

# Affirming Methodologies: Local and Indigenous Approaches to Social Justice and Transformation

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## Introduction

This special collection “*Affirming Methodologies—Local and Indigenous approaches to Social Justice and Transformation*” sought to highlight Local and Indigenous ways of sharing knowledges among Caribbean and global majority populations within an Affirming Methodologies framework. It was our intention, as guest editors, to showcase research which engaged culturally relevant research methodologies to investigate issues with clear outcomes of transformative practice and social justice. Importantly, we hoped to present research studies employing affirming methodologies centering the knowledges of Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour. This focus allowed for those traditionally othered in academia by dominant theorizations and knowledge systems to speak for themselves and with others. This lens also makes visible the worldviews, realities and practices of peoples from whom knowledge is sought and shared, and enables those involved in research (whether as scholars, activists or educators) to have agency in co-creating knowledge with fellow participants as co-researchers (Fernandez Santana et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2018).

Within an Affirming Methodology approach is the liberation and freedom of working within our epistemologies and ontologies, considering in its entirety, the knowledge that is shared (De Four-Babb et al., 2022). Crucial to the concept of Affirming Methodologies is reciprocity, relationship, and respect, not only for engaging with qualitative research but within quantitative or mixed methodologies, and not only for academia but for the community (Nakhid et al., 2019). Additionally, a Critically Affirming Methodologies framework allows for the nuances of our own ways of doing, being, and knowing to be critiqued, acknowledging that we all hold different consciousnesses, and that debates, arguments and contestations are helpful in moving us forward (Nakhid, 2026). Affirming methodologies are considered valuable in and of themselves and do not seek to justify or rationalise their relevance, with Local and Indigenous knowledges embodied within and ensuring that previously marginalized and silenced voices will be heard (Nakhid et al., 2022). The researcher is cognizant of how our histories have informed and shaped knowledge that emanates from our living realities and experiences, and recognizes that, crucial to Affirming Methodologies are the relationships with those who share their knowledges.

The articles accepted for publication by the journal and its reviewers highlight the tensions that exist in adopting and re-engaging with methodologies that are culturally relevant yet have not been given nor seek exposure in Western and Eurocentric academic spaces. It also reveals the challenges for journals in finding reviewers comfortable or knowledgeable with culturally affirming methodologies which centre and reference the ways of knowing for Indigenous, Local, Black and Persons of colour, particularly those from lesser-known regions and communities (Nakhid & Farrugia, 2021; Nakhid-Chatoor et al., 2018). The articles within this Special Collection reveal the challenges by the authors to integrate affirming methodologies within an investigation of social justice issues that could lead to transformative outcomes. We empathise with this, as the demands and constraints of research such as finances, time, and expectations to research in a particular way, have dissuaded many researchers from venturing beyond what and how they have been traditionally taught to understand and carry out research. While several of the articles presented here reveal this tension, there are two papers that have successfully managed to present methodologies that embody these ways of knowing and critiquing knowledge (analysis) - “Extending the Lime [De Lime Cyah Done]: Challenging Mainstream Discourses with Culturally Affirming Methodologies” and “Ngopi as Methodology: Reclaiming Indonesian Practices for Knowledge Co-Creation” (Husniyah, 2026). While the remaining papers do offer some reference to Indigenous or Local research methodologies, their methodologies and methods of analysis remain Western-centric and devoid of an holistic embrace of Indigenous or Local research practices. For us, as guest editors, the

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Special Collection falls short of the type of papers we originally envisaged. However, we acknowledge the effort made by researchers to refer to Indigenous, Local and culturally relevant research methodologies. It is our hope that researchers, academia and journals continue to recognize the necessity and value of employing an Affirming Methodologies framework to research, to transformative practice and social justice, and to respecting the histories and living realities of those from Local, Indigenous, Black and People of Colour communities who share their knowledges. Engaging, encouraging, supporting and sustaining community researchers and reviewers as well as those in academia who work within this framework is essential to making this research available.

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