

Benefits of Afrocentricity in Exploring Social Phenomena: Understanding Afrocentricity as a Social Science Methodology

by

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Abstract

Reviewing the writings of the foremost Afrocentric theorists, this article seeks to detail a foundation for employing appropriate methods, principles, and frameworks through which researchers can interpret Africana phenomena. The objective is to illustrate the benefits of an Afrocentric methodology in developing, conceptualizing and operationalizing social research projects. This research details the components of Afrocentricity as the structural methodology that engenders a culturally appropriate conceptualization of Africana reality. Moreover, as a methodological framework, Afrocentricity serves as a governing tool of active agency, which informs new approaches in interpreting social phenomenon and can aid in the redevelopment of social science research.

Previous interpretive frameworks used to study Africana phenomena have focused on cultural notions derived from social science disciplines and have therefore concluded that Africana people are innately culturally, politically and economically inadequate and deficient. However, normative social science approaches lack a culturally appropriate and realistic interpretation of Africana reality and researchers who use them do not take into consideration the historical, social, or contemporary experiences of Africana people. Reviewing the writings of

the foremost Afrocentric theorists, this article seeks to detail a foundation for employing appropriate methods, principles, and frameworks through which researchers can interpret Africana phenomena. The objective of this article is to illustrate the benefits of an Afrocentric methodology in exploring Africana social phenomena, particularly as it relates to the subject place of Africana people.

Operating under the umbrella of a paradigm, Afrocentricity is the philosophical and theoretical construct in the discipline of Africana Studies where laws, generalizations, methodologies, and theories are created. In *The Afrocentric Paradigm* (2003), Mazama notes that there are three aspects to the Afrocentric paradigm: 1) affective, cognitive, conative; 2) structural; and 3) functional. The affective, cognitive, conative aspect is understood as the navigating principles that function as the basis for inquiry into African phenomena. This aspect equips the scholar with necessary methodological tools and principles to conduct research that is liberating for continental and diasporic Africans. The institutionalization of organizing principles generates a basis for methodological approaches that are rooted in Africana people's realities.

There are seven criteria for the establishment of an Afrocentric methodology identified by Mazama (2003): 1) The African experience must guide and inform all inquiry; 2) The spiritual is important and must be given its due place; 3) Immersion in the subject is necessary; 4) Wholism is a must; 5) Intuition is a valid source of information; 6) Not everything that matters is measurable; and 7) Knowledge generated must be liberating (Mazama, 2003: 27). These criteria are formed in collaboration with Africana people's historical and cultural lives. Banks (1992) suggests that Afrocentricity must function as a methodology of the absolute and not one of comparative analysis. These criteria therefore institute a standardized foundation for scholarship produced on people of African descent. The establishment of a minimum standardized research criteria fosters a disciplinary stance whereby researchers are charged with the task of implementing these criteria in their research on Africana phenomena. According to Reviere (2001) "Afrocentric methodologies are intended to be used to investigate pertinent research questions legitimately and effectively (that is, truthfully and inclusively), especially those that possess embedded assumptions about race and culture" (709). In this sense, Afrocentricity as a methodology not only generates new orientations toward interpreting data but ultimately employs research that is fruitful and liberating for African people.

Since Afrocentricity constitutes a systematic approach to Africana phenomena where culture is emphasized as essential for the collective liberation of African people, it is imperative that Afrocentric methodologies are generated for and applied to the construction of research projects as well as the interpretation of research on Africana people. The key here is 'epistemological centeredness,' which involves placing Africans as self-willed agents instead of objects of investigations (Mazama, 2003: 5). Asante states that Afrocentricity serves as the establishment of the subject place of Africans and the destruction of the compliance with the European ideas and concepts of Africans (Asante, 1988: 6). Accordingly, Semmes contends that

Afrocentricity within the social science context must steer clear of similar “dogmatic distinctions, by dichotomizing and ranking reality, but should recognize the reciprocity or interaction of the material and the spiritual, of action and ideas, of observed reality and the interpretation of that reality” (1981: 8). In effect, Afrocentricity emerges as a methodology that consciously operates within African ways of knowing and existence and results in the implementation of principles, methods, concepts, and ideas that are derived from our own Africana cultural experiences (Mazama, 2003: 5). Hence, Afrocentric methodologies constitute the development of research whereby Africa is culturally asserted—agency—for Africans for the liberation of Africana people (Asante, 1988; Mazama, 2003).

The ‘crystallization’ of an Afrocentric methodology involves the placement of Africana cultures, histories, experiences, and perceptions as the central axis that “reorganizes our frame of reference so that we become the center of analysis and synthesis” (Asante, 1988: 39). The prioritization of Africana people’s customs, beliefs, motifs, values, and conceptualizations is the rubric by which the application of an Afrocentric methodology operates. According to Modupe, Afrocentricity is the continental and diasporic African collective cognitive will to cultural and psychic liberation with the ultimate goal being Africana existence on Africana terms (2003: 58-59). Therefore, Afrocentric methodologies must operate as valid and reliable research aimed towards the freeing of Africana peoples’ thoughts and realities. Thus, Afrocentricity is the social science inquiry basis of African cultural phenomenon in practice.

As a methodological frame, Afrocentricity serves as a foundation for exploratory, explanatory and descriptive research. These research approaches are basic modes of inquiry that function within the realms of Afrocentricity when used to investigate Africana phenomena. Asante (2007) identifies five basic characteristics of an Afrocentric project. The first characteristic that must be established is an interest in psychological location. Here the direction and orientation out of which African people operate is prioritized and determined by the symbols, motifs, rituals, signs, and language that African people create (Asante, 2007: 42). The second basic characteristic is a commitment to finding the African subject place. The centrality of Africana people as subject is established in all phenomenon, whether social, political, economic, or religious. Therefore, Afrocentrists must take care to seek the subject role of African people, ideas, and concepts (Asante, 2007: 42). The third characteristic is a defense of African cultural elements. This means the total safeguarding and defense of Africana culture (Asante, 2007; 43). Africana values, habits, customs, religions, behaviors, and thoughts must be protected and clear of all interpretations that are un-African. The fourth characteristic is a commitment to lexical refinement. This means that the person who contextualizes Africana reality must be aware of the subject role of all Africana phenomena (Asante, 2007: 43). This also means that the terms and definitions used to define Africana people are not outsourced from other cultures, but instead are derived from Africana social-historical experiences and languages. The final basic characteristic of an Afrocentric project is a commitment to a new Africana narrative. This entails creating a new corrected history of African people throughout the world (Asante, 2007: 44). It is

important to understand that this new narrative will not falsify the social history of Africa, but promote culturally centered Africana historiographies, literature, economic development, and religious orientations. With the establishment of these criteria, Afrocentric methodologies provide a scientific anchor for understanding social phenomena of African people.

The assumed cultural homogeneity embedded in social science research methodologies illustrates the need for a dismantling of misguided research approaches; thus, it is critical to use the above research assumptions in order to study people of African descent from their own cultures, histories, experiences, and perspectives. An Afrocentric methodology is therefore a structural research approach that engenders a reconceptualization of Africana phenomena. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between an Afrocentric theory and an Afrocentric methodology. Afrocentricity as a governing tool of inquiry operates as a methodological framework and not a theory. This is not to state that Afrocentricity does not operate as a theory; instead this claim emphasizes the difference between Afrocentricity as a theory and Afrocentricity as a governing tool of inquiry. Theories are general sets of assumptions that guide the research, whereas methodologies consist of research methods and principles that direct a study. Afrocentricity as a methodology serves as an empirical method rooted in the active agency of Africana people. In effect, Afrocentric methodologies equip researchers with tools to develop valid research objectives and questions that attempt to alleviate the social conditions that Africana people face, such that Africana people are able to return to a social reality that is more germane to their own cultural center. This is essential as the research objective and question governs the concepts and measures used to investigate social phenomena. Thus, Africana phenomena can be investigated and interpreted to reveal the social and historical reality that Africana people experience from their own perspectives, while not compromising the reliability, validity, and objectivity of the research process.

Implementation of Afrocentric conceptualizations and operationalizations of concepts and variables is of critical concern for Afrocentric researchers. This is important because it is the redirection of an African frame of reference from one that is irrelevant and oppressive, to a frame that is germane to our history and culture. Conceptualization within Afrocentric methodologies fosters the application of culturally attuned meaning of the concepts used in the study. In this sense, the terminology applied in any inquiry of Africana phenomena must not only be culturally appropriate but also non-oppressive and liberating. Afrocentric operationalization creates applicable tools of measurement that are in harmony with Africana people's existence. Thus, the tools of measurement are not threatening, intrusive, or disruptive to the agency of Africana people. Furthermore, the successful application of an Afrocentric methodology should generate research that is non-antithetical to African people's conscious struggle for liberation.

Research Project Design: Applying an Afrocentricity Methodology

Any study of Africana phenomena involves focusing on appropriate cultural notions derived from African cultural facts. It is important to note that this approach requires a culturally applicable and realistic understanding of African reality and must take into consideration the historical, social, and contemporary experiences of Africana people. Utilizing an Afrocentric methodology equips the researcher with a detailed foundation for employing culturally correct methods, principles, and frameworks in analyzing Africana phenomena. The implementation of this methodological approach is crystalized in Africana social science research projects. The development of social science research projects entails nine primary components: purpose, conceptualization, method, operationalization, sampling, data collection, data processing, data analysis, and application (Babbie, 2010). These components are directly influenced by the researchers' interpretative framework, theory, paradigm, or chosen methodology. Ultimately, the researchers' methodology will determine the course of the project undertaken and the methods and analysis used to investigate the subject matter.

In an Afrocentric research project design, the researcher must first determine a purpose that is not antithetical to Africana people. The researcher is charged with the task of being grounded in the culture and history of the Africana community in which the researcher seeks a more intimate understanding. In addition, the researcher must also identify a liberatory dimension of the research which aids Africana people in their quest for freedom. In this sense, the purpose of Afrocentric research is to produce research that provides a holistic view of Africana people, a critical analysis and challenge of misguided research, and directives for liberation.

There are three major types of social science research—exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Babbie, 2010). Employing an Afrocentric methodology in exploratory research involves investigating Africana phenomenon for the purpose of developing a culturally accurate understanding of Africana reality. This type of research is initially conducted to examine a specific aspect of the Africana community and serve as preliminary data collection. Further research is warranted to develop a more intimate understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Afrocentric descriptive research provides a more precise understanding of Africana social phenomena. This type of research is conducted to describe the state of Africana reality. Afrocentric scientific observations must accompany descriptive research, which requires the researcher to utilize an appropriate cultural lens. While normative social science researchers are trained to shred themselves of their own personal bias, the adoption of faulty interpretive frameworks can further skew the data collection and analysis of any research project. For this reason, Afrocentric methodologies exist to frame an Afrocentric social science research project within the culture, history, experience, and perspectives of Africana people; Africana phenomena

becomes the center of analysis and synthesis. Although descriptive research projects begin to paint a centered picture of Africana phenomena, it does not however provide any justifications, reasons, or causes for any phenomenon.

Explanatory research employed via an Afrocentric methodology provides reasons for an Africana phenomenon and the causes of that phenomenon. Explanatory social science research seeks to explain causal relationships between one factor impacting Africana reality and another. This type of research first requires that the researcher establishes a viable and reliable understanding of the Africana phenomenon and the entities that interact with that phenomenon, while not compromising the subject place of African people. Without a proper assessment of all dimensions involved, explanatory research projects undoubtedly fail to accurately report the causes and effects of factors that strengthen or impede the Africana community. Therefore researchers must be geared to critically dissect multidimensional elements simultaneously in order to best evaluate Africana experiences. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine which research purpose or which combination of objectives is most appropriate for the subject in which they seek to investigate.

Upon identifying a research purpose, the researcher participates in the process of conceptualization. During this phase of the research project design, definitions of the concepts and variables to be studied are specified. This is a vital component of Afrocentric social science research, as this process dictates the connotations and significances applied to key terms and characterizations. Utilizing an Afrocentric methodological frame to define Africana phenomena must be formed in alliance with African people's historical and cultural realities. Without this connection the meanings applied to the concepts and variables under investigation become fundamentally flawed in that they lack validity since they are misguided representations of Africana phenomena. During this phase of conceptualization, a commitment to lexical refinement is achieved. As stated earlier, this means that the person who contextualizes Africana reality must be aware of the subject role of *all* Africana phenomena. This also means that the terms and definitions used to define Africana people are not outsourced from other cultures and other people but instead are derived from Africana people and their languages. In this sense, conceptualization within Afrocentric methodologies fosters the application of culturally attuned definitions of concepts used in the study. Furthermore, the terminology applied in any inquiry of Africana phenomenon must not only be culturally appropriate but non-oppressive and liberating.

The third component of an Afrocentric research project is the selection of research methods that are culturally adequate and applicable. This phase carries with it the understanding that not everything that matters can be measured. This idea is central because Africana phenomena exist beyond measurable entities and the spiritual is important (Mazama, 2003). Intuition must also be understood as a valid source of information; thus the methods chosen should involve Africana peoples' perceptions and their grounding. The key here is epistemological centeredness, as identified above, which involves placing Africans as self-willed

agents and not objects of investigation. There are multiple types of research methods: experiments, survey research, field research, content analysis, existing data research, and evaluation research to name a few. The orientation that a researcher applies to these methods ultimately determines the function of these methods. Hence, the researcher must establish an interest in the psychological location, not only of Africana people but also of him/herself. Therefore, it is essential that the direction and orientation used in the application of research methods is grounded in African people's symbols, motifs, rituals, signs, and languages. The Afrocentric idea is essentially focused on location because African people have been researched from the Eurocentric standpoint. The central element in an Afrocentric research project is the selection of methods that address Africana phenomenon holistically and not unidimensionally. This entails a deliberate and conscious approach, on the part of the researcher, to systematically study African people from their own standpoint. Thus, one research method may not adequately address the subject under investigation. In this same light, the Afrocentric social scientist is charged with the task of creating new research methods that are rooted in African people's histories, cultures, and experiences. Consequently, Africana researchers must review and adopt Afrocentric social science research methods that are produced by Afrocentric scholars who are generating new methods and methodological approaches.

Following the selection of appropriate research methods, the researcher determines the measurement procedures for the variables under study. This phase is called operationalization, whereby the researcher decides how they will actually measure the concepts defined. Afrocentric operationalization creates applicable tools of measurement that are in harmony with Africana people's existence. Thus, the applicable tools should not threaten, intrude upon, or disrupt the agency of Africana people. Operationalization means setting the framework or parameters for which the variables are assessed. For example, if a researcher seeks to study cooperative economics in a particular Africana community, that research must specify the factors that constitute cooperative economics from the standpoint of the chosen Africana community. In effect, the researcher identifies how he/she will assess/measure cooperative economics with a precise set of dimensions rooted in the culture, history, and reality of African people. These dimensions set the framework for analysis, where dimension one may evaluate who contributes to the cooperative economics of that community and dimension two evaluates what types of contributions constitute cooperative economics. During this process, however, language plays a critical role. Afrocentricity seeks to connote that "the language used in a text is based upon the idea of Africans as subjects. This means that the person who creates the text must have some understanding of the nature of the African reality" (Asante, 2007: 43). In the case of inappropriately defined measures, the use of terms such as 'traditional African,' 'non-Western,' and etc., leads one to assume that Africa is an object of the Western world. These terms signify a reliance on Western thought. The phrase 'traditional African' suggests that Africa no longer exists as it did in its past; thus, the beliefs, practices, cultures, etc. are extinct. The term 'non-Western' places the West at the center of one's perspective on Africa, thereby making it a subject to the West and as a result its location is lost. Therefore it is important that Afrocentric

social scientist become more attentive toward the type of language used. Afrocentric operationalization is achieved when it is rid of language that negates Africans being agents within the domain of Africana people's history that is inclusive of African cultural values, and that is welcoming of African people's understanding of their own reality. Ultimately, this means that the measures used are attuned with the Afrocentric enterprise.

In addition to identifying concepts and measurements, the researcher must determine a population and sample size that represents the Africana phenomenon being explored, and does not reduce the agency of those participating in the study. Population and sampling involves pinpointing a targeted group to study. This is important because this phase dictates the conclusions that can be drawn about the Africana phenomenon. The Afrocentric objective, "has always been to create space for conscious human beings who are, by virtue of their centeredness, committed to sanity. This is the key to re-orientation and re-centering so that the person acts as an agent rather than as a victim or dependant" (Asante, 2007: 34). Accordingly, Afrocentric research projects are directed at the center of the African subject place as an independent agent. Research on Africana people cannot promote agency reduction¹ lest it continues in the tradition of non-African research, which ignores the ability of African people to act as self-willed agents of their own liberation. In this sense, the voices of Africana people must be the target of any study exploring Africana phenomenon; external entities only offer an outsiders perception of Africana reality. Without the perspectives of Africana people, researchers run the risk of faulty observations, analysis, and conclusions. Subsequently, Afrocentric social scientists operate more deliberately in their sampling procedures in order to ensure Africana people's culture and reality are not comprised or distorted. In this same sense, it is equally important that the sample of Africana people chosen is a representative sample of the population under investigation. The sample size must be inclusive of all parties involved and cannot neglect any portion of the population in order to achieve generalizability.

Generalizability is the process whereby the research conducted mirrors the entire population under study. This means that the conclusions drawn accurately reflect the whole population from their own standpoint. It must be noted that Afrocentric researchers remain cognizant of the agency of Africana people and must take care to involve a proportionate sample of African people in their studies. Conducting research on African people with a biased, disproportionate, or misleading sample alters the context of the study and reduces its validity. Moreover, securing a suitable research population and sample safeguards the integrity of the research.

The sixth component of an Afrocentric research project design is African framed observations of African phenomenon. Collecting data for analysis and interpretation within an Afrocentric methodological context requires an Afrocentric orientation and interpretative framework. Researchers who seek to study African phenomenon must, as Asante (2007) states, commit discipline suicide. Researchers who embrace non-African disciplines as a universal

phenomenon for intellectual inquiry flounder and fail in their research and analysis of all things African. This clinging on to non-African disciplines impedes researchers' ability to move beyond the surface of an African essence, thereby preventing them from formulating an Afrocentric understanding of Africa.

In the collection of empirical data, the Afrocentric social scientist is equipped with methodological tools that are grounded in an Afrocentric consciousness. Asante (1988) states that there are two aspects of consciousness: 1) toward oppression: where one is able to verbalize the conditions of oppression; and 2) toward victory: where a victorious historical will is emphasized. Through consciousness, agency is enacted and liberation can be brought about. Thus, the direction of Afrocentric consciousness is liberation, and therefore a key concept of freedom. While some non-Afrocentric researchers point to peace and happiness, this type of consciousness is not sufficient enough for the liberation of African people. The true Afrocentrist is not content with mere happiness, but is concerned with the freedom of all African people.

Observations of an Africana phenomenon are not simply descriptions of the state of Africana people, but are the conscious recordings of that phenomenon in the most original form. Therefore, observations of Africana life entail a twofold approach where the researcher witnesses a phenomenon and at the same time seeks clarity on that phenomenon from the Africana people involved in that phenomenon. In the recording of observations, Africana voices must come through. The researcher is responsible for accurate, unbiased recordings of Africana life. Any deviation from that which is African constitutes a shift in the interpretive framework and a shift in the understanding of African culture, life and experiences; this directly results in flawed research observations and thus becomes tainted research that cannot be used to assess Africana phenomena. Fundamentally, the observations that researchers procure determine the route the rest of the research takes since the baseline observations set the tone for the analysis and conclusions rendered.

Coupled with observations is data processing. Data Processing in Afrocentric social science research is the process whereby data is transformed, without compromising the integrity of the data, into a form appropriate for analysis and empirical calculations. Manipulation of the data into statistics without utilizing Afrocentric research criteria mentioned supra challenges and changes the authenticity of the original observations. The researcher must avoid distorting data and placing negative values on different aspects of African culture and life. Hence, the classification and coding process must maintain the original Africanism displayed during the observational phase; this requires an Afrocentric scientific coding procedure where accurate values are placed on the African data collected. The preservation of African social artifacts is vital in any assessment of Africana phenomenon because retaining the genuineness of the data assures the validity of the study. Moreover, the dichotomizing of values such as good or bad, high or low, strong or weak changes the context of the data and is no longer attuned to the African phenomenon first studied. Utilizing Afrocentric scientific coding procedures entails

acknowledge and application of African attributes applied to African concepts. Values generated by the researcher and the adoption of non-African values, characteristics, or codes, skew the context of the data and it loses its authenticity. Accordingly, the cultures, motifs, traditions, histories, ideas, languages and experiences of Africana people must inform the coding process; non-African aligned standards of data processing can seriously retard the data scheme and can result in a corruption of the research. Furthermore, the meanings applied to codes used to represent various African attributes of Africana entities must be denoted via African cultural norms.

Once the data has been transformed into an appropriate form, the researcher begins the process of data analysis. The data is interpreted from an African cultural center and conclusions are constructed that reflect the history, culture, ideas and experiences of the Africana phenomenon being investigated. Misguided analysis of the Africana phenomenon connotes a pronounced level of intellectual vulgarity, in that these assessments are not grounded in any of the governing principles of the Afrocentric paradigm.

The Afrocentric paradigm requires researchers to not simply describe a phenomenon, but researchers must provide culturally infused descriptions and explanations of an African phenomenon. This means that effective analyses of the data require dedication to the subject place of an Africana phenomenon and an intimate understanding of that phenomenon. Computing data by summing or combining values of several observations is a common research practice; however, researchers must steer clear of culturally inappropriate summations that may skew the data analysis. The researcher must possess a clear understanding of the African variables involved in the study; failure to do so can result in researcher manufactured relationships, averages, correlations, etc. In addition, it is important that the researcher assess the extent to which the research methods employed accurately address the Africana phenomenon under investigation. Reliability of an Afrocentric research project is achieved when the analysis of the data truthfully reflects the conditions of African people's reality, and can be seen in the day-to-day lives of the population involved in the study. Any deviation from Africana experiences constitutes undependable examinations of Africana reality and jeopardizes the reliability of the study. Moreover, analysis in an Afrocentric social science research project depends heavily on the researcher's ability to produce sophisticated data analysis rooted in the insights gained from not only observing but also comprehending African reality from an African perspective. Therefore the conceptual procedures used in Afrocentric data analysis must align with Afrocentric conceptual frameworks in order to assure accurate examinations and interpretations of observations.

The final stage of an Afrocentric research project is the practical application of the analyses rendered. Reporting results and assessing the implications of the research affords the researcher the opportunity to contextualize the findings of the research in an African cultural frame. This process entails emphasizing the meanings and relationship patterns associated with

the Africana phenomenon under investigation. As identified by Asante (2007), the final basic characteristic of an Afrocentric project is a commitment to a new narrative of Africa, which consists of generating accurate accounts of Africana phenomena. It is important to understand that this step does not encourage researchers to falsify a portrait of an Africana phenomenon. Instead, through this final step, researchers can promote authentic Africana historiographies, literatures, social realities, economic development strategies, and religious orientations. Hence, the research results reported in an Afrocentric research project must provide corrected analyses, accurate findings, and liberation-driven solutions and recommendations. This vital component of an Afrocentric research methodology engenders a conscious reporting of the findings and a critical discussion of the implications of those findings.

Application of research findings is key because during this process, researchers not only summarize results, but also provide action-based assessment of an African phenomenon. Accordingly, embedded in the research is the charge to act victoriously as African people which is illustrated through the researcher's recommendations and suggestions for future research. This is important because these recommendations are designed to point us in the direction of consciousness, agency, and liberation, which is the supreme goal of Afrocentricity as a methodological framework. Ultimately, the application procedure in an Afrocentric research project seeks to establish new and innovative knowledge that is liberating to African peoplehood.

Many Afrocentric minded scholars in Africana Studies have raised concerns about the prevalence of faulty research methodologies in studying Africana phenomena. This research sought to highlight the proficiency of Afrocentric methodologies in developing models of inquiry from a culturally appropriate interpretative framework. As this article demonstrates, the fashioning of an Afrocentric research project involves the conscious employment of appropriate methods, principles, and frameworks in analyzing Africana phenomena. The above research project design model illustrates the applicability of an Afrocentric methodology in researching Africana people's reality. The principles identified cannot in any shape, form or fashion be compromised, lest the integrity, validity, and reliability of the study are lost.

This methodological approach generates research methods, principles, concepts, and measures that align with the mission of the discipline of Africana Studies, which in turn seeks to contribute to Africana liberation. Operating as a methodology, Afrocentricity creates a venue through which social scientists can systematically place Africana phenomena at the center of analysis and synthesis. This methodological shift reorients the researcher to an African-centered paradigm that seeks to uphold the authenticity and integrity of African people's histories, cultures, experiences and perspectives.

Furthermore, it is imperative that we begin to consider the centrality of Afrocentric methodologies for the future of Africana Studies. The new wave of research orientations rests on Africana scholars' ability to systematically and innovatively construct pertinent and reliable research studies that inform and engage Africana peoples struggle for liberation.

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¹ See Michael Tillotson's (2011) *Invisible Jim Crow: Contemporary Ideological Threats to the Internal Security of African Americans*.