. Additionally, the school must have an outlet for the publication of its materials. Beginning with the former, Wright notes:

The catalogue of the Officers and Students of Atlanta University indicates that sociological seminars covering statistics, general sociological principles, social and economic conditions, and methods of reform were offered at Atlanta University during Du Bois' tenure. 'In addition to this, graduate study of the social problems in the South by most approved scientific methods [was] carried on by the Atlanta conference, composed of graduates of Atlanta, Fisk, and other institutions.' (Wright 2002a, 28)

Additionally, Atlanta University hosted conferences between 1896 and 1924 where the findings of the yearly studies were presented and policy implications were debated. In addition to hosting a conference where research findings were presented for over 20 years, Atlanta University housed a publishing company and between 1896 and 1917 released the conference proceedings and findings of each year's investigation. Bulmer's seventh criterion mandates that a school have an adequate infrastructure to promote advances in research methods, develop institutional links and garner strong philanthropic support. Some of the methodological advances established by the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory include the use of insider researchers and method and theory triangulation (Wright 2002a). The institutional links of the school were exemplified in cooperative efforts between Atlanta University and the faculty and students from historically black colleges and universities and predominately white institutions (Chase 1896; Du Bois 1968). Arguably, the most challenging criterion of all Bulmer's requirements was the amassing of evidence supportive of the notion that Atlanta University garnered strong philanthropic support. Given the nature of the Atlanta University research agenda, which was highly critical of American racism, prejudice and discrimination, many potential philanthropists often chose not to support an institution that would facilitate the materialization of research that would potentially be critical of them. According to Du Bois, his first resignation from Atlanta University was instigated by the school's inability to obtain philanthropic gifts because of his uncompromisingly critical research into and commentary on the unequal treatment of blacks in America. Despite the difficulty in obtaining funding equal to that poured on the University of Chicago by the Rockefeller family, evidence of Atlanta University's strong philanthropic support is bolstered by the fact that despite opposition to its research agenda, the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory conducted investigations, hosted conferences and published its results for 20 years. Elliott Rudwick provides a salient argument supporting the notion that Atlanta University garnered strong philanthropic support despite its massive obstacles. Directly addressing the level of philanthropic support during Du Bois' tenure with the school, Rudwick (1957, 42) notes:

Since Atlanta University was a struggling and impoverished institution that could not afford to support Du Bois' research adequately for one year – much

les for a decade or century – it is a tribute to his determination that he actually supervised the preparation of sixteen Atlanta University sociological monographs between 1897 and 1914.

The eighth criterion, that a school not last beyond the generation of its founder, is met because after Du Bois' departure as director of the Atlanta University studies in 1914, the school only released two monographs and the conferences were ended within 10 years. The final criterion mandates that a school be open to ideas and influences from other disciplines. Support for this criterion is drawn from the fact that the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory addressed topics that are now the domain of independent academic disciplines (e.g., business, religion, education) and substantive areas within sociology (family, health and medicine, work, etc).

Despite attempts to place the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory within the sociological cannon, to date, this school has not been widely embraced or acknowledged. An attempt to explain the sociological marginalization of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is offered in the next section.

### **'Why black people tend to shout!'**

If the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, not the Chicago School, comprised the first American school of sociology, why have the sociological exploits of this school been marginalized more than 100 years? According to Wright (2002b) the sociological marginalization of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory can be explained by (i) racism; (ii) the belief that the activities of the school were conducted in academic obscurity; (iii) the perception that the findings were ungeneralizable; (iv) the perception that the methods of research were unsophisticated and of low quality; and (v) the perception that theory was omitted from the findings.

Wright argues that the primary explanation of the sociological marginalization of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is racism. The reader must be mindful that during the early twentieth-century blacks in America were considered by most whites, and supported with scientific data of the era, to be biologically and intellectually inferior. White sociologists of the era were not exempt from similar racist views (Wright 2002b). Lemert (1994, 387) comments on what he perceives as the racially motivated marginalization of Du Bois and the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory from classic sociological status when he states:

It is easy to conclude that what is at work in canonical exclusions are the indirect but powerful requirements of the dominant culture ... It is a widely discussed, and plausible, position that Euroamerican culture was founded upon, and still today proudly entails, a structural inability to see those in the racially Other position.

The inability of many whites to view blacks as scholars and intellectual equals with the capacity to engage in and master high-level professional activities is captured in Du Bois' admonition that:

So long as the world of science and letters was concerned we never ‘belonged’; we remained unrecognized in learned societies and academic groups. We rated merely as Negroes studying Negroes, and after all, what had Negroes to do with America or science? (Du Bois 1968, 228)

It is quite possible that some could extend the omission of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory beyond racism by arguing that the activities of the research unit were unknown to its peers and, thus, relegated to academic obscurity. This notion becomes spurious after discovering that reports of the annual conferences were requested by and sent to graduate and undergraduate students at schools like Harvard, Wellesley, the Catholic University, and the University of Texas. According to Wright (2002b, 342), ‘If graduate and undergraduate students at these particular schools utilized Atlanta University data, is it not reasonable to suggest that their mentors knew of the scholarship taking place at Atlanta University?’ Continuing the list of outlets to whom reports were delivered, Wright (2002b, 343) asserts:

In addition to the mailing of reports to graduate students, undergraduate students, ordinary citizens, and national organizations, the Seventh Atlanta University Conference publication indicates that ‘during the past few years lectures [focusing on the sociological investigations initiated at Atlanta University] have been given at the Unitarian Club of New York, American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, and the American Negro Academy.’

A third explanation of the sociological marginalization of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is the perception that the school’s research findings were not generalizable. Since the primary focus of the studies was on blacks in America, it could be surmised that the findings were limited. From its inception, the Atlanta University studies were designed to be generalizable. President Bumstead emphasized this point at the first conference in 1896:

The general subject of this and succeeding conferences – the study of Negro city life – and the subject of this year – the morality of Negroes in cities – constitute a human problem far more than a Negro problem. We shall use the words ‘Negro’ and ‘colored,’ not to emphasize distinctions of race, but as terms of convenience. We are simply to study human life under certain conditions – conditions which, if repeated with any other race, would have practically the same result. (Chase 1896, 6–7)

After examining the Atlanta University studies, Wright (2002b, 345) concludes that ‘many of the social problems identified in the investigations and the resolutions offered to ameliorate the problems were generalizable’ as they could be useful in understanding urban conditions affecting persons regardless of race (e.g., tuberculosis and health-related issues) and to the black community with respect to differences in region and rural/city concerns (e.g., convict lease system, inequality in prison sentences and pay).

A fourth explanation offered by Wright to explain the marginalization of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is the perception that the school

utilized unsophisticated or low-quality methods of research. This assertion is made by Rudwick (1957, 468) who analyzed the studies and determined they 'were of uneven quality in planning, structure, methods, and content'. In his critical examination of the Du Bois-led research efforts, Rudwick bemoans what he perceives as the lack of attention to possible sampling errors, the providing of limited instructions to researchers in the field and the lack of a method to check the reliability or validity of the data. He ultimately concludes that the methodology of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory suffered because 'Du Bois' method of case counting was naïve and influenced by his acquaintance with the work of social reformers and social workers' (p. 473). Wright (2002b) addresses and refutes Rudwick's arguments while highlighting a couple of methodological practices that were institutionalized at Atlanta University before most, if not all, institutions in this nation. Included in these advances are the use of 'insiders' as researchers and the acknowledgment of the methodological limitations of one's work. It is useful to note that the Chicago School did not institutionalize the practice of acknowledging the limitations of their scholarship until years after the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory made the practice commonplace (Hammersley 1989; Platt 1987). Addressing critiques of the perceived low-quality methods of research utilized by the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, Wright (2002b, 353) proposes that 'Rudwick attempts to place a 1950s intellectual perspective upon a collection of scholarship after more than fifty years of methodological developments in the discipline'. That Rudwick compared the methodology of Atlanta University with that of 1950s era sociologists and not its early 1900s contemporaries, according to Wright, serves as the major flaw of his critique.

The fifth, and final, explanation of the sociological negation of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is the notion that the school lacked theory. Wright argues that the ways in which sociologists have defined the term theory is limiting and grounded more in the *narrowing of intellectual creativity* and serving as a *gate-keeping* practice than in acknowledging and embracing alternative forms of theory construction that, while remaining consistent with the definitional understanding of the term, does not follow the desired format. Admittedly, the theoretical contributions of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory do not mirror those at predominately white institutions. However:

If one defines a theory as a set of interrelated statements that attempt to explain, predict or understand social events, and that can be replicated and generalizable, then the resolutions offered in the conclusion of the Atlanta University Publications, after being tested by interested social scientists, qualify as systematic theoretical constructions (Wright 2002b, 353).

Wright, providing a concluding note on this topic, asks, 'should Atlanta University's theoretical contributions be minimized because, although

they qualify for theoretical status according to a strict definition of the term, they do not qualify ideologically?’ (Wright 2002b, 354). In addition to forming the first American school of sociology and making various advances in sociological methods, the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory should receive increased recognition because of its role in the development of a parallel world of sociological inquiry called black sociology.

### **Jim Crow sociology**

The research activities of Du Bois and his school not only resulted in the establishment of the first American school of sociology, but also black sociology. Until recently, black sociology was purported to have emerged in the 1970s when a growing number of black sociologists became interested in engaging in research focused primarily, not circuitously, on blacks. Scholars such as Joyce Ladner, author of the seminal anthology *The Death of White Sociology*, proposed that her book was an attempt to ‘define the emerging field of Black Sociology’ (Ladner 1973, xix). Following Ladner’s lead, scholars like Robert Staples (1973, 1976), Darryl Le Duff (1975), Wilbur Watson (1976) and a few others, penned definitions of black sociology. While these scholars penned credible ideas of what constituted black sociology, none utilized the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory as a source for their conceptualization. Wright and Calhoun (2006) argue that any attempt at defining this area of study without utilizing the activities of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory as a template is tenuous. Using the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory as a template, Wright and Calhoun define black sociology as:

An area of research which may be performed by Black or White scholars, that is focused on eliminating Blacks from social oppression through objective scientific investigations into their social, economic, and physical condition for the express purpose of obtaining data aimed at understanding, explaining and ameliorating the problems discovered in the Black American community in a manner that could have social policy implications. (p. 16)

Wright and Calhoun also offer five principles of black sociology which emanated from the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory.

The first principle is that the research endeavors be led primarily by Black Americans. This criterion was established at the 1896 Atlanta University conference when President Bumstead proposed that ‘the problems of Negro city life must be settled largely by Negroes themselves’ (Chase 1896, 5). It must be stalwartly asserted that nonblack researchers are not excluded from engaging in black sociology, but that the research should be led primarily by blacks.

The second principle of black sociology is that the research center on blacks. President Bumstead articulates this criterion at the 1896 conference in response to the limited objective scientific literature on blacks in America

at the time. One must be mindful that when blacks were the focus of scholarly studies during this era they were largely examined from deviance perspectives, as the subjects of biased studies that contributed to the popular belief that there were inherent physical and intellectual differences between blacks and whites or as addendums to studies on whites (Ladner 1973). Accordingly, Atlanta University sought to provide depth and balance in the literature on black American life.

The third principle of black sociology mandates that the research be interdisciplinary. The Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, as discussed earlier, embraced interdisciplinary research in its studies that addressed topics that now are considered separate academic disciplines and substantive areas within sociology.

The fourth principle of black sociology proposes that the findings be generalizable. This issue was also addressed by President Bumstead at the 1896 conference when he proclaimed, as quoted earlier, that the research findings emanating from these studies were applicable to humans of all races because the research focused on conditions affecting the human population in general. Thus, while blacks were the focus of the research, many of the findings were useful in understanding issues affecting nonblacks as well.

The final principle of black sociology mandates that, when applicable, the findings have social policy implications. It must be stated that Du Bois and the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory did not place special emphasis on research for the explicit purpose of affecting social policy. However, if in the course of engaging in objective and scientific research projects one discovers data that could be useful in affecting social or public policy, then the researcher should take the proper steps to assure that their data is utilized by interested parties.

## Summary

Under the leadership of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory formed the earliest research center for urban sociological study in the USA. Byproducts of this research center include the establishment of the first American school of sociology and various advances in sociological methods and theory. While the contributions of this school are considered by a growing number of scholars to be equal to if not greater than those of the Chicago School, an examination of contemporary introduction, methods, and theory textbooks includes no discussion of the activities or relevance of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory. Admittedly, arguments for the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory's place in sociological lore are relatively new and, as with any new body of knowledge, take time to become incorporated into the sociological cannon. One needs to look no further than Du Bois for evidence of this. It was only in the 1990s, after many years of clamor from supporters, that his

accomplishments beyond the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory were included in the sociological canon. Notwithstanding his massive scholarly offerings beyond the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, it is quite disheartening that discussions of Du Bois as a 'father' of the discipline, while acknowledging his concepts such as the talented tenth, double consciousness and the color line, fail to directly acknowledge his extensive accomplishments at Atlanta University. At most there is a cursory acknowledgment of his tenure at the school, but never a detailed discussion concerning the significance of the 16 studies that he directed. Thus, the activities of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, even when an opportunity for its acknowledgment is presented, are omitted. This omission is further complicated by the suggestion of an early sociologist who believes that Du Bois and the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory were engaged in research on the sociology of the American South prior to any school. According to Thompson (1945, 360–61):

The sociology of the South is the sociology of one who, whether southerner or northerner, native or outsider, endeavors to maintain something of the detachment of the stranger as he looks at the South and examines it. For him the South together with its contents is a social object to be studied as he studies other social objects like a family or a city area.

The development of the sociology of the South is generally credited to early sociologist Howard Odum. Upon his death in 1954, Ogburn (1954, 237) writes of Howard Odum's significance to the discipline of sociology.

His success in social action is recognized, after his death, in an editorial in the *Washington Post*, which begins with these sentences: 'Howard W. Odum was the Eli Whitney of the Modern South. He inspired a revolution. Certainly there is no one – unless it was [former United States President] Franklin Roosevelt – whose influence was greater than Odum's on the Development of the region below the Potomac.'

While Odum is traditionally lauded as being the 'father' of the sociology of the American South because of his research activities in this area beginning with his doctoral dissertation in 1910, his University of North Carolina colleague offered an alternate origin nearly 20 years before Odum's death. According to Johnson (1937, 65), 'In 1896 [Du Bois] went to Atlanta to teach in Atlanta University. There he undertook what was perhaps the first real sociological research in the South.'

In this examination of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, an attempt was made to summarize some of the reasons why the school should be lauded and embraced with as much vigor as the Chicago School and included in the cannon of books and articles that students of the discipline are required to read. Admittedly, data supporting the accomplishments of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory are relatively new. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, there does not exist one published paper challenging the conclusions reached by the scholars engaged in research on this topic.

Despite this fact, the contributions of this school are relegated to the Jim Crow section of the American sociological enterprise through its relative invisibility in the sociological canon. So long as the 'gatekeepers' of the discipline marginalize and defer the legacy of this school, the vast majority of degreed sociologists and sociologists in training will be deprived of learning of the impressive research accomplishments of individuals at the all-black institution in Atlanta, Georgia that, when confronted with studying and prescribing solutions for the one of the greatest challenges ever faced by the USA, the incorporation of its formerly chattel slaves into the American fabric, embraced the task and made substantial and, to this day, ignored contributions to the discipline of sociology.

### Short Biography

Earl Wright II is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Texas Southern University. Over the past 10 years, his research has centered on W. E. B. Du Bois, Hip-Hop and the urban African American barbershop and appeared in journals, including *Deviant Behavior*, *Journal of Black Studies*, *Sociological Focus*, *Sociological Spectrum* and the *Western Journal of Black Studies*. Earl's current research agenda includes uncovering the accomplishments of early black sociologists engaged in black sociology at Tuskegee Institute, Fisk University, and Howard University.

### Note

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