"IF YOU SEE SOMETHING THAT'S NOT RIGHT, WE NEED TO CHALLENGE IT… IF WE DON'T, WELL, WHO WILL?" A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE IN ENGLAND.

by

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ABSTRACT

Social justice has been positioned as a global ethical framework for educational psychology in the face of growing inequalities and increasingly unjust events affecting schools and communities. However, most research has taken place in the US and social justice is understood to be a culturally situated concept. Consequently, this thesis qualitatively explores social justice in applied educational psychology practice in England to explore its relevance and utility for educational psychology. Eleven local authority employed educational psychologists (EPs) from the West Midlands were interviewed using virtual semi-structured interviews on Microsoft Teams. Interview data was audio recorded, transcribed and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Research questions explored EP's understanding and experiences in relation to a) defining social justice, b) social justice and the role of the EP, c) identifying practical ways of working towards social justice (if EPs should work towards it) and d) exploring barriers. Themes are explored and related to the wider social justice and educational psychology literature. Results suggest that EPs defined social justice as an eco-systemic and contextually situated concept, which involved the pursuit of fairness and equity, human rights and anti-oppressive practice for all. This entailed a commitment to advocacy for social justice and challenge of social injustice. However, social justice was recognised to mean different things to different people, and some EPs expressed concern about the ambiguity of the definition and the hidden threats this may hold, particularly regarding the influence of politics on practice. However, EPs unanimously agreed that promoting social justice, as defined above, was core to the role of the EP, as long as social justice work was undertaken with critical, holistic and multivariant psychological formulation of children's needs and utilised evidence-based

interventions. Social justice was positioned as a natural extension of the advocacy role of the EP, particularly for marginalised groups. EPs reflected that their personal and professional values, beliefs and backgrounds led them to become EPs to work towards social justice through the application of psychology.

EPs expressed that they were well placed to work together with other agencies, professionals, and families to pursue social justice through acting on social justice values. EP phronesis/practical wisdom was elicited, presenting useful psychological tools such as consultation, eco-systemic working, relational approaches, supervision, reflection and reflexivity and application of therapy and therapeutic principles. The role of relationships as a critical mediator was also emphasised. Finally, barriers were identified including the misuse of power by schools, local authorities (LAs), and some individual EPs. This involved collusion with organisational agendas and the use of psychometric assessments unethically. Moreover, high EP burnout was thought to have contributed to poorer psychologist performance and outcomes for children and young people and their families. EPs also identified a lack of voice in government and advocated for an ability to work systemically with educational policy makers to better mitigate social injustice and work towards social justice.

Implications for EP practice are discussed suggesting a reconceptualisation of the EP role towards community psychology to overcome some of these barriers. However, lack of funding remains a pervasive barrier. It is suggested that EPs may reflect on the psychological tools presented here to develop cycles of their own social justice praxis. Limitations and future directions are discussed.

Key words: Educational Psychology, Social Justice

DEDICATION

To Victoria. This would not have been possible without your unwavering support, love and belief in me**.**

To Mum and Dad. You have supported me throughout my life and helped me to develop my passion for lifelong learning and helping others, especially when it is challenging. As always, you inspire me to become a better psychologist and make an authentic difference.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. EP = Educational Psychologist

2. TEP = Trainee Educational Psychologist

3. SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

4. CYP = Children and Young People

5. BPS = British Psychological Society

6. HCPC = The Health and Care Professions Council

7. BASW = British Association of Social Workers

8. IFSW = International Federation of Social Workers

9. NASP = National Association of School Psychologists (US)

10. US = United States of America

11. UK = United Kingdom

12. CPSG = Child Protection and Safeguarding

13. LA = Local Authority

1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reflexivity, Social Justice and the Role of the Researcher

It is an acknowledged principal of qualitative paradigmatic research that the researcher is situated in their own unique cultural and historical context and brings forth their own views, beliefs and values which inevitably affect the research they create (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Kidder & Fine, 1987). Reflexivity and transparency of this positioning is key to assessing the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative studies.

The researcher has long been interested in social justice and human rights. He has a background in philosophy, applied ethics and human rights, before working for UNICEF which helped to cement his knowledge and experience of social justice (and injustice) and human rights frameworks. Since embarking on the doctoral training in 2019 social justice has increasingly become a poignant topic of conversation, training and supervision within educational psychology services. This, coupled with world events such as the growing inequalities exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, Black Lives Matter, the attempted repeal of the Human Rights Act and the cost-of-living crisis refocused his interest to study it further.

The researcher was interested in how social justice and his developing role as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) were intertwined and, if they were, what actions could be taken by EPs to better resist the social injustices he was coming across in placement. The researcher reflected that social justice, or at least the mitigation of social injustice through inclusive practice, education and empowerment of marginalised groups, such as children and young people (CYP) with special

educational needs and disabilities (SEND), could be core to being an educational psychologist (EP).

He was interested in how EPs viewed social justice in relation to their role, and to what extent it could be defined and facilitated as a practical concept to work towards in improving outcomes for CYP in the context of EPs working life in England day-to-day. On searching the literature, there was only one published study (Schulze et al., 2019) investigating social justice as a socially constructed and culturally embedded concept, within EP practice in England. Subsequently the researcher became aware of other authors calling for a global social justice agenda for educational psychology (Briggs et al., 2009; Jenkins et al., 2017; Moy et al., 2014; Shriberg et al., 2008; Shriberg & Desai, 2014; Shriberg et al., 2011; Winter & Hanley, 2015; Winter, 2015), and proposing comprehensive ecologically systemic (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) models of social justice practice, to be taught on educational psychology training programmes (Hatzichristou et al., 2020), with most proponents manifesting in US research (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016).

The researcher's position prior to this empirical study was that pursuit of social justice, which he defined pre-reflectively as the promotion of equity, equality and human rights, lessening of human suffering and child-centred advocacy for vulnerable groups, was core to the EP role. However, he carried out this study with an open and enquiring mind and was interested to learn from some participants who were wary of social justice. Throughout the research process the researcher has weighed the evidence of participants' beliefs and contextually embedded value driven practice against his own and remained open to refining and changing his stance. This self-inquiry and co-construction of knowledge through interactions is a key part of the qualitative

constructivist, subjectivist-transactional epistemological approach in this study. The iterative and recursive research process and helpful exposure to differing viewpoints, necessitated further reflection. This further refined and strengthened his strong interest in working towards social justice in educational psychology practice.

Throughout the research, and as a reflective practitioner, he was conscious of the relative power of his intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2001). That is, how his positioning as a white, cis-gendered, heterosexual male from a middle-class non-religious background, identifying as British, who was well educated and spoke English as his first language, would inevitably affect this research through implicit or underlying assumptions. A research diary was undertaken and kept throughout the research to elicit underlying assumptions and aid reflexivity in the research process. Supervision was also undertaken with my supervisors to aid this. Reflection on, and transparency about, his position will be apparent in the design where the researcher has attempted to even out power dynamics with participants carefully where possible (see Chapter Three: Methodology). The researcher is aware that his positioning as a proponent of social justice in EP practice will have influenced the analysis of the data and construction of the study itself. In order to support transparency and reflexivity, the researcher offers a list of his beliefs:

- He believes in equal opportunities, fairness and equity for all.
- He believes in human rights for all.
- He believes that society has a moral obligation to distribute resources in an equitable way, that is, the greatest resources should be allocated to those in the greatest need first.

- He believes that society has a responsibility to ensure collective health and wellbeing.

- He believes in advocacy for marginalised populations and vulnerable members of society.

- He believes that societal disadvantage and oppression exists, and that some people due to their background, environment, social power, social positioning and identity construction, require greater support than others to ensure equal rights, opportunities and outcomes are upheld.

- He believes that those with greater societal power and privilege should work with those with less and engage in anti-oppressive practice to facilitate wellbeing, fair treatment and promote human rights for all.

The researcher's constructions of data and subsequent axiology is explicitly value-laden and this was a key reflexive factor in choosing a critical realist ontology and a constructivist, subjectivist-transactional epistemology and qualitative design (Morrow, 2007). However, rigorous iterative cycles were undertaken during reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021a) to ensure quality and that constructed themes were based on meticulous inductive coding, and that was constructed from raw transcript data. This is in line with reflexive thematic analysis (TA) which positions the researcher as an active participant in thematic formation (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013, 2019, 2020).

Reflexivity is therefore key in the context of qualitative, ethical, social justice research and practice. As Teo and colleagues (2014) put it:

"Reflexivity is not a monological endeavor but includes the participation of Others. It involves an understanding of the societal nature of humans, the historicity of social concepts, and the disunified reality of much of social justice work. It means discussing the role of the Other, which includes a discussion of the role of "me," that research needs to be with and for the Other and not merely about the Other, or that social justice research and practice is an ethical project. Such reflexivity may allow the conditions for avoiding the narcissistic trap of adoring reflexivity for its own sake while at the same time engendering social justice work and informed action that is aware of its limitations as well as its possibilities in the here and now." (Teo et al., 2014, p. 17)

This research will present in what follows a balanced, reflexive and critical appraisal of social justice and how it manifests in EP practice.

1.2 Research Aims and Rationale

This research aims to qualitatively explore the understanding, perceptions and views of eleven EPs working in local authority employment in England to answer the follow research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How do EPs understand and define social justice?

RQ2: How do EPs view social justice in relation to their role?

RQ3: What can EPs do to work towards social justice (if they do and should)?

RQ4: What barriers are there to working towards social justice in EP practice?

The research, designed as a nested case study (Thomas, 2016), aimed to elicit a working definition of social justice and EP views regarding any relationship between

social justice and the EP role, particularly regarding their distinctive/unique contribution. Following this, EPs were questioned on how and what they did to work towards social justice and to identify barriers to this work and, if possible, strategies to overcome these.

The rationale for this research was to explore the relationship between social justice and the EP role identity, to further the achievement of 'socially just' working through the facilitating of equitable outcomes for CYP and their families. This research sought to identify practical ways of working, approaches and psychologies for EPs, or TEPs, to use this knowledge to reflect and practically apply their knowledge and skills. That is, to work towards becoming more consciously 'socially just' practitioners and to overcome existing barriers. Furthermore, this timely research contributes towards addressing the dearth of research on social justice and educational psychology in England, with only one previous empirical study being published on the subject (Schulze et al., 2019).

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out a review of the current literature regarding social justice and educational psychology. The nascent stage of the research base within UK educational psychology literature necessitated a search of international papers, as well as papers across disciplines and key texts from the education literature. Initially scoping searches were utilised encompassing wider guiding questions for the review. These included:

- What has been researched or written in the literature about social justice and educational or school psychology globally?
- What research has there been, if any, in the UK context on educational psychology and social justice?

The following RQs were used to guide the written presentation of the literature review for ease of reading and conceptual coherence:

RQ1: How do EPs understand and define social justice?

RQ2: How do EPs view social justice in relation to their role?

RQ3: What can EPs do to work towards social justice (if they do and should)?

RQ4: What barriers are there to working towards social justice in EP practice?

2.2 Search Strategy

The following databases were searched over three time periods September 2021, January 2022, and March 2022 to ensure updated accounting of the evidence base from the last 10 years 2012-2022 inclusive:

- PsychINFO

- Education Resource Information Center (ERIC)

- Web of Science

- Google Scholar (supplementary searches).

Databases were searched for free text and terms such as: 'Educational Psychol* AND Social Justice AND UK', 'Educational Psychol* AND Social Justice', 'School psychol* AND social justice'. A further set of searches was then carried out following the ESCAPADE protocol (Boland et al., 2017, p. 201): Exploratory Methods, Software, Citations, Application, Phenomenon, Approaches, Data and Experiences (School of Health and Related Research). Supplementary searches added in words such as 'Survey', 'Narratives', 'Viewpoints', 'Focus Group', 'interviews' 'Standpoints', 'Lived Experiences', 'Encounters' (Boland et al., 2017). Searches were restricted to published studies and unpublished doctoral theses (not peer reviewed) written in English. This initial scoping search returned 1506 studies.

Additionally, hand searching and citation chaining (backward searching) was used to identify key papers, especially those outside of the last 10 years and those contained in book chapters. This resulted in the identification of 30 studies, commentaries and chapters. This was followed by a screening process involving the reading of the titles which resulted in the inclusion of 86 studies. Reading of abstracts resulted in the total inclusion of 48 published peer reviewed studies. The January and March searches revealed one new study for social justice which was included after full reading of papers. This resulted in retention of 49 studies in total. Please see appendix 1 for full list of search terms and inclusion and exclusion criteria.

2.3 Understanding Social Justice: Theoretical Overview

Social justice is a difficult term to define. It has been theorised to be a contextually embedded, socially constructed set of values, a process and/or a vision or a goal (Bell, 2016). It involves commitment to values such as equality and equity, non-discrimination and anti-oppressive practice, democratic participation in society and freedom (Schulze et al., 2019).

Bell (2016) argues that social justice is best understood in relation to a theory of social injustice, which can be split into three broad domains; a) relational injustice or injustice between people, b) distributive injustice or unjust distribution of finite resources, and c) procedural injustice, conceived of as where systems actively oppress people as an output of that procedure.

Before exploring definitions of social justice further in answer to RQ1, it is necessary to give a brief overview of power and each type of justice as they are commonly recognised in research (Prilleltensky, 2012).

2.3.1 Power

Power can be thought of as the capacity to enable or deny, empower or oppress (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). Power is understood as never absolute and necessarily limited (Riemer et al., 2020), because the oppressed group or person can always frustrate or resist the power of the oppressor. Therefore using the term 'power' is often synonymous with the term social power, derived from Foucauldian philosophy (Foucault, 1983). Reimer and colleagues (2020) discuss several forms of power relevant to social justice which are included in table 1 below.

These types of power operate across society and promote or inhibit social justice through the following key conceptual mechanisms. Therefore, empowerment is a key process when considering social justice. It is defined as the enabling of power for marginalised or oppressed groups or individuals, organisations and communities across the social world to enact their human rights, achieve their goals, control resources and achieve wellness (Prilleltensky, 2012) and social inclusion (Riemer et al., 2020). Empowerment is not a static goal to be achieved but an ongoing process whose outcomes create further empowering cycles. The following concepts are also integral to social justice.

2.3.2 Distributive Justice

Distributive justice has been debated since the work of Aristotle (Miller, 2001). Modern conceptualisations of distributive justice tend to focus on equity theory accounts which propose that resources should be distributed in order of need (equity), as opposed to equally, that is, allocating all people the same amount or type of resources regardless of need (Tyler, 2000). Therefore, distributive justice is the principle which governs the fair distribution of resources, services and goods in society.

2.3.3 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice (Rawls, 1971) emphases fair process and is a conceptual underpinning of social justice in education (North, 2006). It stresses the importance of equal and fair participation in decision making. In education this manifests as the importance of involving all stakeholders in decisions about a CYP's education outcomes and directions, sometimes known as coproduction. Notably, this is enshrined in legislation following the Children and Families Act 2014, and particularly applied to

CYP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities ([SEND], Department for Education [DfE] and Department of Health [DoH], 2015). Procedural justice involves the empowerment of all stakeholders to have their voices heard in fair process proceedings both in law and education. Also pertinent to this is the child's right to communicate and be heard, which is protected in the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, Article 12 (UN General Assembly, 1989).

Table 1

Power Descriptors and Characteristics Adapted from Riemer and Colleagues (2020, p.62-63)

Descriptor	Characteristics
Power Over	This refers to direct or indirect control over other's thoughts, feelings and actions through dominance (Gaventa, 2006). This includes the capacity to deny that needs are met for groups of people.
Power With	The involves joining forces, collaborating with others and taking collective action to forge alliances to share power equally (Gaventa, 2006).
Power To	This involves the capacity for individual action, agency, realisation of human rights, voice and citizenship within aspects of people's lives through empowerment or the sharing of power (Gaventa, 2006; Hollander & Offermann, 1990).
Power Within	This is an empowerment process which is internalised and leads to increases in self-confidence, identity and awareness that people can bring about social action to even out power imbalances. This awareness of unequal power differentials is key to social justice action and termed 'critical consciousness' by Freire (Freire, 1970/2000).
Power From	This is understood at the capacity to 'resist' the demands of others by refusing to accept the attempts of others to disempower them (Hollander & Offermann, 1990).

2.3.4 Relational Justice

Relational justice is a complex multi-faceted concept which pertains to how we treat each other and incorporates ethical principles such as 'do no harm'. Relational justice is embedded firmly in all psychologists' codes of conduct in the UK and globally (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2018a, 2019; Winter, 2015). Cultural justice is relational justice on the level of macro systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and policy development, whereas relational injustice is said to take place between individuals (Graybill et al., 2017). Relational injustice can manifest when one person or group is placed in an unfairly lower societal and power status to another (Anderson, 1999). This causes difficulty relating to each other as equal members of a community, and increases group-based prejudices which can then be institutionalised in macro level structures (cultural injustice), such as the civil service, government and law.

This suggests that social justice requires a commitment to fairness and equality of outcomes for all and a democratic process which is inclusive, representative and attempts to resist oppression by rebalancing power dynamics through empowering marginalised and vulnerable groups of people.

2.4 Defining Social Justice

Regarding RQ1, for the better part of two decades the necessity for a global social justice agenda within educational psychology has been argued by psychologists examining the relevance of social justice to their work. This work is largely based in the US (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017) with emerging UK evidence in counselling psychology (Winter & Hanley, 2015; Winter, 2015, 2018) and in educational psychology (Schulze et al., 2019). Social justice is increasingly being recognised as a key motivation for entering the profession (Moy et al., 2014). However, in answer to RQ1, definitional issues plague this area of research. Social justice is a

complex concept involving appeal to historically and culturally contextually situated goals, processes and values which may shift over time (Schulze et al., 2019). Bell (2016) defines it as:

> "…[social justice is] *both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.*" (Bell, 2016, p.2).

Bell (2016) suggests that the goal or vision of social justice is to have empowered and facilitated individuals to develop their own critical thinking skills (power within). Enabling them to understand how oppression operates in society and recognise their own socialisation in those oppressive systems, also referred to as 'consciousness raising'. This allows them to harness their own agency to disrupt those oppressive patterns to create positive change across the communities and organisations they interact with (Bell, 2016). The process, Bell (2016) suggests, of social justice is to pursue social justice values and goals through equal and collaborative, democratic participation, inclusive respect for human diversity and the rebalancing of power dynamics. Bell (2016) and Schulze and colleagues (2017) both assert that social justice is a socially constructed and culturally embedded term.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (2020) in the US have recently co-constructed a working definition of social justice within applied educational psychology (school psychology in the US):

> "*Social justice is both a process and a goal that requires action. School psychologists work to ensure the protection of the educational rights,*

opportunities, and well-being of all children, especially those whose voices have been muted, identities obscured, or needs ignored. Social justice requires promoting non-discriminatory practices and the empowerment of families and communities. School psychologists enact social justice through culturally-responsive professional practice and advocacy to create schools, communities, and systems that ensure equity and fairness for all children and youth" (NASP, Para 4 cited in Grapin & Shriberg, 2020, p.4).

This definition shares the hallmarks of Bell's (2016) emphasis on non-discriminatory practice, equality and equity, empowerment of marginalised voices and culturally attuned participatory democracy. This definition also has clear links to the advocacy role of the EP in the UK (Cameron, 2006; Farrell et al., 2006; Schulze et al., 2019).

2.5 Social Justice in the Helping Professions

Before exploring the literature regarding the role of the EP and social justice in response to RQ2, it is important to acknowledge that this thesis does not imply that social justice is the sole responsibility of EPs. In the UK, as well as respecting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly, 1989), human rights and a commitment to ongoing equality and equity are enshrined in both the Equality Act, 2010 and the Social Care Act, 2012. Social justice has core value as a professional duty for teachers, the National Health Service (NHS) and social workers (Schulze et al., 2019). Within social care, both the British social work code of ethics (British Association of Social Workers [BASW], 2021) and the International Federation of Social Workers' (IFSW) statement of ethical principles (IFSW, 2018), include social justice as a core principle. This is defined as involving celebrating diversity, distributing resources equitably, challenging discrimination and unjust policy and practices and

working together with other professional agencies in solidarity. For health workers the NHS states:

> "*NHS England is committed to high quality care for all, now and for future generations. We know from evidence that we cannot successfully achieve this vision without advancing equality and reducing health inequalities…*" (NHS England, 2018, p. 11).

Similarly for teaching in Scotland, the professional standards for full registration document, states:

> "*The personal and professional qualities of sustainability and social justice, integrity, trust and respect and professional commitment are crucial if we are to inspire and prepare learners for success in our increasingly complex, interdependent and rapidly changing world.*" (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2021, p. 6)

Internationally, teaching is recognised as being a key mechanism to increase awareness and promote inclusion and social justice (Bell, 2016). Therefore, social justice seems to be of high professional relevance to all helping professions (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Schulze et al., 2019; IFSW, 2018).

2.6 Community Psychology and Social Justice

There are clear links in the definitions above with the empowerment of families and community psychology models. This reflects social justice's long standing links with critical community psychology (Prilleltensky, 2001). Orford (1992) argues that there are seven main principles of community psychology and these are:

1. Psychologies: To draw on multi-level, integrated psychology

2. Education: To facilitate wellbeing, development & learning

3. Child Centred: To authentically enable, empower and advocate for children's voices.

4. Social Justice: To promote equity, inclusion & empowerment (human rights) within social inclusion models.

5. Prevention: To work independently and within multi-agency teams and engage in joint systems work to prevent negative life trajectories from occurring.

6. Ethics: To draw on critical psychology and applied ethics to inform practice, change and leadership in EP services.

7. Interdisciplinary practice: To work where possible in a multi-systemic and collaborative manner to further the impact and reach of support for CYP and their families.

Community psychology draws on these values to promote liberation from oppressive systems through empowerment of marginalised or oppressed communities, working together with them to achieve meaningful change towards social justice. Critically, community psychologists have made an important distinction between ameliorative and transformative interventions (Riemer et al., 2020). Ameliorative interventions aim at promoting and restoring wellbeing within ecological system through rationalised problem-solving, whereas transformative interventions target issues of oppressive practices, power imbalances and emphasise the strengths in people as opposed to their deficits. Historically, community psychology and educational psychology have primarily promoted ameliorative interventions for individuals and groups, and less attention has been paid to preventative and systemic level intervention to prevent problems (Riemer et al., 2020).

According to Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002), to promote transformative change psychologists should work in solidarity with marginalised groups and concentrate on collaborative social action that challenges power structures which oppress. They should incorporate cycles of praxis utilising an ongoing spiral of application of values, critical reflection, and continual learning and action (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). The role of the community psychologist is to offer their psychological expertise to help the community find solutions to problems. Furthermore, since transformative intervention is a response to oppressive systemic power operations, the psychologist role involves working with marginalised and oppressed groups to provide collaborative intervention, which allows them to resist oppression and liberate themselves by challenging the status quo. The political role of the psychologist is clear and is incorporated into the professional role (Winter, 2019).

Prilleltensky (2020) argues that a self-actualised society requires a balance between individual and collective wellbeing to support social justice. This necessarily involves the rights and responsibilities, to feel valued and add value to others, in order to experience happiness and fairness. Fairness is crucial to a socially just society because it promotes balance. It incorporates relational justice, championing democratic participation, and the opportunity to elicit voices and empower people to make choices about decisions which affect them. Prilleltensky (2020) purports that fairness acts as a necessary balance value between the values of freedom and equality. Excessive individual freedom may lead to a 'me society' promoting narcissism if unchecked, whereas over-emphasis of equality can lead to a 'we society', which at its extreme, involves disempowerment as a individual's identity and autonomy is erased by state control.

Social justice is irrevocably tied to wellbeing for Prilleltensky (2020), who criticises psychology's tendency to interiorise societal problems and over emphasise the individual's capacity of grit and resilience to overcome adversity. The argument is that, given the mental energy required to survive in conditions of social injustice, such as inequality, poverty and war, unless social conditions of justice are met, the individual cannot self-actualise, become happy or remain healthy without extreme difficulty. For marginalised groups this adversity often exceeds the capacity of the individual's resilience resources to help them through it. Therefore, community psychology promotes a balance between individual, community and systemic (organisational/societal) justice and wellbeing. This may offer a helpful mechanism of practice for EPs to develop what Freire called 'value-based praxis' (Freire, 1970/2000), a dynamic and interactive process where theory, history and practice interweave over time through applied human action. Therefore, Riemer and colleagues (2020) argue that psychologists should endeavour to blend ameliorative and transformative interventions. This is described as '*an intentional process put in place to positively affect the wellbeing of individuals, groups and/or the broader population by promoting changes toward optimal conditions of justice*.' (Riemer et al., 2020, p. 172).

2.7 Social Justice and Educational Psychology: Global Perspectives

Considering RQ1, 2, and 3, research suggests that social justice has high relevance to EP's work globally and is reflected in the training, quality assurance and ethical standards in professional EP training (HCPC, 2015, 2016; BPS., 2018a; Winter, 2015). Similarly in the US, a review of 1190 articles from five journals between 2010-2013 reported 13% of articles contained an identified element of social justice (Graybill et al., 2017). In educational psychology, authors defined social justice as involving five

core areas: 1) advocacy for marginalised groups, 2) protection of educational and human rights, 3) culturally sensitive and responsive practice, 4) non-discriminatory or anti-oppressive practice and 5) the systemic promotion of equity at an organisational systems level of intervention (Graybill et al., 2017). However, only 8% of studies reviewed (n=9) involved non-US research locations. This has led to increased calls for global evidence of social justice in educational psychology practice outside of the US. Outside of the US and UK there has to date only been two studies (Pillay, 2014, 2020) examining social justice for children in South Africa and one (Hatzichristou et al., 2020) offering a persuasive ecological systems model of social justice and school psychology in Greece. Hatzichristou and colleagues' (2020) model is included in figure 1 as an examplar framework within which socially just EP practice might take place.

Reflecting on figure 1 social justice and educational psychology can be harmonious in their application of psychology across ecological systems. This model clearly links to definitions of social justice (Bell, 2016; Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Graybill et al., 2017) and provides a pragmatic framework for social justice with which EPs may resonate. The social justice principles described here relate to the English model of EP practice (Fallon et al., 2010). In particular, there is resonance in the community level and systemic working emphasised, the application of psychology through ethical assessment, multiagency working, training, advocacy, supervision and consultation, and the promotion of collaborative and evidence-based interventions.

One possible explanation for the global appeal of social justice as the EP role is its integral tie to ethics (Winter, 2015) and logically follows from a commitment to ethical practice. This has support from previous reflective accounts (Kakkad, 2005; Speight & Vera, 2009). Winter (2015) argues, building on the work of community psychologists (Prilleltensky, 2001; Prilleltensky, 2012; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997), that societal

Figure 1

A model of social justice in school psychology (Hatzichristou et al 2020, pp.70)
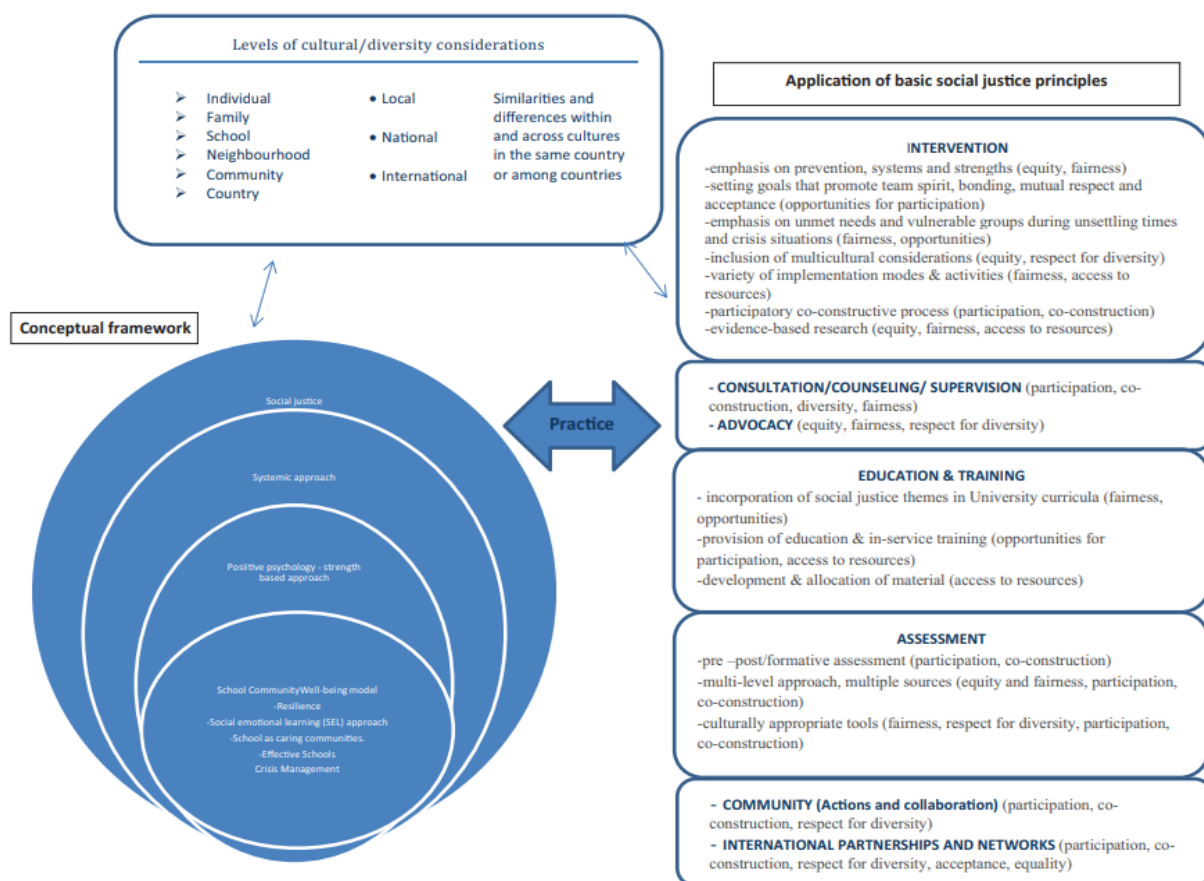
wellness and individual psychological functioning and wellbeing depends upon issues of social justice. Therefore, social justice should be a priority for psychologists practising internationally, echoing others (van de Vijver, 2013).

Furthermore, Schulze and colleagues (2017) conducted a systematic literature review of the evidence base for social justice and school psychology. Five studies were identified and reviewed after full reading of texts (Briggs et al., 2009; Miranda et al., 2014; Moy et al., 2014; Shriberg et al., 2008; Shriberg et al., 2011). Schulze and colleagues (2017) found that the evidence base was small but growing in the US at

the time of the review. They found that reviewed papers conceptualised social justice as involving commitments to fairness, non-discriminatory practice and advocacy in the EP role. Psychologists believed in social justice and saw clear links between their role, distributive justice and promotion of cultural diversity, wellbeing and equal outcomes for CYP. Identifying with a social justice agenda to resist inequality such as discrimination and prejudice across race, sex, gender and class were highlighted as being of crucial importance. This emphasises the ongoing importance of critically reflecting on Burnham and colleagues' SOCIAL GRRAACCEESS, hereafter referred to as 'Social GRACES' (Burnham et al., 2008). This heuristic for understanding encompasses aspects of a person's identity and how oppression manifests for them through these aspects. The acronym represents Gender, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Class, Culture, Ethnicity, Education, Sexuality and Spirituality as important (non-exhaustive) aspects to consider when reflecting on social injustice. In particular, attending to the crucial importance of intersectionality of identity when considering oppression (Crenshaw, 1991), and how it is experienced through these interacting domains of identity and to identify areas for psychological support and intervention to promote social justice (Buchanan & Wiklund, 2020; Leong et al., 2017).

Moreover, Biddanda and colleagues (2019) interviewed six 'veteran' US EPs and identified the importance of psychologists taking personal responsibility for social change and using their own knowledge, skills, and political 'savvy' to navigate power structures and support CYP and families with complex social justice issues. The authors suggest the importance of modelling the change psychologists are seeking in their treatment of others and being culturally responsive and respectful to navigate differing opinions (Biddanda et al., 2019).

More broadly, US research has debated the significance of social justice in school psychology (Speight & Vera, 2009) and linked this explicitly with human rights frameworks (Shriberg & Desai, 2014). It has investigated social justice applications through consultation with schools to promote inclusivity for multicultural groups (Li & Vazquez-Nuttall, 2009), examined models of training in social justice for trainee school psychologists (Briggs et al., 2009; Grapin, 2017), and investigated how they can apply social justice values in practice following graduation and employment (Jenkins et al., 2017).

In further response to RQ2, Jenkins and colleagues (2017) indicate that social justice is highly relevant to school psychology, citing key themes of access to resources, equity, awareness and advocacy. One key finding was an emphasis on how assessment of children's special educational needs represented both a barrier and an opportunity for social justice advocacy. On the one hand participants described difficulty in influencing the opinions of budget holder (head teacher in the UK) to allocate funding and resources, and on the other described it as an opportunity to select tests which were unbiased in terms of a child's racial, ethnic, sexuality, linguistic, gender or socioeconomic identity. The participants emphasised the importance of social justice consciousness, for example knowing that minority groups are overrepresented in SEND populations and viewing the child in their interactive ecological context, with associated risk and protective factors to determine their needs. Additionally, they emphasised the importance of being aware of one's own biases and privilege as a psychologist, raising cultural awareness in staff, educating staff on difficulties and experiences of children, and implementing interventions themselves when social change was urgent. They cited lack of resources, insufficient understanding of structural barriers to social change such as poverty and exclusive

education (Williams & Crockett, 2012), and lack of time as key barriers. There was also a strong focus on the need to maintain empathy with children and staff in schools and to work collaboratively, contributing towards RQ3 and 4 in the current literature review.

However, this study was limited by small sample sizes (n=9) which limit transferability to wider populations. Nevertheless, the study has trustworthiness through its transparent and coherent consensual qualitative research design (Hill et al., 1997), coupled with researcher triangulated coding and an external coding auditor to ensure that the coding was not biased by the researchers' views. However, it is open to vulnerabilities given that authors utilised the concept of data saturation to justify their sample size. This has difficulties regarding its vagueness and incongruence with some types of qualitative research, as a concept of 'information redundancy', which have been recently highlighted (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). Jenkins and colleagues (2017) are not explicit about their assumptions regarding their ontological and epistemological approach which is common with published qualitative studies, but makes it difficult to ascertain the degree of fit between their method, framing and philosophical approach. This is important because a realist ontology coupled with coding reliability methodology allows the team to position themselves as a 'discoverer' of knowledge in the data, and position the results as 'real things' as opposed to interpretivist-qualitative paradigms which position results as actively constructed. In the former researcher bias would be problematic, but in the latter an asset as long as the paper was written reflexively. However, Morrow (2007) argues that all qualitative research requires the transparent situation of researcher's views and although the authors identify their positionality, they do not explain their philosophy.

For qualitative research drawing on interpretivist qualitative paradigms Braun and Clarke (2021b) propose the use of 'information power' (Malterud et al., 2016) instead for sample size considerations in qualitative research with qualitative paradigm assumptions (such as the current study). This avoids connotations of neo-positivist and empiricist framings when approaching qualitative research and the interpretation of meanings. The more information power a sample has, the fewer participants are needed in the study. Sufficient information power can be determined when there is congruence and coherence between the samples specificity and the studies' aims, data collection, analysis methods, use of literature theory and dialogue quality. Despite the lack of clarity regarding their philosophical approach, this study provides a clear indication of researcher positioning and seems to be coherent with the use of saturation drawing on grounded theory within a realist ontology (that is, knowledge discovery) and explicitly using a coding reliability method of meaning analysis.

Shriberg and Clinton (2016) indicate that US studies consistently suggest the importance of institutional power in considerations of social justice, and emphasise the fact that almost all literature on social justice has been written from a Western perspective, with embedded colonial/postcolonial values affecting researchers' attitudes and intentions. In response to RQ2 and 3, they conclude that social justice in school psychology necessitates an orientation to advocacy for marginalised groups, non-discriminatory practice, cultural responsiveness and sensitivity and promotion of social justice dialogue itself (consciousness raising).

Finally, within the US research, a key role for school psychologists to enact social justice was through consultation with school (Shriberg & Fenning, 2009), contributing to RQ3. Shriberg and Fenning provide describe a framework for consultation which would involve the following:

"A social justice framework combines empirically based practices and active consideration of the social, environmental, political, and cultural context in which these practices are implemented at both the macrolevels and microlevels. School consultants will strive both to find areas of common ground among people and to identify and support that which makes us different. School consultants do this toward the end of finding just solutions to challenging problems and opportunities facing individuals and schools, with particular attention to students and families who have been disenfranchised through larger systems and institutional biases and barriers." (Shriberg & Fenning, 2009, p.4)

Consultation is a well-developed role for EPs in the UK (Farrell et al., 2006; Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Schulze et al., 2019), although as Nolan and Moreland (2014) highlight, consultation is a difficult term to accurately define involving commitments to deep empathetic listening, communication, advice, re-framing perceptions, elicitation (non-advice giving), emotional support, problem solving, education and management of difficulties depending on the psychological frameworks and paradigms used. Despite definitional difficulties surrounding consultation in the UK as a practice, Schulze and colleagues (2019) recently called for further development of this social justice consultation in the UK, arguing that EPs would be well placed to use child-centred consultation to enact social justice values on an ecologically systemic basis (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), where multicultural awareness and contextual knowledge can be shared to challenge and empower individuals across ecological systems. However, to date there remains no further research into this and limited research into how psychologists are applying social justice values and principles in practice (Speight & Vera, 2009), especially in the UK.

2.8 Social Justice and Educational Psychology in England

Despite the wealth of US research, there has only been one published empirical study to date investigating the relevance of social justice in educational psychology in England (Schulze et al., 2019). Schulze and colleagues (2017, 2019) recommend further studies to understand significant contextual differences in how it manifests in practice. This is strongly supported by the US research base, forms part of the rationale for the current study (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016) and has some support from counselling psychology in the UK (Winter & Hanley, 2015; Winter, 2015, 2019).

Regarding RQ2 in England, Winter (2015) highlighted that applied social justice values are present within the ethical codes of conduct that regulate psychology practice and arguing for them to be updated to match these explicitly (HCPC, 2015; BPS, 2018a). Two years after Winter's paper (2015) the BPS issued a report of an audit of itself on social justice and equality issues (BPS, 2017), reflecting their importance. The influence of social justice values, themes and frameworks are apparent in its updated safeguarding and child protection guidance (BPS, 2018b), and are embedded in the Code of Ethics (BPS, 2018a) in the four practitioner principles of competency, respect, integrity and responsibility. Ethics therefore is explicitly linked with social justice values in UK psychology.

Regarding specific EP practice and social justice in England, Schulze and colleagues (2019) carried out an exploratory qualitative study on the relevance of social justice to nine practising EPs in England. Authors used semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to construct themes. Results indicated that EPs defined social justice as involving power and privilege, action on values, commitment to equality and equity, and recognition that social justice is culturally and contextually embedded. EPs in the

study reported variable importance of social justice to their role and this depended on a combination of personal and professional values and experiences. Authors divided these into 'within-profession' reasons and 'without-profession' reasons to promote social justice.

Furthermore, EPs recognised social justice in their professional practice. They were able to remark on the importance of awareness of their own prejudices and biases, recognised themselves as using consultation to promote social justice through building relationships, through challenge and support, and also identified social justice 'tools' which could help them but did not explicitly state what these might be. EPs remarked upon the impact of traded services on social justice advocacy in their work and reflected an ongoing commitment to child centred practice. Finally, EPs believed that the profession should take action against injustice but recognised that the necessity of conflict in this area often led to 'professional inertia' (Schulze et al. 2019). They expressed that professional organisations such as the BPS could be doing more to help, and expressed a desire to work systemically through policy development and at macro ecological system levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to minimise social injustice. The study also recommended the application of social justice values through collaborative consultation frameworks (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) to facilitate social justice. However, it was limited by its small exploratory design and as its participants reflected, might not generalise to the rest of the EP population, given the variety of EP views.

2.9 Towards an Understanding of EPs Unique Contribution towards Social Justice

In answer to RQ2, educational psychology has been linked with social justice because of EPs capacity to resist social injustice through enacting early intervention and

promote positive changes for CYP and their families (Power, 2008). Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on collaboration (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) participation (Lundy, 2007) and giving voice (Fox, 2016), particularly the voice of the child (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). This has been reinforced through legislation in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015). EPs seek to avoid the pitfalls of a potentially damaging within-child view, where the problem is located by the adults solely within the child (Beaver, 2011; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Williams & Greenleaf, 2012). EPs frequently work collaboratively with CYP and their families and multiagency services from Health, Education and Social Care to cofacilitate positive and lasting change through application of evidence-based psychologies (Cameron, 2006; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016).

It has been suggested that the role of the EP is best encapsulated through the application of psychology through five main functions/methods of working at three systemic levels, referred to as the 5/3 model of EP practice hereafter (Fallon et al., 2010; Farrell et al., 2006; Squires & Farrell, 2007). These are delivery of consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training at the individual, group or organisational level. Cameron (2006) extends this suggesting the role of the EP involves a) applying psychology to human experience, b) formulating and identifying mediating variables between specific situations and outcomes, c) utilising psychology to explain complex human difficulties, d) deploying evidence-based working to facilitate positive change and e) promoting 'big ideas' from psychology in applied contexts.

Between these two conceptualisations of the role, it is clear that although individual EP's practice, training, applications of psychology, working contexts and choice of

specialism ranges widely, they share core functions and common themes throughout their work. It has long been suggested that social justice values are aligned with the EP role, both within SEND and outside it (MacKay, 2002), with CYP aged 0-25, their families and organisations such as the local authority, schools and colleges with their constituent stakeholders. However, the multiplicity of 'clients' or 'customers' that EPs provide services to can create confusion regarding the EP role and lead to working reactively, following customer/client expectations of what EPs do, instead of the profession actively creating and setting these expectations (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; MacKay, 2002). This confusion has been compounded by traded practice in response to government austerity policies and cuts to public services, which increased pressure on EPs to meet customer (school) expectations as a 'paid-for' service commodity (Lee and Woods, 2017).

One aspect of EPs' unique contribution towards social justice may lie in psychological formulation. EP training and practice draws on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to explore the interacting factors at play between a child and their wider ecological context (Boyle et al., 2016). Bronfenbrenner proposed that the child should be viewed as a social actor, both being impacted on by their social world and impacting upon it, across multiple levels including the family, community and wider societal levels such as political, economic and legislative changes. That is, there is bi-directional influence between a child and their environments.

Bronfenbrenner sets outs multiple ecological systems: The microsystem which includes the relationships within the family and the school, and the mesosystem, which relates to interactions between the relationships in the microsystem, such as parents and teachers or peers and the child. The exo-system contains social structures which indirectly influence the child's development such as parent's friends, the community or

mass media. The macrosystem is concerned with cultural constructs and societal structures of the child's country such as the economy, laws, prevailing societal beliefs, ideology and values and the impact on child's developing identity. The chronosystem explains how these factors interact and change over time through historical events and personal transitions (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The microsystem contains the family and the school and is positioned as influencing the child's development most. EPs tend to focus their practice in the microsystem but their formulation factors in the child's wider ecological systems (Boyle et al., 2016). Ecological systems theory has clear links to social justice given the often interactions and impact between macrosystemic factors and the microsystems where the child develops. For example, during the Trump Migrant Separation Policy in the US where migrant children were separated from their parents and kept in cages (BBC, 2018).

However, although useful to situate child development and its relationship with social justice, ecological systems theory has some important limitations. In particular it relies on the idea of circular causality, or that all experiences are causally related. This is helpful as it allows EPs working towards positive change to locate difficulties with children's behaviour into the functioning of the ecological system and not a problem within the child themselves. However, there are cases where circular causality must be rejected by people who have experienced social injustice. For example, Riemer and colleagues (2020) state that abused children do not cause their own abuse. Clearly in this example an ecological lens can help to analyse this problem on multiple levels, however the abuser remains more powerful than the abused, and it is the abuse of this power that they are responsible for. Therefore, a critical application of ecological systems theory would necessarily require a critical consciousness (Freire, 1970/2000), or an awareness of power operation in the system and across ecological levels from

macro to micro (Riemer et al., 2020). Therefore, applying ecological systems theory requires critical political analysis (Riemer et al., 2020; Winter 2019).

Therefore, regarding RQ3, EPs' unique/distinct contribution towards social justice may involve collaboratively applying psychology across the home, school, and community. EPs may encourage reflective practice in school staff and offer critical and holistic psychological assessment of needs involving analysis of power-focused ecological systems. This may then empower stakeholders and EPs themselves, through consciousness raising and increases in power within, power with and power to, thereby increasing also power from, and power over resources which affect their lives (see table 1).

2.10 Capacity Building and Advocacy as Key to Working Towards Social Justice

Concerning RQ3 and drawing from Nelson and Prilleltensky (2007), Nestasi (2008) explains the importance of capacity building in organisations and communities to enhance and facilitate sustainable change towards transformational intervention. Social justice is conceived of as an essential component of wellbeing, which authors describe as being multi-component and involving inter-personal, personal and collective domains (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). Social justice is conceptualised as the fair and equitable allocation of societal obligation, resources and power, including access to basic resources such as food and access to welfare services such as health and education (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). Nestasi (2008) purports that social justice in educational psychology pertains to a range of CYP's needs, including social, emotional, mental, physical and educational, across multiple ecological systems, particularly the home, school, peer group and community contexts.

Nestasi (2008) calls on EPs to be critical in their self-reflection and to go beyond advocacy for individual children to advocate for CYP at a macro level and influence policy development in society. Power (2008) argues that EPs are active in the promotion of social justice for CYP with SEND, however he cautions that efforts tend to be concentrated on intervention for individual children or at the level of the classroom. He argues that the established need for intervention goes beyond the individual level and must extend throughout the ecological systems incorporating, political, cultural, social, and economic factors (Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). This is in direct contrast to historical discourses of psychologists being positioned as existing to perpetuate oppression, and serve the status quo, by helping individuals to manage their symptoms and anxiety of living in an unjust world, instead of challenging the conditions which were causing the distress (Thrift & Sugarman, 2019). This type of oppressive practice was prevalent across psychology in the UK, including educational psychology, which has been complicit with the disabling and social exclusion of the children marginalised groups and ethnic minorities, at the very least through enforced segregation in special schools (Coard, 1971) and the oppressive use of IQ testing (Hill, 2005; Hill et al., 2013).

However, in an effort to learn from the past, advocacy and building capacity in schools has been a key role for EPs in the UK. EPs have attempted to move towards eco-systemic models of change to resist pathologising and medicalising individual children for 'problems' arising from societal or ecological interactive factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This reflected a change from a medical model of disability to a social and/or capabilities model of disability in practice (Cameron, 2014; Haegele & Hodge, 2016; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). This is illustrated through EP frameworks for practice (Boyle

et al., 2016; Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008; Kelly, 2006; Woolfson et al., 2003) and casework guidance (Beaver, 2011).

Power (2008) states that the incorporation of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) into the profession has provided the emphasis for a necessary shift in EP role identity towards holistic, preventative and transformational intervention design and implementation. This includes an extension in advocacy to promote human rights, achievement and wellbeing for all CYP. As reflected in the previously reviewed literature, these community psychology ideas remain highly relevant to educational psychology today (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2019).

2.11 Educational Psychology, Social Justice and Microethics

Regarding RQ4, EPs often find themselves in a series of microethical dilemmas, caught between the agendas and demands of different stakeholders, for example, the child, the parents, the school and the local authority, external professionals and other advocates (Devlin, 2017). Microethical dilemmas involve EPs negotiating difficult tensions in discussions of human rights, responsibilities, needs and oppression. It can be helpfully illustrated in the following quotation:

> *'Ethics, in this case, is not a matter of individualized choice or relativism but a social discourse grounded in struggles that refuse to accept needless human suffering and exploitation. This ethics is taken up as a struggle against inequality and a discourse for expanding human rights.'* (Giroux, 1997, p. 219)

Microethical dilemmas occur between the code of conduct, political policy decisions and the practice of EPs. That is, they are characterised by EPs knowing the right thing to do and not being able to do so because of organisational or resource constraints, and have long been experienced in educational psychology (Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000).

These are the kinds of experiences identified by EPs in Schulze and colleagues (2019) research on social justice in EP practice in England, which references macro level changes such as the policies of austerity, and the subsequent creation of traded practice as a major cause of the 'moral distress' (Austin & Fitzgerald, 2007) experienced by EPs. Traded service delivery was necessitated due to financial cuts in order to provide some service to CYP and schools, and in some cases for the survival of those services EPs required that they become income generating (Lee & Woods, 2017). EPs have argued that this presented new ethical challenges including limiting their reach to CYP in schools with the finance required to buy them in, whereas others have contended that trading allows a freedom of practice through negotiation with stakeholders to work on more systemic levels within school systems through creative applications of psychology.

Devlin (2017) writes that EPs are supposed to remain neutral and objective but their daily work threatens this with pressure to collude with several powerful agendas. This characterises the work space as one full of risk, compromise, uncertainty within interdependent multiply-connected aspects of ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Devlin (2017, p. 91) coins this space the '*swampy lowlands'* of ethical practice. This is particularly pertinent when we consider issues of EP power and the potential negative effects of labelling, categorising and measuring children (Billington, 2012; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). Devlin alludes to a significant resistance in the inability of the child to 'unsay' what the psychologist has 'said' about them. 'Said' and 'saying' here referring to assessment, diagnoses and labelling. True advocacy involves the EP's application of psychology to assess strength and needs in a holistic and ecological manner, whilst taking care not to communicate anything about the CYP that could be limiting or excluding or reductive. This raises the possibility of critical

reflection, curiosity and sitting with uncertainty being essential psychological social justice tools.

2.12 Exploring the Gap Between Social Justice Rhetoric and Practice: Reflecting on the Current EP Work Context

Concerning RQ4, Shriberg and Desai (2014) argue that it is not necessary and sufficient for facilitating social justice to utilise either a social justice lens without action or action without the lens, but both are required. However, EPs in the UK with an interest in social justice may be constrained by a multitude of factors, including but not limited to: The impact of austerity and financial cuts (Lee & Woods, 2017), competing agendas from school and home (McGuiggan, 2021), lack of time, funding and resources, power and access difficulties limiting them to intervene only at the level of the child or classroom, their own oppressive history for certain populations (Coard, 1971; Hill et al., 2013), the challenging and demanding nature of this work, frequent microethical dilemmas (Devlin, 2017) and associated distress, wellbeing difficulties and burnout risks (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). This is further compounded by historically low workforce populations and difficulties recruiting, retaining and training enough EPs to meet rising demands in local authorities ([LAs], Department for Education [DfE], 2019). These factors are likely to contribute to what Schulze and colleagues termed 'professional inertia'. This coupled with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and its exacerbation of existing inequalities (BBC, 2021; Bhopal et al., 2021; Cleare et al., 2021; Luijten et al., 2021) is likely to drive LA employed EPs' workload back towards prioritisation of highly reactive individual Statutory Assessment casework (necessary ameliorative work), and away from traded systemic or multi-agency projects which might resemble something closer to transformational intervention.

2.13 Limitations of the Evidence

Although Schulze and colleagues (2019) provide initial exploratory evidence for how social justice is viewed by EPs in England, conclusions are limited by its stand-alone nature and the dearth of research in this area. There was also some confusion and conflict from participants which is likely explained by the emotive and complex nature of the topic and the definitional issues explored above. Although work towards a consensus definition of social justice has begun in school psychology and education in the US, it has yet to have been tested against conceptualisations of social justice at work within the West Midlands English context.

Nonetheless, initial results from England (Schulze et al., 2019) are promising as EP definitions corresponded to themes within the US research definitions. Particularly regarding a commitment to fairness, equity and equality and human rights alongside anti-oppressive or non-discriminatory practice and systemic level working (Bell, 2016; Grapin, 2017; Grapin & Shriberg, 2020). Work towards a consensus definition is important given the global nature of social injustice, however the unique specific historical and cultural contexts of differing groups of people in different countries across the world and throughout time hamper attempts to construct a precise and exact definition. This leaves the term 'social justice' vague and open to interpretation, and dynamic and interactive revision based on events throughout time. For example, a conceptualisation of social justice is likely different today from 100 years ago or may be different in the UK when compared to developing countries.

However, it is promising that the NASP (2020) have reached a working definition within school psychology as it provides UK EPs with a vehicle to contain the subjective meanings ascribed to the concept in relation to their actions and role. Thematic consensus between US and UK research has already begun on certain themes, for

example the operation of power, a commitment to fairness, equity and equality for all (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Schulze et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the education system in the US is a different context and it is not yet known how differences in working contexts will impact on the conceptualisation of social justice within English EP services.

Despite definitional issues, Schulze and colleagues (2019) present a robust research design. Given the socially constructed and contextually embedded nature of social justice, analysis of common and disparate themes between subjective definitions of the concept would be a useful approach in developing intersubjectivity, and build knowledge towards a consensus definition within and across global contexts, whilst acknowledging important individual differences. The complexity of the meaning of lived experiences in relation to social justice make qualitative approaches well suited to this research. This is especially pertinent because a lack of consensus definitions would prohibit the operationalisation of the concept, therefore impacting on the development and accuracy of measurements of social justice outcomes. Consequently creating measurement error, conceptual and definitional confusion, and difficulties building towards validity and reliability in post-positivist research. Initial attempts at this notwithstanding (Graybill et al., 2017). The nascent stages of the evidence base in England make qualitative exploratory studies a rational next step in investigating this phenomenon and how it manifests itself within the EP population.

As Shriberg and Clinton (2016) point out it is difficult to be against the core concepts underpinning social justice. That is, it is unlikely that anyone is explicitly for social injustice. However, although appeal to the UN human rights framework is helpful for facilitating social justice and fairness, particularly Article 12 on the rights of a child (UN General Assembly, 1989), the application of human rights in context remains highly

culturally sensitive and nuanced work. Authors suggest that two well meaning, ethical and social justice orientated EPs could come to different conclusions on what constitutes best practice within their own context, with universal 'best practice' strategies offering little support. Therefore, there is a need for the current research to further knowledge the importance of social justice and EP practice in England.

2.14 Summary

Overall, research evidence regarding social justice and EP practice is strongest in the US, particularly with the inclusion of a systematic literature review and substantive content analysis (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Graybill et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2017; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016; Shriberg & Desai, 2014; Shriberg et al., 2011). Elsewhere it has yet to be firmly established, recent notable attempts to begin research in this area in Europe (Hatzichristou et al., 2020) and South Africa (Pillay, 2014, 2020), and significant work, albeit with small samples, in UK counselling psychology notwithstanding (Winter & Hanley, 2015; Winter, 2015). Only one empirical study has examined social justice and EP practice in the UK (Schulze et al., 2019).

Although definitional issues plague this research area, recent attempts to reach a consensus definition for social justice in educational psychology practice have revealed common themes throughout US and UK contexts (Bell, 2016; Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Graybill et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2019). These particularly relate to ethical issues such as access, power, participation, advocacy, equity and equality, fairness, and the promotion of human rights (Pillay, 2014; Shriberg & Desai, 2014; UN General Assembly, 1989). They are underpinned through appeal to distributive, relational, cultural and procedural justice principles (Anderson, 1999; Bell, 2016). Furthermore there are calls for a global social justice agenda (Grapin & Shriberg,

2020; Hatzichristou et al., 2020; Mays, 2000; Schulze et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2019) in educational psychology because of its relevance to the profession across multiple contexts, which position the EP as a key social justice advocate (Briggs, 2012; Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; MacKay, 2002; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016).

However, the research area is generally characterised by small voluntary sampling of individuals who self-refer because of their interest in social justice. Although an acknowledged bias characterises the participant pools within these studies, this is coherent with exploratory research methods which seek rich and meaningful participant data through a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. It is also appropriate given the culturally bound, dynamic, intersubjective and ecologically (context) dependent nature of social justice in educational psychology. Arguably interviewing, surveying and otherwise eliciting data from psychologists with a self-identified interest in social justice could lead to richer and more fruitful data and recommendations for practice, and greater information power (Malterud et al., 2016), than those of disinterested or perhaps pre-reflective practising psychologists. However, it remains the case that participants across studies did not purport to resist social justice as a relevant concept and there was minimal indication of critical reflection and scepticism towards it. This is likely linked to Shriberg and Clinton's (2016) comment that it is unlikely anyone is *for* social injustice given its links with crime, slavery, genocide and corruption.

However, care must be taken to employ criticality to evaluate the extent to which purported social justice values match actions (Prilleltensky, 2001; Prilleltensky, 2012; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016). A key finding in this review is to critically examine the gap between an individual's rhetoric and meaningful social justice action and investigate the reasons for this (Prilleltensky, 2001, 2012;

Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997; Winter & Hanley, 2015; Winter, 2015). This is a fundamental reason why investigating *how* participants commitment to social justice manifests in action is a necessary step to include in an analysis of social justice and EP practice (as evidenced in RQ3 and 4 in the current study).

Given the cultural variation of the concept and the microethical contexts in which EPs practice in the UK, further research is needed to openly investigate the importance of a social justice agenda for EP work in England, explore to what extent EPs could or should be promoting or resisting it, and to explicitly identify possible psychological social justice 'tools', and explore barriers to its facilitation.

2.15 Rationale and RQs

To contribute to the nascent but building knowledge base, the current exploratory study investigates similar areas to Schulze and colleagues (2019). It will build a richer picture of how social justice is conceptualised by local authority employed West Midlands EPs, how they view it in relation to their role, identify possible social justice 'psychological tools' that can be used by practising EPs working in England and critically examine the barriers against social justice EP work. Following recommendations for further research in this area by Schulze and Colleagues (2019) and Grapin and Shriberg (2020), this research aims to answer the following RQs. These RQs were continually developed through repeated recursive and iterative cycles throughout the research design, data collection and analysis, literature review stages of this work In line with qualitative enquiry.

RQ1: How do EPs understand and define social justice?

RQ2: How do EPs view social justice in relation to their role?

RQ 3: What can EPs do to work towards social justice (if they do and should)?

RQ4: What barriers are there to working towards social justice in EP practice?

3. CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the current research's philosophical approach and design, methodology and methods, including sampling, data collection and analysis, reflexivity and ethical considerations.

3.2 Ontology and Epistemology

This research takes an ontologically critical realist approach. Critical realism suggests that there is a real world which exists independently of human perception, thought or experience, but asserts that we can never escape our own subjectivity to objectively know it, as it is in itself (Maxwell, 2012). Drawing on constructivist epistemology, critical realist ontology asserts that knowledge is always constructed by us as subjective 'knowers', and therefore bound to a specific positioning or viewpoint from which it is seen, known or 'acquired'. Consequently, there are multiple perspectives of reality which exist for individuals who interpret the meaning of events subjectively. Similarly, it follows that there is no possibility of knowing a complete, objective account of knowledge which is independent of all knower's beliefs, interpretations, and/or intuitions. Critical realism suggests these assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) are both correct. Critical Realism acknowledges that in 'reality' both the social world and the natural world are interconnected, and contain structures and objects with causal properties which can impact our lives in the form of pleasure, pain and oppression (Burr, 2015). However, it acknowledges that causes may not be observed directly and perhaps only identified through analysis of their effects. This is summed up well by Maxwell (2012, p.9):

"…there are different valid perspectives on reality…Language does not simply put labels on a cross-culturally uniform reality that we all share. The world as we perceive it and therefore live in it is structured by our concepts, which are to a substantial extent expressed through language. Critical realism also holds that these concepts and perspectives…are part of the world that we want to study, and that our understanding of these perspectives can be more or less correct."

Social justice research often draws on a subset of critical realism known as a critical ideological paradigm (Morrow, 2007). A critical-ideological paradigm is informed by critical realist ontology and acknowledges that 'multiple realities' exist, in the sense that multiple perspectives of reality exist and knowledge is bound in perspectival subjectivity, developed through interactions with others and the world. However, it asserts there is a reality within which power and oppression can be *experienced* by all. This paradigm is commonly used in social justice research in order to legitimise the 'reality' of the pain and suffering experienced by participants through encounters with power and oppression (Morrow, 2007). That is, the subjectivity of individuals is valued within the overall aim of exploring research which is committed to ending oppression and promoting social justice. The axiology of the study is therefore explicitly value laden.

This research takes a constructivist, subjectivist-transactional epistemological approach (Morrow, 2007) within the context of a qualitative research design (Levitt et al., 2017). Broadly this can be positioned under a constructivist and interpretivist (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013) epistemology. More specifically, the claim that knowledge is constructed, transactional and subjective assumes that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. The knower and the object of knowledge are

interwoven. Therefore, how we understand the world is paramount to how we understand ourselves and others. Interpretivist knowledge is understood to be culturally and historically specific and time bound (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013).

Maxwell (2012) suggests that critical realism involves both an ontological realism and an epistemological constructivism. As Frazer and Lacey articulately summarise (1993), this epistemology is highly compatible with a critical realist ontology:

> *"Even if one is a realist at an ontological level, one could be an epistemological interpretivist…our knowledge of the real world is inevitably interpretative and provisional rather than straightforwardly representational."* (Frazer & Lacey, 1993, p. 182).

Therefore, this research favours a critical epistemological positioning of knowledge as subjective but culturally and historically situated, and influenced by political ideology, economics, gender, ethnicity and social values (Scotland, 2012). Subjectivity is based on 'real' phenomena in the world and is shaped by societal ideas. Reflecting the contextual and local nature of social justice interpretation, knowledge is both shaped by power operations across society and socially constructed. That is, those with social-positional power dominate what is permitted to be considered knowledge or not. In response to this, a critical epistemological paradigm reframes knowledge as emancipatory and seeks to promote social justice. Exemplars of critical paradigms include queer theory, Marxism, and feminism (Scotland, 2012). Critical paradigms aim to improve democratic societies through moving towards idealistic utopian visions such as social justice, which may never be fully realisable but yet result in improvement (Scotland, 2012).

For the current research this means that participants had their own unique values and beliefs about social justice and EP practice, formed by their own subjectivity, backgrounds and experiences within their life contexts, and all were considered equally valid. However, given the researcher's beliefs set out in Chapter One, Section 1.1, the research is explicitly value laden. Therefore, participants may have picked up on the researcher's interest in, and commitment to social justice, which may have created impression management and social desirability effects. However, this was part-mitigated through the open phrasing of the questions, e.g. 'how do you view social justice in relation to the EP role?', and the inductive approach to analysis undertaken to build the results from the data itself and not base these on researcher theory, values and beliefs. Nevertheless, as a reflexive researcher operating in a qualitative paradigm, it is acknowledged that researcher voice will be intrinsic in shaping the analysis and 'going beyond' the data to analyse latent as well as semantic meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

3.3 Design

This research uses an exploratory, qualitative design (Levitt et al., 2017), framed within a nested case study (Thomas, 2016). Qualitative research can be usefully subdivided into research using Big Q and small q qualitative research distinctions (Kidder & Fine, 1987). Big Q qualitative research utilises qualitative techniques within a qualitative paradigm of assumptions with a focus on meaning-making, subjectivity, perceptions, experiences and richness of data. Small q by contrast is the use of qualitative tools within a quantitative positivist/post-positivist paradigm. The current research uses a Big Q qualitative paradigm and techniques. This provides clear conceptualisation and goodness of fit between philosophical assumptions and approaches, research design,

data collection, analysis tools and processes. This is also referred to as 'methodological integrity' (Levitt et al., 2017).

The research used semi-structured interviews (appendix B) to explore participants' individual views and understanding in greater depth than focus groups or questionnaire/survey data may have allowed. Semi-structured interviews ensured flexibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), along with the opportunity to challenge or clarify. This was key in exploring EP experiences, views and understanding to construct rich data. Interviews were carried out in a conversational style. This reflects the positioning of constructed knowledge as arising through dynamic interactions between subjective participants (subjectivist-transactional epistemology), in this case through language and discussion. Semi-structured interviews are often cited as offering ideal vehicles for qualitative data collection (Silverman, 2017). However they have attracted criticism for being shallow and descriptive in some cases (Connelly & Peltzer, 2016). To avoid this, this research developed the interview schedule using Thomas' 2013 model. This focused on developing interview questions around the RQs to ensure goodness of fit between questions being asked and the studies' aims. This also helped to redirect drifting interview responses whilst remaining open to relevant and salient, new information pertinent to the research aims (Thomas, 2013).

Although originally designed to be implemented face to face, the interviews were carried out virtually online through Microsoft Teams (see Chapter five, section 5.2 for limitations). This was necessary because of the Covid-19 Pandemic and associated 2020 National Lockdown which occurred prior to and during data collection.

Each interview was audio recorded using an audio recorder and transcribed by the researcher to produce anonymised transcripts (appendix C). To protect the confidentiality of participants' identity, transcripts were permanently deleted after the

data analysis process was complete. Additional informed and written consent was obtained to include the sample transcript extract in appendix C with thanks to that participant.

Overall the design of the study aimed to conform to qualitative quality criteria (Levitt et al., 2017) methodological integrity, goodness of fit and conceptual coherence between its philosophical assumptions, design, method and data collection and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Chamberlain et al., 2011; Willig, 2013).

3.4 Sampling and Recruitment

Eleven qualified EPs were successfully recruited through purposeful, voluntary convenience sampling (Coolican, 2019). Inclusion and exclusion criteria did not specify an interest in social justice to participate because this research openly sought to understand a range of EP views about social justice and the role of the EP.

Participants were recruited via opt-in recruitment emails (appendix D) with attached information sheets (appendix E) and consent forms (appendix F) to Principal EPs working in LA services. The West Midlands geographical area was chosen for pragmatic reasons due to the researcher training there as a TEP, and the LA at which the researcher was placed having established contacts and links with West Midlands EP services. Furthermore, given the focus of the study, choosing a region of England with a diverse and multicultural population was felt to be crucial to improving the quality of data collected, as experience of working with diversity is both a key standard of EP competency (HCPC, 2015) and central to social justice (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020). Principal EPs acted as 'gatekeepers' by distributing the recruitment email throughout their teams, or not, and forwarding the researcher's contact details to self-selected interested participant EPs. TEPs were not recruited because this study aimed to

investigate how social justice might best be worked towards in the context of working as a fully qualified EP. Fully qualified EPs were deemed to have more experience of the day-to-day life of an EP, alongside psychological and practical knowledge gained through the completion of their training and practice following graduation. Furthermore, as previous research has indicated (Schulze, 2017), social justice research has historically been overly-focused on the views of trainee psychologists.

Interested EPs then contacted the researcher directly and were asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire (appendix G) and arrange a date for the interview. Originally thirteen participants expressed interest in participating, with two later withdrawing from the study for personal reasons. After completion of the final interview, the data set was examined during the initial immersion stages, and the criteria for adequate information power was deemed to be met (Malterud et al., 2016). Information power is sufficient when there is a compelling coherence between the studies' aims, samples' specificity, methodological integrity, use of dialogue and research literature.

3.5 Participants

The participants were eleven fully qualified EPs who worked in the West Midlands. Their demographic information is presented in table 2 in order to situate the sample.

3.6 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were chosen over focus groups or survey/questionnaire data because they offer the ability to provide greater depth of individual insight. This research was interested in individual EP's perceptions and understanding of social justice and how this manifested in their practice. Focus groups were also considered, however they collect data primarily through interactions between the group in

response to a topic question (Walton, 2021). They were therefore considered to be inappropriate because quieter, more reticent participants were likely to be influenced by collective group social desirability, which in turn may not give adequate opportunity for their own voice to be heard. Furthermore, the researcher was aware that due to the potentially emotive nature of social justice that the participants may feel unable or unwilling to share their difficult experiences of social injustice in front of a group.

3.7 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews can be defined as a "*conversation between two people whose interaction with one another generates the data to be analysed*" (Willig, 2013, p. 39). They enabled the researcher, through their flexibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the conversational style employed, to build rapport successfully and to clarify, challenge and repair communication where necessary, whilst keeping answers within the focus of the RQs. Reflecting the RQs, the purpose of the interviews was to enable conceptual clarification of social justice, alongside exploration of its meaning and its relationship to the role of the EP, and if relevant, to explore practical ways in which to work towards social justice, together with barriers to this. This approach was chosen because it involves a pre-set schedule of questions (appendix B). This facilitated in depth topic relevant exploration by allowing the researcher to ask follow up questions, be responsive to participants and adjust the interview, if necessary, in real time within a flexible structure. Given this, semi-structured interviews are a popular choice for qualitative research projects (Walton, 2021).

The researcher also conducted an initial pilot interview with the first participant in order to revise the structure or wording of the schedule, or adapt any features of the interviewing procedure if necessary. The interview was successful in ethically

Table 2

Demographic Information for Participants of the Current Study

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years as an EP	Type of EP Service (Traded/Hybrid or non-traded)	Type of EP Employment
Natalie	50	Female	White British	23	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
Ben	34	Male	Mixed – White Asian	1.5	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
Sue	40	Female	White British	11	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
Kate	42	Female	White British	7	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
Hannah	58	Female	White British	25	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
Ann	59	Female	White British	26	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
John	50	Male	White British	14	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
Mary	35	Female	White British	5	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years as an EP	Type of EP Service (Traded/Hybrid or non-traded)	Type of EP Employment
Sarah	34	Female	Mixed -Black Caribbean and White	1	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority
Lucy	56	Female	White	22	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority (Associate EP)
Beth	49	Female	Black Caribbean	10	Traded/Hybrid	Local Authority

These details were collected primarily to illustrate the diversity of the sample, and to limit claims about potential relationships between findings/themes and the sample. This follows from the understanding that all knowledge is situated in a given context, and all participants belong in unique and specific cultural spaces. Demographic information collected here was therefore not treated as a variable to generalise but collected and presented here to situate the sample, and ensure a variety of EP experiences and backgrounds were accounted for (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

gathering rich data and was included in the study because the participant reflected that it had been appropriately well designed and employed. To add to the richness of data the researcher also compiled field notes to aid reflexivity and reflection during the data analysis and collection processes. Field notes involve the researcher writing observations and reflections regarding participant manner, body language, emotion and linguistic inflection after the interview to aid in understanding co-constructed meaning (Thomas, 2016).

3.7.1 Online Interviewing

Although face to face interviews may have been initially preferred, synchronous online interviews using Microsoft Teams proved to be adequate and allowed for ethical interviewing and rich data collection to occur. One consequence of the lockdown was that EPs across the country had needed to work from home and upskill themselves in the use of video conferencing software, such as Microsoft Teams. Participants were therefore already familiar with the programme and this contributed to an ease within the interactive atmosphere in which to build rapport. Furthermore, there were several advantages to using online interviews including researcher time and travel costs which were significantly reduced, leaving extra time for analysis. It also enabled participants to schedule the interviews at a time and place of their choosing which was mutually agreed with the researcher. This could be much more flexible than if the researcher had needed to physically visit the participant's workplace and also may have promoted the geographical diversity of the sample for similar reasons. These are common advantages of online interviews (Salmons, 2021).

Microsoft Teams was used instead of telephone interviews to allow the researcher to pay visual attention to non-verbal body language and any signs of potential distress, in line with the ethical commitments of interviewing research (Brinkmann & Kvale,

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2015). Microsoft Teams allowed the researcher to read facial expressions and body language during pauses and recalibrate the interview appropriately, for example offering clarity if the participant appeared confused by a question phrasing. This was an important advantage of the semi-structured and conversational style of the interviews. This ensured that the researcher did not overinterpret answers given and allowed for communication repair if intended meaning had begun to drift. This interaction between rapport building, communication styles, question phrasing and style of interviewing are well recognised as part of the traditional 'craft' of qualitative interviewing (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Interviews were initially intended to be one hour in length with scope to extend this if rich information was being collected. Due to the depth and richness of the interview data, the majority of interviews exceeded this time frame. Interviews took an average of two hours per interview, resulting in a large and rich data set and more than adequate information power to answer the RQs (Malterud et al., 2016). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher into individual transcripts as part of the analysis.

3.7.2 Advantages and Disadvantages

As with all data collection methods semi-structured interviews have advantages and disadvantages. These are presented in table 3.

3.8 Data Analysis

This research used the updated version of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis (TA) which is named 'Reflexive Thematic Analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013, 2019, 2020, 2022) to analyse the data and answer the RQs. Reflexive TA draws on Big Q qualitative paradigm assumptions and differs from the original

conceptualisation of TA which can be used in small q research. Reflexive TA is inappropriate for neo-positivist methods which use TA as an analysis tool within mixed methods studies or using coding-reliability TA methods. This is where teams of researchers code the same data to produce inter-rater reliability of constructed themes. Reflexive TA however is positioned firmly in a qualitative paradigm, that is, situated in Big Q assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Braun and Clarke (2022) argue that a key facilitator of quality qualitative research using Big Q approaches is to maintain awareness of assumptions and protect against 'positivist creep'. Positivist creep occurs when ideas from quantitative positivist research which are appropriate for small q qualitative research, and coding-reliability approaches to TA, are erroneously imported and imposed upon Big Q qualitative research utilising reflexive TA. To promote transparency, trustworthiness and prevent incoherence of research design (Levitt et al., 2017), the underlying assumptions of this research and reflexive TA are presented in table 4.

3.9 Reflexivity

Due to the nature of knowledge set out in this study's epistemology this research is positioned as interpretative. That is, researchers cannot escape their own subjectivity and should not wish to, but rather should engage in reflexive practice to determine how their subjectivity, their feelings and thoughts about the world, impact on their research and shape its analytic outputs (Denzin et al., 2006). Elliot and colleagues (1999) refer to reflexivity as striving to '*own our perspectives*'. Furthermore, reflexivity is crucial to high quality qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2020, 2021a; Levitt et al., 2017). Reflexivity has pertinent application in social justice research to ensure

transparency and trustworthiness and ensure that research and practice in social justice is done *with* participants and not *to* them (Teo et al., 2014).

Reflexivity can be understood as examining one's own thoughts and beliefs to situate these within the research, and the associated effects this may have on the participants, questions asked, the design, the analytic process and output of the research. It can be further subdivided into three kinds (Wilkinson, 1988):

1) Personal – how researcher's thoughts, values and beliefs shape the research and knowledge constructed.

2) Functional – how methods and design aspects shape the knowledge developed by the research.

3) Disciplinary – how academic disciplines shape knowledge production.

During this research the researcher regularly accessed research supervision to elicit underlying assumptions and understand their position. A research diary (appendix H) reflecting all three parts of Wilkinson's definition (1988), and the researcher's own intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), was kept throughout the research for this purpose and to ensure quality of reflexivity throughout the study to improve its trustworthiness.

This research was carried out from both an insider position as a TEP and an outsider position, as a researcher, simultaneously (Berger, 2015). Insider status came with advantages such as access and participation in a shared professional language. However, outsider status allowed the researcher to clarify meanings of short-hand linguistic phrases and to elicit lengthy contextual accounts from participants to improve the situated richness of the interview data.

Considerations of power were also taken into account, especially given the current study's focus. As a TEP the researcher may have had lesser professional power than

Table 3

Advantages and Disadvantages of Semi-Structured Interviews (adapted from Coolican, 2019)

Advantages	Disadvantages
The researcher can be alert and responsive to non-verbal body language and adapt the interview to improve rapport and the quality of interaction.	Participants may be influenced by impression management and the social desirability of the questions being asked.
The researcher has far greater freedom to be responsive to the individual participant than with other methods such as focus groups or surveys.	Successful interviewing requires rigorous planning, ongoing reflection and is time consuming as a method. Transcribing interviews is also time consuming and labour intensive. Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest 8-10 hours of transcription for every hour of interviewing.
There is a potential to construct rich data from participants.	
They allow for the research to adopt a natural, conversational questioning style to increase rapport and improve the quality of interaction. They can facilitate open discussion of difficult or sensitive emotional issues such as social justice.	Unlike quantitative methods the analysis in semi-structured interviews is ongoing and requires an active researcher. That is, researchers are not afforded the opportunity during the interviews to become a detached observer.

fully qualified EPs, but as 'the researcher' they may have held more perceived power as an 'expert' in the knowledge area. Although the researcher eschewed an 'expert' approach, reflexively, participants may not have known that. Overall, the researcher believes that the dual identity of being an insider and an outsider balanced the power dynamics within the interviews, and allowed richer discussion, given that participants were well educated, professionally senior to them and aware of their rights to withdraw or refuse to answer any questions at any time up until data analysis.

3.10 Justification of Data Analysis Method

In order to present the reasoning for selecting reflexive TA, it is compared with two alternative data analysis methods in the table 5 below.

Reflexive TA provides both necessary and sufficient richness and rigour of data analysis to answer the RQs. It facilitates the generation of practical recommendations for EPs and exploration of broader meanings within the social world, between as well as within individual participants. It is also coherent with the research aims, philosophical approach and underlying reflexive researcher values and assumptions. Braun and Clarke (2022) state that it can be particularly suited for exploratory critical realist research projects such as the current study.

3.11 Reflexive Thematic Analysis: Process

Braun and Clarke (2022) set out the following steps in this research which were adhered to during the data analysis process. The researcher used qualitative data software *NVivo 12* to carry out the data analysis and manage the complexity and size of the data set. *NVivo* also allowed the researcher to create an electronic audit trail (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Nowell et al., 2017), to improve the trustworthiness and transparency of the study, and to reflexively interrogate their assumptions with

Table 4

Qualitative Assumptions of the Current Research (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2022)

Big Q and Reflexive TA Assumptions	Explicit Description	Implication for quantitative positivist assumptions
Subjectivity (Luttrell, 2019)	The knowledge developed by the research is intrinsically subjective and contextually situated. Researcher subjectivity is a resource for analysis (Gough & Madill, 2012). All researchers hold reflexive sets of beliefs and experiences which will affect the interpretation of data.	Researcher bias does not make sense within this research context because it implies the existence of objective singular truth that can be known.
Data interpretation can be weaker or stronger but not accurate/inaccurate	Data interpretation can be less compelling or more compelling but not true or false.	Notions of accuracy/objectivity are inappropriate in this research.

Big Q and Reflexive TA Assumptions	Explicit Description	Implication for quantitative positivist assumptions
High quality coding can be carried out alone or in collaboration with others.	The researcher focus is on enhancing understanding, reflexivity and interpretation and not on establishing consensus between researchers.	Coding does not have to be completed in teams and achieve consensus through inter-rater reliability models of the validity/reliability of coding to be meaningful knowledge.
High quality data coding and themes arise from depth of engagement and immersion in the data, recursive and iterative data analysis, and through giving the analysis	Code and theme construction is a dance between the researcher, the data set, the established codes and constructed themes. The researcher is active in this process, and not a	Themes do not emerge from the data set and are not discovered by objective researcher observations.

some space and time. The researcher actively constructs the codes and themes through engagement with the data.

passive observer 'discovering' themes which are inherent in the data set, but rather actively constructs the themes from the data through systematic reflexive engagement.

Big Q and Reflexive TA Assumptions	Explicit Description	Implication for quantitative positivist assumptions
Themes can be understood as patterns grounded by a key concept. They are analytic outputs.	Themes are grounded by shared meaning with their constituent codes.	Themes are not simply summaries of the data but go beyond it to construct meaning.
Data analysis is always influenced by theoretical assumptions and these need to be reflected on.	No knowledge or data analysis method is objective as all knowledge is constructed through subjective interpretations of meaning.	There is no objective data analysis method free from theoretical assumptions.

| Reflexivity is a key feature (Gough, 2017). | High quality analysis requires researchers understanding their own perspectives and what they bring actively to the research process (Elliott et al., 1999). | The idea of an objective, distanced researcher is incoherent with this research design and would limit the quality of the analytic output. |

criticality as the process unfolded. This audit trail included the transcripts, field notes, initial coding, candidate themes, initial thematic maps, finalised thematic maps, theme names, theme definitions, and working codebooks from each stage of the Reflexive TA process outlined below. This was shared regularly with the research supervisor for transparency and comment. The current research used inductive TA and constructed themes from the data using the following steps (Braun & Clarke, 2022):

Step One: Familiarisation with the Data

This is the process of initial immersion and familiarisation with the transcript data. The audio transcripts were transcribed by the researcher to aid with this process (appendix C). Data sets were read repeatedly and notes were made relating to broad analytic ideas that were constructed during this process for each individual data item as well as the whole data set.

Step Two: Coding

In line with inductive TA approaches each interview transcript was coded using comprehensive, complete line by line open coding (appendix I). This involves systematically reading through the whole dataset one interview transcript at a time and coding information. Coding is the allocation of segments of data to analytically-meaningful descriptions or labels which help to answer the RQs. Coding involved both semantic and latent coding. That is, codes were allocated for surface meaning as well as interpreted latent meaning. The researcher's reflexive interpretation of the data was incorporated explicitly into the process of coding. This process was then repeated across every transcript resulting in collated codes with indexed quotation evidence from all relevant interviews, all linked through *NVivo* software. The researcher used complete line by line coding whereby each data item relevant to answering the broad scope of the RQs is systematically mapped to all related codes over the course of the

analysis. Codes are then split, refined, merged or deleted as patterns of meaning are constructed across the data set in relation to the RQs.

Step Three: Generating Initial Themes

The researcher then aimed to identify shared patterns of meaning across the data set. Clusters of codes were compiled and grounded by a core idea or concept which might contribute to answering a RQ. Theme development should be understood as an active process, themes are generated by the researcher drawing on the data, RQs and researcher insight to generate themes to describe broader shared meanings. All coded data was collated under these initial candidate themes.

Step Four: Developing and Reviewing Themes

The researcher then assessed the goodness of fit between the candidate themes, the data and the overall analysis through re-examining the entire dataset. Sense-making was verified through extensive checking of both coded extracts and the full dataset. Revisions were made including but not limited to the deletion of themes captured elsewhere, the division of themes into component parts and the collation of codes into overarching codes which contributed to themes. The relationships between the themes were also examined and themes were further refined and allocated to RQs to produce an initial thematic map.

Step Five: Refining, Defining and Naming Themes

The researcher fine-tuned the analysis ensuring a strong core concept and clear demarcation of themes as well as deletion of less relevant themes. Names of themes processed and thematic maps for each research question were completed. Themes were organised into themes and subthemes around a central organising concept (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Table 5

Data Analysis Methods Comparison

Method	Benefits	Limitations
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	Rich and meaningful subjective lived experiences of participants can be analysed.	IPA is designed for use with a homogenous group and variations among EPs prohibited this as it was not certain all participants would share similarities in their view of social justice and the world (Smith et al., 2009). For example, participants had different experiences of social justice and social injustice, trained in different psychological methods, and held positions for varying degrees of time in the profession, some specialist and leadership level, and some main grade level.
	It provides a systematic and structured process for exploring experiential constructions (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).	
	It recognises the researchers' role as a subjective human being interpreting data as opposed to being positioned as using objective observation (Smith et al., 2009).	

Method	Benefits	Limitations
		Furthermore, the nature of social justice as a culturally and subjectively experienced phenomenon required an analysis of meanings in the social world as well as individual subjective lived experiences. IPA seemed more suited to individual lived experiences, that is, a focus on within-participant data as opposed to an equal focus on between-participant data.
Foucauldian Discourse Analysis	This would provide rich analytic insight into the language used and how this shapes, perpetuates and/or ameliorates social (in)justice experiences.	FDA is aligned more closely with idealism and social constructionism (Burr, 2015) than critical realism, and thus limited to analysis of language and micro or macro discourses and not actions (outside of the performative

Method	Benefits	Limitations
	FDA is a structured and systematic process for data analysis.	features of language). A centrally held assumption of social constructionism is that each individual's subjective experience is equally valid and therefore a social
	FDA would offer deeper insight into the understanding of what EPs think social justice is and meanings ascribed to this definition.	constructionist approach would prohibit recommendations on good practice for social justice in educational psychology, through delimiting the notion of 'better or worse' practice.
	FDA could enable deeper insight into micro discourses which serve to uphold power imbalances and the status quo in society regarding social justice and EP work.	FDA focuses on the semantic understanding of social justice more than pragmatic meanings and actions/recommendations for practice and is therefore not as in line with the current RQs and aims.

Method	Benefits	Limitations
		FDA is costly in researcher time and could be framed as overly philosophical without clear practical insights.
		FDA is limited by an inability to go beyond recording the hierarchy of powerful discourses which currently frame society. It has possible difficulty with suggesting practical ways of working towards social justice without further research.
Reflexive Thematic Analysis	Reflexive TA enables examination of patterns of meaning between participants as well as within. That is, it is capable of identifying patterns of meaning *across* the dataset.	Thematic analysis has been criticised for having a poorly conceptualised approach and supposed atheoretical nature (Boyatzis, 1998) and subsequent lack of clear rigorous analytic

Method	Benefits	Limitations
	It allowed for a larger sample size for sample situation and comprehensiveness (not statistical generalisation as this is not sought).	procedures (Nowell et al., 2017). Braun and Clarke (2022) argue that Reflexive TA overcomes many of the shortcomings of traditional TA having set out its underlying Big Q assumptions (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Madill & Gough, 2008). Including subjectivity, positioning of knowledge and emphasised its theoretical transferability among theories with similar assumptions rather than positioning it as an atheoretical method *per se.*
	Reflexive TA provides analysis of language *and* practical actions in the form of social justice psychological approaches, interventions and tools. It goes beyond analysis of the power dynamics that uphold the current status quo and allows the recommendations of practical features/ways of working towards social justice from within the EP	Reflexive TA provides good process guidelines not rigid rules on how to conduct itself. This allows for reflexive research practice regarding room for openness, interrogation, and criticality

Method	Benefits	Limitations
	profession, if any are appropriate/suggested.	within qualitative research. However, this can result in researcher 'paralysis' and be experienced as overwhelming.
	Reflexive TA is explicitly value-laden and emphasizes reflexivity and subjectivity at its core and these values are coherent with the current research design.	Reflexive TA is costly in researcher time and may leave the role of language practice and discourse potentially under explored. This also implies that the analysis of power as it operates in society generally will be
	Reflexive TA provides the opportunity to engage with the data and construct unanticipated knowledge which is ideal for the current exploratory study which seeks to map the complexity of a multifaceted abstract concept such as social justice.	underdeveloped compared with FDA methods. However, reflexive TA allows for a sufficient analysis of power operation within EP practice to answer the RQs.

Step Six: Writing Up

Given the nature of reflexive TA and Big Q research which involved iterative and recursive cycles of knowledge generation, the final step in the analysis is the writing of the current study. As research literature is re-examined and through the process of writing up; themes are further refined where necessary and presented in the results section.

It should be noted that Braun and Clarke (2022) stipulate that the researcher can move back and forth between steps in this framework at any time during the research process, and that several steps can be repeated, in line with recursive and iterative knowledge generation in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Levitt et al., 2017). This research undertook an inductive approach to data analysis and, although theory and research were consulted during the research process, and particularly the writing stage, there was no attempt to 'fit' data into established theories. The research moved back and forth between stages four, five and six multiple times during the latter phase of the project. In particular, it became necessary to go back, refine and rename themes three distinct times during the writing stage of the process to ensure a robust narrative of meaning was emerging in relation to the RQs. This involved re-coding themes in RQs 3 and 4 when, on reflection, themes appeared 'thin' or singular ideas, revealing themselves to be codes in disguise (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Merging, pruning and re-coding facilitated more fully realised themes which present a coherent narrative to the RQs and are discussed in the next chapter.

The researcher aimed to strike a balance to promote extensive comprehensiveness of coding and theme development, and avoid analytic foreclosure where the analysis is closed down prematurely. The recursive nature of the analysis also heightened its

quality through ensuring that themes were not limited to topic summaries of what each participant had said at a semantic level. Themes combined researcher reflexivity to include an interpretative element which went beyond the surface, extending the analysis at a latent level of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This was important for this research to explore unsaid, hidden or implied constructions of social justice experience relevant to the RQs. To ensure methodological integrity (Levitt et al., 2017) Big Q research assumptions are reflected in this approach, stipulating that the researcher brings their own reflexive knowledge, assumptions and beliefs to the research and that this enhances analysis by bringing an additional resource, as opposed to positioning this as problematic.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The University of Birmingham's Code of Practice of Research (2019) and the British Educational Research Association's (2018) ethical research guidelines were followed throughout the research. The researcher was undertaking the research whilst on placement with Local Authority (LA) services as a trainee EP and therefore the researcher was also ethically guided by the BPS' Code of Ethics, quality standards and the HCPC standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists (BPS, 2018a; HCPC, 2015). Ethical approval was granted on the 11th December 2020 by the University of Birmingham's Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (see Appendix J for Application for Ethical Review).

3.13 Summary

This chapter has presented and justified the methodology and methods selected to answer the RQs. Chapter Four will present the findings of the current study and link these with research reviewed in Chapter Two.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the research results and analytic narrative, relating these to the wider literature discussed in Chapter Two. Themes and sub-themes are presented in answer to each RQ together with extracted evidence from participant transcripts. Themes and subthemes are explained utilising both semantic level description from participant accounts and latent level interpretation across the dataset.

4.2 Overview of Analysis

The analysis took an inductive approach to the analysis with all constructed themes grounded firmly in the situated participant data. However given this study's philosophical approach and Big Q qualitative assumptions (Kidder & Fine, 1987), specifically that researcher subjectivity is a resource for analysis (Gough & Madill, 2012), researcher voice is acknowledged as present in this results and discussion chapter. As Braun and Clarke (2022) explain, reflexive thematic analysis, when utilised with a critical realist approach, grants epistemic access to interpreted, situated participant realities and not decontextualised truths. That is, participants' perspectival data presents a mediated picture of subjective reality, sculped by their language use, cultural context and social/historical positioning (Braun and Clarke, 2022). As a researcher, this is what is presented in the located participant data which is then interpreted through the researcher's own situated, perspectival, cultural positionings and academic knowledge. The goal of the research analysis is therefore to provide increased understanding through an analytic narrative. This narrative comprises of analytic outputs (themes) which are grounded in and driven by the participant data.

This thematic narrative describes participant's situated realities and balances this with researcher interpretation to critically identify underlying social structures which might limit "*the world that participants exist within*" (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 171).

Therefore, the reader is presented with thematic content which is grounded solely in the participant data (descriptive or explanatory content), and content with a more critical orientation which further develops and interprets from the descriptive semantic level of participant data. This critical interpretation is part of the analysis in order to construct latent meanings and/or present and explain underlying unifying structures which may 'go beyond' (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p.201) the surface semantic level of transcript data. However, these critical interpretations remain firmly grounded in the meanings communicated by participants. This approach drew on researcher subjectivity or researcher voice as an additional resource to make sense of participant data (Gough and Madill, 2012), however no attempt was made to fit participant data into particular theories. Instead, researcher subjectivity was utilised to help make sense of the participant accounts through critical appraisal and interpretation. Interpretation here is conceived of as involving subjective reflexivity during the analysis incorporating scholarly academic knowledge (theory and literature) and reflexive factors of the researcher's identity such as social positioning, ideology, cultural and historical situation (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

Researcher interpretation must be warranted and necessarily remains grounded in the participant data and does not give the researcher free reign. This flexibility in interpretation does not mean that the researcher may impose ungrounded meaning on the data. This is articulated well by the authors of this method: "*Interpretation brings together all our knowledge related to the subject or object at hand…our own*

experiences combined with our academic, substantive and theoretical knowledge can help us go beyond a semantic reading of our data…[but] this is not an 'anything goes' situation." (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p.200). That is, for this study, all meaning, latent or semantic, was grounded in the data and drawn out or developed from the data, although researcher interpretation incorporated existing academic knowledge. For example, the researcher included the concept of phronesis or practical wisdom (Crisp, 2014) to better capture/frame the shared meaning of the theme 'EP Phronesis'. Therefore, readers can delineate researcher voice (identification of latent meaning, interpretation, coding, theme development and situation of results in wider literature or academic knowledge), from participant voice (conceptualised here as the semantic level descriptive content in the analysis and illustrated through verbatim quotes).

During the analytic narrative themes are presented and discussed. Semantic level meaning (participant voice) is evidenced where accounts address descriptive and explanatory content, and this is clear and did not require further critical interpretation to make sense of it. Those themes for which data required further researcher knowledge (theme development) to interpret and make sense of underlying constituent subthemes and participant latent meanings, represent a more critical researcher interpretation to develop and recombine meanings from the semantic level of the data. For example, active researcher voice is noticeable in the development of the model in Figure 5 and in the construction of the overall theme of 'EP phronesis', or the 'Misuse of Power' themes. However, the data content from which the themes were coded and developed as analytic outputs, as with all results content in this study, was inductively driven by and developed from participant transcript data. That is, the conceptual presentation, situation in the wider literature, development and coherence of the

analytic narrative, and meaning making through active interpretation involves the researcher voice but the analysis is crucially grounded in the participant's data.

To clarify, all the results that follow are based in inductive analysis of participant data (voice) and through the steps of reflexive thematic analysis have been developed into fully realised themes. Themes sometimes presented descriptive content as meanings were self-evident from participant accounts and sometimes required further critical conceptual and interpretation work by the researcher to better communicate the results. This work drew on researcher knowledge to explain and present participant meanings and situate these in the wider literature context. Researcher voice is also evident when results from this study are situated, discussed and compared against results from the wider literature in this Chapter and throughout Chapter Five: Conclusion. Participant voice is illustrated with verbatim quotations to aid readers in understanding phenomena from the participant's perspective within the context of the researcher's analytic interpretation of the dataset, in line with trustworthiness for qualitative research (Levitt et al., 2017). Themes are presented along with their underlying organising concept or essence as determined by researcher interpretation (Braun and Clarke, 2022). All themes presented hereafter were developed inductively from participant data, through reflexive, recursive and iterative steps of analysis as laid out in section 3.11 in Chapter Three: Methodology.

Table 6 constitutes an overview of all themes in relation to their RQs together with theme type and characteristics.

4.3 RQ1: How do EPs Understand and Define Social Justice?

It is acknowledged in the research that the term social justice means different things to different people (Schulze et al., 2019), although there is a degree of overlap in definitions (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020). Depending on their subjective definition of social justice, EPs were either favourably or cautiously orientated toward it. To answer RQ1 themes across participants are presented together with grounding textual evidence. The results are then discussed within the context of the wider literature. The themes presented in figure 2 were constructed through reflexive thematic analysis.

4.3.1 Major Theme One: Fairness and Equity

"A mixture of fairness and equity and relates to lots of things like anti-discriminatory practice, resources and assessment, equal and fair access… inclusion…" Mary (16-20)

"Social justice [for EP practice] is about…all children, young people, adults, whatever their disability, whatever their faith, religion, having equal rights, equal voice, equal access." Ann (8-10)

Fairness and Equity as a theme represented a vision of social justice constructed by a complex web of ideas elicited from EPs. EPs drew on concepts of fair and just treatment within systems, and the fair operation of the societal system as a whole. This involved equal access to resources and services, educational and societal inclusion, and democratic participation in service of a social justice vision. Social justice delivered equality of opportunity and outcomes for all, irrespective of an individual's intersectional identity (Crenshaw, 1991) and social GRACES (Burnham et al., 2008), through distribution of provision and resources to those most in need. That is, participants were clear that equity of provision was paramount to social justice. EPs

rejected an underdeveloped notion of 'equality' which might suggest that everyone should be provided with the same provision/resources in favour of equity.

Participants drew on anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice, ethical practice, and appealed to the immutable nature of human rights. There was a strong assertion that social justice led to the promotion of fairness and equity for marginalised groups of people and included the active challenging of injustice. These findings are similar to US research definitions explored in Chapter Two (Bell, 2016; Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Graybill et al., 2017) and are consistent with previous English research findings

Table 6

Overview of Themes from Analysis

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
RQ1: How do EPs understand and define social justice?	Fairness and Equity	Major	EPs defined social justice as fairness and equity for all. They related this to promoting human rights, anti-oppressive practice, equitable access to services and resources, advocacy for marginalised groups, and challenging social injustice. Each person's view of social justice was recognised as subjective. However, it was recognised that a degree of overlap might present itself through the intersubjectivity of meaning co-construction, which might then contribute towards a working consensus definition of social justice.

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
	Respect and Dignity: Anti-Oppressive Practice	Sub	EPs stressed the importance of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice across distributive, procedural and relational domains of social injustice (Bell, 2016).
	Advocacy and Challenge	Sub	Social justice involved a commitment to action. This involved both an active advocacy for marginalised groups and the challenge of socially unjust oppressive practice, systems and narratives, across all ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986).
	Time and Place: Social Justice is Eco-systemic and Context Situated	Sub	Social justice was recognised as underpinned by operations of power, within culturally and historically situated interacting ecological systemic contexts over time. Consequently, psychologists in this subtheme framed psychology as necessarily political, in that it involved political awareness

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
			and critical consciousness of power structures during formulation (Riemer et al., 2020).
	The Dangerous Ambiguity of Language	Major	Some EPs were orientated cautiously towards social justice and warned of the ambiguity of language, withholding endorsement until the definition was clarified. Concerns were expressed that the meaning had shifted from fairness and equity to a more politically driven ideology in some uses of the phrase.
			EPs expressed that the moral righteousness of social justice discourse closed down discussion and critical thinking towards the wider 'social justice political agenda'.
RQ2: How do EPs view social justice in relation to their role?	Working Towards Social Justice Is the Role of the EP	Major	EPs agreed that social justice was core to practising as an EP, as an extension of ethical practice.

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
	Advocacy for Marginalised Groups	Major	Social justice was framed as an extension of ethical values-based practice for EPs. By implication, it is a professional duty for EPs to challenge social injustice for all within their working contexts, but especially the members of societally marginalised and oppressed groups that they work with.
	Personal and Professional Values: Making a Difference	Major	Social justice was an extension of EP's personal values in many cases and was reinforced by ethical practice and professional standards. Making a difference in applying values in practice to promote social justice was framed as a key motivation for becoming an EP, and cited as sustaining EPs in the experiential adversity of their role.
RQ 3: What can EPs do to work towards	Acting on Social Justice Values	Major	This theme involved promoting social justice values, human rights and the necessity of avoiding virtue signalling through commitment to meaningful action within the role.

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
social justice (if they do and should)?			
	Relationships are Vital	Sub	Building, maintaining and repairing relationships was key to the success of psychological social justice work with schools, families and communities. The strength of relationships had a direct bearing on the quality and creativity of psychology applied in the system to work towards social justice.
	EP Phronesis (knowledge and skills applied in context): Psychological Tools for Social Justice	Major	Practical psychological tools are presented from this themes' constituent subthemes. These were constructed from EP responses to RQ3 and are pictorially represented in figure 5.

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
	Consultation	Sub	EPs expressed the utility of consultation and psychological coaching techniques and skills in working towards social justice.
	Eco-Systemic Working and Capacity Building	Sub	Drawing on the contextual nature of the work, EPs emphasised the importance of working systemically and empowering schools and communities to work towards social justice by building capacity in schools.
	Relational Approaches	Sub	EPs expressed the utility of psychological relational approaches for working towards social justice. In particular attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), developmental dyad psychotherapy (Hughes et al., 2015), and restorative approaches (Finnis, 2021) were drawn upon.
	Supervision, Reflection and Reflexivity	Sub	EPs understood the vital nature of supervision (receiving and providing this), and ongoing reflection and reflexivity

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
			regarding their own intersectional identity (Crenshaw, 1991), biases, assumptions and social GRACES (Burnham et al., 2008). Cultural aspects were particularly highlighted as being a relevant area for social justice work alongside critical reflection and ongoing learning, in line with community psychology cycles of praxis (Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2002).
	Therapy and Therapeutics	Sub	EPs drew on principles from a wide variety of therapeutic models and applied these across ecological systems to promote social justice with individuals, groups and organisations. Therapeutic models also helped to increase understanding of children's needs and social injustice issues affecting them.

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
			Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955) was emphasised as being a powerful social justice tool in eliciting the child or young person's voice and allowing the EP to then advocate for this. Facilitating opportunities for equal voice for children and families was recognised as a possible role for EPs, in line with previous research (Schulze et al., 2019).
RQ4: What barriers are there to working towards social justice in EP practice?	The Misuse of Power	Major	This relates to the misuse of power by commissioning schools and the local authorities, becoming overly directive of EPs' professional input, viewpoints, choice of assessment and application of psychology to suit their agendas. This also relates to individual EP's collusion with agendas or choice of oppressive assessment in order to preserve the status quo.

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
	Colluding with School and Local Authority Agendas	Sub	This relates to EPs colluding with school and LA agendas and marginalising the views of families and children through tokenistic practices.
	Unethical Assessment	Sub	This subtheme suggests that assessment choice and the reporting of results are sometimes controlled by customer agenda and not critical psychological formulation or the best interests of the child.

In particular, this was expressed in relation to IQ testing and traditional cognitive assessments. The oppressive use of cognitive assessments is discussed to situate these comments, and their current use with culturally diverse populations shown to be a barrier to social justice. |
| | Trading for Burnout | Major | Unreasonable EP workloads and traded practice constraints resulted in increased stress and burnout. |

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
	Traded Practice Constraints	Sub	This theme reflects the move to traded practice following financial cuts to public services since the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government of 2010 (Lee and Woods, 2017). EPs expressed a significant lack of time to do their job well. EP workload was controlled by tradable practice and dependent on financial distributions amongst school budgets. This had ethical implications for fair access to the service for schools and therefore children and families, especially when combined with the possible misuse of power by schools. Reflections on the lack of direct referral from families or communities are also explored. Funding remains a significant barrier for social justice in EP practice.
	EP Burnout in LA Employment	Sub	This theme expressed the idea that EPs under high stress and workload demands lost their capacity for prevention and

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
			creative applications of psychology and became reactive in their practice. This was seen as an inhibiting factor towards facilitating social justice, particularly with the psychological effects of burnout affecting the quality of psychologist performance.
	Silent Allies: Lack of EP Voice	Major	EPs expressed a wish to access policy developers in government and use their research training and skills to advocate for social justice at macro levels of policy development. Lack of EP contribution to educational and SEND policy resulted in the loss of the opportunity to apply evidence-based practice and prevent systemic social injustice.
			LA employed EPs also raised that the profession was far too timid and did not challenge oppressive practices as often as it should. This was particularly true in relation to systemic

Research question (RQ)	Theme name	Theme Type	Characteristics
			oppressive practices or structures. For example, the oppressive use of the SEND tribunal system by financially equipped families with relatively low need and high legal savvy. The contribution of private EPs to the skewing of scarce LA resources towards the privileged children with minor or no SEND needs and away from the most need was raised as a continual barrier. Risks of challenging these systems were also explored.

Figure 2

Definition of Social Justice Thematic Map for RQ1. Major Themes are Presented in Ovals and Subthemes in

Rectangles
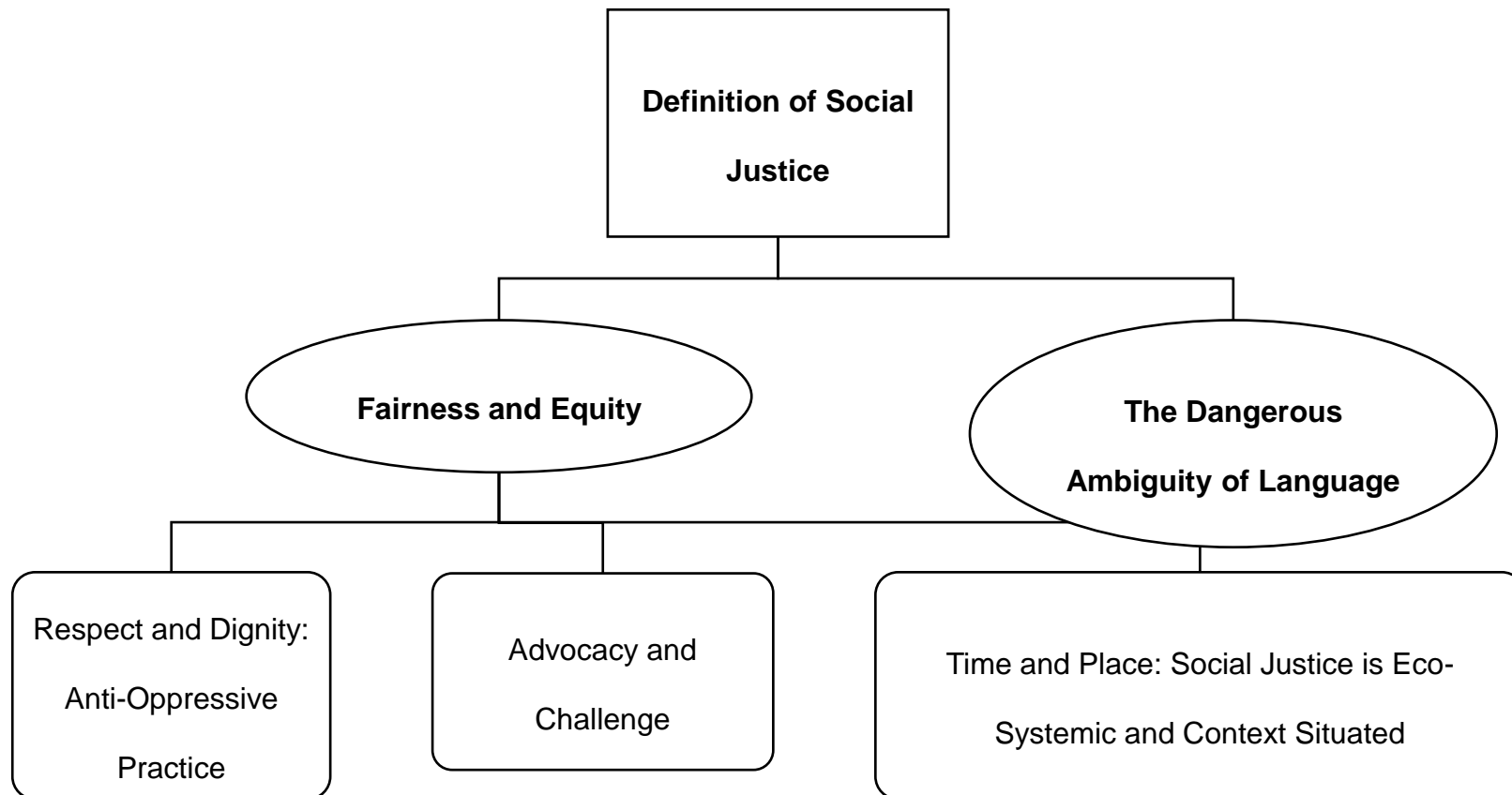
(Schulze, 2017; Schulze et al., 2019). In this research, the term 'equality' was omitted from this theme to avoid falsely implying that EPs advocated for equal provision irrespective of need.

EPs presented an understanding of social justice related to fairness across distributive, procedural and relational realms of social injustice (Bell, 2016), integral to ethical practice (Winter, 2015), contained an equity promoting attitude that *"those who are in greatest distress or need, that their claims come first."* John (17). EPs agreed that promoting equality of opportunity and equality of outcome through equitable distribution of resources, services and support, was highly relevant to socially just practice with the families they worked with. This implicitly captured the idealistic moral belief that desirable outcomes in life ought to be achievable for anyone based on merit. However, within this theme EPs recognised that the utopian vision of social justice was aspirational and not fully realisable but stressed that working towards it was beneficial for all. This is also consistent with previous research (Schulze, 2017; Schulze et al., 2019).

Overall, EPs discussed pursuing the social justice values of fairness and equity in their work with CYP and their families. Responses were characterised by a strong sense of personal and political values as well as acknowledgement of the ethical and professional standards which encourage and support socially just EP practice. Underpinning this major theme, EPs regularly drew on the following sub themes.

4.3.2.1 Subtheme One: Respect and Dignity: Anti-Oppressive Practice

> "…*I think it (social justice) is anti-oppressive practice under a different label.*"
> Natalie (40-41)

EPs drew on the vital importance of maintaining respect and dignity of all, and emphasised how this was encapsulated within anti-oppressive practice and ethical

requirements in the role. Anti-oppressive practice is a term coined within the Social Care profession to capture the mission of that profession to identify and address societal roots of social oppression for all (Strier, 2007; International Federation of Social Workers, 2018). Within this, is the respect for and promotion of human rights at all levels of EP practice. Recalling the 5/3 model of the EP role from Chapter Two (Fallon et al., 2010), this involves applying psychology through the five functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training and at the levels of individual, group and the organisation.

EPs positioned social justice as harmonious with anti-oppressive practice through the need to uphold the rights of others against injustice, within the limits of one's professional role, and working collaboratively with others. This necessarily involves the promotion of equity and fairness for marginalised and disadvantaged groups and the challenging of social injustice.

4.3.2.2 Subtheme Two: Advocacy and Challenge

> "*I say with social justice that you always do have to rock the boat a little bit…We can't collude, people won't like it, but if you see something that's not really right, I think we do need to securely challenge it. We do need to question it. We do. If we don't well, who will you know?*" Beth (217-221)

EPs constructed that social justice involved an ethical commitment to action, to both advocate for marginalised groups and challenge socially unjust practice when this is encountered. The analysis clarified that social justice promotion necessarily required *both* advocacy and challenge in EP practice. That is, neither was sufficient alone. This feeling is commensurate with the critical writings from community psychology regarding the necessity of addressing the passive rhetoric gap between espoused

beliefs and meaningful action in regard to social justice in psychology (Prilleltensky, 2001; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). On a latent level, that EPs immediately started to relate the abstract definition of social justice to their active role further supports the idea that social justice had utility and resonating value in EP practice, as an active and applied valued-based praxis (Prilleltensky, 2001).

4.3.2.3 Subtheme Three: Time and Place: Social Justice is Eco-Systemic and Context Situated.

> "*How can we extract our work from the context, and the cultures in which we work? How can we fight for better outcomes for vulnerable learners without naming the impact of austerity and deprivation on poor outcomes?*" *Kate* (336-338)

EPs regularly commented on the vital nature of eco-systemic perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986) and systemic thinking (Beaver, 2011) when working towards social justice. On a latent level, and in some cases semantic, EPs were deeply aware of the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), of the CYP and families they worked with, and the resulting range of social injustice experiences present across an individual's social GRACES (Burnham et al., 2008). EPs linked social justice fundamentally to systemic working as a process of prevention of injustice through resistance to marginalisation and, where possible, repair of injustice. This reflects a key idea from Bronfenbrenner (1979) who viewed the child as an active social actor, impacting on and being impacted by the environment they grow up in over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

In summary, EPs who were orientated favourably toward social justice defined it as involving societal fairness and equity. This incorporated the justice principle that those with greatest need should receive more than those who were not in such need. EPs

spoke of the promotion of social justice values which included: a) Anti-oppressive and ethical practice, which incorporated respect, ethical integrity and dignity, b) advocacy for marginalised groups and the challenge of oppressive and discriminatory practice, and c) EPs situated social justice as operating within wider interacting ecological domains, such as political legislation and socio-economic conditions, reflecting the importance of multivariant analysis of needs and social context in EP practice. This additionally re-highlights the community psychology critique of ecological systems theory that an analysis of power operations across ecological systems is necessary for social justice work. This supports the contention that psychology is framed as political and critical consciousness is necessary for holistic formulation of needs (Riemer et al., 2020).

Schulze and colleagues (2019) correspondingly found that EPs defined social justice in that study as relating to themes of a) power and privilege, b) equity and equality, c) action, d) vision and values and e) was context and culture specific. Social justice was positioned as a culturally and contextually embedded construct, subject to change over time. EPs agreed that a commitment to action was necessary to challenge social injustices and discrimination, which arose from differences in society. These differences bred diverse interactions of power and privilege between groups and individuals, contributing to oppression and injustice.

The current study's results from the favourably orientated group of EPs are consistent with social justice definitions from the US (Bell, 2016; Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Graybill et al., 2017). This perhaps supports Grapin and Shriberg's (2020) call for an internationally recognised definition of social justice for educational psychology. However, caution must be taken given the importance of culture and context on social justice's meaning within a profession. Further work is needed before consensus

statements can be drawn, if indeed they should be. Indeed, in the current study some participants were avid proponents of caution and criticality in relation to social justice, out of concern that social justice narratives could turn oppressive themselves.

4.3.3 Major Theme Two: The Dangerous Ambiguity of the Language

"…the way that the term is being used has changed… It's getting morphed into something else… we all think this is a good thing we're all on board with it..[but] I'm not really sure" Natalie (61-69)

This theme expressed the idea that defining social justice can be experienced as trying to hit a moving target. This is because of the ambiguity of a definition of social justice and the recognition of its inter-subjective meaning, alongside its ecologically interactive, contextually situated and changeable nature. This change is dependent on cultural and historical contexts, intersectional positionality over time and across ecological systems and power operations. EPs contributing to this theme expressed concern about the influence of politics in EP work, stressing that EPs should remain firmly grounded in the psychological evidence-base and should not be swayed by political ideology. They were critical of perceived social justice agendas and moral pressure to address difficulties with an overly-reductionist single-variant analysis. They argued for the importance of EPs continuing to engage in critical thinking, multivariant analysis of children's needs and individual differences, within multi-level ecological psychological formulation and evidence-based intervention.

These findings are unique to this study as previous school psychologists and EPs have not voiced their caution towards social justice in the literature to date (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Pillay, 2014, 2020; Schulze, 2017; Schulze et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2019). As aforementioned, Grapin and Shriberg (2020) point out that offering

scepticism places the EP in a position where they may be construed as being *for* social injustice. However, these participants reflected that they would support social justice if it was securely defined as the pursuit of fairness and equity for marginalised groups, such as CYP with SEND, together with critical, ecological and holistic psychological formulation. This further supports the importance of efforts to agree a consistent definition of social justice for educational psychology practice (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Graybill et al., 2017).

4.4. RQ2: How do EPs View Social Justice in Relation to Their Role?

After consideration and clarification of the definition, all EPs unanimously agreed that applying psychology to work towards social justice was the role of the EP.

4.4.1 Major Theme: Working Towards Social Justice is the Role of the EP

"*It's a core that runs through me and it's why I'm doing the job. Social justice is the reason I get up in the morning and do what I do*" Hannah (14-15)

"*EPs have a role…in social justice…ensuring…equitable distribution of resources and opportunities and privileges…on different levels… [the] individual level with the child, eliciting the voice of the child or advocating for…safeguarding…or equitable access to education…mental health…[their] sense of belonging…sense of achievement and identity…. a community based level with family…[working on] intergenerational trauma or [oppressive] narratives that are passed down through families...[EPs try to] stop a negative cycle, assist with positive change. EP's can [work] at organisational levels…the school system… [or an] institutional level with government...we're in a really*"

unique position. We are applied psychologists who also have research skills."

Sue (78- 123)

EPs promoted social justice values such as ethical practice, respect and dignity, promotion of fairness, access to services and resources, anti-oppressive practice and human rights. These were seen as core aspects of the EP role, especially for, but not limited to, CYP with SEND. This evidence further supports social justice in EP practice as a values-based praxis (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). There are clear links to the role of the EP, reflecting the 5/3 model (Fallon et al., 2010) and distinctive contribution of EPs as applied psychologists with research skills promoting 'big ideas' from psychology (Cameron, 2006). EPs felt that they could and did work towards social justice across ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986), and had the skills and knowledge to contribute at the level of the individual, group and organisation, wider community and institutional/governmental macro policy levels. EPs expressed that they were well placed to apply psychology to facilitate understanding of a child's needs and to then advocate for CYP, and resist oppressive practice across the 5/3 model (Fallon et al., 2010). This supports the earlier suggestion of the distinctive contribution of EPs towards social justice given in Chapter Two, Section 2.9.

4.4.1.1 Subtheme One: Advocacy for Marginalised Groups

"… it's about minority groups having a channel or forum for their views to be heard and respected and listened to, and acted upon…advocating for those CYP...promoting their needs and aspirations…and…challenging the environments…in relation to acceptance and inclusion" Ann (224-249).

Advocacy is recognised here as a core role of an EP which is strongly linked to social justice. Related to subtheme two in response to RQ1, this involves both promotion of

Figure 3

Social Justice and the Role of the EP - Thematic Map for RQ 2
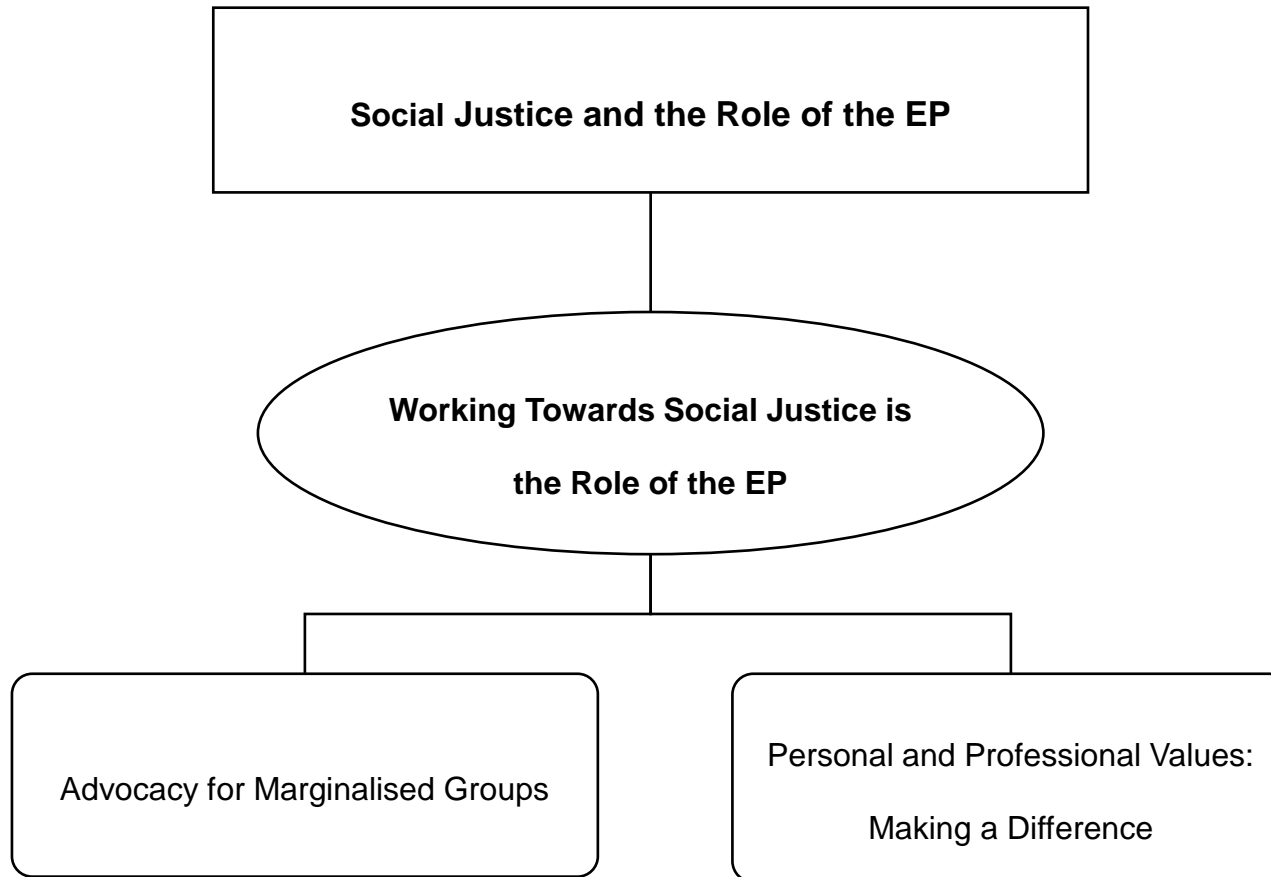
the human rights of marginalised groups to fair access, resources, respect, integrity and treatment, and also a commitment to challenge injustice or marginalising narratives of difference (Billington, 2012). This involves the focus on strength-based approaches to formulation which are frequently used by EPs (Cameron, 2014; Tedeschi and Kilmer, 2005) and are recommended for use in social justice to empower marginalised or oppressed groups (Riemer et al., 2020).

This application of psychology further reflects the EP's potential unique contribution and is supported by a recent paper by Mercieca and Mercieca (2022). Authors argue that EPs have a responsibility to disrupt the normal flow of systems of procedural justice by inviting people to 'think again'. EPs can disrupt marginalising or punitive procedural systems *and* advocate for CYP, by embracing their capacity to become 'dissenting voices'. EPs do this routinely when encountering overly-medicalising, marginalising or excluding narratives of CYP's behaviours (Billington, 2012). Consequently, the use of enabling and empowering language is a key focus in frameworks for EP practice (Boyle et al., 2016; Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008). This commitment to social justice advocacy for children in educational psychology is consistent across the literature (Briggs, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2017; Pillay, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2019; Williams & Greenleaf, 2012).

4.4.1.2 Subtheme Two: Personal and Professional Values: Making a Difference

"*If you don't believe that you can make a difference to young people, I don't know how you could be effective in the role…you have to have some pretty strongly held beliefs…and I do believe that we do make a big difference.*"
Hannah (648-667)

> "…*we all go into this profession to support some sort of social justice.*" Sarah (329).

EPs brought a wide variety of backgrounds to their profession. EPs noted that they had strong personal and political values regarding social justice from a young age. Becoming an EP allowed them to apply these values in their professional role, and make a difference for marginalised groups of CYP and their families. The pursuit of this self-actualisation (Maslow, 1970) and social justice value-based psychology praxis, is cited by EPs as a key motivation for entering the profession, consistent with research (Jenkins et al., 2017; Moy et al., 2014). EPs believed in fairness and equity, human rights, inclusion and anti-oppressive, ethical practice and the power of psychology to make a meaningful difference. This set of core values and beliefs was a protective factor and sustained them in their current roles despite the high stress and adversity experienced.

Schulze (2017) reported similar findings relating to 'within-profession' and 'without-profession' reasons for supporting social justice, depending on individual EP backgrounds and subjective experiences, alongside the ethical and legal duties of the profession. Schulze (2017) also alluded to a third theme in relation to the role, which was that social justice had varying degrees of importance to EPs. These findings were broadly consistent with the current study. Social justice was a core value and vision for some EPs in the sample and for others it emerged during the reflective interviewing process how relevant it was to their profession. This suggested that for some EPs that social justice may be akin to a submerged construct (Kelly, 1955) within EP practice, which requires consciousness raising (Freire, 1970/2000) and critical reflection to bring into awareness, further increasing the rationale for the current study.

4.5 RQ3: What Can EPs do to Work Towards Social Justice (if they do and should)?

4.5.1 Major Theme: Acting on Social Justice Values

EPs described the importance of promoting social justice values. This included advocating for fairness and equity in the provision of resources, fair access to services, human rights and promoting democratic forms of collaborative working. EPs stressed the importance of challenging social injustice and addressing power imbalances. This had systemic ramifications including a possible shift from the traditional working models which may position the EP as the expert, towards more of a community psychology model of participatory action (Prilleltensky, 2001). This rebalances power from the EP as the 'expert', to the CYP and their families being supported as equal change partners, and the EP acting as a consultant with expertise in the application of psychology (Beaver, 2011; Riemer, et al., 2020). This is a position which is harmonious with existing EP practice frameworks and service ideals (Boyle et al., 2016; Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008). However, EP efforts towards this are often limited by reactive working contexts, legislative agendas and lack of funding. EP practice still takes place within a system of power set up for traditional school-based educational psychology service delivery which may inhibit opportunities for community psychology work.

Overall, EPs advocated for the promotion of access to education, coproduction, equity and equality of opportunity for CYP with SEND, anti-oppressive/anti-discriminatory practice, ethical assessment, inclusive practice, whole school and community wellbeing, advocacy for marginalised groups, and the importance of the voice of the child. Evidence-based interventions which instilled confidence in supporting adults and

children, increased self-efficacy, and promoted acceptance and belonging were thought to be crucial in pursuing social justice. EPs considered the utilisation of critical, holistic and ecological formulation of needs and the application of evidenced-based practice at the level of the individual, group and organisations vital.

> "[*the children we see] are a complex multifaceted individual within complex systems and settings, and that's your job that you're trying to…help them understand all of that in order to open up opportunities for change*" Natalie (1276-1281)

Specifically, the EP role was reconceptualised to feature the necessity of EPs standing their ground by challenging oppressive narratives about CYP and families which often may involve a form of conflict with others. These narratives were recognised to lead to negative outcomes such as school and social exclusion, lack of acceptance and belonging, and exacerbation of difficulties. EPs supported recognition of oppressive practice in assessment and intervention, and challenging this to prevent harm, and crucially, acting on child protection and safeguarding (CPSG) responsibilities. This included the triangulation of data with multiple professionals and critical evaluation of parental narratives. EPs widely stressed the importance of collaborative working and working with other services and agencies in working towards social justice. These findings are consistent with Schulze and colleagues' (2019) findings.

4.5.1.1 *Subtheme One: Relationships are Vital*

Fundamental to the EPs' ability to work towards social justice was the foundational context of building and maintaining responsive working relationships with CYP, their families and all other stakeholders, and within and between EP services, and widely across LA services, social care and the NHS.

Figure 4

What EPs can do to Work Towards Social Justice - Thematic Map for RQ3
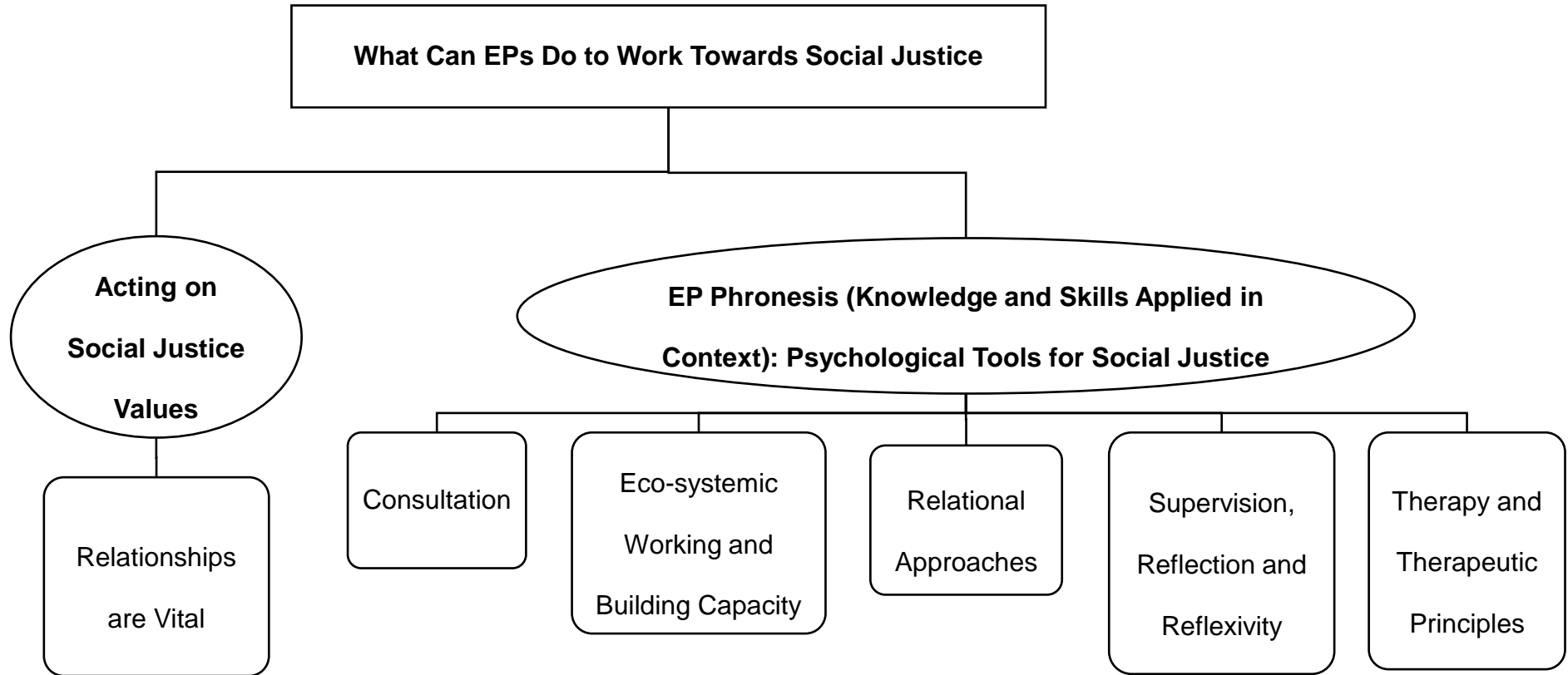
"*Relationships, without relationships our job is nothing…relationships…are everything…[Without relationships] it's just tokenistic…you can't go towards any of the [social justice] psychology that I've talked about, anywhere near any of it.*" Mary (432-438)

This theme indicates that EPs need to facilitate quality relationships to work towards social justice. They do this through their rapport building and communication skills coupled with advocacy and promotion of social justice values. This includes the application of evidence-based psychology, including critical, ecological and holistic formulation and working together with others. This also involves challenging social injustice, both within EP practice and across ecological systems through psychological formulation, reframing, collaboration and empowerment of others. This is facilitated through the context of supportive relationships with all stakeholders and within EP services themselves as a key mediator. This is also a consistent finding across research (Schulze, et al., 2019; Grapin & Shriberg, 2020).

4.5.2: Major Theme: EP Phronesis (Knowledge and Skills Applied in Context): Psychological Tools for Social Justice.

Aristotle described *phronesis* as practical wisdom (Crisp, 2014; Mercieca & Mercieca, 2017), otherwise construed as the application of theory to practical action (knowledge and skills) and refined through this process. This RQ was designed to elicit the day-to-day phronesis of EPs regarding social justice, or to elicit some 'how-to' mechanisms for social justice action via the application of psychology. The psychological tools described by EPs here were applied mechanisms of delivery for them to work towards social justice. These psychological tools have been inductively compiled from varied practical psychologies which have been discussed during interviews, and distilled

through analysis into the following sub-themes. EPs in this sample therefore described their distinctive contribution when working towards social justice as applying psychology through the following sub-thematic mechanisms.

4.5.2.1: Subtheme One: Consultation

> *"…I wonder whether [social justice in EP practice is] a lot about consultation...*"
> Mary (898)

> *"…having curious questions and offering an alternative perspective, and through that you are…promoting social justice…multi agency working…is where I have the most…useful conversations."* Sarah (1029-1045)

Consultation was highlighted by EPs as a practical way of working towards social justice. Consultation has a wide variety of definitions, uses and applications (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). It can be thought of as something more than a conversation, a psychologically informed and structured discussion which seeks to construct an improved understanding of CYP but may have different specific aims. For example, the aim may be solution or problem solving focused, emotional or supportive focus or an educative coaching focus, depending on the kind of consultation model employed by the EP. Consultation is typically a practice to bring about joint consideration of the child's psychological needs with parents, teachers and other professionals which in turn leads to a jointly agreed action plan to improve the situation, through achievement of better outcomes at home and at school (Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

EPs are well placed to deliver psychology through consultation, using techniques such as curious questioning, reframing of narratives, wondering aloud and through their interpersonal communication skills, empathy, reflective listening and rapport building skills (Beaver, 2011). EPs described the importance of the orientation towards

curiosity, working *with* people (not doing *to* them), and promoting social justice values. Highlighted here was the power of EPs to use their dissenting voices to disrupt the natural flow of procedural systems which can harm CYP. This involved the creation of a reflective, safe space, to invite professionals and parents making decisions about that child's future to 'think again', reflecting research (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022). This could be to identify improved outcomes, pathways or expand problem solving. EPs were firm in the assertion that this was more effective when the voice of the child has been elicited and was being advocated for authentically. Social justice consultation implies collaboration and was thought to involve consultation with multiple professionals and services. EPs drew on a wide variety of therapeutic models such as, but not limited to, Solution Focused Therapy (De Shazer, 1988), Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2012), Psychoanalysis (Kenneally, 2021) to inform consultation practice. They also drew on prominent consultation (Boyle et al., 2016; Schein, 1988; Wagner, 2008) and psychological coaching models (Adams, 2015) within formulation frameworks (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008) to help facilitate positive change.

Consultation has been applied by EPs at all three levels of the 5/3 model of EP practice (Fallon et al., 2010) and can be used effectively to advocate for social justice for CYP (Schulze et al., 2019). EPs favouring the use of collaborative consultation models, such as process consultation (Schein, 1988), seek to balance directive input, where necessary, with open and equal communication (Gutkin, 1999), to empower the consultees as agents of change and decrease dependency on outside 'expert' agencies. This model empowers the child by locating the problem in the interactive factors of the ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), not within the child, and increases the resources, skills and confidence of the adults around them to help meet

their needs. In this way consultation aims to level out power dynamics and give equal voice to consultees whilst considering and applying relevant psychological theory, to facilitate positive change. It seeks to increase the capabilities of the consultees (the supporting adults and the child) and build capacity in the system to respond to social injustice.

Consultation models frequently used by EPs resonate strongly with social justice. They emphasise values of democratic, equal participation in decision making, balancing of power dynamics, empowerment of consultees, and promoting empathy and emotional support for the situation (psychological needs). It also raises critical consciousness (Freire, 1970/2000), and develops better understanding of the needs within the system context, alleviating shame and blame (Kenneally, 2021). Consultation often results in an agreed co-constructed action plan which is then implemented and reviewed (Beaver, 2011). Consultation also provides an opportunity for advocacy for the child and the challenging of social injustice.

Schulze and colleagues (2019) identified consultation as a major way that EPs can help to facilitate social justice. EPs in this study discussed the importance of being child-centred, facilitating, believing, listening, challenging, reflective questioning, attempting to change thinking and responding to others' views and interpretations of the child's needs. Authors conclude, in agreement with the current study, that social justice consultation may be a valuable vehicle for EPs to work towards social justice, by facilitating equal opportunities and empowering family and child voices to be heard, and through building capacity in systems to help children with similar needs.

4.5.2.2: Subtheme Two: Eco-Systemic Working and Capacity Building

"*…our role is really preventative…how do we…really enhance and really optimise school systems?"* Ben (567-568)

"*EP's working at organisational levels for social justice within the school system…[schools] using EPs in different ways, whether that's training… individual therapy, on project work, on training, supervising and supporting staff wellbeing. Any other things you can do besides just assessing a child.*" Sue (2013-2020)

EPs here emphasised the importance of working towards social justice at a systemic (Meyers et al., 2012) or organisational level to promote change across ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). That is, on middle and senior leadership levels within organisations and offer advice to contribute towards macro and policy levels within government. EPs described using methods such as solution focused consultation and psychological coaching to pursue social justice in schools and organisations in which they worked. They aimed to facilitate empowerment in staff and to create resources within the school, known as 'building capacity' in schools (Beaver, 2011). That is, to foster confidence and self-efficacy in staff supporting CYP and to create change in the system to facilitate positive change, as opposed to trying to force the child into the current system (Beaver, 2011).

Most EP services participants worked in had moved from a traditional model of assessment-based service delivery, where an EP would enter a school, carry out an assessment, help identify a child's needs and provide recommendations, towards a consultation model of service delivery. The emphasis here was on prevention as well as reaction, for groups of children with similar needs through consultations as well as/instead of, working entirely on traditional assessments. EPs identified social

injustice within SEND populations that continued to escalate in England. Particularly, in regard to distributive and procedural injustice regarding resources, deteriorating mental health, the separation of children into special schools against inclusive education principles, punitive behavioural management 'zero tolerance' policies and climbing exclusion rates (DfE, 2018; Graham et al., 2019). EPs spoke about the need to work systemically and preventatively towards social justice, given the national shortage of EPs, with 68% of interviewed Principal EPs commenting that they couldn't fill job vacancies, and 47% of LA employed EPs also working in private practice in a government survey (DfE, 2019). There is increasing demand for EPs following the SEND reforms following the Children and Families Act 2014, which extended the remit of EPs from 2-19 to 0-25 years. This combined with an increasingly ageing and retiring workforce, and the COVID-19 pandemic which exacerbated existing inequalities (DfE, 2019; Cleare et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2021; Luijten et al., 2021), highlights the need for systemic preventative practice to cope with demand.

Recalling the 5/3 model (Fallon et al., 2010), EPs offered training and action research in school settings alongside ethical assessment, intervention and consultation to empower schools to build their own psychological capacity. Schools could then be encouraged to share their interventions and resources across groups of children with similar presenting needs. This empowered the supporting adults around children and optimised the school system as a whole to work towards social justice. EPs highlighted the importance of working with multi-agency working groups within LAs and with other disciplines. The referenced working with certain services such as the Virtual School, social workers and the police to support more marginalised groups within SEND such as Looked After Children, or those in the youth justice system.

However, no EPs in the study mentioned utilising research skills to support participatory action research (PAR), which aligns itself well with community psychology and social justice values given its empowering and collaborative nature (Grimwood, 2015; Johnson et al., 2022; Kagan, 2012; Langhout & Thomas, 2010) . Participatory action research works together with marginalised community stakeholders to apply action research to find solutions to community problems. It emphasises democratic, participatory, inclusive and strength-focused, self-determination enhancing contributions from the community for the community (Riemer et al., 2020). EPs would be well placed with their research training to support schools and communities to conduct their own participatory action research to work towards social justice. This empowering research could contribute towards collaboratively designing, critical, power-focused, ecological interventions to promote change, in line with critical consciousness raising (Freire, 1970/2000) and cycles of praxis for transformative and ameliorative change (Riemer et al., 2020). However, although EPs are well placed to offer this support PAR can take a significant length of time and the current reactive nature of EP work and lack of funding for this work can often be prohibitive of this in current working contexts.

4.5.2.3: Subtheme Three: Relational Approaches

"*Yeah… [social justice] overlaps with…restorative justice, attachment…the importance of the relational aspect.*" Sue (26-30)

"*…attachment and trauma capacity building has been huge... [it] delivers…acceptance…it ties very strongly into social justice.*" Ann (44-51)

"*Attachment training…to build capacity in schools so that they have an understanding of what the child has been through… it's helping teachers and*

> *staff to get a better understanding of some of the social injustices that exist*"
> Hannah (1849-1862)

Following from the earlier stress on the importance of relationships when working towards social justice EPs utilised a variety of relational approaches, consistent with research (Fitzgibbon and Winter, 2021; Winter, 2018; Prilleltensky, 2020). Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1970), developmental dyadic psychotherapy (Hughes et al., 2015), developmental trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2014), the neurosequential model (Perry, 2020), restorative approaches and restorative justice (Brown, 2017; Finnis, 2021; Fronius et al., 2019) were all highlighted as being crucial. They helped EPs to promote understanding of relationships and trauma, and work towards the reparation of harm done by relational injustice in schools and communities. EPs stressed that this had been key to their practice in working towards social justice, especially in populations who had experienced developmental trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2014) or child abuse.

EPs linked the importance of providing training for staff and reframing the understanding of child behaviours, which may be experienced as aggressive or frightening, to increase confidence, understanding and empathy in key adults supporting them. The ability of the EP to reframe the negative narrative surrounding children, which perpetuates negative outcomes and social injustice, was key in disrupting the system. This facilitated for the CYP an opportunity for change, by empowering the adults to support them through enhanced relationships and understanding. Systemic capacity building interventions targeting emotional literacy approaches such as the EP developed emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) intervention (Burton, 1999; Burton & Okai, 2018) are a clear example of embedding empowering relational capacity in schools.

4.5.2.4: Subtheme Four: Supervision, Reflection and Reflexivity

"*The other thing I think that's really fundamental to successfully integrating social justice themes into our EP work is self-reflection…through [the] supervisory process, attending to the social GRACES, to anti-oppressive practice…[and] transcultural supervision.*" Kate (1603-1609)

EPs expressed the importance of receiving and providing supervision in working towards social justice. Supervision is recognised as providing three main functions, educative, supportive and managerial (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). EPs recognised the importance of reflective supervision regarding one's own intersectionality, assumptions, and identity, applying Burnham and colleagues' Social GRACES (2008), to identify areas that might require support.

Reflexivity was recognised as key for practising as a socially just EP. Initiatives such as transcultural supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) were mentioned as being helpful in this regard. Transcultural supervision occurs when the supervisor and supervisees hold a safe, reflective space to support and explore thoughts and feelings regarding cultural aspects of their identity (Soni, Fong and Janda, 2022). EPs extrapolated this to include reflection using the Social GRACES (Burnham et al., 2008) to identify salient aspects which might benefit from further reflection. Furthermore, EPs are required to receive supervision and be ongoing reflective practitioner psychologists (HCPC, 2015, 2016). Therefore, they are well placed to deliver supervision services to organisations such as schools and LAs, to help them to work towards social justice. Supervision is key in ensuring clear and critical formulation and thinking has occurred in the complexity of work where social injustice is at play. This is the case across the continuum of EP work but particularly where social injustice is the primary factor such as with CPSG casework (Allen & Bond, 2020; BPS, 2018b; Woods et al., 2011).

Schulze and colleagues (2019) found similar results with EPs from their sample emphasising the necessity of reflexivity for social justice work. The global themes found in their study promote EP self-awareness of prejudice and bias, the vital nature of relationships, including the balance of being supportive and being critical, and the importance of child-centred practice. Authors also found that EPs regularly used consultation, professional and legal frameworks and human rights to challenge social injustice such as appeal to the Equality Act 2010. This is consistent with the current study's findings.

4.5.2.5: Subtheme Five: Therapy and Therapeutic Principles

"…motivational interviewing, solution focused models, narrative family therapy models, personal construct psychology models for eliciting what's happening and how each individual perceives that within the system. So, you've got the school system, the teacher, you've got the parent… the child…the TA, and they all see it in a slightly different way, they've all got a slightly different narrative of it. And our job is to hear all of that and pull it together, whilst holding fast to the child's needs…as paramount … that's the job…that's what we do, that perhaps other professionals don't do." Ann (1938-1947)

EPs drew on their extensive knowledge and skills (phronesis) regarding therapeutic approaches and principles and applied this across the 5/3 model (Fallon et al., 2010) to work towards social justice. EPs emphasized the utility of Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955) for eliciting and advocating for the child's voice. They also highlighted various therapy and therapeutic models which were highly useful in working towards social justice across their role. These included interventions utilising collaborative consultation approaches such as solution circles, based on solution focused therapy (De Shazer, 1988), narrative reframing (Billington, 2012; White &

Epston, 1990), narrative therapy, motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2012), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Padesky & Beck, 2003), Theraplay (Booth and Jernberg, 2009), psychoanalytic approaches (Kenneally, 2021) and systemic change focused interventions such as Circle of Adults (Newton, 1995).

4.6 Psychological Tools for Facilitating Social Justice

EPs explicitly identified the core psychological theories and approaches from psychological literature and theory which they applied through the 5/3 model of EP practice (Fallon et al., 2010) to facilitate social justice. That is, applying psychology through consultation, assessment, evidence-based intervention, research and training for individuals, groups and organisations to promote social justice values. Echoing Prilleltensky's contention (2020) that social justice requires a balance of psychological work between individual, group and organisational/societal (collective) wellbeing.

Although each individual EP practiced in different ways, within changeable and unique eco-systemic contexts, the repeated references to therapeutic approaches, relational approaches, supervision, consultation and eco-systemic work, provide social justice psychological tools for EP practice. This forms the basis of a value-based praxis through which to actively work towards social justice within the EP role. Combined with participatory approaches, relationships, multi-agency working and collaboration with marginalised groups such as, but not limited to, CYP with SEND, this set of psychological tools enable EPs working in England to distinctively contribute by applying psychology with social justice values. This could involve collaborative design of ameliorative and transformative interventions to co-facilitate social justice.

These results are supported by similar concepts from earlier study's emphasis on eco-systemic working and consultation (Hatzichristou et al., 2020; Schulze et al., 2019), and reflections on EP practice and social justice in the UK (Mercieca & Mercieca,

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2022) and community psychology (Riemer, et al., 2020).They also echo Riemer and colleagues' (2020) recommendation for continual cycles of value-based praxis, incorporating ongoing learning and reflection with empowering action.

Results for RQ3 are summarised in the model illustrated by figure 5. As a summary of the thematic data from the current study's sample of EPs the model is acknowledged as limited and non-exhaustive. All elements are mutually interactive, flexible and 'mash-ups' encouraged in practice, similar to COMOIRA's flexible formulation design (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2008). EPs may apply psychology through value-based praxis to work towards social justice in England, illustrating the phronesis applied by these EPs in their contexts. It is hoped that this will act as a useful reflective guide for EPs to further develop their own social justice praxis, and assist in overcoming some of the following barriers.

4.7 RQ4: What Barriers Are There to Working Towards Social Justice in EP Practice?

4.7.1 Major Theme: Misuse of Power

This theme was constructed out of two subthemes relating strongly to power misuse by commissioning schools, LAs, and some EPs to perpetuate cycles of injustice, rather than challenge it or advocate for social justice.

The first subtheme is the recognition that moving to traded models of practice resulted in extra pressure for EPs to perform for schools who bought them in. This relates to the historic shift to traded practice which many services made in England to survive as public services were cut repeatedly since 2010 (Lee & Woods, 2017; Schulze, 2017). This creeping privatisation of public services was felt by EPs to have disempowered family voices in favour of paymaster schools who can use their increased power to control the EP and their output. For example, dictating what the

EP should say in their report about a child (McGuiggan, 2021). Collusion by EPs with the school's agenda, over the family's, remains a barrier to social justice in practice, especially when their views conflict. The second sub theme related to the continual use of unethical assessment by EPs which, unintentionally at best, and complicitly at worst, serves to perpetuate vicious cycles of social injustice and is imbued with historical and cultural injustice. Both subthemes are addressed below.

4.7.1.1 Subtheme One: Colluding with School and Local Authority Agendas

"*Schools control you…agendas [are] set by the school or the local authority saying 'what we're gonna do is review your education, health and care plan (EHCP)… the agenda is set by the school. And then the family are brought into it...everyone can tick the box on the form that says, 'Have you involved the family?'…yes you have but in a…tokenistic and oppressive way... [its] oppressive because it happens in schools, in meetings organised by schools, when schools are often telling families, what the problem is.*" Natalie (2834-2885)

"*It's just a ridiculous notion…I'm not a mechanic so I don't take my car to the mechanic and say this is how you should fix it.*" Sue (1671-1673)

EPs warned that the power implications of schools buying-in EPs, meant that in some cases schools would act like they were the client because they were the financial customer. The transaction of paying for the service sometimes made some schools feel like they owned the EP's intellectual 'product' and could amend, edit and direct this at their will. EPs expressed feeling overly-controlled and constrained by schools who pressured them. They restated the importance of standing their ground as an independent professional giving advice to support the CYP's needs, who is considered the true client of the EP (Lee and Woods., 2017). This included providing professional

Figure 5

Model of social justice in educational psychology practice summarising results from RQ3
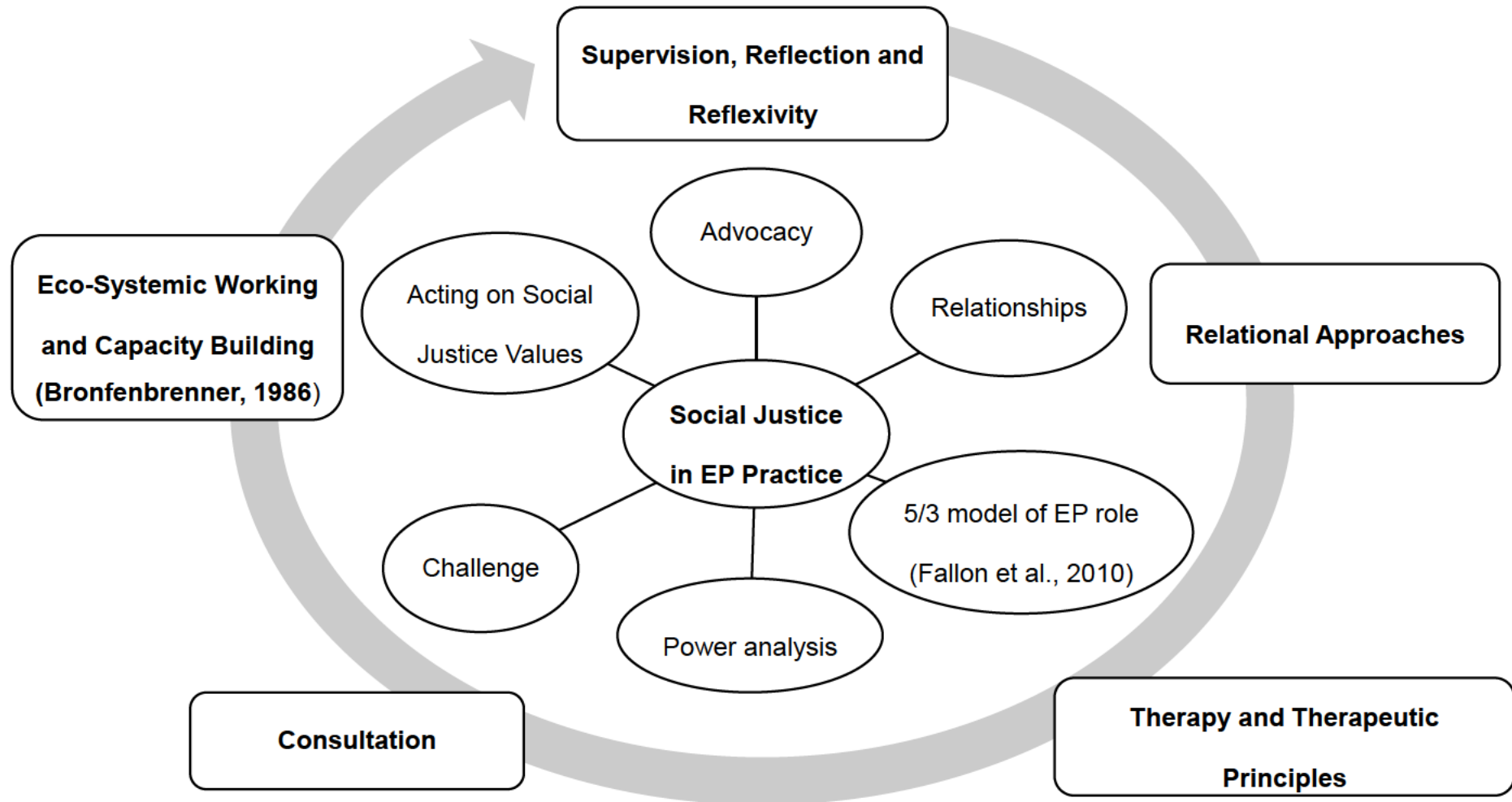
psychological formulation and advice, irrespective of the disharmony that this can create with commissioning schools, or LA service managers, and ongoing agendas. Furthermore, if an EP allowed this, they would be in direct contradiction of the ethical standards for practice set out by the BPS (2018a) and HCPC (2015), and yet participants across the data set claimed to experience this occurring. This reflects the swampy lowlands of ethical practice experienced by EPs (Devlin, 2017).

However, such resistance was recognised as risky for EPs, given that the main contributor to EP performance ratings were schools and the LA. Nevertheless, EPs stressed that they have a responsibility to advocate for the child and to work towards social justice, by embracing their role as a 'critical friend' to schools and LAs. EPs agreed with recent research (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022), that they should use this role to promote dissenting voices in the best interests of the child. Finally, EPs drew attention to the lack of direct referral systems for families to self-refer for EP support, and were working to agendas primarily set by schools and LAs, and questioned how this lack of equal access was working collaboratively with families (McGuiggan, 2021).

4.7.1.2 Subtheme Two: Unethical Assessment

"*Okay, certainly in terms of assessment… we need to be holistic and fair…it does cause cognitive dissonance for us to be perpetually assessing using standardised normative assessments…*" Ann (567-573)

"*But we're still in a place where we have schools who request psychometric assessment because they need some numbers to be crunched in order for this child to access a particular service, and that whole sphere is something that leaves me very uncomfortable…being deployed [by services and schools] to go*

Figure 6

Barriers to EPs Working Towards Social Justice – Thematic Map for RQ4
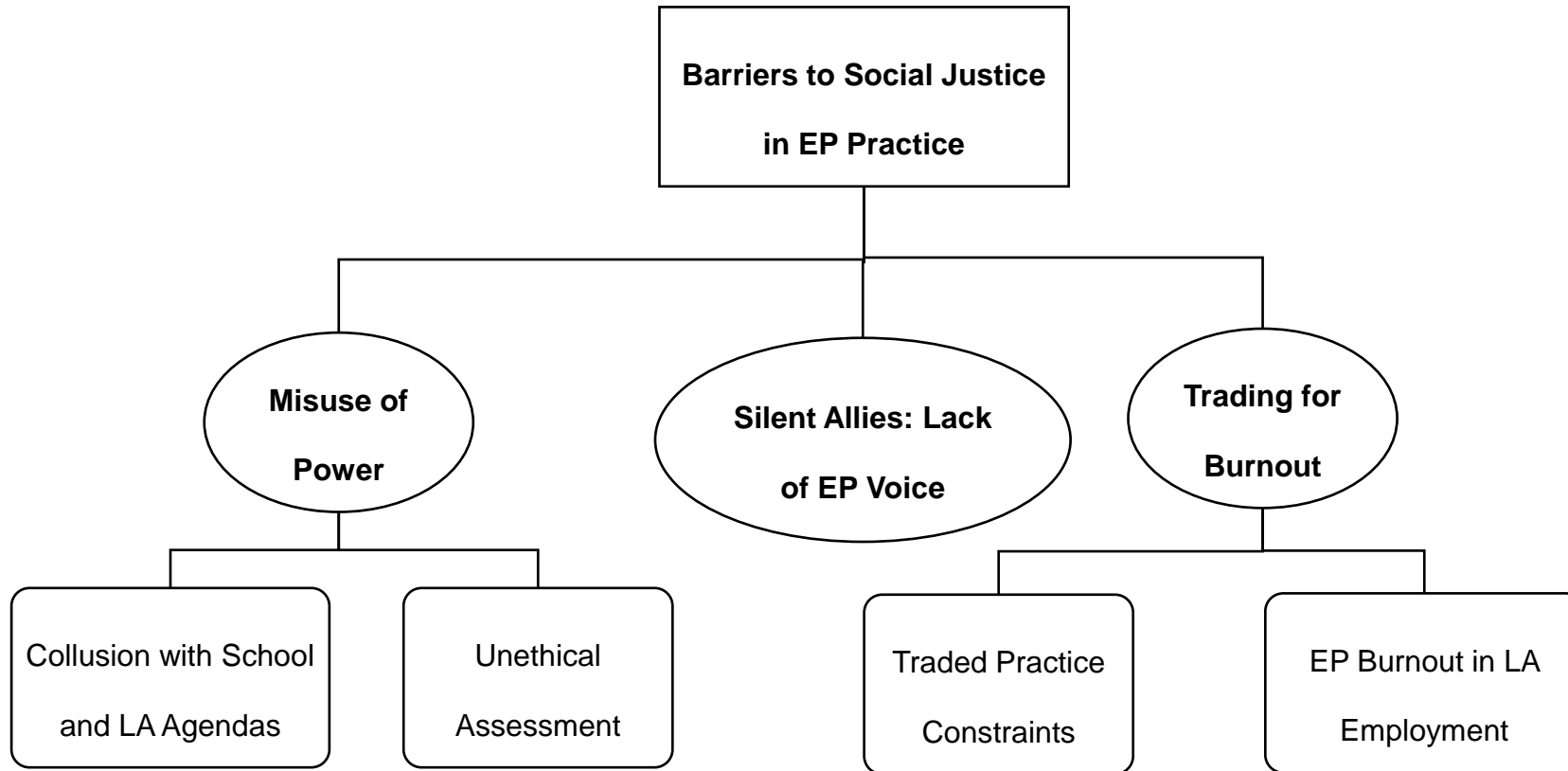
and do [psychometric assessment] and it not being so ecologically valid, culturally relevant or ethical…it doesn't feel right at all." Kate (279-296)

Related to the first subtheme, EPs can feel pressure to carry out assessments of CYP in the way in which schools expect. A common expectation that the EP will carry out a cognitive assessment or IQ test such as the British Ability Scale (BAS, Elliot & Smith, 2012; Swinson, 2013) on a child. IQ tests are based on the assumption that IQ does not change over time. This assumption is false, especially for SEND populations where intervention can dramatically increase IQ test scores over time (Hill, 2005). Research has long concluded that they are inappropriate for measuring the ability of children with SEND, for example those with literacy difficulties (Hill, 2005; Thomson, 1982).

Furthermore, traditional cognitive assessments using standardised IQ data such as these have been used in oppressive ways. For example, they were used in the 1970s to segregate Black West-Indian populations in London, and segregate them to residential special schools by labelling them as 'educationally sub-normal' (Coard, 1971). The cognitive reasoning tests that are used in these cognitive assessments produce IQ scores which are culturally and ecologically invalid. These scores are often used oppressively, especially working with diverse cultural populations (Reynolds et al., 2021) such as Black-Indigenous-People-of-Colour (BIPOC). Their infused historicity of oppression remains with families to this day (Randall et al., 2022). EPs were, and may continue to be, complicit in this and must be mindful of their oppressive history and less than ethical origins (Wright, 2017). Critical consciousness and awareness of power is once again central to resisting oppressive practice here.

EPs were aware that psychometric assessment is still used to perpetuate cycles of disadvantages such as the continual overrepresentation of children from BIPOC

communities in SEND populations (Cavendish et al., 2020; Randall et al., 2022).This is what Gillborn calls 'the new eugenics' (Gillborn, 2010), and its influence on intelligence testing persists to this day (Yakushko, 2019). Therefore, relating to social justice, EPs stressed that the use of these IQ tests was not acceptable, especially when practitioners had cultural relevant, ecologically valid, individualised alternative methods of cognitive testing available. For example, EPs mentioned dynamic assessment (Haywood & Lidz, 2006; Tzuriel, 2001), which works with the child to uncover how they are best supported to learn, and rejects the myth of pre-determined static intelligence levels (IQ).

EPs therefore have a professional and moral duty when working towards social justice to select their assessment tools critically and cautiously with ethical and cultural awareness. They must ensure there is a clear rationale which is supported by ethical and anti-oppressive values in practice, and resist pressures from schools or LAs to carry out oppressive testing, resulting in the over-disabling and labelling of children and the capping of their potential (Billington, 2012). EPs therefore could support social justice through resisting the use of oppressive cognitive assessments and employing critical consciousness (Freire, 1970/2000) to formulate the psychological needs of CYP across the ecosystems they are working within.

4.7.2 Major Theme: Trading for Burnout

This theme's essence concerns a) traded practice constraints and b) workplace contextual factors which are contributing to increased rates of EP burnout. Both subthemes are explored separately below but are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

4.7.2.1 Subtheme One: Traded Practice Constraints

'… *we need more time [and] space to do it*.' Ben (1557)

> *"There is still an equity issue being a traded service. At the moment only 83% of Lakehouse LA (pseudonym) schools buy-back traded services so you know there are equity problems. What about that other percentage of schools who aren't buying back and those children who aren't accessing that?"* Sue (427-431)

A significant barrier raised by EPs was lack of time built in to traded models to carry out ethical psychological assessments, formulations, interventions and reviews. Furthermore, within the LAs sampled there were a percentage of schools and families with no access to educational psychology because they do not buy in the service due to lack of funding. Consequently, access to the service was a significant and pervasive social injustice issue. However, given that the government in England has consistently cut public services since implementing their austerity policy in 2010, it is unlikely that access will be improved through increased LA funding.

One option may be to morph into community educational psychology services where educational psychology is delivered not just through schools but in the community. This would improve access to its services alongside other professions and would require joint commissioning. However, funding opportunities range from rare to unavailable. Therefore, although a community psychology model (Prilleltensky, 2001; 2012; 2020; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997) may offer some answers, EP service transition to this model may be prohibited from this.

4.7.2.2 Subtheme Two: EP Burnout in LA Employment

> *"It can be hard to know how to maintain integrity under a huge amount of pressure…a big hindering factor for social justice for EPs is burnout… they have empathy drain and the quality of their work is compromised 'cause they*

can't keep up with their workloads. It alters their motivation about what they're doing, 'cause the biggest ambition is getting to the end of your To Do List… when you're under huge amount of stress, it…compromises your ability to be a good psychologist." Sue (1291-1312)

The EP profession is under a continued nationwide shortage and cannot keep up with demand (DfE, 2019). Meanwhile, following changes to statutory assessment process in 2014, with the implementation of the Children and Families Act, LA employed EPs' statutory workload has increased dramatically. This, coupled with expansion of the role under traded models, and development of EP work into more social, emotional and mental health support, has resulted in a large nationwide demand and increasingly limited supply. EPs described the workload as unreasonable, and commented that completing it or staying on top of it was impossible in many services. Similarly, EPs were subject to additional toxic stress coming from increasing SEND Tribunal cases brought against LAs by parents.

Emotional exhaustion is a key element of burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1990; Maslach & Jackson, 1984; Maslach & Leiter, 2017) and has significant effects on a psychologist's ability to perform, including diminished ability to hold empathy for clients. Work-life balance is reported to be a significant ongoing concern with EPs unable to manage the stress and demands of the role and becoming sick, retiring, or leaving LA employment (DfE, 2019). This may be a reason why more EPs are feeling the need to move into private practice. This in turn results in increased pressure on LA employed EPs to clear statutory caseloads within legal deadlines, and can strangle opportunities for creativity and growth which are essential to continual professional development and retention of EPs in LA services. This in turn limits social justice practice in relation to reduced funding opportunities for systemic, community and/or preventative working

as workloads become unsustainable and highly reactive in nature. This is consistent with earlier findings (Jenkins et al., 2017), and given Prilleltensky's contention (2020) that social justice requires wellbeing for the self and others, is a significant barrier to social justice.

Schulze and colleagues (2019) identified consultation as a possible solution to this. Consultation was thought to provide a) preventative working for EPs to work towards social justice by de-escalating tensions and preventing social injustice, b) expanding the role from individualised assessment work to include organisational consultation and eco-systemic working (Meyers et al., 2012) within traded models, and c) ongoing support for EPs post-qualification, and during the training could increase protection of EPs and reduce burnout effects (Schulze et al., 2019). However, the majority of EP services where participants worked already operated so-called 'consultation' service delivery models and were still experiencing these negative effects. Therefore, a move towards community consultation-based psychology services may help to alleviate burnout symptoms. However, this would involve a radical restructure of EP employment, with funding sources secured likely outside of the LA which is not currently possible under the current organisation of the role, or secured via trading for joint commissioning by local Health, Education and Social Care services. The transition to a community psychology model of practice is therefore considered a risky professional change which many EPs are unprepared for, financially prevented from, and understandably reluctant to make.

4.7.3 Major Theme: Silent Allies: Lack of EP voice

"I think for so many years, when it comes to the challenge, we're silent. We don't say anything. And it's time to have a voice and to use our professional bodies to promote that voice…" Ann (2001-2003)

"EPs have got loads to offer [government] 'cause of the research skills they have, evidence-based research, that can feed directly into government policy about education and mental health." Sue (1091-1093)

The essence of this theme was that EPs should stop colluding with oppressive policies by staying silent and challenge injustice in organisations and in government. EPs interviewed in this study firmly advocated that educational psychology must be braver and advocate for social justice. This was asserted especially when it is easier, more convenient or harmonious to side with powerful organisations and support the status quo over the child's needs, choice and voice. This belief is echoed by EPs in Schulze and colleagues' (2019) study.

EPs in the current study wished to amplify their voice at macro government levels to advocate for social justice. EPs suggested that they use their research skills to support policy development and implementation. Lack of access at this level meant having to mitigate the social injustice effects of oppressive policies for CYP throughout their work. EPs asserted that access to collaborate with, and disseminate research findings among, decision and policy makers would result in improved social justice outcomes throughout the education system.

Schulze's unpublished doctoral thesis (2017) captured this claim well: "*The decisions being made by the government with regards to the SEN and [the] education system, were considered to be coming from an uninformed, detached position, which lacked appropriate knowledge.*" (Schulze, 2017, pp. 57.) Schulze and colleagues (2019) again resonate with findings of the current study. Authors found barriers to social justice within educational psychology to be situated in traded practice constraints such as diminished time, reactive assessment work, EP burnout, lack of clear messaging from professional organisations such as the BPS and Association for EPs on social

justice and the role of the EP, and conflation of 'social justice' with politics and personal values, instead of professional standards.

In summary, EPs identified several interacting and interconnected barriers to social justice which require ameliorative and transformative solutions (Riemer et al., 2020). These included the misuse of power by schools, LAs and individual EPs to, in the best case fail to challenge the status quo, and in the worst, actively support unethical assessment and unfair practice to preserve traded contracts and not 'rock the boat'. Further barriers included the contextual austerity policies and financial cuts to public services and the operation of services within traded practice constraints (Lee & Woods, 2017), consistent with earlier research (Schulze et al., 2019). This was linked to increasing and unmanageable workload, a recruitment and retention crisis in LA employment, and increased EP stress and diminished work/life balance, which resulted in poorer psychological practice and high burnout.

Finally, EPs were exasperated with EP professional bodies that there was no/ineffective access to influence socially unjust government policy. EPs sought access to prevent or mitigate systemic harm for English schools, and argued that they had the research skills and expertise in SEND to do so. EPs suggested that professional silence in the face of social injustice amounted to collusion and perpetuated cycles of injustice. This was exemplified by the SEND Tribunal situation in England, suggested by:

> "…the tribunal system is complicit in skewing scarce, SEND resources away from the neediest children and authorities to the most privileged children. And there are private EPs who are colluding with it…I feel there is huge, huge injustice in the system that we are directly colluding with and have a direct influence over, that we should be sorting out, and it's around special educational

needs and disability….children's needs aren't being met in their mainstream schools…children are being pushed out of those schools, and…there's discrimination against children with disabilities…the scarce resources that are out there are being skewed in lots of different ways by those with the ability to do so and… we need to do something about it, and the EPs should be screaming to the high heavens about that because if you want a social justice issue. It's been handed to you." Natalie (3010-3053)

There was a call to action from EPs to use their voice, skills and knowledge within the professional systems they are involved in to advocate for social justice, and challenge social injustice for CYP and their families. However, some barriers, such as lack of government funding for community psychology roles, and statutory expectations and legislative restrictions regarding the SEND role, were recognised as possibly impermeable. These barriers limit the extent to which EPs can work towards social justice without large-scale grassroots change in the profession. However, critical consciousness is essential in working towards organisational change, and to avoid tokenistic changes, which only serve to quell resistance and strengthen the status quo (Riemer et al., 2020). Acknowledging this, EPs might critically consider the psychological tools for social justice presented in response to RQ3 (figure 5) as mechanisms for practically starting to overcome some of these barriers within their local contexts, as a first step.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will address the limitations of the study and implications for EP practice alongside concluding remarks. This study set out to answer RQ1-4, which are summarised in Chapter Four, Table 6 'Overview of Analysis'.

5.2 Limitations

Consistent with the research design this study will not address positivist concepts such as statistical generalisability, reliability or statistical sample size because they are not relevant to the current study. That is, they are inconsistent with the study's philosophical approach, research design, saturation and methodological integrity (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, 2022; Levitt et al., 2017). However, as with all research, this study has important limitations.

This study was costly in researcher time, particularly regarding transcription, interviewing, and analysis of a large data set. The engrossing nature of the subject of social justice resulted in rich data being collected from participants, but consequently interviews were an average of double the intended time. Therefore, instead of transcribing and analysing 11 hours of interviews, the researcher spent double the time to analyse what equated to 24 hours of interview data. Although ultimately advantageous to the richness and depth of participant data, and subsequent reflexive thematic analysis, this limited the study by being so costly in researcher time. For example, although important to transcribe interview data oneself for immersion purposes, Braun and Clarke (2013) estimate that verbatim transcription alone takes 8-10 hours for every hour of interviewing. This in turn has a snowball effect and limited the time available for the analysis and writing the research report. In hindsight it would

have been advantageous to stop data collection at eight participants when the criteria for information power (Malterud et al., 2016) had been met.

Furthermore, although relevant concepts and theory were criticality explored, this study was limited by its reduced word count, which in turn limited the depth of critical discussion of concepts. This prohibited a more extensive and exhaustive literature review regarding historical and philosophical underpinnings of social justice (Foucault, 1983), which this study may have benefited from. In particular referring to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and community psychology related concepts such as liberation, empowerment and the operation of power and theorised structures of oppression (Orford, 1992; Prilleltensky, 2020; Riemer et al., 2020).

Another limitation of this study is that lack of physical presence during online interviews may have meant a loss of additional data, such as subtle emotional data or body language, which may have had negative effects on rapport building when compared to face-to-face interviews. This placed a higher demand on the researcher's communication skills and their ability to repair communication where it drifted or had gone wrong (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). However, data collection was successful over Microsoft Teams, and opportunities for clarification and repair of meaning successfully managed in this study, as judged by gaining adequate information power and answering the RQs. The Covid-19 restrictions under which data was collected may have impacted that data through prohibition of face-to-face interviewing but how this may manifest comparatively with the current data set is unknown.

Finally, a potential limitation of this study is the chosen method of third person, past tense reporting style. This can be considered at odds with the qualitative and reflexive

nature of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2022). However, given the complexity of the analysis and findings discussed, and the doctoral level at which this thesis is submitted, the researcher felt it judicious to write in a familiar academic tense in which they had the most skill. This helped to communicate the complexity of the expressed analytic narrative of the study and ethically best serve the participants by producing a well written, coherent research report. Consequently, the researcher did not write in first person tense and this may be considered as a limitation, although efforts to ensure transparency and methodological integrity (Levitt et al., 2017) support quality.

5.3 Implications for EP Practice

As an exploratory qualitative study, this study did not attempt to be generalisable in a statical sense but rather may be held to be 'softly generalisable' (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Therefore, the study may have a qualitatively-situated transferability. That is, findings are consistent with previous research and may be of use to EPs in England and resonate with their own subjective experiences of the role. This creates an intersubjective overlap of experiential consensus, consistent with Biq Q assumptions (Kidder & Fine, 1987). More specifically, this study asserts inferential and representational generalisability (Lewis et al., 2014). This arises from research which describes and contextualises the data, participants and analysis in a transparent manner so that the reader can determine to what extent representational or naturalistic transferability might occur to their own context. There is transferability through research resonance with reader's experiences and similarities between this study and wider research, whilst championing contextual sensitivity (Lewis et al., 2014). With this caution expressed, this study suggests the following implications for EP practice.

Results from RQ1 suggest that EPs consider social justice to entail the pursuit of fairness and equity for all, human rights, anti-oppressive practice, and involves commitment to advocacy and challenge of social injustice. The concept was recognised as being contextually and ecologically situated in time and space. This was comprised of personal and professional values and a vision of a possibly unattainable future, which was associated with fairness across distributive, procedural and relational domains of social injustice (Bell, 2016). These findings are consistent with the broader research literature (Graybill et al., 2017; Schulze, 2017; Schulze et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2019). This supports the potential for a conceptual consensus for a working definition to be applied in the global profession of educational psychology, despite cultural variations on themes (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020).

Results from RQ2 suggest that EPs resonate strongly with social justice, *as it is defined in RQ1*. EPs supported social justice as core to the professional role of the EP, especially when working with marginalised groups, such as CYP with SEND. This finding is consistent with research as discussed in Chapter Four. EPs also stipulated that social justice retain a commitment to holistic, multivariate, power-focused, ecological, critical, psychological formulation of needs and evidenced-based intervention, across the 5/3 model of EP practice (Fallon et al., 2010). Given the relevance of social justice to the EP profession expressed by interviewed EPs, training courses may benefit from incorporating explicit social justice teaching into the training for the profession, in line with previous research recommendations and training models (Briggs et al., 2009; Grapin, 2017; Hatzichristou et al., 2020; Miranda et al., 2014; Schulze, 2017; Shriberg et al., 2008).

Results from RQ3 and RQ4 discuss the ways EPs can work towards social justice in the role and the barriers to this. Results present a commitment to both advocacy for

social justice and challenge of social injustice as essential for EPs working in England. Practical psychological tools for working towards social justice across the 5/3 model were proposed. EPs suggested that working towards social justice was possible through application of psychology through consultation, systemic working, relational approaches, supervision, reflection and reflexivity, and applying therapeutic principles in context. EPs also emphasised the importance of drawing on critical, holistic, power-informed and multivariate psychologies to inform ameliorative and transformative intervention at multiple ecological and systemic levels. This phronesis represents the efforts of EPs in this sample to work towards social justice and overcome barriers set out in RQ4, and is represented in figure 5.

Barriers highlighted include EP burnout, traded practice constraints, including lack of time and funding, collusion with school and LA agendas, misuse of power and a lack of voice in macro levels of society. However, although alluded to contextually, the lack of funding opportunities to support community-based working, and social justice initiatives was not explicitly referenced by EPs in this sample as heavily as it appeared in the previous English study (Schulze et al., 2019). This contributes towards EPs working in England being restricted from enacting socially just community-based practice, even when they do embody personal and professional social justice values. Results here indicate the importance of applying social justice in action through application of critical evidence-based, power-focused, ecological psychology, formulation and intervention (Riemer et al., 2020). This supports both advocacy for social justice and challenge of social injustice, consistent with recent research (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022).

The implications of these findings are that EPs may find the suggested model of practical tools (figure 5) useful to reflect on when working towards social justice in their

local working contexts. In particular, social justice values and praxis can be effectively applied during psychological consultation (Schulze et al., 2019), and multi-ecological and systemic working across organisational and institutional levels, and more broadly across the 5/3 model (Fallon et al., 2010). As Schulze and colleagues (2019) suggest EPs committed to social justice may find organisations such as Psychologists for Social Change (www.psychchange.org) helpful in demonstrating how to engage in discourse and action regarding macro level political policy changes.

In line with community psychology, results suggest that EPs working in England promote social justice and may reconceptualise their role and service delivery to be able to help liberate and empower the communities they work with. This is achieved by working collaboratively with community, school or organisational stakeholders to apply psychology to co-design evidence-based empowering interventions which are *both* ameliorative (wellbeing promoting) and transformative (aimed at challenging oppressive power structures, practices and relationships). EP work as it currently operates is, by and large, aimed at amelioration within the systems in which they work but there is a greater need for working with others to design transformative interventions. This would facilitate challenge of oppressive practice across distributive, procedural and relational injustice domains (Bell, 2016), if marginalised communities are to be best served (Riemer et al., 2020). However, this transition to a community role is currently prohibited by statutory and legislative restrictions on the EP role, and lack of funding opportunities which would first need to be addressed at a macro level. This is further compounded given the current lack of access for EPs to work with government policy makers. This may indicate a need for an organised groundswell of grassroots change within the profession to make macro-level legislative changes to enable funding to be secured for social justice initiatives and/or community psychology

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EP practice. However, individual EPs attempting wholesale organisational change are unlikely to be successful (Riemer et al., 2020), and the apparent impermeability of the current funding barriers are prohibiting community psychology practice in many English EP services.

Therefore, EPs may be best served initially by reflecting on their distinctive contribution towards social justice. Initially considering how they might pragmatically apply, or have been applying, social justice values via the proposed psychological tools proposed in response to RQ3 across the 5/3 model (Fallon et al., 2010), illustrated in figure 5, and overcome the barriers in RQ4, where possible. Especially given the global support for the centrality of social justice to educational psychology (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017; Schulze et al., 2019; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016; Hatzichristou et al., 2020) and the continual escalation of ecological social injustice and disadvantage for the CYP and families they work with.

5.4. Future Directions

Further research on the development, application and evaluation of these results with other EPs around England and the UK, especially the reflective model presented in figure 5, would be beneficial to the literature base, and the profession. Especially given social justice's strong resonance with two groups of EPs in England to date (Schulze et al., 2019). However, both of these studies used voluntary recruitment sampling and may have contained participants with strong views regarding social justice which may not be representative of the wider population. Therefore, a consensus Delphi style survey (Hasson et al., 2000) study could be useful in determining degrees of consensus regarding potentially divisive aspects of social justice and EP practice, such as the definition. Nevertheless, although care must be taken to emphasise the

contextual nature of both samples of EPs, the consistency of findings may suggest a degree of naturalistic transferability across the profession, similar but distinct from that found in the US (Grapin & Shriberg, 2020).

Further research could also explore how EPs might mitigate the barriers to social justice expressed in RQ4, perhaps through applications of transformation focused participatory action research within EP and/or LA populations (Grimwood, 2015; Kagan, 2012).

5.5 Concluding Remarks and Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis was the first study to explore views of EPs regarding social justice in the West Midlands and construct a practical reflective model of EP social justice phronesis in England. It has richly answered its RQs. Results suggest that social justice is highly relevant and practically applicable to the role of the EP, consistent with earlier research (Grapin and Shriberg, 2020; Schulze, et al., 2019). This reflects this study's critical paradigm, as Scotland (2012, p.13) puts it, drawing on Freire (1970/2000):

> *"Finding out is the means, change is the underlying aim. This involves making people critically aware of their situation (conscientization), then realizing change through a praxis, which is repeated action informed by reflection."*

On the question of a distinctive EP contribution, it has outlined social justice values and practical psychological tools for collaboratively helping to facilitate social justice in EP practice. EPs may use the reflective social justice model presented in figure 5 to further develop, adapt and explore professional practice, through cycles of reflection and value-based praxis and ongoing reflexivity and supervision regarding their own assumptions and biases. This supports and extends previous work by Schulze and colleagues (2019) by detailing the practical psychological tools/mode of intervention

that EPs in England may use, and further investigating the relevance of social justice to EPs outside of the US (Schulze et al., 2017). It has also provided the argument for why a re-conceptualisation of the role as social justice and community psychology orientated (Riemer et al., 2020), may be beneficial for promotion of social justice, although wider funding and legislative restrictions are acknowledged as currently prohibitive.

Despite this, there is a need for EPs to work towards the amelioration and transformation of oppressive structures, practices and dynamics across ecological levels and social contexts. EPs' psychological phronesis and work across the 5/3 model (Fallon et al., 2010) makes them well placed to facilitate positive change towards social justice by empowering CYP and their families. Finally, results stress the importance of relationships as a key mediator for acting on social justice values, and promotion of relational justice to balance the twin societal pitfalls of excessive emphasis on equality or freedom alone (Prilleltensky, 2020). Considering this, EPs could initially reflect on the psychological tools summarised in figure 5, to develop their own reflective cycles of social justice praxis, by applying psychology to empower CYP and families, advocate for social justice *and* challenge social injustice. Overall, this thesis deepens understanding of the theoretical and pragmatic nature of social justice and identifies barriers to working towards it in an English context. This further supports its vital relevance and centrality to EP practice given the current political, economic and social conditions affecting CYP and families.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Search strategy

The following databases were searched over three time periods September 2021, January 2021, and March 2021 to ensure updated accounting of the evidence base from the last 10 years 2011-2021 inclusive:

- PsychINFO

- Education Resource Information Center (ERIC)

- Web of Science

- Google Scholar (supplementary searches).

List of search terms

Databases were searched for free text and the following terms: 'Educational Psychol* AND Social Justice AND UK', 'Educational Psychol* AND Social Justice', 'School psychol* AND social justice', 'social injustice AND educational psychol*', 'Social injustice AND school psychol*', 'social justice AND psychol*'.

A further set of searches was then carried out following the ESCAPADE protocol (Boland et al., 2017, p. 201): Exploratory Methods, Software, Citations, Application, Phenomenon, Approaches, Data and Experiences (School of Health and Related Research). Supplementary searches added in words such as 'Survey', 'Narratives', 'Viewpoints', 'Focus Group', 'interviews' 'Standpoints', 'NVivo', 'Themes', 'Thematic Analysis', 'Attitudes', 'Perceptions' 'Lived Experiences', 'Encounters' (Boland et al., 2017). This initial scoping search returned 1506 studies.

This was followed by a screening process involving the reading of the titles which resulted in the inclusion of 86 studies. Additionally, hand searching and citation

chaining (backward searching) was used to identify key papers, especially those outside of the last 10 years and those contained in book chapters this resulted in the identification of 30 studies, commentaries and chapters. Reading of abstracts resulted in the total inclusion of 48 published peer reviewed studies in the initial search. The January and March searches revealed one new study. Full reading of papers resulted in retention of 49 studies.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies must be written in English, be published and peer reviewed. Doctoral Theses may be unpublished if relevant. Studies must include information pertinent to the research questions. That is, they must address either the experiences or perceptions of social justice in the fields of educational and/or school psychology in relation to a definition of social justice, the role of a psychologist, challenges against social justice for psychologists, stakeholder perceptions, ways of working towards social justice, and barriers to working towards social justice. Studies which mentioned the UK context or compared this were prioritised in the research process although the vast majority of work has been done in the US.

Exclusion Criteria

Unpublished studies and 'grey literature', including masters or undergraduate dissertations. Studies concerned only with student views, teacher views, local authority officer or other professional views. Studies published outside of the last 10 years, 2011-2021 (inclusive). Studies not written in English. Studies on social justice with no clear link to educational psychology practice. Studies which did not refer to information pertinent to answering the research questions a) a definition of social justice within an education or community-based context where educational

psychologists can work, b) commentary of the role of the educational psychologist and social justice, c) ways in which educational psychologists' might work towards social justice and d) barriers identified which hampered or prevented social justice outcomes.

Appendix B: Example Interview Schedule

Housekeeping:

- Welcome the participant and thank them for agreeing to meet.
- Social Justice and EP Practice interview – my interest in SJ human rights and equity for full human potential to be actualised.
- Do you have any questions before we start?
- Review signed consent form, including agreement for audio-recording of the interview and right to withdraw.
- Confidential – pseudonyms pick yours or I can pick for you
- Note safeguarding issues – will need to be reported.

Interview commences (turn on audio-recorder):

Topic	Possible questions	Possible prompts and follow up questions	Probes
Definition	What does 'Social Justice' mean to you? How do you define Social Justice?	*What does it look like?* *Definition?*	That's great, I'm interested in when you said x? Could you tell me more about that?
Role	What are your thoughts regarding how social justice relates to the role of the EP? If it does? Do you think that it's part of the EP role to promote social justice?	*What reasons to you have for thinking that? (either yes or no)*	*Tell me more.* *Anything Else?*
Implementation	Yes Promote:	*Interventions?* *Approaches?* *Assessments?*	*Tell me more.* *Go on.*

	What can we do to promote social justice in EP Practice? Any examples form practice? NO If you think we its not our role how do we work towards social justice goals/aims as a profession? If we shouldn't do this what should we do to promote equity and child rights effectively?	*Consultation?* *Training?* *Research?* *Age ranges?* *Thoughts, feelings and actions?* *What would this look like?*	
Barriers	To what extent, if any, have you faced barriers or difficulties of acting on social justice values/ promoting social justice principles in your work? What obstacles have limited or prevented your efforts to apply social justice in your work?	*What would this look like?* *Power, Resources, staff, equipment?* *Language, psychological knowledge?*	*Anything else?*
Solutions	How can these be overcome? Do you have examples of when you were able to overcome a barrier?	*Ethos? Knowledge and skills? Awareness?* *E.g. funding, resources, expertise, knowledge*	*Can you tell me more?* *Anything else?*

	Implications?		
Wrap up	Final thoughts? Are there any issues you would like to raise or explore which haven't been covered here today?		

'I will turn off the recorder and officially end the interview now' – turn off

Conclude interview (turn off the audio-recorder):

- Thank the participant for taking part.
- Remind the participant of their right to withdraw within the next 14 calendar days, and of the steps to take should they wish to do so.
- Signal to the participant that their participation in member checking phase of the research would be appreciated, but is not required, and that an invitation will be sent once a viable date and time have been agreed.
- Signpost the participant to the offer of a debrief via telephone once data collection and analysis are complete.

Appendix C: Example Transcript Extract – Shared with Consent.

1	Researcher	So yeah, the first one, diving straight in really is, how do you
2		define social justice?
3	Kate	I think, uh, it's a fantastic question and it's something I think about
4		because I'm not sure there is a shared understanding of what
5		social justice means in the EP world, and possibly more broadly
6		than that. For me, it's about fairness and equity. Fairness across
7		society, and equity rather than equality. I'm really kind of
8		passionate about thinking about the rights of the clients that we
9		serve, most especially the children and their families that we work
10		with and thinking about access to our service to, um, wider
11		support in the community and our role in helping kind of facilitate
12		wider participation in the community as well so, having thought
13		about it a lot in anticipation of what we're going to think about
14		today, I think that's what fits with my perspective on social justice.
15	Researcher	Yeah, definitely, and I think, um, for me, you know, just reflecting
16		back as well, it's certainly something, the distinction between
17		equity and equality, erm, you know equal not being fair and fair
18		not being equal is quite an interesting one to hone in on. So yeah,
19		it really is interesting that you mentioned that as well. And yeah,
20		the second one really is about our roles, so if that's what social
21		justice is, what are your thought's regarding social justice and the
22		role of the EP?

23	Kate	I think, ah, I think, we have a complex relationship to social justice.
24		There are, I think, my experience is, that there are branches of
25		our profession that are resistant to accepting that we have a role
26		in social justice while at the same time there's people who are
27		thinking about the ethics and code of conduct that we work under,
28		the ethics of the, the, assessment tools we use, and they're
29		thinking about vulnerable learners or the impact of social
30		economic status on attainment, or looking at factors such as, um,
31		exclusion rates for marginalized groups and yet, not comfortable
32		with seeing our profession in the context of a kind of, in a political
33		context, I've seen and heard EP's kind of say 'oh I don't get
34		involved in politics, it doesn't belongs in educational psychology.'
35		And then I think, but how can we extract our work from the
36		context, uh, and the cultures in which we work? How can we fight
37		for uh, better outcomes for vulnerable learners without naming the
38		impact of austerity? And you know, deprivation and, you know, on
39		poor outcomes. How can we separate the two? And I think we
40		can, perhaps get a bit muddled up between a political perspective
41		and activism perspective, and party politics. And this isn't about
42		party politics. This is about, erm, the sort of the cultural factors
43		which underpin the context of the work that we do, if that makes
44		sense.
45		

46	Researcher	No, it does definitely and it's interesting to you talk about um,
47		yeah, activism and political awareness and sort of, I guess,
48		relating that to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems.
49	Kate	Exactly.
50	Researcher	We do work there and it's part of our training. So yeah, would it
51		be fair to reflect back that you think it is something that is our
52		responsibility or aligned with our job or our role in some way?
53	Kate	I do think it's our responsibility. I also think it can be a very
54		uncomfortable position for, for us as professionals to occupy
55		because it involves the promotion of deep self reflection about
56		ourselves and our own cultural context and the privileges that we
57		have. Many of those kind of dialogues are being amplified at the
58		moment in terms of understanding privilege around race and
59		culture and equity, even on getting onto the training and the, you
60		know, the kind of systemic barriers to becoming an EP in the first
61		place. When we're all saying, 'oh we need more', you know, 'we
62		need our EP population to represent the young people that we
63		serve and wonder why it doesn't. That's strange', but let's carry
64		on with the same system that we've always had and not reflect on
65		issues around equity of access to the training in the first place.
66		And then how issues of social justice kind of integrated into
67		courses, and I suspect. I mean I can only think from my, my lived
68		experience where we were thinking around the social graces as
69		a kind of heuristic for understanding, um, difference, I suppose, in

70		our work and how we work with difference, if you're, as I am, a
71		middle aged white woman.
72		Yeah, we're terribly dull as a as a species. Middle aged white
73		women. But we do we, you know, we have had to overcome our
74		own barriers to participation as, as women, and so perhaps we
75		have more of a, an empathy for thinking about the impact of, of
76		marginalization and marginalized groups. But yeah, my
77		experience was the social graces and that sort of thing is the lens.
78		I don't know how well integrated issues of social justice are in
79		other courses, and training providers across the country, and
80		there may well be some variability 'cause a lot of that depends on
81		the lens of those who are running the courses and administrating
82		it. And then you're working within the context of the BPS and the
83		DECP, and the HCPC who perhaps haven't been as forward
84		thinking and fast moving and responsive as they might have been
85		as organisations.
86		
87	Researcher	No, absolutely, I think you raise, yeah, so many interesting points
88		there and you know just some of the themes coming out for me,
89		it might be; obviously a difference of opinion across EP
90		progression, whether or not this is something you know that EPs
91		need or should advocate for, or perhaps there are those who think
92		it's definitely not our job as well, and that's OK.

93	But I think in terms of, you've mentioned several codes of
94	conduct, so at least you know, on a legal, professional standard
95	level we are required to do certain things that you know under
96	your definition, of equity and fairness, would be considered
97	socially just, perhaps. But then there is the question of whether,
98	you know, to what extent individual EPs then take that forward in
99	their practice.

100	Which is sort of what this discussion is about, so that's set up
101	perfectly for the, sort of, next bit, of this. Yeah, this might be, we
102	can obviously return to, to the first three sections as well as the
103	conversation goes, but, um, in terms of implementing social
104	justice, um, this is what I'm, I'm quite, quite keen to hear your
105	voice on really in terms of your what you think EP's can do,
106	perhaps to promote it? That's quite a big question. So yeah, I'll
107	ask it first and then I've got some prompts after. It's just a kind of
108	scaffold, 'cause I want to make sure you know, and there's things
109	you already mentioned, like assessment, which I want to return
110	to.

111	Yeah, so first of all then what could we do as a profession, or as
112	individual EPs to promote social justice do you think?

113	Kate	I mean, I think. I do think a lot of the time in our practice we're
114		doing it, that we perhaps just not making those links explicit, and
115		I would like to see us as a profession to be more outward facing.
116		That's how I would describe it, in calling out those, those issues

117	and having that presence that thinking you know, kind of on a, on
118	a macro level as a profession. I think I would like to see issues of
119	around social justice made more explicit and integrated into
120	courses and really kind of linking content with social justice
121	themes, and I think to some degree that was happening so for
122	example, when we were learning about, in the first year of
123	training, around different assessment tools and models of
124	assessment, psychometric, dynamic assessment, we were
125	always really encouraged to think about the ethics of using it, and
126	to get acquainted not just with the scoring manual, but with the
127	parts in manual that examine who it might not be relevant to be
128	used with, who it might not be culturally appropriate to use it with,
129	and to think through the ethics and think through the power of
130	those tools and what happens when you calculate numbers and
131	the power that that gives us. And I think a lot, well, my sense is
132	that a lot of EPs might quite like that, and that's one of the reasons
133	why it's quite, it's something that we cling to as a profession, and
134	we can't seem to leave it behind and, you know, park it in in
135	history.
136	I also think, a tiny example from when I was writing my thesis, that
137	I mentioned something in there around when I collected kinds of
138	biographical data about my participants, so I did a qualitative
139	study, I didn't take any data about social economic status, and my
140	study was about the factors which enable young people with
141	autism to transition into further education, and I, my

142	understanding is that you know social, economic factors and
143	austerity context, deprivation factors are likely to be another
144	contributing factor to young people with autism not successfully
145	transitioning to college. I didn't look at that, and I wasn't
146	encouraged to look at that, and when I put it in as an additional
147	line, 'Oh, you know, in future I think I would look through this
148	lens.', The response from the research team was, well, your
149	thesis examiner might might be a Tory, you know, as in 'I'd take
150	that out 'cause not everyone's political Kate', you know. I know
151	that made me really annoyed because I took up a very, an activist
152	position in my research, but that was really me doing that on my
153	own volition and I'd like there to be more, more thinking, more
154	kind of, integrating of social justice themes into our training, into
155	our research, how can we extract what we do from the context in
156	which it happens? And I felt that even as I was training, it's not
157	just kind of something, an add on, or you know, post qualification.
158	And the other thing I think that's really, really fundamental to, uh,
159	successfully integrating social justice themes into our EP work is,
160	is self reflection, and there seems to be more of that around and
161	I'm really glad of it. Things like, through supervisory process,
162	attending to the social graces, to anti oppressive practice and you
163	know transcultural supervision, and things like that as models
164	which is new to me. You know five years post qualification, and
165	I'm glad and I'm excited by it. And I think all of those things are,
166	bringing up the spirit of social justice at least, into our practices.

167	Researcher	No, I definitely agree, again an I think there has been a natural
168		resurgence following Black Lives Matter protest certainly last
169		year, but I think it's always been there. A lot of things in EP
170		practice may naturally be promoting social justice, but those extra
171		things that you've named there, are really, really important and I
172		think they have come in, sort of, the newer wave. So like you say
173		in the last sort of five years it's kind of expanded, transcultural
174		supervision has become very popular, for example.
175		So yeah, I was wondering about say if we might go for any
176		particular interventions that you might you may or may not be a
177		fan of, and to sort of promote this kind of work?
178	Kate	So when you when you're saying 'interventions', say more about
179		that?
180	Researcher	So whether this is, you know, training school staff to do these
181		interventions, doing interventions yourself, therapeutic
182		interventions, non-therapeutic interventions, so anything that has
183		struck you as key or as being informed by social justice principles
184		and perhaps you know, would be a way of practitioners who want
185		to start doing more socially just practice to kind of look up or have
186		a kind of training in or?
187	Kate	I mean something I've been really working on recently is thinking
188		about the kinds of questions I use in consultation. I mean, I, I take
189		the position that assessment is intervention, as anything you do
190		that goes rummaging around in somebody's life is going to have

191	an effect on their life in some sense or another. And that's why we
192	have to be really reflective and thoughtful about our assessment
193	and intervention practices. And I think there are really powerful
194	communications through the tools that you use, about issues
195	around power around, ownership and autonomy. When if we're
196	not, if you're only, if you limit the lens through which you're looking
197	at, a young person or the concern that's being brought, you risk
198	missing things that have real significance because you just
199	haven't attended to them, so I've been trying to think about the
200	kinds of questions that I use that feel comfortable, they feel like
201	they fit my language. They don't feel artificial and gently try to
202	inquire around uh, issues of, of cultural relevance? I mean, I know
203	I am not somebody with any religious persuasions, and I know
204	that religion is and cultural associations to do with anything
205	religious, is a bit of a blind spot for me, and that only comes
206	through that process of self reflection.
207	And then I have to put my, uh, my sentiments to one side, my
208	stuff, park that out of the way and think about what's meaningful
209	for the person I'm working with. Uh, and that's what, you know,
210	that's work in progress for the rest of my days as an EP. I'm
211	certain of that, but I know that there are issues that may be more
212	difficult, less more uncomfortable to get to grips with and to
213	address.
214	Uh, and things like Black Lives Matter. Yes, it's kind of released
215	something that was latent in the profession and it's quite exciting

216		to be able to finally illuminate the issues around privilege and
217		power and oppression. And to be honest, and open and
218		interrogate our assessment and intervention processes, and try
219		to somehow disinfect them through shining a lot of sunlight on
220		them.
221	Researcher	Yeah, so it seems to be important, maybe to have that ongoing
222		dialogue through the EP world sort of thing, in terms of, you know,
223		applying these principles and sort of, sense checking our work
224		or? Is that roughly what we're saying?
225	Kate	Yeah, right, that makes sense. I think it's really understanding that
226		you know we, we know a lot about change processes as well. In
227		our profession, we understand that change can be difficult and
228		change, uh, when it's something is imposed on another group. It
229		is not sustainable, and it's quite fragile. When we are asking our
230		colleagues to interrogate their fundamental processes that have,
231		kind of, got them this far in their professional careers. It's quite a
232		big ask, and if that's imposed from without, and not coming from
233		within through those processes of self reflection and really
234		understanding and engaging with opportunities to dig deeper and
235		reflect and understand the impact of the choices that we make.
236		We have agency and we have power, and we have to think very
237		very carefully about how we use that. And I think that is built into
238		training courses, but the links to, to, the connections from a social
239		justice perspective perhaps could be made more evident that they
240		might be.

242	Researcher	Yeah, so in some courses they might be threaded through, sort
243		of implicitly, whereas other courses might have modules or
244		particular courses which make it very explicit and give you some
245		more protected time to reflect on that.
246	Kate	Yeah
247	Researcher	And the either way it's, it's more important that practitioners
248		emerge with a raised consciousness about these kinds of issues.
249	Kate	Yes, and then they go into services and they raise consciousness
250		within services and then that changes shifts and encourages
251		reflection on the part of, you know, longer established
252		practitioners. And I'm not suggesting oh it's a new wave coming
253		in and teaching all the old guard how to do it. Not at all, but then
254		we know actually educational psychology is relatively new
255		compared to other disciplines. It is still in its infancy in many ways.
256		You know we haven't been around for all that long and our
257		practices and profession has shifted enormously in a relatively
258		short space of time and keeping up with those change processes
259		is it is not always easy. But I think there are some people who
260		have been around a lot longer than others who really get this and
261		understand it and have been waiting for this, sort of community
262		psychology movement to happen, and it feels like it's happening,
263		I just wonder about sustainability, and whether its going to bring

264		about something radical, which is what I think deep in my heart,
265		is what I hope that will happen.
266	Researcher	OK, so let's explore that? So what would be your idea of a, yeah,
267		some kind of radical social justice movement in the profession?
268	Kate	Oh gosh, well, I think in in microcosm to sort of bring it back to
269		manageable levels. What we've seen in the service where I've
270		been working where we've shifted from a very expert model of EP
271		service delivery involving formal, usually psychometric,
272		assessment with the EP dictating what happens to you know that
273		young person and shifting away from that to a much more
274		collaborative collegiate way of working, where the expertise is
275		100%, right back to the family and the child. They are the experts
276		in their life. We have expertise in psychology.
277		I think that even that has shifted the power imbalance somewhat
278		to mean that the power is being given back to, to the individuals
279		at the heart of the work that we're doing. But we're still in a place
280		where we have schools who request psychometric assessment
281		because they need some numbers to be crunched in order for this
282		child to access a particular service, and that whole sphere is
283		something that leaves me very uncomfortable. And I want to
284		challenge it and I think it is being challenged. But it involves an
285		awful lot of other disciplines and other, Uh, contexts and
286		organizations to make that change as well, but we might be a

287		small voice, but I think we can be a strong one if we, if we have a
288		collective power.
289	Researcher	So to challenge that kind of older model where it's not appropriate
290		or?
291	Kate	Right, yeah, I mean so, one instance, for example is this is about
292		issues of power is where, a hypothetical situation where a less
293		experienced colleagues might be deployed to go in, for example,
294		to administer psychometric assessment with a young person and
295		so they do that because they're being told to and the power is top
296		down and they are potentially holding a lot of reservations about
297		the validity of what they're doing, the appropriateness of the, the
298		ethical aspect of that you know. When you practice psychometric
299		assessment on your mates when you're learning to use the tools
300		you realise just how demanding and powerful they are and they
301		end when the child is struggling. I mean it apart from anything
302		else, to understand that you finish when the child can't do it
303		anymore, has been a real ethical issue for me and that's one
304		reason why I think we have to use them really carefully. But I'm
305		thinking about that power dynamic again of that individual being
306		deployed to go and do it. And it not being so ecologically valid,
307		culturally relevant or ethical to do it, but they still are because
308		that's the tools that we've got and that's what we do, and that's
309		how we use them. And it doesn't feel right at all.

Appendix D: Recruitment Email for Principal EPs

Dear _____

I hope that this finds you well.

My name is Daniel Cumber and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in the second year of my training on the Doctorate for Applied Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham, currently on placement in Shropshire Educational Psychology Service. I am being supervised by Dr Huw Williams. I am conducting a research project for my thesis exploring Social Justice and the Role of the Educational Psychologist (EP). I am focusing on how EPs understand social justice, if they view its promotion as part of their role and critically considering how they might best promote social justice in the current English context. The aspiration of the project is that it will produce a useful summative toolkit of recommendations for promotion social justice for practising EPs around the country.

I will be interviewing a range of fully qualified EPs for this project and would appreciate your help in recruiting any EPs from your service who might be interested in participation. Please could you circulate this email within your EP team and could I ask any EPs who are interested in participation to read and complete the attached information sheet, short demographic questionnaire and consent form and email them back to me at this address.

I will then be in contact to arrange a convenient date and time for the interview.

Thank you very much for your time and help. If you have any queries, or wish to know more, please contact me or my supervisor using the details below.

Email: ████████████████████████
Phone: ██████████████

Research Supervisor: ████████████████████
Phone: ███████████████

Recruitment Email: Participating EPs

Dear _____

I hope that this finds you well.

My name is Daniel Cumber and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in the second year of my training on the Doctorate for Applied Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham, currently on placement in Shropshire Educational Psychology Service. I am being supervised by Dr Huw Williams. I am conducting a research project for my thesis exploring Social Justice and the Role of the Educational Psychologist (EP). I am focusing on how EPs understand social justice, if they view its promotion as part of their role and critically considering how they might best promote social justice in the current English context. The aspiration of the project is that it will

produce a useful summative toolkit of recommendations for promotion social justice for practising EPs around the country.

Participation would involve a single confidential interview. Interviews will last approximately 1 hour and will be conducted face to face in council buildings or via Microsoft Teams if there are Covid-19 restrictions in place. It will take place at a time which suits you. The interview would, with your consent, be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis by myself as the researcher. Strict confidentiality would remain in place throughout. As this would be an in-depth interview of a personal and potentially emotive topic, there is a possibility that you could find it upsetting in some way, although every care will be taken to prevent this and you will be able to take a break or discontinue the interview at any stage if necessary. However, I expect this will not be necessary and I hope you will find it both enjoyable and interesting.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you will have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw without giving reasons prior to, during and for two weeks (14 days) after the interview takes place at which point data analysis will start and I would be unable to destroy your data. You also have the opportunity to withdraw part of your data during these two weeks. All information provided will be kept confidential and identifying information will be changed and a pseudonym given to any of your data used in any report, the write up for my thesis and any publications arising from this research.

If you do wish to be interviewed, please read and complete the attached information sheet, short demographic questionnaire and consent form and email them back to me at this address. I will then be in contact to arrange a convenient date and time for the interview.

Thank you very much for your time and help in considering to take part. If you have any queries, or wish to know more, please contact me using the details below.

Email: ██████████████████████████
Phone: ████████████████

Research Supervisor: █████████████████████
Phone: ████████████████

Appendix E: Information sheet (Page 1 of 3)

Social Justice and Educational Psychology: Putting Values into Action (2020)

Background Information

My name is Dan Cumber, I am a trainee educational psychologist who worked for Powys Educational Psychology Service (EPS) as an assistant educational psychologist for two years, from 2017-2019. Since September 2019, I have been registered as a postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham, where I am undertaking the three-year, full-time professional training in educational psychology.

As part of my training, I am undertaking a two-year supervised practice placement within Shropshire EPS and undertaking this substantive research study for my thesis. My research supervisor is Dr Huw Williams who is available for contact or queries on the contact details below.

This information email has been sent to you because I am seeking your agreement to take part in this research project. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, please read this so that you understand why the research is being conducted and what being part of the project will entail. If you would like further information or would like to ask any questions about the information below, please do not hesitate to ask (contact details are provided at the end of this document).

My Research Aims

I am interested in exploring the views, understanding and experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) with regard to the application of Social Justice in our role. I aim to elicit how EP understand social justice, whether they identify with it as part of the role and how they can best promote social justice in practice within the current English context, including discussion of barriers to social justice and potential solutions within EP practice.

Justification

The promotion of social justice and the empowerment of marginalised children and young people and their families/groups is often cited as a key motivator and aspect of the identity of the EP, stemming from their traditional advocacy role, but can be hampered by day-to-day conditions of the job including but not limited to administrative tasks, meetings and local authority structures and wider austerity conditions. Given the evolution of EP work often into a traded model with the current austerity measures and previous ethical concerns with this, and wider cultural events e.g. the Black Lives Matter protests, widening attainment gap for disadvantaged children and young people in the UK, how EPs can best promote social justice in this current English context is, in my view, a timely and relevant question.

This research will hopefully lead to critically considered practical ways forward towards building an understanding of ways in which EPs can promote social justice and equity in their practice to reduce inequality for all stakeholders including vulnerable and marginalised groups of children and young people and adults in society.

I anticipate that through exploration of these issues that a practical toolkit of realistic ways in which EPs can promote social justice as a set of values or a vision might be consolidated from responses alongside ways to overcome identified barriers to the promotion of social justice within the current English context.

Your involvement

If you are willing to take part in the study please email a completed copy of the attached consent form and I will be in contact to answer any questions you may have and to arrange a suitable date for a research interview (of approximately one-hour's duration) at a time and location convenient to you. The process will involve an in-depth discussion about your professional career, asking you to recall and reflect upon key events throughout your life that have had an impact on your values and on the promotion or hinderance of social justice in your work.

The interview will be audio-recorded* to enable me to capture the detail of your account and ensure accuracy: I would not be able to maintain a full or accurate written record!

A follow-up meeting is planned to take place in November 2021, to offer me a chance to feed back initial findings to you and provide you the opportunity to confirm whether the findings reflect your views, or that they do not.

(Please note: You do not need to engage in this follow-up meeting if you prefer not to).

What will the findings be used for?

The research findings will be communicated in a research report for the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service. An executive summary, or, should you prefer, the full report, will be provided to you. These reports may also be shared with other professionals from participating local authorities.

Please note: Your name, local authority and any other identifying information **will not be included** in any of the reports.

The research findings will also be written in my doctoral thesis for the University of Birmingham, which will be published, in full, online in the University e-theses database. Shorter papers summarising the research may be written for submission to a peer-reviewed journal for publication, and findings from the study may also be disseminated at professional conferences.

What will happen to the data that is collected?

Immediately after your interview, the electronically audio-recorded and video-recorded data will be transferred from the devices to a password-protected folder on the University of Birmingham's secure electronic data storage system, BEAR Data Services. The files will then be erased from the recording devices. Electronic transcripts and notes will also be held in a password-protected folder on BEAR Data Services. Any written notes and forms will be scanned in and also stored on BEAR Data Services in a password protected folder. Original paper notes and forms will be shredded. In accordance with university research policy, data will be stored on BEAR Data Services for 10 years after completion of the project. A 10-year expiry date will be set for the electronic data stored on BEAR Data Services.

If I change my mind, can I withdraw from the study?

- You have a right to stop the interview (and the recording) any time, without having to give a reason.
- You also have the right to ask me to redact any part of your interview transcription. You can choose to exclude specific comments from the interview transcript, which will not be analysed. However, it will not be possible to erase excerpts from the audio recording.
- If you choose to withdraw completely from the study during or immediately after the interview, the recording will be deleted from the recording devices immediately.
- Following the interview, you can withdraw your data from the research, for a period of up to fourteen days, by contacting the researcher (see contact details below).

Will my information be kept confidential in the study?

- Yes. Anything that you say will be treated as confidential, which means that it cannot be identified as yours.
- Pseudonyms will be used throughout the transcript and research report. Family relationships or professional roles may be referred to (e.g. brother, teacher or doctor).
- Every care will be taken to minimise the reporting of specific or unique case details that may reveal your identity. Please contact me if there is anything that you would like to be left out.
- If, for any reason, I become seriously concerned about your own or others' safety and/or well-being, I have a responsibility to pass on this information to the university tutor or placement supervisor, in order to decide how to offer support. This would be fully discussed with you first.

Where can I seek further information?

- Please feel free to ask me any questions you may have now.
- There will also be opportunity for questions and discussion after the interview.
- If you have any remaining questions or concerns after the interview, please use the following contacts:

Researcher: Dan Cumber

Research
supervisor: Dr Huw Williams

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering your participation in the study.

Appendix F: Consent Form

I _____ would like to take part in the study exploring social justice and the role of the educational psychologist. This study is being carried out by Dan Cumber, Trainee Educational Psychologist, as part of a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology at the University of Birmingham.

<u>Please read and complete the participant consent form.</u>

I have read and understood the project information sheet.	Y	N
I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the project.	Y	N
I confirm that I am currently a fully qualified Educational Psychologist practising in England.	Y	N
I understand that the interview will last approximately one hour.	Y	N
I agree to meeting the researcher at a later date, to discuss initial findings and share my thoughts on these.	Y	N
Right to withdraw: I understand my participation in the study is voluntary. I understand I can withdraw from the at any point without explanation. I can also ask for my interview information not to be used in the study up until two weeks after the interview date. If I decide to withdraw from the study during or after the interview, all interview data will also be destroyed.	Y	N
Confidentiality: My views and identity will be kept confidential unless I say anything that suggests I or another are at risk from harm, in which case Dan would seek guidance from his research supervisor and follow the necessary safeguarding procedures.	Y	N
Privacy: I understand that my voice will be recorded during the interview and Dan may also take some hand-written notes. I understand that the voice recordings will be transcribed. I know that neither my name, nor the name of the local authority, will be included in these reports. I understand that basic details about me (ie. Sex, ethnicity, age, service type and years of experience) will be summarised in the methodology section. I give permission for my interview recording to be typed up with a different name and for this to be used in his research. I agree to anonymised quotes being used as part of the study.	Y	N
I agree to being audio recorded and I understand that the recordings will only be heard by Dan and his research supervisors.	Y	N
Data storage: All hand-written notes and audio recordings will be typed-up using pseudo-names, the original recordings (including video, if additionally agreed) and notes will be deleted or destroyed. The notes and recorder will be kept locked in a filing cabinet that only Dan Cumber has access to. The anonymised transcripts will only be available to Dan, his University Supervisor and University assessors. In adherence to the Data Protection Act (2018), All electronic versions of anonymous documents will be stored on the University of Birmingham secure network for a period of 10 years, after which point, they will be destroyed.	Y	N
Data usage: I understand that the results of this study: • Will be used for Dan's Doctoral Thesis	Y	N

- Will be shared with professionals from the participating Educational Psychology Services - Will be made available to other professionals working in children's services in Shropshire. - May be written up for professional journals or shared at conferences for people working in/with educational psychology services.		192

Staff Name: _____   **Researcher:** _____

Signature: _____   **Signature:** _____

Date: _____   **Date:** _____

Appendix G: Demographic Questionnaire

Please complete the following table.

Please note that this data will be used for the methodology section of the written thesis document.

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years as an EP	Type of EP Service (Traded/Semi/non-traded)

*Please note that these details are collected solely to illustrate the diversity of the sample, and to limit claims about potential relationships between findings/themes and the sample. This follows from the understanding that all knowledge is situated in a given context, and all participants belong in unique and specific cultural spaces. Demographic information collected here is NOT treated as a variable to generalise but to ensure a variety of EP experiences and backgrounds are accounted for (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

Appendix H: Reflexive Journal Excerpts

- interviews moved online due to covid restrictions on F2F for foreseeable future.

Interview went well - - questions worked well so proceeded as planned.

Final interview (11) completed July 2021 - interviews March - July. PPR 2-4 completed so vol 2.

Transcription and Analysis Autumn 2021 - returning for iterative reading of transcripts to "immerse" self in data.

MS Teams ethically safe so data protect -ion.

one participant concerned re confidentia -lity. - Advisor suggested deleting all recordings after transcription + shredding/deleting transcript after data analysis - agreed

Part 2 - The flexibility of TA

Reflexive researcher positioning influences TA
- Not pure induction.

[Inductive] ✓ or Deductive

experiential or critical orientation to
How they make sense   data-
of things   meaning is interrogated
                         often heavily discursive
                         - language
                         - what does that way of
                           speaking evoke?

Critical realism or Contextualist? or Constructions

TA researcher must   TA is flexible
be at least here   Not inherently realist
to be coherent with   Not atheoretical
the assumptions of
a qualitative paradigm

Very important in write up to articulate
your assumptions because they affect your
analysis! ∴ Theoretical

No requirements about Sampling - homogenous
                                  is fine.
                              Heterogenous is
!Language Practice - can't be used   fine.
                     with TA needs
                     to be mashed up
                     with Discourse Analysis to do this

Decision Point - No member check

Constructivist Epistemology

MC hangover of ~~positivity~~
positivist mentality? - validity check?

But Big Q - Not generalisability
or reliability/validity.

Ethics of member check -
Force participants to reengage with
emotionally charged content. May change
to fit to "researcher expertise"
Participants may change narrative
or challenge themes but after
Stage 3 themes are actively shaped
by the researcher in thematic
analysis so confirming validity
of interpretation of participants
view both incompatible with epistemology
, qualitative approach and data analysis!

MC - Foucault's Polyhedron of intelligibility
-y. Differing time points + reengagement
would change data? would it improve
comprehensiveness? - No because interviews
were average of 2 hrs long and
examining EP in the moment phronesis
not reflective accounts per se.
- Kinds of knowledge distinct?

Appendix I: Extract from NVivo Codebook

Code and Theme Names.	Number of Participants (Files)	Number of individual coded textual extracts (References)
RQ 1 - Defining Social Justice	11	310
Negative	8	16
SJ definition unclear	8	16
change over time	2	6
Dangerous ambiguity in language	4	13
Contradictory views because of definition	3	7
Critical Voices Silenced	2	21
Free Speech	3	5
No safe place to discuss SJ issues	3	19
Can't question SJ	3	20
Uncritical acceptance of 'SJ'	5	26
SJ as oppressive practice	4	5
SJ analysis can be disempowering for individuals	2	7
slippery definitions of SJ	3	3

Code and Theme Names.	Number of Participants (Files)	Number of individual coded textual extracts (References)
Unconscious Bias	2	2
Positive	11	294
Fairness and Equity	11	294
Anti-oppressive practice	10	40
Distinction between Equality and Equity	4	5
Equality of opportunity and (VS) outcome	3	6
Human Rights	11	116
Access to services	9	22
Marginalised groups	10	40
promoting agency for individuals	8	30
Transgender	2	3
Community Participation and Support	8	16
PFA outcomes, getting a job and independent living	3	3
Different to Inclusion	4	5
Human rights within education	9	26
Justice	9	20
Power Imbalance	11	40

Code and Theme Names.	Number of Participants (Files)	Number of individual coded textual extracts (References)
Empowerment of disadvantaged	9	40
RQ2 - Exploring Professional Identity - Social Justice and the Role of the EP	11	48
SJ and the role of the EP	11	48
No, it's not the role of the EP	4	9
EP role is not the role of a politician	4	8
Not solely EP's work	1	1
Not the EP's remit	3	4
Professional vs personal	4	11
Psychological dissonance between SJ and EP Role	5	8
EP's role in historical and current oppression SEND	6	14
Groupthink, bandwagon and complacency	3	17
Virtue Signalling	4	15
Overly reductionist formulation of needs	8	27
Yes, it is the role of the EP	11	35
Advocacy role	11	195

Code and Theme Names.	Number of Participants (Files)	Number of individual coded textual extracts (References)
advocacy for marginalised groups	11	58
Diversity as strength to be celebrated	8	26
Challenging injustice in environments around CYP	8	35
Assessment Ethics	7	16
Codes of Conduct and Ethics	4	5
Culture of clients	5	7
Exclusions	8	20
Making a difference	7	21
Broad vs narrow education working	6	9
Reducing barriers for CYP	3	5
Virtual school work	5	16
Religion of Clients	3	4
SES of clients	3	4
Social Class	3	7
EP Knowledge and skills - well placed	8	24
Taught on EP training	8	15
Training Course	4	5

Code and Theme Names.	Number of Participants (Files)	Number of individual coded textual extracts (References)
Values	11	147
Culturally embedded	6	23
Lens	7	10
Motivations for becoming an EP	2	3
Process	8	15
Psychology is political	10	22
Gatekeeper	1	2
Ep's input into allocation of resource for children in LA	8	16
Part of good psychological formulation and assessment	9	29
Not limited to SEND	3	6
Resource distribution	2	9
Vision	7	19

Appendix J: Application for Ethical Review

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Application for Ethics Review Form

Section 1: Basic Project Details

Project Title: Social Justice and Educational Psychology: Putting Values into Action

Is this project a:

University of Birmingham Staff Research project ☐
University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project ☒
Other (Please specify below) ☐
Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of the Principal Investigator or Lead Supervisor (for PGR student projects):

Title: Dr
First name: Huw
Last name: Williams

Position held: Tutor in Educational Psychology
School/Department Education – Disability, Inclusion and Special Needs

Telephone: ███████████████
Email address: ███████████████

Details of any Co-Investigators or Co-Supervisors (for PGR student projects):

Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
First name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Last name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position held: Click or tap here to enter text.
School/Department Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of the student for PGR student projects:

Title: Mr

First name: Daniel
Last name: Cumber

Course of study: App Ed and Child Psych D
Email address: ██████████████████████

Project start and end dates:

Estimated start date of project: 03/05/2021
Estimated end date of project: 06/06/2022

Funding:

Sources of funding: N/A

Section 2: Summary of Project

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon - please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases. Please do not provide extensive academic background material or references.

This research will focus on social justice and the current role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in England. It will specifically seek to elicit EP's understanding of how to promote social justice in practice through the following potential research questions:

1) How do EPs define and understand social justice?
2) Do EPs view the promotion of social justice as part of their role?
3) Do EPs think that their training prepared them for their role in promoting social justice?
4) How do EPs best promote social justice in their work?
5) What barriers exist to the promotion of social justice in EP work and how can these be overcome?

Rationale

Social justice is a difficult concept to define and there is no all-encompassing definition which has achieved literature consensus. Social justice is likely to be a culturally embedded term (Schulze et al, 2019). However, a popular and prominent definition was provided in 2016 by Bell to situate the concept:

'The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. The process for attaining the goal of social justice should also be democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create

change.' (Bell, 2016 pp.3)

In many ways the role of the EP already serves these functions. Cameron (2006) argues that the role of the EP is diverse but encompasses:

a) The application of psychology to human problems,
b) The uncovering of mediating variables to provide explanation of related events,
c) The exploring of problem dimensions using models which can be used to demonstrate a useful map of interaction between people factors and their environments across systems and organisations,
d) The utilisation of theory and research from psychology to develop and enact evidence-based strategies for change.
e) The promotion of innovative concepts which flow from evidence and theory and enable clients to identify and seize opportunities for positive change.

Arguably, the promotion of social justice is embedded within the day to day work of EPs throughout these role functions. EP's have historically usually worked at the level of the individual, the organisation and the system as a traditional model of service delivery from Curran, Gersch and Wolfendale (2003) illustrates. They are well placed to work across Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems (2001) including work as advocates of inclusion from the level of the child, the family, the school and the wider socio-political and cultural contexts. In Bronfenbrenner's terms across the Micro, Meso and Macro systems. A quote from the EP email forum EPNET (2005) included in Cameron's paper (2006) illustrates this well:

'Educational Psychologists are applied psychologists who primarily address issues within
children's development and learning, whilst supporting equal opportunities relating to removal of barriers in culture, race, gender, disability and social disadvantage, ultimately
promoting inclusion at all these levels' (EPNET, 2005)

Arguably EPs have much to contribute to the promotion of social justice in England through a natural extension of their roles as advocates of vulnerable and marginalised groups and inclusive practice, dynamic and appropriate psychological assessment of needs, and their research and practical knowledge of longitudinal psychology regarding risk and resilience factors, socialisation outcomes, the value of diversity and the importance of working collaboratively with others, for example through use of consultation, coaching and training. EP's working in England work within its cultural context which includes explicit promotion of human rights. Alongside the UK being a signatory to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, the UK has attempted to promote social justice work through strong legislative support from The Equality Act (2010) and The Children and Families Act (2014) and the revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in England (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015) which attempts to empower stakeholders and focuses on the importance of eliciting and promoting the voices of children and parents/carers from all backgrounds within SEND processes.

The promotion of social justice is also commensurate with the new education inspection framework from OFSTED in England. In particular the public sector equality duty which stipulates that while exercising its functions under 109(2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, OFSTED must hold schools and local authorities to account for the work they do to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under The Equality Act 2010. EP's as local authority employees and members of the Health Care Professions Council share this duty in their practice. Similarly, the British Psychological Society (2017) conducted a recent audit on its members who were involved with the promotion of social justice and found that most members were actively engaged in avid promotion of social justice, equality and inclusion across ecological systems although they did face several barriers.

Wider research indicates strong support for why EP's might conceptualise part of their role to be the promotion of social justice. Power (2008) suggests that educational psychologists (called school psychologists in the US) are well suited to the promotion of social justice through their work with schools and families, especially in regard to their role in early intervention. EPs regularly promote the reflection and action of school staff regarding difficulties and strengths of pupils in their learning environment. That is, they promote the consideration of factors impacting on pupils from wider 'systemic' and ecological levels such as at the level of the family home, the wider community, local culture, political and legal levels in contrast to sole use of a 'within-child' deficit model, although individual differences are also important (Williams & Greenleaf, 2012). Shriberg & Clinton (2016) argue that EPs are trained to work collaboratively with families, school staff and allied professionals to co-create positive change for the children and young people with which they work.

A recent systematic literature review into the small and emergent evidence (Schulze et al., 2017) found that social justice was significant to educational psychology practice. The studies reviewed were mostly conducted in the US (Briggs, McArdle, Bartucci, Kowalewicz, & Shriberg,2009; Miranda, Radliff, Cooper, & Eschenbrenner, 2014; Moy et al., 2014; Shriberg et al., 2008; Shriberg, Wynne, Briggs, Bartucci, & Lombardo, 2011). Social justice was found to be comprised of non-discriminatory practice, equity and advocacy. The importance of combating the effects of prejudice, discrimination and inequality was considered vital to the role of the educational psychologist and the promotion of social justice seen as an essential way to do this.

Within England, there has only been one study published which investigated social justice and EP practice (Schulze et al., 2019). England is under a different culturally specific context than the US research explored above. In particular, 10 years of austerity measures and cuts to education, health local government services such as educational psychology have impacted the profession (Karanikolos et al, 2013). In response many EP services have adopted 'traded' or 'semi-traded' business models and had to move away from 100% 'core funding' on which they used to rely. Core funding means that EP services receive local government funding to deliver statutory and early intervention work. Semi-traded services receive some funding for this work and fully traded services only receive funding for statutory work. All other work is paid

for by schools, nurseries, colleges, universities and voluntary organisations (Coughlan, 2017; Weale, 2017).

Schulze and colleagues (2019) found that EPs working in England discussed similar themes to the US research particularly focusing on equality and equity, power and privilege and action in their roles. The influence of socio-political measures was evident in the lived experiences of EPs. This included the difficulties and barriers arising because schools, now paying for EP services, were likely to favour prioritisation of individual assessment of children experiencing difficulties, as opposed to funding significant preventative and developmental change projects within the wider school, known as 'systemic' practice to EPs and seen by EPs as a more 'socially just' approach. EP's expressed concerns for the ability of Local Authority employed EPs to promote social justice within increasingly privatised health and education sectors but valued its promotion and for the inclusion and diversity of society. Social justice was considered to be important to EP practice and be comprised of several approaches including personal (being aware of personal bias), and professional (through consultation, supporting others and challenging the status quo). EPs from this study agreed that social justice should be promoted through their work but there was disagreement regarding what action this would involve and uncertainty as to whether the profession as a whole would support social justice as a part of the role.

Therefore, given the wider literature and the argument for promoting social justice within the EP profession, it is my belief that a thesis investigating social justice and EP practice in England is both timely and relevant. The current research proposed here will hopefully lead to critically considered practical ways forward towards building an understanding of ways in which EPs can promote social justice in their practice to reduce inequality for all stakeholders including vulnerable and marginalised groups of children and young people as well as adults in society, and promote equity. It will also help to further address the gap in the literature base and inspire further work in this area.

Expected Outcomes

I anticipate that through exploration of these issues that a practical toolkit of realistic ways in which EPs can promote social justice as a set of values or a vision might be consolidated from responses alongside ways to overcome identified barriers to the promotion of social justice within the current English context. It will contribute to the knowledge base regarding the role of the EP in relation to social justice and indicate how EPs may understand their ability to promote these values in the English context. There will be a summative toolkit of potential recommendations for EP practice following this research to enable EP's who desire to effectively promote social justice in their work to do so with greater clarity. There will also be recommendations for if and how EP training courses might support the promotion of a social justice agenda which is growing internationally across the psychology professions (Schriberg & Clinton, 2016).

Section 3: Conduct and location of Project

Conduct of project

Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used. If more than one methodology or phase will be involved, please separate these out clearly and refer to them consistently throughout the rest of this form.

Design

This research is interested in the understanding and meaning of social justice for EPs and the ways in which they might successfully promote this. It will therefore use an exploratory, qualitative design (Levitt et al., 2018), framed within a multiple case study (Thomas, 2016).

Method
Semi-structured interviews will be used and guided by the interview schedule (See Appendix 5) and then analysed with thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2014). This research will aim to recruit 8-10 EPs as participants for the interviews. They will be recruited via email using purposive and voluntary sampling. Data will be collected in the interviews via audio recording and this will later be transcribed for analysis. Interviews will last approximately one hour.

Covid-19: If face to face interviews are not possible due to covid-19 restrictions participants will be given the option to participate via Microsoft Teams in a location of their choosing. The interviewer will conduct these interviews securely from their home office.

Justification of method
The research is concerned with eliciting data from the lived experiences of EPs. Therefore, the research questions focusing on subjective EP experiences naturally align with thematic analysis as a way of exploring and describing themes in this area. The aim of a sample of ten will help to distil common themes in the data to understand how EPs understand social justice in relation to their role and how they might promote it. Although Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was considered, the focus on commonality and utility of findings required for the toolkit drawn from participants in different unique cultural and historical organisational cultures, for example different Local Authorities, highlights Thematic Analysis as the appropriate choice. This is because Thematic Analysis promotes access to richness and depth of data but allows for common themes to be distilled, as opposed to the use of IPA which may be more geared towards understanding fewer specific EP's experiences in greater detail.

Geographic location of project

State the geographic locations where the project and all associated fieldwork will be carried out.   If the project will involve travel to areas which may be considered unsafe, either in the UK or overseas, please ensure that the risks of this (or any other non-trivial health and safety risks associated with the research) are addressed by a documented health and safety risk assessment, as described in section 10 of this form.

- The main location of the data collection, analysis and write up will take place in Shropshire Local Authority.
- The project may involve some travel to West Midlands Local Authority Educational Psychology Services for data collection purposes only.
- Meeting rooms will be booked and interviews conducted safely and confidentially within office workspaces.
- **Covid-19:** If face to face interviews are not possible due to covid-19 restrictions participants will be given the option to participate via Microsoft Teams in a location of their choosing. The interviewer will conduct these interviews securely from their home office.

Section 4: Research Participants and Recruitment

Does the project involve human participants?

Note: 'Participation' includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, in crowd behaviour research).

Yes   ☒
No   ☐

If you have answered NO please go on to Section 8 of this form. If you have answered YES please complete the rest of this section and then continue on to section 5.

Who will the participants be?

Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

Qualified Educational Psychologists working in England

How will the participants be recruited?

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student). Please ensure that you attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

The participants will be recruited via purposive, voluntary, convenience sampling. Participants interested in social justice or having strong feelings about it's promotion in the profession are therefore likely to volunteer. Inclusion and exclusion criteria will not

specify an interest in social justice in order to participate but the researcher recognises that participants are likely to be advocates of social justice. This is not necessarily a difficulty for this study given that it seeks to understand strong views about social justice promotion and the role of the EP and it does not seek to generalise findings in a positivist manner given its qualitative exploratory orientation.

Participants will be invited to participate through an email detailing the research request with the information sheet and opt-in consent form attached, alongside a short demographic questionnaire gathering age, gender, ethnicity, years of EP experience and EP service type (see Appendices 2-4). The email will be sent to the Principal Educational Psychologist for each respective service (see Appendix 1), asking for the email to be circulated among the team's constituent EPs and for interested EPs to contact the researcher directly via a council email or telephone number. These details will be shared so that participants can contact the researcher if they have any questions, queries or concerns before or after the interview. No personal contact details will be shared (i.e. home address or phone number of either the researcher or prospective participants).

As a Trainee EP I will be interviewing people I work with and work for as well as strangers. Due consideration for power hierarchies and potential coercive 'voluntary' participation will be mitigated by interviewing fully qualified EPs, Senior EPs and Principal EPs and through additional reiteration and ethical checking with the participant at the beginning of the interview. In particular, the right to withdraw, refuse and referral to supervision and support will be outlined and agreed with participants before the interview commences in addition to having written proof via the information and consent sheets.

This research is considered to be safe for everyone participating and as a member of their 'in-group' I expect EPs who volunteer to be interviewed will feel safe to do so. I will be interviewing fellow professional EPs in safe workplaces or virtual settings so this concern is minimised.

The information sheet and consent form will seek to secure informed consent, including the consent to be interviewed and the consent to be recorded alongside the above ethical considerations which will be reiterated at the start of the interview to allow for ample opportunity for participants to refuse or withdraw after consideration.

Section 5: Consent

What process will be used to obtain consent?

Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why. If the participants are under the age of 16 it would usually be necessary to obtain parental consent and the process for this should be described in full, including whether parental consent will be opt-in or opt-out.

Guidelines for freely-given, fully-informed consent will be followed from the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2018), the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) and The University of Birmingham Code of Practice for Research. Gatekeepers (Principal Educational Psychologists) will be emailed in the first instance and asked to circulate the email together with the information sheet and opt in consent form. Interested participants will be asked in this email to read the information sheet carefully and email a completed copy of the opt-in consent form and demographic questionnaire to the researcher's council email. As noted above educational psychologists who express an interest in taking part in the study will be asked to contact the researcher directly via a council email or telephone number. These details will be shared so that participants can contact the researcher if they have any questions, queries or concerns before or after the interview. No personal contact details will be shared (i.e. home address or phone number). Although participants may give initial consent via email, at the beginning of each individual interview, the researcher will talk through the information sheet, which will include information about the study, the study's aims, and what participants will be asked to do. There will be an opportunity for participants to ask questions in person at the beginning of the interview and previously in response to the email invitation. Once all questions have been answered and participants agree that they understand all of the information provided, they will be asked to confirm oral consent in reference to the consent form prior to the start of the interview (see Appendices 4-5).

Please be aware that if the project involves over 16s who lack capacity to consent, separate approval will be required from the Health Research Authority (HRA) in line with the Mental Capacity Act.

Please attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.

Note: Guidance from Legal Services on wording relating to the Data Protection Act 2018 can be accessed at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/legal-services/What-we-do/Data-Protection/resources.aspx.

Use of deception?

Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study?

Yes   ☐
No   ☒

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and the nature of any explanation/debrief will be provided to the participants after the study has taken place.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 6: Participant compensation, withdrawal and feedback to participants

What, if any, feedback will be provided to participants?

Explain any feedback/ information that will be provided to the participants after participation in the research (e.g. a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

A public domain briefing will be created and shared with participants and schools that were involved in the study. This will include a rationale for the study, methods and key findings. This summary report will not include any information that could identify participants. Participants will be offered the opportunity to meet with me to discuss the research findings.

The research project will be written up to form Volume 1 of my thesis for the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, which will be available online, and may be published at a later date. To ensure confidentiality, participants will be informed that names of participants, the local authority etc. will not be used and that any other identifying information will be redacted from all interview transcripts. Pseudonyms will be used to aid readability. Some demographic information about the participants (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, EP service type and years of EP experience) and the local authority in which they work (e.g. size, OFSTED rating, inclusion policies) will be gathered and included to provide contextual and background information. Excerpts from interview transcripts will be included in the final write-up of the research project, and participants will be made aware of this.

What arrangements will be in place for participant withdrawal?

Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project, explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

Click or tap here to enter text.
Participants will be able to withdraw from the project and this will be stated in the information sheet and consent forms. Participants will be reminded of this orally prior to each interview commencing. Participants will be given contact details (my local authority phone number and email address) to use should they wish to withdraw from the study. There will be no consequences for the participant if they withdraw from the study and all their data will be immediately destroyed.

Please confirm the specific date/timescale to be used as the deadline for participant withdrawal and ensure that this is consistently stated across all participant documentation. This is considered preferable to allowing participants to 'withdraw at any time' as presumably there will be a point beyond which it will not be possible to remove their data from the study (e.g. because analysis has started, the findings have been published, etc).

Participants will be free to withdraw from the project before, during or (up to two weeks) after their interview takes place. After this time data analysis and synthesis will be in progress and I will be unable to withdraw their data.

What arrangements will be in place for participant compensation?

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

Yes ☐
No ☒

If yes, please provide further information about the nature and value of any compensation and clarify whether it will be financial or non-financial.

N/A

If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

N/A

Section 7: Confidentiality/anonymity

Will the identity of the participants be known to the researcher?

Will participants be truly anonymous (i.e. their identity will not be known to the researcher)?

Yes ☐
No ☒

In what format will data be stored?

Will participants' data be stored in identifiable format, or will it be anonymised or pseudo-anonymised (i.e. an assigned ID code or number will be used instead of the participant's name and a key will kept allowing the researcher to identify a participant's data)?

The study involves face-to-face interviews, which means that anonymity cannot be offered to participants. To ensure confidentiality, as noted above, participants will be informed that names of participants, the local authority etc. will not be used and that if identifying information is discussed in an interview this will not be included in the transcript. Pseudonyms will be used to aid readability, and a key will be kept by the researcher to enable the identification of a participant's data. Some information about the participants (e.g. demographics [see appendix 2]) and the Local Authorities in which they work (e.g. size, OFSTED rating, inclusion policies) will be gathered and included to provide contextual and background information. Excerpts from interview transcripts will be included in the final write-up of the research project, and participants will be made aware of this.

Will participants' data be treated as confidential?

Will participants' data be treated as confidential (i.e. they will not be identified in any outputs from the study and their identity will not be disclosed to any third party)?

Yes   ☒
No   ☐

If you have answered no to the question above, meaning that participants' data will not be treated as confidential (i.e. their data and/or identities may be revealed in the research outputs or otherwise to third parties), please provide further information and justification for this:

N/A

Section 8: Storage, access and disposal of data

How and where will the data (both paper and electronic) be stored, what arrangements will be in place to keep it secure and who will have access to it?

Please note that for long-term storage, data should usually be held on a secure University of Birmingham IT system, for example BEAR (see https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/it/teams/infrastructure/research/bear/index.aspx).

Immediately after each participant interview, the electronically audio-recorded data will be transferred from the devices to a password protected folder on BEAR DataShare. The files will then be erased from the recording devices. Electronic transcripts and notes will also be held in a password-protected folder on BEAR DataShare. Any written notes and consent forms will be scanned in and also stored on BEAR DataShare in a password protected folder. Original paper notes and forms will be shredded.

Data retention and disposal

The University usually requires data to be held for a minimum of 10 years to allow for verification. Will you retain your data for at least 10 years?

Yes   ☒
No   ☐

If data will be held for less than 10 years, please provide further justification:

N/A

What arrangements will be in place for the secure disposal of data?

In accordance with university research policy, data will be stored on BEAR DataShare for 10 years after completion of the project. A 10-year expiry date will be set for the electronic data stored on BEAR DataShare.

Section 9: Other approvals required

Are you aware of any other national or local approvals required to carry out this research?

E.g. clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Local Authority approval for work involving Social Care, local ethics/governance approvals if the work will be carried out overseas, or approval from NOMS or HMPPS for work involving police or prisons? If so, please provide further details:

I already hold enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

For projects involving NHS staff, is approval from the Health Research Authority (HRA) needed in addition to University ethics approval?

If your project will involve NHS staff, please go to the HRA decision tool at http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/ to establish whether the NHS would consider your project to be research, thus requiring HRA approval in addition to University ethics approval. Is HRA approval required?

Yes   ☐
No N/A ☒

Please include a print out of the HRA decision tool outcome with your application.

Section 10: Risks and benefits/significance

Benefits/significance of the research

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

It will contribute to the knowledge base by addressing the gap in the literature regarding the role of the EP in relation to social justice and indicate how EPs may understand their ability and role to promote these values in the English context. There will be a summative toolkit of potential recommendations for EP practice following this research to enable EP's who desire to effectively promote social justice in their work to do so with greater clarity. There may also be recommendations relating to how training courses for prospective EPs might support trainees to better promote social justice in their work after graduation.

It is helpful to note that the wider research (Schulze at al., 2017, 2019) has recognised the value of social justice practice, for school psychologists internationally and for EPs in the UK. Within our own unique and specific historical and cultural context EPs have described difficulties with putting their values into action regarding balancing of the promotion of social justice with systemic pressures across ecological levels. It seems encouraging that social justice principles can operate within austerity conditions and particularly in EP work involving the design of interventions and training, the choice of forms of assessment, the provision of supervision and therapy and work with multiple agencies and across systemic boundaries. It would seem that EPs might be able to use many existing paradigms within practice which could be drawn on to aid the promotion of social justice. As research notes, social justice is connected with the promotion of human rights, specifically child rights and fairness and equity for all and this aligns with the core personal constructs for many EPs and School Psychologists who join the profession to 'make a difference' to CYP and their key adults across systems (Jenkins et al, 2016, Shriberg & Clinton 2016, Hoy et al, 2014).

The research also indicates a harmony between traditional roles of EPs in line with promoting equality, equity and inclusion for all children and young people and their families and the traditional advocacy role EPs have adopted in promoting and protecting the human rights and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

In the UK context, only one study (Schulze et al., 2019) has to date investigated social justice within the English EP context. This study therefore aims to develop this line of enquiry within a qualitative exploratory paradigm to build on evidence toward understanding the identification of social justice with the EP role and practical ways in which EPs might overcome barriers to its promotion within the existing context. This will then be extrapolated and situated within the wider growing international social justice agenda within psychology as a whole (Schriberg & Clinton, 2016).

Risks of the research

Potential risks to the researcher, research participants and other individuals not involved in the research are outlined below. Both the British Psychological Society (2018) and British Educational Research Association (2018) ethical guidelines were consulted when considering potential risks associated with this project.

<u>Interviews</u>
Risk to research staff
Physical risk of harm to the researcher is minimal as the interviews will be conducted in the council building, with other professionals in the vicinity or online at home. The research may have some emotional and psychological risks to the researcher, which could be evoked by the emotive nature of some of the areas of discussion. To minimise the risk to the researcher, regular supervision will be used with the University of Birmingham Supervisor, Dr Huw Williams to reflect on and consider the impact of the research.

Risk to research participants
Risks to participants are minimal, although participants may find reflections in which the researcher invites them to engage, stressful or upsetting. Participants will be asked to reflect on and provide their personal experiences of promoting social justice and whether or not this was successful. Steps will be taken to reduce the risk of evoking distress by being respectful toward participants throughout the course of the project, and by being sensitive to aspects of participants' work and life which they experience as frustrating or overwhelming.

If the researcher sensed that a participant was becoming distressed, they would punctuate the interview, inviting feedback on whether the interviewee would like a short break or prefer to discontinue the interview.

Participants will be debriefed following their interview, giving them the opportunity to ask any questions and to share any concerns they have. If required, participants will be signposted to professional supervision and support from colleagues within their service, or to relevant external services and agencies and to liaise with my research supervisor at the University of Birmingham. All participants will be provided with contact details of the researcher and university research supervisor, should they wish to ask questions or make any complaint.

Other

Interviews could gather information that could identify the local authority involved. Information may also be provided by participants that may present these local authorities in a negative light. The researcher will ensure any identifiable information is excluded from the final report so the local authority remain anonymous. If information is provided which may present a risk to organisational reputation or safeguarding, advice will be sought through research supervision regarding the inclusion and communication of this data. Supervision and guidance will be sought and quality assured through supervision from the supervising university tutor Dr Huw Williams on all of this content should such matters arise.

University Health & Safety (H&S) risk assessment

For projects of more than minimal H&S risk it is essential that a H&S risk assessment is carried out and signed off in accordance with the process in place within your School/College and you must provide a copy of this with your application. The risk may be non-trivial because of travel to, or working in, a potentially unsafe location, or because of the nature of research that will carried out there. It could also involve (irrespective of location) H&S risks to research participants, or other individuals not involved directly in the research. Further information about the risk assessment process for research can be found at
https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/policy/Research-Risk-Assessment-and-Mitigation-Plans-RAMPs.aspx.

Please note that travel to (or through) 'FCO Red zones' requires approval by the University's Research Travel Approval Panel, and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where sufficient mitigation of risk can be demonstrated.

Section 11: Any other issues

Does the research raise any ethical issues not dealt with elsewhere in this form?

If yes, please provide further information:

Disclosure:

Participants' data will be treated as confidential; however confidentially may need to be breached during the research project if a participant made a disclosure which raised safeguarding concerns – in which case the relevant local authority procedures would be followed.

Confidentiality may also be breached if the participant or another individual were judged to be at risk of harm or if there were indication of illegal activities. There may be moral or ethical reasons to consider a breach in confidentiality, for example if I am made aware of inappropriate or unprofessional practice, such as discrimination or a breach of Equality Act 2010.

I will seek advice from a relevant responsible person (research supervisor) before proceeding to disclosure if and when appropriate. Insofar as it does not undermine or obviate the disclosure, or jeopardise researcher safety, I will inform the participants, of my intentions and reasons for disclosure. Any decision to override agreements on confidentiality and anonymity will be taken after careful and thorough deliberation. I will make contemporaneous notes on such decisions and the reasoning behind them. I will also consider whether overriding confidentiality and anonymity compromises the integrity and/or usefulness of data and withdraw any compromised data from the study.

Do you wish to provide any other information about this research not already provided, or to seek the opinion of the Ethics Committee on any particular issue?

If yes, please provide further information:

N/A

Section 12: Peer review

Has your project received scientific peer review?

Yes ☐
No ☒

If yes, please provide further details about the source of the review (e.g. independent peer review as part of the funding process or peer review from supervisors for PGR student projects):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 13: Nominate an expert reviewer

For certain types of project, including those of an interventional nature or those involving significant risks, it may be helpful (and you may be asked) to nominate an expert reviewer for your project. If you anticipate that this may apply to your work and you would like to nominate an expert reviewer at this stage, please provide details below.

Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
First name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Last name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address: Click or tap here to enter text.
Phone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Brief explanation of reasons for nominating and/or nominee's suitability:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 14: Document checklist

Please check that the following documents, where applicable, are attached to your application:

Recruitment advertisement ☒
Participant information sheet ☒
Consent form ☒
Demographic Questionnaire ☒
Interview/focus group topic guide ☒

Please proof-read study documentation and ensure that it is appropriate for the intended audience before submission.

Section 15: Applicant declaration

Please read the statements below and tick the boxes to indicate your agreement:

I submit this application on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will be used by the University of Birmingham for the purposes of ethical review and monitoring of the research project described herein, and to satisfy reporting requirements to regulatory bodies. The information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent. ☒

The information in this form together with any accompanying information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it. ☒

I undertake to abide by University Code of Practice for Research (https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/research.pdf) alongside any other relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct and/or ethical guidelines. ☒

I will report any changes affecting the ethical aspects of the project to the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer. ☒

I will report any adverse or unforeseen events which occur to the relevant Ethics Committee via the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer. ☒

Please now save your completed form and email a copy to the Research Ethics Officer, at aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk. As noted above, please do not submit a paper copy.