A socio-cultural activity theory exploration into educational psychologists' perceptions and experiences of anti-racist practice.

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the perception and experiences of educational psychologists' (EPs') practice of anti-racism. This research sought to explore the ways in which EPs' conceptualised anti-racism in their practice and the factors that they perceived to support and constrain practice in this area. Second-generation activity theory was used as a tool to structure the semi-structured interviews and data collection (Engeström, 1999a). Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) was used deductively as a method of data analysis.

The findings from this research study suggest that anti-racism is conceptualised by EPs' in several ways. Anti-racism as the object of activity that was explored, was conceptualised at the individual, local and national level. EPs' identified being part of development groups and working with other professionals to explore practice that was conceptualised as anti-racist and anti-oppressive. A range of outcomes were identified in response to this activity that were conceptualised at the individual, local and national level. Although some EPs' were taking a lead on practice within this area, activities were divided amongst professionals to support with meeting the aims and objectives of the development groups. Tools that influenced practice were outlined, along with a range of professionals who were identified as being part of a wider community that contributed to anti-racist work.

Primary and secondary contradictions were identified from the findings which suggested that there are numerous implications for EP practice at the individual, service and national level. Finally, strengths and limitations of the study are outlined along with ideas for future research.

DEDICATION

To Jay, my loving husband. Thank you for giving me the time and space to complete this thesis and never once complaining. Your relentless energy, positivity and optimistic outlook on everything I do has given me the strength and courage to keep going. You are our rock.

To Grace and Rosie, my beautiful daughters. Thank you for the love, happiness, joy, excitement and pride that you bring to my life every day. I promise to make up every moment of time that I lost with memories that will last forever. Mummy loves you to the moon and back!

Finally, to my Dad for always believing in me and supporting my dreams. And to the women who gave me strength and taught me how to smile at life. Without you, none of this would have been possible. For my beautiful Mum and Nan – I miss you and love you always.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AEP	Association of Educational Psychologists
BAME	Black and minority ethnic backgrounds
BEEP	Black and Ethnic Minority Educational Psychology (BEEP) network
BPS	British Psychological Society
CRT	Critical Race Theory
DCP	Division of Child Psychology
DECP	Division of Education and Child Psychology
DfE	Department for Education
EPs'	Educational Psychologists
EPRCF	Educational Psychologists "Race" and Culture Forum
HCPC	Health Care Professionals Council
PEP	Principal Educational Psychologist
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
TA	Thematic Analysis
TEPICC	Trainee Educational Psychologists' Initiative for Cultural Change
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis was written as part of the University of Birmingham's requirements for the three year Doctorate in Applied Education and Child Psychology (2020-2023). This forms part one of a two-part thesis. This chapter will outline a rationale for completing this research along with personal and professional justifications for wanting to explore anti-racism practice within the EP profession. My positionality as a researcher will be considered along with a brief description of the context of the research. Finally, the aims of the research will be presented along with a brief overview of the research structure.

1.1 Rationale

Prior to commencing the doctorate, I was a secondary school teacher and SENDCO and during my time spent in this career, I responded to incidents of racial discrimination towards students from ethnic minority backgrounds. I developed an interest in learning how issues of racism were addressed within the curriculum and how incidents were responded to, in relation to school policy and procedures. Furthermore, in my first year as a trainee EP, I supported a young person who shared that they were experiencing racial abuse. During this time, I reflected upon what I could do to support children and families in response to such incidents. In addition, I wanted to develop my confidence in proactively cultivating support and promoting anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice throughout systems such as the child, family, school and beyond. The anti-oppressive practice module, that was delivered in Year 1 of the course, supported my understanding of terminology and how ideas of power, culture and intersectionality relate to our practice. I have continued to develop an interest in the issue of racial inequalities and the impact of such within the education system. This module, along with my previous experiences, has inspired me to explore this area further. From a personal perspective, my husband is Black-Caribbean and my children are dual heritage. I have become attuned to the oppression and discrimination that has impacted my family members over the last decade and it is a commitment of mine, both personally and professionally, to develop my understanding and commitment to anti-racism and in being an ally.

1.2 Positionality statement

A researcher's position or positionality can be described as *"…saying who you are and where you are coming from*" (Thomas, 2017, p. 153). It is considered as an important aspect of the research, particularly during the preparation phases (Punch, 2009). It is argued that all researchers come from a particular 'position' and that *"…there is no such thing as a 'position-free project"* (Punch, 2009, p. 45). Furthermore, researchers should reflect on their positionality in exploring who they are racially and culturally (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). In recognising my positionality as a researcher, the following strengths and weaknesses have

been identified, along with consideration of how potential weaknesses can be minimised (Punch, 2009).

A possible strength of exploring anti-racism within educational psychology practice, is that I have some form of insider awareness of the work that is being carried out. I am aware of working groups that exist within various local authorities and that EPs' have received anti-racism training. An additional strength is that I am passionate about this area of practice which has motivated me to explore it further. However, my curiosity is informed by my individual circumstances which may impact upon the purposes of the research (Thomas, 2017). It is important to acknowledge that I am a white researcher and I do not have the lived experience of someone who has black or brown skin. I acknowledge my position as a white researcher and consider my responsibilities with researching the topic of anti-racism (Mertens, 2014). To support my confidence in researching this topic, I have developed a "*…reflexive stance*" where I have engaged in self-reflection during supervision (Gray, 2018, p.175). By self-reflecting on the ways that potential biases could impact upon the research processes, I have considered ways to mediate these, which are discussed in further detail in chapters four and seven.

1.3 Context of the research

This research was carried out within the West Midlands region of England during my second and third year as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP). To support with the exploration of EPs' experiences and perceptions of anti-racism in practice, I used the second-generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1987) to form the semi-structured interview questions. Activity theory, which will be described in further detail in chapter four, was used as a descriptive and analytic tool to help explore the varying aspects of activity that was happening within individual EP contexts. The second generation activity theory has seven nodes which were used to support with the development of interview questions and analysis of data. Furthermore, the second generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1987) was used to explore the relationship between EPs' conceptualisation of anti-racism and their practice of this (object/outcome); the resources they used (tools); who else they were working with (community); how the work was shared (division of labour); and the factors that were supporting and constraining this aspect of practice (rules).

1.4 Research aims

The aims of this research are to explore anti-racism approaches within EP practice and to develop an understanding of these. This research seeks to provide an in-depth exploration of EPs' perceptions and experiences of anti-racism within their practice. It also aims to explore the factors that they perceive to constrain and support their work within this

area. By utilising sociocultural activity theory, the research hopes to consider EPs' perceptions of wider systemic factors which are related to anti-racist practice. Thus, the main objective of the project is to illuminate experience and perspectives, not to provide generalisable outcomes.

1.5 Summary of chapters

The literature review has been divided into two parts (chapter two and chapter three). In chapter two, the varying definitions and terminology that are used within this topic are outlined, in addition to a brief exploration on 'race'-related policy and legislation. Theoretical perspectives for the presence and development of racism within society are also considered. In chapter three, issues of racial inequalities within education are presented. As EPs' work within the education system, the role of the EP and their responsibilities in being anti-oppressive and anti-racist are explored. These responsibilities are considered within the guidelines and frameworks provided by professional bodies. Finally, this chapter presents previous research that has explored EPs' and anti-racist practice.

Chapter four of this thesis presents the philosophical position of this research along with the methodological approaches and methods used. This chapter provides an overview of activity theory and how it has been used to support the methods of data collection. Furthermore, reflexive thematic analysis as a data analysis tool is outlined and discussed.

Chapter five provides a summary of the data that was collected for this research. By utilising reflexive thematic analysis deductively using the activity theory nodes, thematic maps are outlined for each of the seven nodes and quotations are presented to summarise the themes that were developed. Finally, primary and secondary contradictions between the nodes are considered.

Chapter six presents a discussion of the data that was collected in relation to the proposed research questions and the literature surrounding anti-racism and the EP profession.

Chapter seven provides a conclusion to the research study and considers key strengths and limitations of the research. Implications for research and EP practice along with ideas for future research are presented.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW (PART ONE)

2.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter will begin by exploring key definitions and terminology that are used to describe 'race', racism and anti-racism. A brief outline of the development of 'race' related policy and legislation will be provided. Finally, theoretical perspectives on 'race' will be explored to support with an understanding of the topic being researched.

2.2 Key definitions

2.2.1 Definition of 'Race'

Gillborn (1995) suggests that the word 'race' is a term which has been debated within the political, social and academic literature for over a century. Demoiny (2018) explains that the term 'race' was used to differentiate humans based upon physical characteristics (i.e., skin colour), so that humans could be classified as being either superior or inferior, which is considered a scientific form of racism. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the historical and political landscape in which the term has developed and been understood across time, most researchers in this area agree that humans cannot be differentiated on the biological basis of 'race' (Thomas, 2022) and that *"…there is no such thing as separate human races in the traditional biological sens*e" (Gillborn, 2008a, p.2). There is preference from writers within the literature to use speech marks to signify the meaning of the term "race" as a way of signalling that it has no scientific validity (Walters, 2012; Thomas, 2022). The use of inverted commas represents the conceptual difficulties associated with the word and symbolises that it is a socially constructed term (Maisuria, 2014). Within this thesis, I will refer to 'race' by using inverted commas as a way of demonstrating an acceptance and agreement with the difficulties associated with the term. Furthermore, it is accepted that 'race' has less to do with biological and/or physical characteristics and more to do with the social constructions that we create based upon for example, the languages we speak, the colour of our skin and our physical features (Carter, 2007). In this sense, people attach meanings to skin colour and physical characteristics, in various places and at different times and these will change according to those times and places (Walters, 2012). As described by Gillborn, *"…race is a system of socially constructed and enforced categories that are constantly recreated and modified through human interaction",* (Gillborn, 2008a, p.3). Furthermore, 'race' as a social construct, *"…categorises people based on reductive ideas of phenotypical or observable physical difference, for example, skin colour, hair texture, or eye colour"* (Thomas, 2022, p.22).

'Race' has been associated with power and categorisation (Blair, 1998) in that it has served to promote social hierarchies in society based upon physical characteristics (Thomas,

2022). The less powerful 'races' within societies which accept 'race' as having "*…differential power*" are argued to be discriminated against, impacting upon their opportunities and life outcomes (Blair, 1998, p.15). It is contended that the term should be rejected, as its connotation suggests a division of humans into distinct racial categories (Walters, 2012). However, whilst the conceptual understanding of the term 'race' has been debated and since recognised as not being biologically based (Walters, 2012; Thomas, 2022), the recognition of racism as a concept has been retained (Walters, 2012) likely in response to the social and economic consequences of it being treated as if it is real.

2.2.2 Definition of Racism

The Race Relations Act (1968) presented the term racial discrimination as discriminating or segregating people based upon their nationality, race, colour, ethnic or national origins by treating them less favourably (The National Archives, n.d). This definition of racial discrimination has remained similar in successive Government policy and the Institute of Race Relations (2020) refined racial discrimination as occurring when people are not treated fairly because of their ethnicity, religion, or skin colour for example. The definition of racial discrimination shares similarities with definitions of racism which will now be outlined.

Walters (2012) suggests that the word racism can be understood and defined in multiple ways, and the lack of consensus on the term has been argued to impact upon the continuing 'race' debate. Gillborn argues that racism has been viewed as having a *"…belief in the existence of discrete human races and the idea that those 'races' are hierarchically ordered"* (2008a, p.3). However, Gillborn (2008a) acknowledges that is uncommon to explicitly hear this as an espoused theory in educational conversations and it is more common to hear discussions of intended or institutionalised racism. Furthermore, the term is acknowledged as being *"…highly contested ….[and] always controversial…"* (Gillborn, 2008a, p. 3). Gillborn (2008a) suggests that people can often react defensively, in response to the word 'racism' as it is such a powerful and significant term. Consequently, this has been argued to impact upon the ability to acknowledge the various ways in which racism operates (Gillborn, 2008a).

The Collins Dictionary Online (2022) defines racism as *"…the belief that races have distinctive cultural characteristics determined by hereditary factors and that this endows some races with an intrinsic superiority over others".* In the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report, racism is defined as being *"…conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form, it is as damaging as in its overt form…* (MacPherson, 1999, p.41). Furthermore, in this inquiry report, the concept of institutional racism was presented and defined as being "…*The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their*

colour, culture, or ethnic origin" (MacPherson, 1999, p. 49). Whilst the term racism acknowledges the oppression experienced by individuals because of their skin colour, ethnicity and culture, the term institutional racism extends the concept of 'race' discrimination beyond individuals, to the organisations of institutions.

It is important to note that definitions of racism have changed throughout time and acknowledgement has been given to the lack of agreement on how to define it, likely as a result of continued debate around 'race' and its language (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021a). A range of prefixes have been adopted and used to provide examples of racism e.g., institutional, structural, and systemic. Thomas (2022) outlines four dimensions of racism; structural, institutional, interpersonal and internalised core-beliefs (Table 1).

Table 1: The four dimensions of racism and their definitions (Thomas, 2022)

Dimension of racism	Definition
Structural	"…*this occurs where multiple institutions uphold racism"* (p.48).
Institutional	"…*this manifests itself in policies and practices that reinforce racist standards within a workplace"* (p.48).
Interpersonal	"…*this is the relationship between people. It includes racist acts and microaggressions carried out from person to person"* (p.48).
Internalised core-beliefs	"*Internalised core beliefs and bias lead to subtle and overt messages that reinforced negative beliefs and self-hatred"* (p.48).

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report (2021a), argues that terms such as institutional and structural racism are problematic, and that they have contributed to a misunderstanding of the term racism. In addition, the rise of terms have been defined as "…*confusing"* and that inappropriate use of the terms has resulted in other factors being ignored (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021a, p.34). This report outlines the negative implications of having a range of definitions and how they have been used. However, it has also been acknowledged that as individuals develop their understanding of what racism means, that consequently, definitions of racism are likely to progress (M'gadzah, 2022). Whilst examples of definitions have been outlined for the purpose of this research, I acknowledge the ever-changing landscape of terminology, due in part to the changing constructions formed by individuals regarding their experiences and in response to their circumstances which has resulted in the reconstitution of discourse (Troyna, 1993). However, when researching anti-racism within the EP profession, it is important to be aware of the ongoing development of terminology and the implications this has for our understanding and practice.

2.2.3 Definition of Anti-Racism

The term anti-racism can be defined as "…*policies, behaviours, and beliefs that are opposed to or intended to prevent racism (unfair or harmful treatment of people based on their race)*" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Furthermore, anti-racism has a history of emphasising the need to "…*build upon and respect the viewpoints and experiences of minoritized groups*" (Gillborn, 2008b, p.31). A simplistic definition is that antiracism is the "…*opposition to racism*" (Gillborn, 1995, p.6). However, there are difficulties in defining anti-racism, due to the social and political history of the term and how it has been contrasted to 'racism' throughout time (Gillborn, 1995). Anti-racism has been conceptualised through an image developed by Andrew M.Ibrahim (Figure 1) and subsequently shared through social media, which demonstrates how our knowledge, intentions, motivations and experiences encapsulates the 'activity' and 'action' of becoming anti-racist (Ibrahim, n.d.). It is representative of a process, which may not be linear in nature, but demonstrates the actions that can be taken to support people in their growth, development and understanding of being anti-racist. This model helpfully visualises the steps that can be taken to develop feelings of confidence, learning, knowledge and skills in becoming anti-racist.
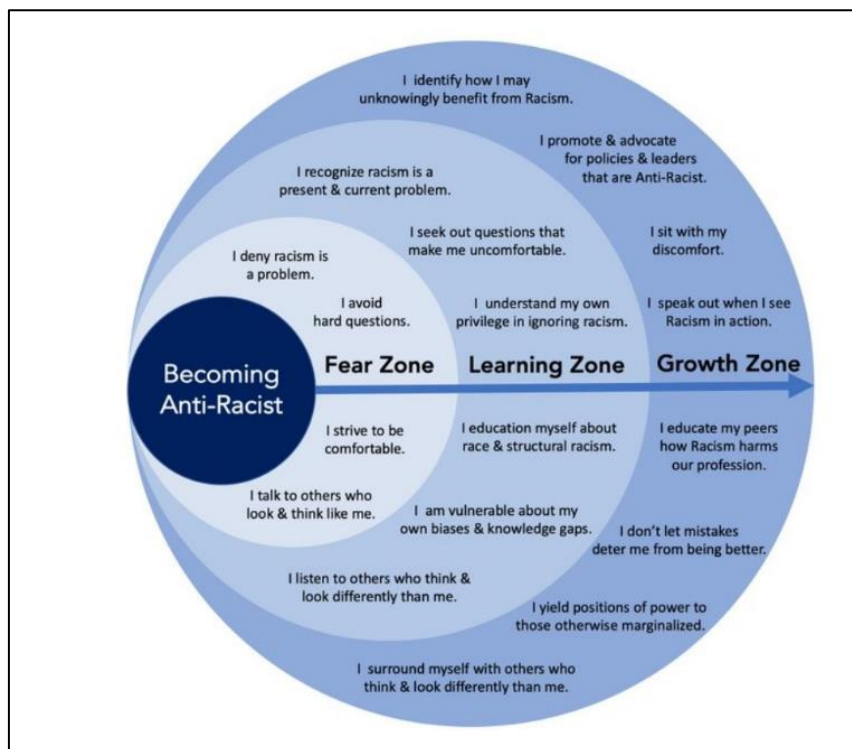
Figure 1: Becoming Anti-Racist image created by Andrew M.Ibrahim MD (Ibrahim, n.d.).

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report (2021a) makes two references to anti-racism within the main body of text and suggests that anti-racism seeks to explain oppression through white discrimination. This has been criticised for shifting the focus away

from other factors that can account for *"…minority success and failure, including those embedded in the cultures and attitudes of those minority communities themselves…"* (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021a, p.11). Other conceptualisations of anti-racism have placed emphasis on the intentional actions that people take that are driven towards challenging racism, racial discrimination and prejudicial views (Thomas, 2022). It is evident that defining anti-racism, along with the other terms described above remain complex. For the purpose of this thesis, the following definition of anti-racism will be used, as suggested by Miller (2021):

"…*an individual and organisational process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organisational structures, policies, practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably*" (p.2).

2.2.4 Language

It is important to note the complexities as described above, in defining key terms and the implications that this might have for the ways in which terms are individually and organisationally constructed. The language we use is impacted by our values and it is important to be reflexive with our use of language. In addition to this, the terms used to describe ethnic minority groups have changed across time.

Thomas (2022) identifies that there are multiple terms that are used in society such as "…*people of colour, BIPOC (Black, indigenous and people of colour), Black and Brown people, political blackness, global majority and melanin rich…*" and *"…in addition, research papers and data sources often use BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) or BME (Black and minority ethnic*" (Thomas, 2022, p.5). However, BAME is no longer perceived as being a helpful term, as it is argued to reduce groups into larger categories and ignore the individuality of people from different ethnic minorities (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021a). The terms BAME and BME are often misunderstood and are used inconsistently (Office for National Statistics, n.d.). From a social constructivist perspective, people may interpret these terms differently, and may refer to themselves by using various terminology. Terms can evoke emotional responses and it is important that these are recognised. Discussing 'anti-racism' and being an 'anti-racist' can result in people feeling discomfort (Inclusive Employers, 2023). There will inevitably be social implications on the ways in which people use racial terms and it is therefore a complicated area that will likely be contested. As EPs' are likely to work with children and young people from a range of ethnic groups, the use of terms and how they are constructed by others should be considered in practice.

2.3 Policy and Legislation

2.3.1 Introduction

This section briefly outlines some key events which have led to the changing landscape of race and education policy. It is recognised that the impact of educational policy is complex (Gillborn, 1995) and that factors such as the outcomes, beneficiaries and priorities of policy development are key to understanding how policy is enacted in society (Gillborn, 2005). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to map or categorise all events to date, and therefore I will focus on key points and developments that have been highlighted in the literature.

2.3.2 Race Relations Act

In 1965, the first legislative document to view racial discrimination as an offense was the Race Relations Act (UK Parliament, 2023). The Act was then extended in 1976 to include the direct discrimination of 'race' and legislation was enforced by the Commission for Racial Equality (Brown, 2018). Subsequently in 2000, the Race Relations Amendment Act, outlined requirements for local authorities and schools to have race equality policies in place (Tomlinson, 2008). These requirements have implications for Educational Psychology Services (EPS'), as they have a statutory duty to promote racial equality and 'race' relations (BPS, 2006).

2.3.3 MacPherson Report

In 1977, the Government asked Sir William Macpherson to inquire into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and in 1999 the MacPherson Report was published (MacPherson, 1999; Tomlinson, 2008). This enquiry and report was considered to be a defining moment in the history of race equality within the UK (Gillborn et al., 2017). This inquiry had significant implications for the police force and it also prompted the introduction of statutory Citizenship education in 2002 for students in secondary schools (Robinson & Robinson, 2001). The next section of this thesis will briefly explore the relationship between the development of 'race' legislation and the implications for education.

2.3.4 'Race' and Education

Archer (2003) describes how educational policies in Britain in the 1960s were reflective of the ideology that "*…White British culture was regarded as unproblematic and normal..",* and that ethnic minority cultures were homogenous and different (2003, p.21). It was during the 1970s and 1980s that discourses of 'multiculturalism' and 'anti-racism' began to permeate educational policy (Archer, 2003). There was a change in the ways in which schools approached 'race' and ethnicity, in response to the national curriculum and the Education

Reform Act (1988) (Archer, 2003). In 1985, the Swann Report examined the reasons for the underachievement of 'West Indian' children in Britain and it concluded that racism was a contributory factor (Swann Report, 1985). The report discussed the importance of challenging racism within the education system to improve the outcomes of children from ethnic minority backgrounds (Swann Report, 1985). Following this report however, it was argued that the intended outcome of educational approaches to promote equity in different cultures, failed to challenge the inequities existing between different ethnic groups, and instead assumed homogeneity of ethnic groups (Archer, 2003). Archer (2003) argued that approaches intending to celebrate and value cultural differences, were not successful as they failed to acknowledge wider contributing factors such as power relations and the impact of gender and class on attainment. Furthermore, Connolly & Troyna (1998) suggest that the report did not provide an explanation for the inequalities. In response to this, attention was shifted to the structures of power and anti-racist policies and initiatives were developed, however, these were criticised for failing to take into consideration the interrelationship between racism and other inequalities such as class, gender and social status (Archer, 2003). In addition, these policies were *"…never properly interrogated for their likely race-specific impacts and, wholly predictably, their outcomes were often racist…"* (Gillborn, 2008b, p.714).

Tomlinson (2008) outlined that the concept of cultural identity and 'race' were recognised and supported as part of the Labour Government (1997-2010). In 1988, Citizenship and the teaching of democracy became compulsory, as outlined in the Crick Report (Landrum, 2000). Nonetheless, in response to the development of policies and legislation that claimed to tackle discrimination in schools and the education system, Gillborn (2008b) suggested that 'race' inequality has continued to exist because there has not been the prioritisation from educational or social policies to address this.

In addition to the developments outlined above, recent world events have impacted upon society's response to racism and discrimination. On the 25th May 2020, George Floyd was murdered by an American police officer and this led to international protests and campaigns. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which originated in America in 2013, gained further momentum following Floyd's death, with its aim of challenging violence towards black people (Cornelius, 2021). In the UK, BLM protests took place, with campaigners raising awareness of the systemic issues of racism and protesting that *"…the UK is not innocent"* (Joseph-Salisbury, Connelly, & Wangari-Hones, 2021, p.22). During these protests, concerns regarding the UK's education system and curriculum were raised (Purdy-Moore, 2021) and efforts to decolonise the curriculum within the UK have been explored (National Education Union, 2022b). Decolonisation of the curriculum can be understood as the examination of *"…limitations and biases of the current curriculum; the omissions in initial teacher education*

and training; and examining the political and societal legacies of colonialism and how they have influenced education policies…" (National Education Union, 2022b). Organisations have argued the need for decolonisation in teacher training (Johnson & Mouthaan, 2021), higher education (Bird & Pittman, 2020) and within the EP profession (Williams, 2020a). Before exploring anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice within the EP profession in more detail, the theoretical perspectives underpinning 'race' will be outlined, to develop an understanding of the differing ways in which racial inequalities are thought to be structured and maintained.

2.4 Theoretical perspectives on 'Race'

2.4.2 Critical race theory

Critical race theory (CRT) explores the concept and role of racism within western society (Gillborn, 2008a). CRT has been described as a "*…movement*" whereby activists and researchers in the field study the relationships between "*…race, racism and power*" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). CRT originated from legal studies within the United States of America (University of Birmingham, 2023a) and has drawn upon theories and ideas developed by Foucault, Bell and Delgado (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT assumes a social constructionist perspective as it views 'races' as categories that have been developed and manipulated by society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This research study was conducted in the UK and therefore it is important to be cautious when discussing CRT as it has originated from America. However, it has been helpful in understanding racism and has therefore been included.

There are several key principles of CRT identified within the literature. Firstly, that racism is considered ordinary and normal within American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), as a result of being embedded within society at the psychological, legal and cultural levels (Gillborn, 2008a; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). As it is so ingrained, it is often invisible and perceived as the norm. A second aspect of CRT is understood to be 'white supremacy', which concerns the understanding of the reinforcement of power, by white individuals, at the economic, political and cultural level (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). It acknowledges the concept of 'white privilege', whereby white people have benefitted in society as a result of societal systems that have been mutually developed to "*…reinforce and entrench pervasive racial power across institutions, sites and events*" (Vaught & Castagno, 2008, p.96). The literature on whiteness within CRT is not an attempt to target white people (Gillborn, 2008a), but it relates to the idea that any difficulties or suffering experienced by white people will not be because of their 'race' (Thomas, 2022). White people will benefit from whiteness because of the ways in which society privileges whiteness. Like other racial classifications, whiteness is a construct and this should be considered within varying contexts. Furthermore, the term

'interest convergence' suggests proportions of white people within institutions will support change that benefits black people if this serves their interests (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Implications of this power imbalance has led to the argument that white people cannot be "*…non-racist*", and that they are either "*…anti-racist or racist*" (Thomas, 2022, p.90), suggesting a polarisation of people into either a racist or anti-racist category. It has been suggested however, that the situation is more dynamic and that we can identify ourselves along a spectrum (M'gadzah, 2022). Another aspect of CRT is 'voices of people of colour'. For us to understand issues of racism, CRT uses storytelling and narratives as techniques to explore the individual lived experiences and perspectives of people of colour (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

An important aspect of CRT is the notion of intersectionality which was first outlined by Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw argues against a *"…single-issue framework for discrimination"* and suggests that other issues such as class and gender should be considered alongside 'race', because failing to do so, further marginalises the communities of people being oppressed (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 152). Intersectionality is also understood as a "*…method and a disposition, a heuristic and analytic tool*" (Carbado et al., 2013, p. 303). Additionally, intersectionality as a concept, advocates social change by interrogating the ways in which oppression is perpetuated and structured (Carbado et al., 2013). To understand the complex nature of racial oppression, critical race theorists have adopted intersectional theories (Bhopal & Preston, 2012) to look at the nature of racism alongside other aspects of inequalities that exist within society such as disability, gender and class (Gillborn, 2008a). The term 'differential racialisation' which is related to intersectionality suggests that the "*…dominant society racialises and gives focus to different minoritized groups at different times to suit hegemonic arguments of racial superiority and inferiority…*" (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011, p.5). An example of this in education, as highlighted by Gillborn (2008) is that some minority groups of students (e.g., Chinese and Indian) are positively positioned as being academically successful when compared to their peers who are black and white who are less academically successful (as cited in Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). A study by Vincent et al (2013a) used semi-structured interviews to explore the enrolment of Black-Caribbean children in extra-curricular activities and reported intersectionality between 'race' and class. In this study, families chose extra-curricular activities both to cultivate their children but also as a "*…racialised strategy of parenting"* (Vincent et al., 2013a, p. 439). The study suggested that enrolling children onto extra-curricular activities was to support their knowledge, but also to prepare them for living in a racist society (Vincent et al., 2013a). It is argued that attitudes amongst Black Caribbean parents towards education have changed over time, and this has been explained by the intersectionality of 'race' and 'class' (Vincent et al., 2013b). Class is impacted by 'race' at

different moments in time and it continues to be a threat in what is described as a white dominated society (Vincent et al., 2013b). A study conducted by the Social Mobility Commission (2016) demonstrated that whilst British Asian children outperform white working class children, they are less likely to secure employment within the professional and managerial sector. Furthermore, their social mobility is likely to be significantly impacted upon in later life (Social Mobility Commission, 2016). Inequalities in education as a result of racial discrimination will be discussed further within chapter three.

2.4.3 Cultural perspectives

Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital theory provides an explanation for how structured social inequalities are reproduced and perpetuated (Richardson, 1986). Bourdieu's ideas on cultural capital for example, suggest that the knowledge and academic qualifications we possess, can be explained by the class and cultural systems that we are a part of (Richardson, 1986). The theory has helped to explain the educational differences between white and black and brown children, due to the differences in value that society places upon social and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005). Specifically, that *"…white, middle class culture as the standard, and therefore all other forms and expressions of 'culture' are judged in comparison to this 'norm'…"* (Yosso, 2005, p.76). Yosso (2005) however, argues that CRT can help to positively shift the discourse away from a cultural deficit, to acknowledge the cultural wealth and strengths that exist within communities of colour.

A controversial view that examined how racism intersects with gender and class within the education system has been outlined by Sewell (1997). Sewell (1997) argued that the failure of black Caribbean boys in schools, could be explained by social systems (e.g., peer group and parenting) and cultural systems (e.g., anti-school black masculinity). Sewell (2001) argued that in order for the underachievement of black children to be addressed, racism within schools should be considered alongside other factors such as school processes, teacher attitudes, self-esteem and peer groups. Low expectations from senior leaders, poor parenting, peer pressure and difficulties in being responsible for behaviour, are factors that are argued to better explain the under achievement of black boys, as opposed to institutional racism (Sewell, 2010). However, as this research suggests that there is a problem of black culture in schools, this could be perceived as a controversial and oppressive approach to understanding the relationship between culture, attainment and school systems.

2.4.4 Psychological perspectives

Gaertner & Dovidio (1986) provided an explanation for racial discrimination within an 'aversive racism framework'. Aversive racism has been described as *"…the racial attitudes of many whites who endorse egalitarian values, who regard themselves as nonprejudiced, but*

who discriminate in subtle, rationalizable ways" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000, p.315). These values are described as being deeply entrenched within American society (Dovidio, Gaertner & Pearson, 2017). The aversive racism framework provides a way to understand the reasons for why bystanders do not respond to racism (Murrell, 2021). The framework suggests that discriminatory views are held unconsciously, and that often white people experience ambivalence between their *"…egalitarian belief"* and *"…their negative feelings towards blacks"* (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000, p. 315). This has been considered as a possible explanation for why by standing police officers made no attempts to intervene during George Floyd's death (Murrell, 2021). Whilst there are a range of factors that are understood to account for the bystander effect, it has been suggested that aversive racism *"…may produce racially biased process ambiguity, thus increasing the bystander effect when the victim is a person of color"* (Murrell, 2021, p. 65). In this paper, suggestions regarding behavioural responses to racial discrimination are outlined (Murrell, 2021). One of which, is to consider the impact of 'microaggressions'. A microaggression is conceived as being something that promotes the exclusion of somebody based upon their 'race' (Williams, 2020b). Microaggressions can be explicit and implicit and can be demonstrated through language and behaviours. Microaggressions are described as negative, derogatory and hostile behaviours towards ethnic minority groups, and can often be communicated in everyday interactions (Sue et al., 2007). Micro-intervention strategies and education have been described as ways to address microaggressions, both at the individual and societal level (Sue et al., 2019). Furthermore, communication strategies that aim to disarm microaggressions have been outlined, by way of interrupting the conversation through disapproving comments or physically leaving the situation (Sue et al., 2019).

Importantly, racial microaggressions have been identified as a useful tool in identifying acts of racism and racial discrimination in systems such as the workplace and schools (Huber & Solorzano, 2015). Doharty's (2019) research used CRT to explore racial aggressions experienced by African and Caribbean students in a secondary school in the UK and found that students experienced racial discrimination during History lessons. This small scale study acknowledges that the findings should be considered in relation to the wider structures that exist within the curriculum and the education system (Doharty, 2019).

To summarise, racism has been theoretically conceptualised through cultural, social, historical, political and psychological lenses and is a complex issue within society and education. Racism intersects with other aspects of our identity, such as our gender, language and culture and this is evident within schools (Welply, 2018). Before considering the topic of racism and anti-racism within the educational psychology profession, several ways in which racial inequalities exist within education will be explored.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW (PART TWO)

3.1 Chapter introduction

In this chapter, an exploration of the racial inequalities that exist within the education system are outlined. Following this, the role of the EP is explored in relation to the guidance provided by professional bodies on anti-racism. Research that has focused upon anti-racism and EPs' will be presented and consideration given to an increase in varying groups that have formed in the last few years. Finally, this chapter will outline the aims and research questions.

3.2 Racial inequalities in education

3.2.1 Identification

It is acknowledged that issues of 'race' are pervasive within schools and Castagno (2008) argues that they are often silenced through educators. In the UK, whilst incidents of racism occur within school settings, schools are no longer legally required to report these to their local authorities, although it is recognised as being best practice to do so (The Education People, 2023). Schools have a responsibility to have a behaviour policy which outlines the measures taken to promote positive behaviour (Department for Education, 2022a) and as part of this, schools must not discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics, including 'race' (Long, Roberts & Lewis, 2023).

In an article from the Guardian, journalists reported from freedom of information requests that schools within the UK had reported over 60,000 racist incidents within a five year period (Batty & Parveen, 2021). As a result of racist incidents within Surrey and Kent schools for example, a parliamentary debate was scheduled in March 2023, and the responsibilities of schools was outlined in relation to tackling racism (UK Parliament, 2023). The issues of racial inequalities within education are complex, although for the purpose of this research, I will now briefly explore the impact of these on attainment, exclusions, representation, policing of hair and the youth justice system.

3.2.2 Attainment

Before considering research into the differences in attainment, it is important to acknowledge the complexities within this area. As described earlier, the concept of intersectionality is relevant here, as patterns of educational achievement are influenced not only by ethnic group, but also by social class and gender (Strand, 2014). Within the literature, evidence suggests that there are variations in the educational attainment in children and young people of different ethnic minority backgrounds (Burgess, 2015). A briefing paper published in 2020 by the House of Commons Library, highlighted that black pupils had the lowest pass rate

in English and Maths when compared to other ethnic groups and that black girls outperformed black boys (Roberts & Bolton, 2020). When considering a progress 8 score, which is the progress students make between the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4, black pupils make more progress than 'mixed' or white students but make considerably less progress when compared to other ethnic groups (Roberts & Bolton, 2020). There are also variations in progress at different phases of education (Figure 2). In 2019, Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils achieved half a grade lower than white students across 8 subjects (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021b).
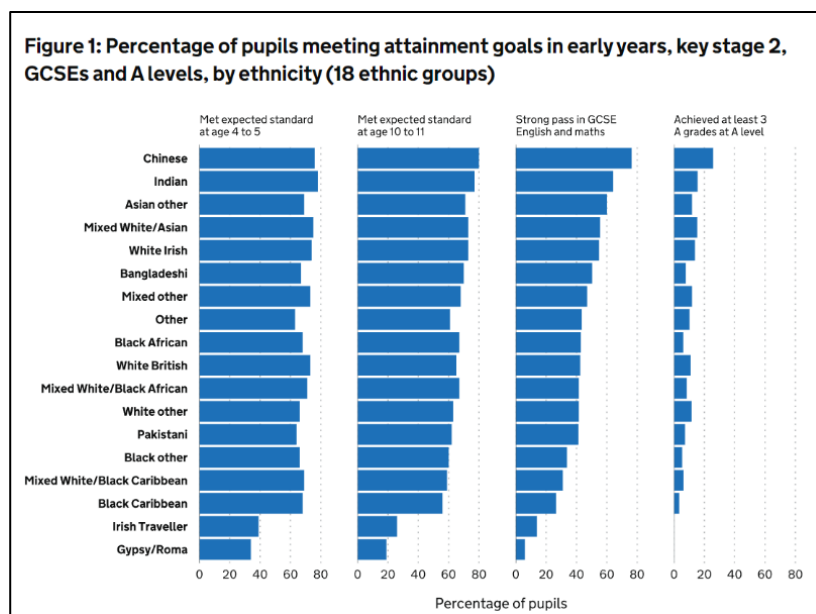
Figure 2: Figure to show the percentages of pupils meeting attainment goals in early years, key stage 2, GCSEs and A levels by ethnicity (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021b).

However, whilst there is research that demonstrates inequities in attainment based upon differences in ethnicity, research has also shown that Black African children are more likely to achieve higher levels of attainment compared to their peers at GCSE (Demie, 2021b). In a research study that explored Black African pupils' attainment in secondary schools in an inner London Local Authority, the findings demonstrated that Black African children were the most linguistically diverse and were also one of the highest attaining groups (Demie, 2021b). This is also the case despite a high proportion of Black African children being misallocated into lower ability sets (Connelly et al, 2019). Furthermore, findings from research demonstrate that Black African children demonstrate higher levels of attainment in their progress 8 scores compared to Black Caribbean children (Roberts & Bolton, 2020). Whilst there has been continued differences in the attainment of students from different ethnic backgrounds (Mirza & Warwick, 2022), there is also evidence to suggest that Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black

African students have caught up and that of the most disadvantaged children, those from ethnic minority groups significantly outperform their White British peers (Mirza & Platt 2022). The study outlines that stages of English proficiency, pupil mobility and levels of socio-economic disadvantage may account for these differences and that these should be taken into consideration when exploring differences in attainment for ethnically diverse groups (Demie, 2021b).

Importantly, there has been research that has explored young people being misplaced in ability groups that further demonstrates the educational inequalities faced by children and young people from ethnic minority groups. A study conducted by Connolly et al (2019) which explored the allocation of 9301 Year 7 students into maths sets based upon their prior attainment at primary school, demonstrated that black students were more likely to be allocated to lower sets compared to their peers. Specifically, research suggests that Black Caribbean students are significantly underrepresented in higher tier examinations at the age of 14 and one argument for this is based upon teacher bias when allocating students to sets, based upon their prior attainment (Strand, 2012). It is argued therefore, that allocating students to settings needs to be considered in addition to teacher's perception and the circumstances surrounding the assessments that have taken place (Strand, 2012). Furthermore, the disproportionality in attainment and exclusions of black children has been in part, explained by the negative stereotyping, perception and attitudes held by teachers (Wright, 2010).

In addition, research from the longitudinal young person's study in England (LYPSE) demonstrates than when other factors such as socio-economic status are accounted for, ethnic minority students perform better than White British pupils (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021b). However, Gillborn (2015) demonstrates the complexities of the *"…educational failure of the white working class"* and that this can be contextualised in regard to the attention and misrepresentation given by politicians and the media (p.6).

In a small scale study, interviews and questionnaires were given to headteachers, parents, pupils, EPs' and teachers to explore the issue of exclusion of Black Caribbean pupils (Demie, 2021a). It was reported by those interviewed that Black Caribbean pupils' attainment was impacted by institutional racism and that exclusions are linked to a range of factors including teacher expectations, lack of diversity and ineffective training for professionals such as teachers and EPs' (Demie, 2021a). However, in an independent report published by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021a), it is argued that the impact of racial bias, if it exists within schools and education, does not solely account for differences in educational outcomes. It is argued that:

"…It is very difficult to judge on a national level the extent to which racism could be a determining factor in educational outcomes amongst ethnic minority groups. However, the fact that ethnic groups within the same system can have quite divergent educational outcomes, and that even within the major ethnic groups there are quite distinct trends, suggests that other factors may be more influential. Indeed, if there is racial bias within schools or the teaching profession, it has limited effect and other factors such as family structure, cultural aspirations and geography may offset this disadvantage" (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021a, p69).

However, there are alternative perspectives within the literature regarding the impact of racism within the education system. A research project that involved interviewing 24 teachers within Manchester and published from the Runnymede Trust, highlighted that racism is "*…deeply embedded*" within the education system and that school policies, the teacher workforce and the curriculum and how they relate to one another, requires further anti-racism work (Runnymede Trust, 2020).

3.2.3 Exclusions

The Timpson Review (2019) of school exclusion report demonstrated that the likelihood of receiving an exclusion was more likely for some children from specific ethnic groups. Whilst the report acknowledges complexities in the research exploring exclusion and ethnicities, it also reported that Black Caribbean children were 1.7 times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion when compared to White British children (Timpson, 2019). In addition, children who are White and Black Caribbean are 1.6 times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion comparative to their White British peers (Figure 3) (Timpson, 2019).
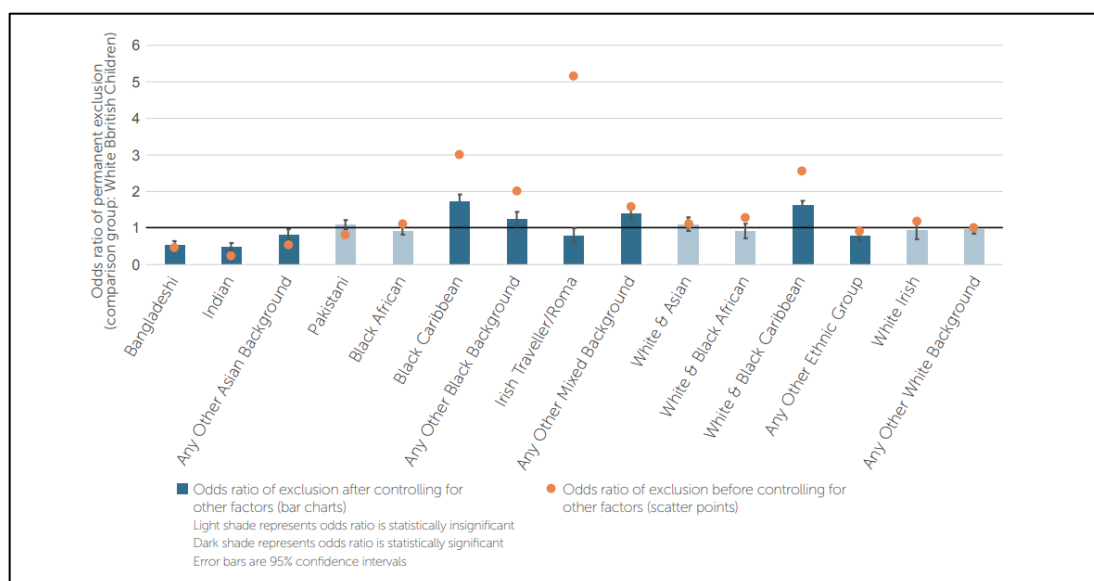
Figure 3: A bar chart demonstrating the likelihood of receiving a permanent exclusion by ethnicity when compared to White British children (Timpson, 2019).

In Figure 3 an odds ratio has been used as a way of explaining the likelihood of a child in one group receiving an exclusion compared to a child in another ethnic group. For example, if children in group C have an odds ratio of 3, this means that group C have approximately three times the likelihood of exclusion comparative to children in another group (Timpson, 2019).

Figure 3 demonstrates that the most significant change is for Irish Traveller/Roma children. The raw data is identified by an orange dot and the dark blue shaded columns represent a statistically significant chance of receiving a permanent exclusion after other factors have been controlled for. Thus, showing a higher likelihood for groups such as Black Caribbean and White and Black Caribbean children. The UK's national statistics for the academic year 2020/2021 published by the Government, highlighted that Gypsy/Roma pupils are the most likely to receive a permanent exclusion and that White and Black Caribbean children have the second highest rates of receiving permanent exclusions (ONS, 2023). The research also showed that Black Caribbean students were almost three times more likely than their White British peers to receive an exclusion (Commission Young Lives, 2022). However, updated guidance from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) shows that Gypsy/Roma pupils are most likely to receive a suspension and White British children received the most permanent exclusions during the 2021/2022 Spring Term with a number of 1,568 (ONS, 2023). However, exclusion rates were still higher for White and Black Caribbean children (0.07) and for Black Caribbean children (0.08) (ONS, 2023). However, it is important to note that some ethnic groups (e.g., Black African) receive less exclusions compared to their peers (Timpson, 2019). For Black African children for example, "*…ethnicity does not appear to be statistically significant in predicting the probability of permanent exclusion, compared to White British pupils and controlling for other factors*" (Timpson, 2019, p.34). It is not clear as to why these differences exist, although factors in addition to ethnicity such as gender, socio-economic status, SEN, family environments and school policies and procedures could overlap and be contributing to the overall complex picture of inequality (Timpson, 2019). As described earlier, it is important to consider the significance of within school factors such as teacher's perceptions and attitudes which may be impacting upon the inclusivity of black children within school (Wright, 2010).

Importantly, in response to the racial disparities outlined above, anti-racist organisations such as the 'No More Exclusions Movement (NME)' are focused on reducing the disproportionate numbers of Black Caribbean and White/Black Caribbean children and young people who have being excluded from schools (No More Exclusions, 2022). Their mission and work is organised around 5 core strands which include Law and Policy Change, Youth development and Youth voice, Parental Advocacy and Partnerships, Teacher

Education and Curriculum (No More Exclusions, 2022). There is a role for EP's to collaborate with professionals working within such movements to promote change and in developing our knowledge and understanding of how race, disability and exclusion intersect (Bagley, 2020).

3.2.4 SEND Identification

In addition to the concerns regarding attainment and exclusions, there has been continued acknowledgement that students from ethnic minority backgrounds are disproportionately more likely to be identified as having special educational needs (SEN) in the UK (Lindsay, Pather & Strand, 2006) and in the US (Morgan et al., 2017). Strand and Lindorff (2018) found that Black Caribbean and Pakistani students were 1.5 times more likely to be identified as having moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean were twice more likely to be identified as having SEMH needs, when compared to White students. Strand and Lindorff (2021) suggest that whilst there is an under representation of some ethnic minority students with an identification of MLD or SEMH needs, there continues to be an overrepresentation for Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean students in regard to SEMH needs. Some disproportionalities can be explained by socio-economic disadvantage but differences in regard to SEMH needs remain significant, even when controls for gender, age and socio-economic disadvantage are accounted for (Strand & Lindorff, 2021).
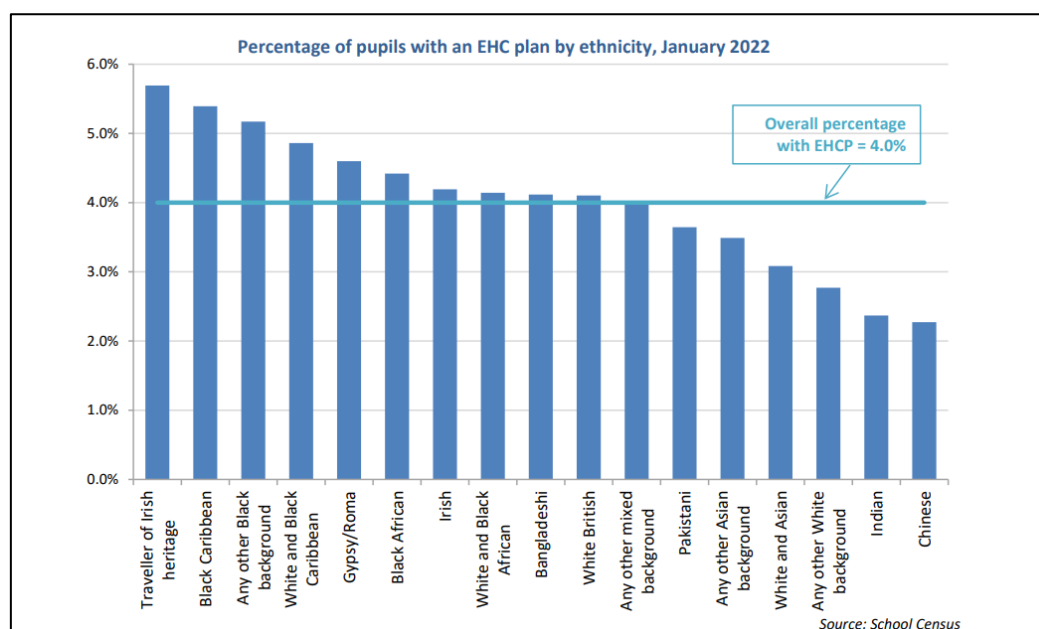
Figure 4: A bar chart to demonstrate the differing number of EHCPs based upon ethnicity in January 2022 (Department for Education, 2022b).

In 2022, Black Caribbean and travellers of Irish heritage students were proportionately the most likely to receive an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), based upon ethnic

groups which is demonstrated visually in figure 4 (Department for Education, 2022b). However, the highest number of EHCPs in 2022 were for White British children (DfE, 2022b). Whilst being identified with SEN can positively impact students through the allocation of resources, it is argued that if ethnic disproportionality is not sufficiently addressed in policy and practice, inequalities will continue (Strand & Lindorff, 2018). Children from ethnic minorities who have experienced racism may be more likely to receive care from child protection services and therefore receiving this external support is crucial (NSPCC, 2022). However, professionals with conscious or unconscious bias, may be less likely to take safeguarding concerns related to children from ethnic minorities seriously, or feel that they may be perceived as being culturally insensitive if they raise concerns (NSPCC, 2022). This has significant implications for children's safety and wellbeing.

To summarise, explanations have been discussed for the over-representation of ethnic minorities with SEND in the literature. Examples include teacher bias and racist attitudes (Lindsay, Pather & Strand, 2006) and school cultures that are based on white middle class values (Artiles et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to consider the likelihood that overlapping factors have in the over-representation of SEND.

3.2.5 Policing of Hair

There have been reported examples of students being placed in isolation, excluded and discriminated against because of their hair (Connelly & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). In the 'Equality Act Review – 12 years on' report, a case is made for hair to be classified as a protected characteristic in recognition that ethnic minority groups should be able to identify as themselves and not receive discrimination based upon their hair styles (Equality Act Review, 2022). In the Equality Act Review (2022), examples of cases in which children have been discriminated against are outlined such as five year old Josiah Sharpe who was banned from the playground at break time because of his "*…extreme haircut*" (p.67). In 2017, when a student was placed into isolation because of his dreadlocked hair, the school's uniform policy was accused of being racist by the public and the young person's family (Connelly & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). This is an example of schools policing the hair of ethnic minority students as their hair styles do not conform to the "*…white norms"* and are therefore problematic (Connelly & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). Furthermore, it is argued that the difficulties surrounding the policing of hair for ethnic minority groups in schools needs to be understood within social and cultural contexts (Connelly & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). As hair is an extension of our identity it has been described as a "*…perfect vehicle through which 'post-racial' racisms can be enacted"* (Connelly & Joseph-Salisbury, 2018, p.9). It is described as being a contemporary issue facing black students in the UK education system (Wallace & Joseph-Salisbury, 2022).

In response to such issues, there have been campaigners who have worked together to develop a charter for schools with an aim of ending hair discrimination completely (Wallace & Joseph-Salisbury, 2022). The 'Halo code' which is a part of the Halo Initiative, has been developed as a way of encouraging schools and organisations to celebrate natural hair rather than discriminate against it (Equality Act Review, 2022). It is therefore important for EPs' to be aware of the additional inequalities facing ethnic minority children and the initiatives and campaigns that are being set up in response, which may, when implemented effectively in schools, begin to challenge the assumptions, perceptions and bias that is impacting young people.

3.2.6 Youth Justice Sector

In 2017, a review into the treatment and outcomes of black and ethnic minority individuals in the justice system was reported and is recognised as the Lammy Review (The Lammy Review, 2017). In this review, it outlined that children from ethnic minority groups are more likely to be remanded in youth detention, receive custodial sentences, reoffend and enter the criminal justice system earlier in comparison to their white peers (The Lammy Review, 2017). Importantly, these disparities are still identified even when other factors are taken into account and the explanation for such disproportionality within the justice system is not clear (The Lammy Review, 2017). Data suggests that in addition to the above, black children are more likely to be arrested, stopped and searched, given a custodial sentence and reoffend within a year (Fraser, 2022). An important message given within the blog written by Fraser (2022) is that behind the statistics are young people and children who deserve the opportunities, equality and supportive environments that enable them to succeed and live safe lives (Fraser, 2022).

Taken together, the sections outlined above demonstrate that inequity and discrimination exists in varying aspects of the school system (e.g., attainment, identification, exclusion, policing of hair etc) and within the justice system. Importantly, there are campaigners, youth-led initiatives and movements that are being developed with the pursuit of decolonising the curriculum and challenging discrimination and inequity. As EPs', having an awareness of these issues and how they are being challenged will be undoubtedly useful within our practice.

3.3 The role of educational psychologists

3.3.1 Introduction

The following section explores the role of EPs' and anti-racist practice. The guidelines and advice provided by the professional bodies that support the EP profession will be considered, along with an exploration of research that has been undertaken in this area.

3.3.2 Professional bodies

Governing bodies that support the EP profession have published guidelines in response to promoting racial equality. In their practice guidelines, the British Psychological Society (BPS) stipulates that psychologists need to understand the discrimination that has been experienced by people from ethnic minority backgrounds in response to the "*…interchangeable use of the terms race*" (BPS, 2017, p33). They suggest that psychologists should not assume that having a knowledge of different cultures "*…solves the problem of equality, fairness and availability of services*" (BPS, 2017, p. 33). In addition, psychologists need to recognise diversity and the impact of all forms of discrimination in response to a person's ethnicity (BPS, 2017). Not only is it important that we understand diversity, but that we consider the impact of our practice for all of the groups of people that we support. In 2006, a report from the Division of Education and Child Psychology's (DECP) working party on anti-racism acknowledged the continued presence of racism within education as a system and highlighted that as EPs' are a part of this system, it is the association and potential bias that is produced in response that needs to be addressed (BPS, 2006). An example of this is considering the assessments that we might use and being aware that they are not representative of the groups of children and young people that we are using them for (BPS, 2006; Sewell, 2016). Within this report, several recommendations were suggested which included EP services needing to evaluate their anti-discriminatory development. One way to do this involves completing a performance checklist for promoting racial equality as part of a framework for self-assessment and this was included within the report as an appendix (BPS, 2006).

In 2020, the DECP wrote a statement titled "DECP pledge to challenge structural racism" (BPS, 2020a). Within this statement, a commitment to various actions were outlined which included promoting diversity within the EP profession, supporting professionals to challenge racist practice, organising meetings to review the work being completed and highlighting research and ongoing practice.

Once trainee educational psychologists qualify, they are eligible to be recognised as a member of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Within the HCPC standards of

proficiency, there is a requirement for psychologists to be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice (HCPC, 2015). In addition, there is an expectation that practitioners actively challenge racism and discrimination (Barwick, 2020). The HCPC recognise their duties and responsibilities in promoting action which leads to change and acknowledges that silence is problematic (Barwick, 2020).

These documents demonstrate the importance and relevance of anti-discriminatory practice within the EP profession, with a particular focus on racial discrimination. A part of the EPs' role is to understand how diversity impacts students, schools and wider communities and it is therefore relevant to our role in knowing how best to support stakeholders with 'race' and 'ethnicity'. EPs' are bounded by standards of proficiency (HCPC, 2015) and should always uphold ethical responsiveness regarding the interrelationship of factors that lead to oppression and hierarchies of power and privilege that exist within society (American Psychological Association, 2019). The proposed research endeavours to learn from EPs' in terms of their understanding and experience of this aspect of practice.

3.3.3 Educational Psychology and anti-racism practice

Just over thirty years ago in 1989, Booker and colleagues (EPs') explored anti-racist practice in an inner London local educational authority (LEA). They argued the importance of finding the time to address anti-racism in practice and that EPs' needed to change their "*…racist attitudes*" as well as those held by others (1989, p123). Grant and Brooks (1998) suggested that EPs' need to become more "*…familiar with issues around racism*" (p.30) and they outline considerations for practice at the child, family, school and local authority level to support with reducing the number of black children being excluded from school. These papers highlight the importance of addressing anti-racism within the EP profession. After searching the literature, there appears to be limited research that explores anti-racism and EP practice in the UK which has been previously outlined (Sultana, 2014). Kumar & DeCuir-Gunby (2023) argue that issues of race have not been adequately addressed within educational psychology. Furthermore, there has not been recent research exploring concepts of 'race' related issues within educational psychology (Saxton, 2017).

The importance of addressing racial inequalities within the EP profession has been argued (Williams, 2020a), and whilst complex, this ongoing work is essential in order to support EPs' in improving systems for children and young people and in actively challenging oppression (Noltemeyer & Grapin, 2021). Schutz (2020) argues that EPs' have been late to research issues of 'race' and social justice, yet there is a role in providing a 'voice' to this aspect of practice. Conversely, Schutz acknowledges the challenges in researching a topic that can change across time: "*….race tends to be a somewhat ill-defined socially historically*

constructed construct that continues to change…" (2020, p. 2). However, through conducting research within EP contexts, it is hoped that EPs' will be able to develop ways of discussing and addressing 'race' within their contexts (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). However, the majority of research exploring anti-racism within EP contexts has taken place within the USA. We should remain cautious about the generalisability and applicability of these findings as they are not within a UK context, however, they do provide interesting insight into the experience and research of anti-racism within the EP role.

Research conducted into EP practice and culture, particularly within theses in the UK, demonstrates a continued acknowledgement amongst practitioners that more research needs to be completed. Anderson (2018) explored EPs' cultural competence and found that EPs' feel competent to work with culturally diverse groups although it was important to develop the services provided for diverse cultures. Sakata (2021) argued the need for exploring cultural sensitivity in more detail within the different functions of the EP role. Ashraf (2016) identified that it would be interesting to explore the voices of EPs' in non-urban locations to gain an insight into the impact of 'race' on the practice of EPs'. In addition, Ashraf (2016) argued that there is a gap in the use of qualitative research methods on eliciting the views of EPs' in the UK. However, whilst there is research that has focused upon cultural competence, very little research has explored the role of EPs' promoting racial equality (Sultana, 2014). Thus, this research hopes to explore the unique experiences and perspectives of anti-racism held by EPs' to provide illumination within this area. Also, the proposed research provides a novel way of doing this by aiming to use a specific framework e.g., a second generation activity framework as a descriptive and analytical device to support discussions amongst ways of working (Leadbetter, 2017). This will be explored within the fourth chapter of this thesis, within the methodology section.

3.3.4 Supporting 'race' related dialogue in the EP profession

In a blog written by EPs' titled 'How to avoid the silence', six concepts to support 'race talk' within the profession are outlined (Sultana et al., 2020). The concept of empathy and connecting with emotions were outlined as examples in how to avoid the silence of 'race' related dialogue. The fears associated with discussing sensitive topics such as cross cultural practice have been identified as limiting factors in promoting intercultural competence (Anderson, 2018). Whilst Anderson's research (2018) looked explicitly at intercultural competence and the experiences of EPs', it signified the importance of 'confidence' in discussing sensitive topics. As argued by De-Cuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014), there is a need to develop ways to talk about race within sociohistorical contexts. To support with this, Agyeman & Lickwa (2020) suggest that we challenge negative narratives through active

questioning, develop our knowledge by being curious and accept that uncomfortable feelings are temporary as ultimately, challenging racism is paramount in making change. The feelings of discomfort experienced however can lend themselves to promoting accountability and offering a way of internally challenging beliefs (Wright, 2020).

3.3.5 Educational Psychology Groups

To support discussions regarding 'race' related issues within the EP profession, there are groups that professionals can join such as the 'Educational Psychology "Race" and Culture Forum (EPRCF). This group aims to provide a space for EPs' to develop and discuss their practice around 'race' and culture in a safe and confidential space (Educational Psychologists "Race" and Culture Forum, n.d.). There is also an established group for trainee educational psychologists known as the Trainee Educational Psychologists' Initiative for Cultural Change (TEPICC) and the Black and Ethnic Minority Educational Psychology (BEEP) network (Black and Ethnic Minority Educational Psychology (BEEP) network, n.d.). Addressing racism and racial inequalities is a key responsibility for professionals, yet the loneliness, opposition and responses from others can risk feelings of psychological safety (British Psychological Society, 2021b). Working together in partnership and in working groups to address racism and in promoting social change has been considered significant in bringing about systemic change (British Psychological Society, 2021b). It is hoped that by exploring the views of EPs' who are part of development groups, or who would like to be, that an understanding of the type of activity that is being pursued can be outlined.

3.4 The current study

3.4.1 Research aims

This research aims to explore EPs' conceptualisation, experiences and practice of anti-racism. As EPs' are at the centre of this research, this study aims to seek the views of those who are involved in developing anti-racist practice and/or those who are interested in this aspect of their practice.

3.4.2 Research questions

The research aims to answer the following research questions:

- Research question 1: In what ways do EPs' conceptualise anti-racism within their practice?
- Research question 2: What factors did the EPs' perceive to support and constrain their anti-racist practice?

- Research question 3: What contradictions were present within the activity systems and what implications do these have for EP practice?

3.5 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter began by outlining several ways that racial inequalities exist within the education system and the implications of these for ethnic minority children was considered. Finally, this chapter presented the role of the EP and the professional competencies that underpin anti-oppressive practice. Research that has explored anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice with EPs' was outlined and a recognition that further research in this area was considered.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research design and methodology that was used within this study. It begins by outlining my ontological and epistemological position, followed by a description of the methodological approach and methods used. An outline of the qualitative and exploratory nature of this research is provided in addition to the procedure, data collection and ethical considerations. A description of Activity Theory, including its origins and applications will be provided along with an explanation of how it has been used as a tool to structure the data collection process. Finally, this chapter will describe reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2021) as a method that was used for data analysis.

4.2 Ontological and Epistemological position

When planning a research project, the frameworks and paradigms for researching within the social world should be considered (Thomas, 2017). Gray (2018) argues that the methodology chosen for research is influenced by the theoretical and philosophical perspectives of the researcher. Furthermore, it is important for the interrelationship between the ontological and epistemological positions to be clearly stated, along with the methodological approaches that will be used (Grix, 2019).

Ontology is described as the study of being (Gray, 2018) and the study of what we know (Grix, 2019). In addition, ontology refers to "…*the kinds of things that we assume to exist in the world, and how those things should be viewed and studied*" (Thomas, 2017, p.123). This research aims to explore and understand the multiple realities experienced by EPs' and therefore assumes a relativist ontology. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) suggest that a "*…relativist ontology is the belief that reality is a finite subjective experience*" (as cited in Levers, 2013, p2).

As ontology refers to what we know, epistemology refers to how we know such knowledge through study (Thomas, 2017). As this research is aiming to explore the meanings that EPs' have attached to an aspect of their practice and the interpretation of these within their social contexts (May, 2011), it assumes a subjectivist epistemology. A subjectivist epistemology accepts that reality and our understanding of it, is created by our interactions with the world (Gray, 2018) as it acknowledges that a reality exists, but that these realities can be constructed in many ways (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Moreover, a subjectivist epistemology acknowledges the legitimacy of human experiences (Silverman, 2017) with consideration given to their actions and experiences, as opposed to the "…*forces that are deemed to act on it*" (Bryman, 2016, p.26).

The ontological, epistemological and methodological principles underpinning research can be understood within a paradigm (Guba, 1990). One of the major paradigms that organizes qualitative research is known as an interpretative, or constructivist-interpretivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Research within an interpretative paradigm seeks to understand events by "*…discovering the meaning human beings attribute to their behaviour and the external world*" (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p.26). This research assumes an interpretivist paradigm because it aims to understand the social reality of those being interviewed, seeking not to develop causal explanations but to explore and illuminate their views (Grix, 2019). Additionally, it is not assumed that there is a single truth in which this research will find. Rather, that there are multiple truths experienced by participants in relation to their individual constructions and experiences and that I can only seek to access these through interaction (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

There are, however, important philosophical tensions that exist between the use of activity theory and reflexive thematic analysis which are both key aspects of this research and as such will be considered. The second generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1999a) assumes that social artefacts such as 'rules' and 'division of 'labour' exist and consequently, sharing the activity theory diagram and associated nodes with participants before the interview, could be considered as imposing the artefacts around which participants should express themselves. Whilst it is argued that within activity theory, the system and activity form a single unit of analysis, the nodes for discussion can be interpreted by individuals in several ways (Allen et al, 2013). For example, tools may be interpreted as materialistic artefacts, or as symbols, signs and language (Allen et al, 2013). Whilst these serve as prompts for discussion, the use of semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity for participants to provide an account of their subjective experiences. As such, this research offers the opportunity to show "*…how participants make sense of (their) reality and bring certain realities into being*" (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

In the analysis, whilst participants will be asked questions about their use of tools for example, it is not the purpose of this study to frame answers within this node as being more real and/or true than others, because this study is not seeking to compare the data against a singular reality that exists (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This research seeks not to provide an "*…ultimate meaning*" of anti-racist practice within the EP profession; but rather to consider the implications and consequences of the meaning shared by the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.174). It should be considered that the activity framework may influence the responses given by participants however, this study does not seek to assume that there are singular realities that exist that can be demonstrated within the nodes.

An interpretivist approach is suitable within this research study as it is seeking to understand the social realities, understanding and concepts held by EPs' and the semi-structured interview process provides an opportunity for these to emerge (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Furthermore, it is acceptable for research assuming a relativist ontology and subjective epistemology to use qualitative methodologies such as interviews, to explore different perspectives (Cunliffe, 2011).

4.3 Research design

In the social sciences, a research design is recognised as "*…a way of organising a research project or programme from its inception in order to maximise the likelihood of generating evidence that provides a convincing answer to the research questions*" (Gorard, 2013, p.8). Thomas (2017) argues that there aren't necessarily right or wrong ways to approach a research design although it is important to clarify and justify the strategy and approaches used (Punch, 2009). This research is seeking to explore the perspectives held by EPs on anti-racist practice and therefore qualitative methods have been chosen (Mertens, 2014). This approach lends itself well as the research involved the exploration of the realities of five individual EPs' who shared their conceptualisations of anti-racist practice within their social and cultural contexts. Finally, this research followed an inductive approach, in which anti-racism was explored with individual EPs' to make sense of this area of practice, as opposed to *"…imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomena of study*" which would be deductive (Mertens, 2014, p.296).

4.3.1 Exploratory research

The purpose of this research is to explore the work and activity being completed by EPs' within a specific area of practice. Whilst the literature on anti-racism is vast, there is less published on EPs' and their anti-racist practice, which makes an exploratory approach advisable (Gray, 2018). Furthermore, exploratory approaches are flexible (Swedberg, 2020) and are used to ask questions about a topic, which helps to inform whether further research in the area is required (Gray, 2018).

4.3.2 Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods provide researchers with the opportunity to understand contexts and situations by exploring various constructions of reality held by participants (Mertens, 2014). As identified by Patton (2002), qualitative approaches are appropriate when the research questions seek to understand detailed information about a topic, as provided by the participants, which this research sought to do (Mertens, 2014). There is disagreement however on the methodological practices that underpin qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln,

2018) and how it is defined (Bryman, 2016). Nevertheless, there are a range of strategies, methods and paradigms that are accepted within qualitative research, such as the use of a case study, which will now be explored in further detail.

4.3.3 Case study approach

There is debate as to whether a case study is a design or a method (Mertens, 2014). Stake (2005) argues that in response to this, the object of study should be considered as a way of defining case study research (as cited in Mertens, 2014). Case studies are a way of gathering information from individuals (or subjects) and they are an example of a design frame and structure (Thomas, 2017). Gorard (2013) argues that using case studies in isolation within research is less convincing. However, the use of case studies enables researchers to collect comprehensive information from individuals or a group (Coolican, 2014). A case study is described as an in-depth exploration of a case or number of cases to understand something in further detail within its context (Punch, 2009). In this research, the cases refer to specific EPs', bounded by the exploration of anti-racism within the context of their practice.

The design frame that was chosen was a multiple case study (Thomas, 2017). Stake (2006) describes a multiple case study as one where several cases are studied concurrently to understand something such as a condition or phenomenon (as cited in Gray, 2018). Moreover, Thomas (2017) argues a further subdivision can be drawn within multiple case studies which is that of a parallel case study design. In the parallel study, the cases are all happening and being studied at the same time, rather than cases being explored sequentially (Thomas, 2017). This study can be described as a "*…snapshot*", as cases were studied within a specific time frame (Thomas, 2017, p.160).

Case studies have been criticised for their lack of generalisability (Punch, 2009), the amount of time that they take to conduct and the volume of data that they provide (Gray, 2018). Case studies have also been criticised for lacking in objectivity and reliability (Yin, 2009). Importantly, this research is not seeking to generalise the research findings to those beyond the context of this study. Rather, the research hopes to explore, in detail, the object of study (e.g., anti-racism within EP practice). The case study approach can help to explore issues and illuminate key features. Despite the criticisms of using case studies in research, they provide opportunities to learn about topics in-depth and they also provide opportunities to conceptualise learning for future research which can result in valid contributions (Punch, 2009).

4.3.4 Trustworthiness

When evaluating qualitative research within an interpretivist paradigm, it is argued that "…*terms like credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity*" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 20). These alternative terms and criteria describe the 'trustworthiness' of the data (Bryman, 2016). Table 2 (see pg. 45) demonstrates the criteria for trustworthiness as defined by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and how this has been applied in this research.

4.4 Activity Theory

4.4.1 Definitions

Activity Theory has been described as "…*a theoretical framework for the analysis and understanding of human interaction*" (Hashim & James, 2007, p1). Activity theory is also known as Socio-Cultural Activity Theory and Cultural-Historical Activity theory and it "…*draws upon a range of disciplines including psychology, sociology, political theory and communication studies*" (Leadbetter, 2017, p.254). A helpful definition as outlined by University of Warwick's Institute for Employment Research demonstrates that;

"…*Activity Theory provides a conceptual framework from which we can understand the inter-relationship between activities, actions, operations and artefacts, subjects' motives and goals, and aspects of the social, organisational and societal contexts within which these activities are framed*" (Institute for Employment Research, 2011).

4.4.2 Origins of activity theory

The theorising and research within this area is known to have originated by Vygotsky, Leont-ev and Luria in Russia (Engeström, Miettinen & Punamaki, 1999). Vygotsky developed the idea of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory which encompassed the importance of 'mediation' within learning (Engeström, 2001). This is also known as the first generation activity theory model. During the 1950s and 1960s, activity theory was developed within theories of learning and child development and it was frequently applied in education settings (Engeström, Miettinen & Punamaki, 1999). In the 1980s and 1990s, the fields using activity theory as a basis for research became broader to include topics such as work activities, therapy and technology (Engeström, Miettinen & Punamaki, 1999). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the developments and applications of activity theory from its inception to the current day, it is important to note the three generations of activity theory that have been conceptualised by Engeström (1999a) which will be outlined below

Table 2: A table that presents the criteria for trustworthiness as defined by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and how this has been applied to this research.

	Description	Applications within this research
Credibility	Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe a range of activities and techniques that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced (e.g., respondent validation, triangulation, prolonged engagement).	Respondent validation: Throughout the interviews, participants were given the opportunity to check their responses and make any necessary additions or revisions to their responses throughout. Triangulation: Webb (1966) argues the benefits of triangulation but also recognises the difficulties in doing so (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One method of triangulation is to seek a range of sources, and in this research study a variety of perspectives were explored.
Transferability	Lincoln & Guba outline that "*…he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility*" (1985, p.316).	Researchers are encouraged to provide "*…thick descriptions*" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.316). Chapters 4 and 5 provide detailed accounts of the context of the research, the data collection tools and analysis methods used, in addition to materials within the appendices (e.g., activity theory diagram, participant information sheet and an application for ethics).
Dependability	For research to be 'dependable', it is suggested that an audit trail is completed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This entails "*…ensuring that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process – problem formulation, selection of research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts …and so on*" (Bryman, 2016, p.384).	Throughout this process, records have been kept and can be found within the appendices (e.g., participant information sheet, activity theory diagram, consent forms, interview schedules, data collected within the interviews and samples of data analysis). In addition to this, I maintained a reflective research diary that outlined my positionality, decisions and steps. The purpose of this diary was to keep a record of my reflections and thoughts throughout the research journey. I used the diary to take notes following several events in the research process so that I could remember my decision points and how this might impact upon the research and writing stage. For example, following a panel presentation where I presented my research ideas, I jotted down reflections following feedback and made notes to support my next steps. I also reflected upon the steps taken in this research project during supervision.
Confirmability		Lincoln & Guba argue that the assessment of confirmability involves several sub steps. The auditor will ascertain if "*…the findings are grounded in the data….whether inferences based on the data are logical… and the extent to which the auditee ensured confirmability*" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.323).

4.4.3. Key principles of Activity Theory

Engeström (1999a) provided five key principles to help support researchers with their understanding of activity theory. These five principles have also been summarised by Daniels (2001) and by Leadbetter (2017). Table 3 demonstrates the key principles as summarised by Engeström (1999a); Daniels (2001) and Leadbetter (2017):

Table 3: Summary table of the five principles of Activity Theory (Engeström, 1999a; Daniels, 2001; Leadbetter, 2017).

Key Principle	Summary
1	The prime unit of analysis in Activity Theory *"…is that a collective, artifact-mediated and object oriented activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems"* (Daniels, 2001, p.93).
2	Activity systems are *"…multi-voiced as there is always a community of multiple viewpoints"* (Leadbetter, 2017, p.258).
3	Historicity. *"…Activity systems take shape and get transformed over lengthy periods of time. Their problems and potentials can only be understood against their own history".* (Engeström, 1999a, p.4-5).
4	Contradictions: *"…contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems"* (Engeström, 1999a, p.4-5). Alternative and newer ways of working can be developed when contradictions are explored (Leadbetter, 2017).
5	Possibility of expansive transformations in activity systems. *"…an expansive transformation is accomplished when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualised to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of the activity"* (Engeström, 1999a, p.4-5).

4.4.4 Development of the model

The first generation model of activity theory developed by Engeström is influenced by the concept of mediation, as outlined by Vygotsky (Engeström, 1999a). Figure 5 demonstrates the relationship between the subject (an individual or group of people), the object (what is being worked on or is the focus of the activity) and the mediation (the tools or artefacts that are used) in order to produce an outcome (Leadbetter, 2017).
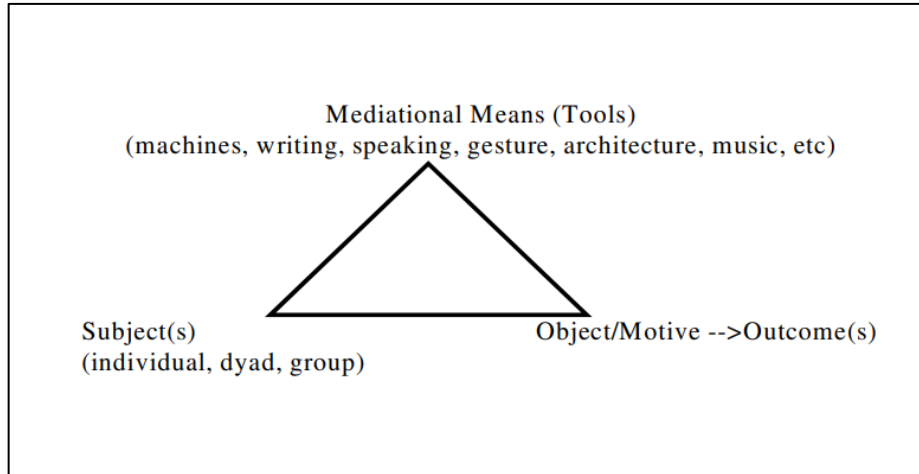
Figure 5: First generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1999a).

Engeström further developed the activity system demonstrated in Figure 5 which was conceptualised as the Second Generation Activity Theory model (Engeström, 1999a). Engeström expanded the initial triangle to include social and collective elements within a system (e.g., rules, community and division of labour), whilst continuing to emphasise the relationship and interactions between each of the elements (1999a). The oval shape in Figure 6 indicates that the object-orientated actions are subject to sense making and change (Engeström, 1987; Daniels, 2001). Figure 6 outlines the second generation activity theory model. In this extended version, *"…the important relations between wider historical and contextual factors can be considered with respect to the actions being taken or proposed"* (Leadbetter, 2017, p. 256). In this system, the activity, also known as the unit of analysis, is broken into analytical components and the relationships between the individual and the collective are emphasised (Roth, 2004).
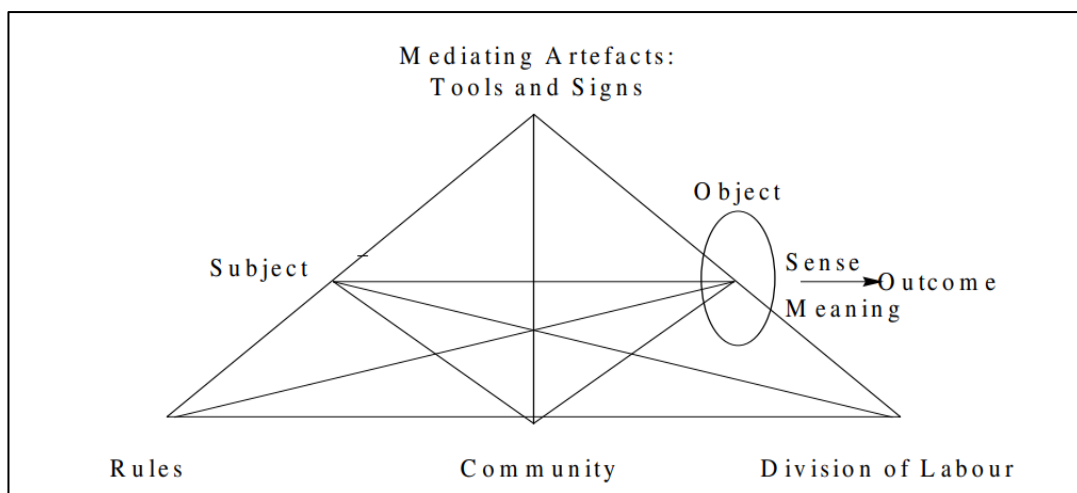

Figure 6: Second generation activity theory model as developed by Engeström (1999a).

There are seven nodes within the second generation activity model and for the purpose of this research, table 4 outlines the definitions of these:

Table 4: A table to outline and describe the seven nodes within the second generation activity model.

Activity Theory Node	Description of Activity Theory Node
Subject	The subject position can be assumed by an individual or a group. It can also be described as an organisation (Engeström, 2001).
Object	The object is described as *"…what is being worked on, acted upon, or is the focus of the activity…"* (Leadbetter, 2017, p.256). Furthermore, *"…object-oriented actions are always, explicitly or implicitly, characterised by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making and potential for change"* (Engeström, 2001, p.134). The object is described as being ambiguous and its constructions are ongoing (Kallio, 2009).
Outcome	The outcome refers to the learning that has taken place from the activity (Engeström, 2001). The outcome is what is achieved after mediation between the subject and the object (Leadbetter, 2017).
Rules	This node acknowledges that the activity is governed by rules and seeks to describe what is supporting or constraining work within the system (Leadbetter, 2017). In addition, the rules are the conditions that determine the action of the individuals within the system (Hashim & Jones, 2007).
Community	Community refers to other people who are involved within the activity system (Leadbetter, 2017) and a focus is on the interrelations between the subject and the community that they are a part of (Engeström, 2001).
Divisions of Labour	Division of labour refers to how the work is being shared out (Leadbetter, 2017) and recognises that participants within the system will assume varying positions as a result of their own histories (Engeström, 2001).
Tools	Tools can be conceptual and theoretical (Engeström, 2001). Leadbetter (2017) describes tools as being concrete (e.g., a machine or object) or abstract (e.g., language). It is assumed that tools will be being used within an activity system and this node helps to explore what those tools are. Tools are also known as mediating artefacts as they *"…mediate thought during the interaction between the subject and the context within an activity"* (Hardman, 2008, p.72).

Engeström further expanded his ideas of activity theory to what he called the Third Generation Activity Model. Figure 7 demonstrates the diagram used to demonstrate this amended system.
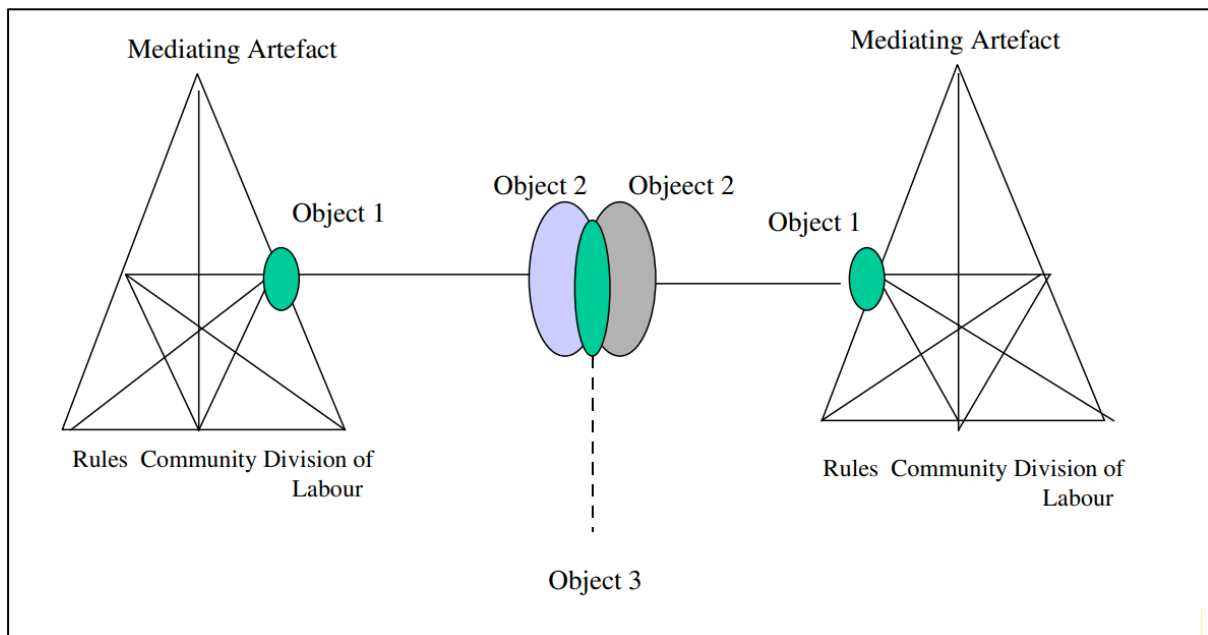
Figure 7: Third generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1999a).

The third generation of activity theory *"…intends to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogues, multiple perspectives and networks of interacting activity systems"* (Daniels, 2001, p.91). In this system, the concept of having interacting activity systems is introduced along with the notion that multiple systems with different, sometimes competing objects, can be being worked on (Leadbetter, 2017). Engeström outlined the importance of power and control within the third-generation activity system, acknowledging the tensions and contradictions that can exist within systems (Engeström, 1999a).

4.4.5 Contradictions

A key element of Engeström's activity theory (1987) is the concept of contradictions. Contradictions can be described as the dilemmas that exist amongst the activity within the system (Roth, 2004). Furthermore, they account for any tensions that exist within and between activity systems (Engeström, 2001). Contradictions can develop across time, and when any conflicts are identified and resolved, this can lead to change within the system (Gedera & Williams, 2013). Whilst contradictions are *"…viewed as a driving force and as a contradictory motive for development"*, it was not within the scope of this thesis to create developments for practice, although considerations for future practice are outlined in chapter seven (Yamazumi, 2009, p.223). Table 5 outlines the four contradictions outlined by Engeström (2014). For this research study it was decided to explore primary and secondary contradictions only. As this

study was not making comparisons between previous models of activity and new ones (Capper, 2020), tertiary contradictions were not explored. Ethically, as part of anonymising the wider activity systems in which the EPs' were a part of (i.e., their local authorities) and in adhering to the terms agreed to consent in the study, it was not possible to explore quaternary contradictions in this study. Assessing the contradictions between nodes can helpfully identify the factors that support and constrain learning (Sannino, Daniels & Gutierrez, 2009). Contradictions can be used to develop shared objects between different activity systems (Sannino et al., 2009) and in building cross-boundary working in what is understood as a development work research (DWR) lab (Engeström, 2007). DWR labs have been used to explore multi-agency working (Leadbetter, 2017) although as this research was not seeking to change practice or ways of working across local authorities, they were not used (Virrkkunen, Makinen & Lintula, 2010).

Table 5: The different types of contradictions as described by Engeström (2014).

Contradiction	Description of contradiction (as cited by Engeström, 2014, p.71)
Level 1 (Primary)	Primary inner contradictions occur within each constituent component of the central activity (e.g., within a node such as rules).
Level 2 (Secondary)	Secondary contradictions occur between constituents of the central activity (e.g., between nodes such as tools and the community).
Level 3 (Tertiary)	Tertiary contradictions occur between the object of the activity and the object of a culturally more advanced form of the activity.
Level 4 (Quaternary)	Quarternary contradictions occur between the activity and its neighbouring activities, furthermore that "*…we take into consideration the essential neighbour activities linked with the central activity that is the original object of our study*" (p.71).

4.4.6 Rationale

Activity theory is recognised as being a helpful tool in qualitative and interpretative research (Hashim & Jones, 2007). Leadbetter (2017) describes the diverse ways that activity theory has been used within EP practice. Activity theory can be used as a descriptive framework (e.g., planning interventions for TEPs' and as a device for discussing ways of working and interventions) (Leadbetter, 2017). It has also been used as an analytic device and as an organisational development tool (Leadbetter, 2017). Second generation activity theory can support with eliciting rich pictures of activity within schools and how components of a system interact (Schroder, Wals & van Koppen, 2020).

Activity theory has been utilised in EP practice and notably within TEP theses and research. For example, Mandair (2021) used activity theory to explore EP practice with young people aged 16-25; Capper (2020) explored EPs' contributions to the statutory assessment process; O'Shea (2019) used activity theory to explore consultation and Edwards (2017) used it to explore the transition process into further education for young people with SEMH needs.

This research used activity theory (Engeström, 1987) as a descriptive and analytical tool to explore EPs' conceptualisations of anti-racism within their practice. More specifically, the second generation activity theory model (Engeström, 1987) was used to explore the relationship between EPs' conceptualisation of anti-racism and their practice of this (object/outcome); the resources they used (tools); who else they were working with (community); how the work is shared (division of labour); and the factors that are supporting and constraining this aspect of practice (rules). By using second generation activity theory as a tool to explore this aspect of EP practice, the research aimed to elicit a range of elements that can be discovered in relation to wider contextual and historical factors (Leadbetter, 2017).

4.5 Participants, Method and Data Collection

4.5.1 Sampling

In this research, the population being studied refers to EPs' employed within EPSs' in the West Midlands. As a large population, it was decided that a sample of EPs' would be collected through a purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling, which is also described as 'judgemental sampling' involves selecting participants on the basis that they will provide data that supports the aims and objectives of the study (Kumar, 2019). As a sampling technique, it is described as non-probabilistic as the sample is not representative of the population (Thomas, 2017). To recruit participants, I initially made contact via email with individual Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs') within the West Midlands and I asked them to share my research advertisement with their teams (Appendix 1). After a small response rate, I decided to share the details of the study with the WMPEP (West Midlands Principal Educational Psychology) group via email. It is conceivable that my research advertisement was not shared by all PEPs' to their services and therefore it is possible that some EPs' were not aware of this research taking place. There may have been several reasons for this, including possible tensions experienced by PEPs, if their service was not already engaging in this type of work. Whilst this research was not seeking to explore which services were engaging and which services were not, it is important to recognise the possible tensions which may have impacted upon the dissemination of the research advert. However, all five participants included in this research study were recruited in response to the research advertisement that was shared.

When considering a sufficient sample size in qualitative research, it is noted that there is significant variability in the literature as to what this should be (Bryman, 2016). It is argued that approximately 30 participants should be recruited however, there is acknowledgement that the sample size is limited by the number of participants the researcher can gain access to (Adler & Adler, 2012). In qualitative research, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) suggest that a sample size shouldn't be too small that this may impact upon successful data saturation and equally that it shouldn't be too large. Whilst it is not explicitly clear what a large or small sample size is, Creswell (2002) argues that when using case studies, a sample size of between three to five cases is sufficient (as cited in Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that a sample of between 4 and 10 cases is sufficient, as having less than this can lead to difficulties in generating theory (as cited in Gray, 2018). However, generalisation of theory is not an intended outcome of this research.

4.5.2 Participants

In this study, participants could volunteer their involvement if they met the following inclusion criteria (Table 6):

Table 6: A table to demonstrate the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined on the participant information sheet.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
- To be registered with the Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC). - To be employed within a West Midlands Educational Psychology Service. - For EPs' who are currently taking a lead and/or involved in work around anti oppressive practice (e.g., anti-racism) within their service or their practice. - For EPs' who may be interested in exploring this area of practice within this research study.	Trainee educational psychologists.

All five participants interviewed were involved in leading upon this aspect of practice within their local authorities in some way. All participants were women. Four participants identified as being White British and 1 participant identified as Black Caribbean. Participants ages ranged between 25 to 50. I have decided not to report on any other participant characteristics as I feel that by doing so, could result in risking their identities. Following the interviews of the five participants, it was decided that no further attempts to seek participants

through contacting PEPs' would take place, as it was felt that a sufficient sample size had been achieved.

4.5.3 Interview procedure

4.5.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

To explore the views of EPs', semi-structured interviews were used as data collection methods which involved presenting participants with an interview schedule (Appendix 3) that outlined a list of questions, prompts and probes, linked to the activity theory system. A strength of using semi-structured interviews is that additional questions can be asked which may not have been considered from the outset of the interview (Gray, 2018). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews support the co-production of responses which help to understand the values, experiences and meanings held by interviewees in a collaborative way (Gray, 2018). To support with the development of the interview schedule, the broad structure outlined by Robson and McCartan (2016) which involves having an "*…introduction, warm-up, main body, cool-off and closure*" was included (as cited in Thomas, 2013, p.199). To support with the development of research questions and in conceptualising the practice of EPs', I referred to the key questions developed by Leadbetter et al (2007, p.92) which is highlighted in figure 8.
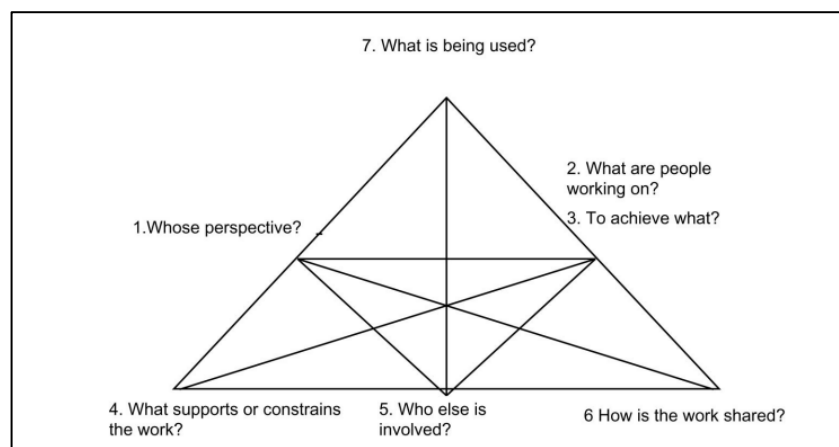

Figure 8: A diagram to show the key questions for the activity theory nodes used to conceptualise practice and activities (Leadbetter et al., 2007, p. 92).

Whilst the questions outlined in figure 8 were used analytically (Leadbetter et al., 2007), it was felt that they could similarly be used to support as a descriptive tool in exploring practice within each of the nodes. To support with the explanation of the activity theory nodes, a diagram developed by O'Shea (2019) was provided to participants as it was felt that this diagram helpfully illustrated the prompts within the varying nodes of activity theory. The five interviews were completed online using Zoom at a time and date convenient to the participant. Interviews ranged in length (e.g., 55-120 minutes), with the average length being one hour.

Braun & Clarke (2013) argue that online interviews are no longer regarded as poorer alternatives to face-to-face interviews and are instead recognised as a different type of interview. The advantages and disadvantages of completing virtual interviews are outlined in table 7.

Table 7: Advantages and disadvantages of completing virtual interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Virtual interviews	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Convenience for participants (e.g., comfort of own home).	Less convenience for participants (e.g., online interviews are potentially more time consuming than face to face interviews).
Increased empowerment (e.g., greater sense of control in the interview).	The researcher has less control over the interview (e.g., disruption by technical problems and distractions of everyday life).
Increased accessibility (e.g., no Geography limitations).	Less accessible to some groups (e.g., involvement is limited to those with access to a computer/internet access).
Potentially ideal for sensitive topics.	Some forms of information are lost (e.g., difficult to interpret visual/emotional cues which can lead to delays in response).

Prior to the completion of interviews, I arranged pre-meetings with participants so that I could introduce myself and provide further explanation regarding the aims of the research. Whilst it was important that consideration needed to be given in regard to the level of self-disclosure provided by myself as a researcher in the initial meetings, it was important to share the personal and professional reasons for wanting to explore this aspect of practice (Mertens, 2014). I reflected on my awareness of cultural competence and what acknowledging this brings to the insider/outsider dichotomy of completing research (Mercer, 2007; Mertens, 2014). Consequently, it felt important to discuss my positionality as a researcher in the initial meetings which also helped to develop rapport. The introductory meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss ethical considerations of the research and to check that the participants were still happy to participate (Mertens, 2014).

4.5.3.2 Pilot

The initial interview schedule was piloted prior to its implementation with an EP. The aim of the pilot was to trial the interview schedule and reflect upon the questions that had been developed. Willig (2013) argues that conducting a pilot is beneficial as it can highlight any difficulties that might be encountered. In this case, this was particularly helpful as time was spent discussing the questions, order of questions and considerations for participants based upon the topic. Consequently, as the majority of the pilot interview was spent reflecting upon the topic and structuring of questions, the data was not included however the following changes were made:

- It felt important that a copy of the Activity Theory diagram should be shared in advance of the interview, along with the participant information sheet, consent form and interview schedule. By doing this, it was hoped that participants would have additional time to consider the information and prepare any questions that they might have in advance of the interview, particularly in relation to activity theory.
- Some of the initial questions were removed and/or adapted. Other questions were also broken down.
- It was felt that there needed to be a bridge between the initial introduction and the object (e.g., anti-racism) in response to the reflection that 'anti-racism' is a powerful term. It was also thought that this may give participants a safe space in which there was acknowledgement that the terms being discussed can be emotive and that their meanings are likely to be interpreted differently.

Smith, Breakwell & Wright (2012) argue that the data collected during the pilot should not be included in the overall study. A considerable proportion of the pilot interview was spent discussing the questions, the structure of the interview and how it might be interpreted and therefore it was decided that the data from the pilot would not be included.

4.5.4 Ethical considerations

An application for ethical approval was submitted to the University of Birmingham's Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (Appendix 2) and full ethical approval was granted in March 2022. This research study followed the ethical guidelines as outlined in the Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2021a) and the ethical guidelines for educational research (BERA, 2019). This research also followed the standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists (HCPC, 2015). Table 8 provides a description of the key ethical principles and how they were applied within this research.

Table 8: Applications of ethical considerations in this research

Ethical consideration	Application in this research
Informed Consent:	In order to gain informed consent, an email inviting participation was shared with PEPs' in the West Midlands. In the invitation email, I included information regarding the research project (e.g., research aims, inclusion criteria and information regarding taking part). Before the interviews were scheduled, I completed pre-interview meetings online to discuss the project in further detail and participants were invited to ask any questions. A week prior to the interview, I shared an Activity Theory diagram (Appendix 6), a consent form (Appendix 4), a copy of the interview schedule (Appendix 3) and a Participant information sheet (Appendix 5). Participants were asked to complete the consent form prior to the interview and at the beginning of each interview, I obtained verbal consent and provided further opportunities for any questions.
Right to withdraw data:	Participants had the right to withdraw their consent at any point during the research process and up until two weeks following the interview.
Confidentiality:	To protect confidentiality, participants were informed that audio recordings would only be listened to by myself. In addition, participant names have not been included in the data analysis/findings sections (e.g., pseudonyms have been used to protect participants' identity). Any information/quotations than could render participants identifiable has not been included in the formal write up (e.g., locations or demographic information).
Positionality as a researcher:	During the pre-interview meetings, I sought to be transparent with participants in regard to my subjective experiences, interests and philosophical position. Throughout the research process, I have been critical of my positionality and subjectivity, which is further outlined in chapter six.

4.6 Data analysis

4.6.1 Reflexive thematic analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was used to deductively analyse the data from the seven nodes of activity theory. Reflexive thematic analysis, developed by Braun and Clarke (2022), replaces the most commonly used term 'thematic analysis'. Reflexive thematic analysis is a method which enables researchers to analyse their data using a six-step method (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Braun & Clarke (2022) argue that acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher is important, and that being critically reflective within the process and practice of research is fundamental.

4.6.2 Rationale

I used reflexive thematic analysis because it offered a flexible framework and process in which to deductively analyse the data. Furthermore, this approach encouraged me to reflect upon my theoretical assumptions and perspectives throughout the process of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), through the use of a systematic, step by step method (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.6.3 Table of Steps

Table 9 outlines the key steps involved in Braun & Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis (2022) and a description of the steps that were applied in this research.

Steps	Description of step (as outlined by Braun & Clarke, 2022)	Application to this research
Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the dataset.	This phase involves becoming familiar with the data set through a process of immersion. This involves reading and re-reading data, listening to audio files and making brief notes about insights derived from the data items and data set as a whole.	During this phase, I re-read over my transcriptions whilst listening to the audio recordings to support with familiarising myself with the data. I looked over the initial mind maps completed whilst taking notes during the interviews and finalised these (Appendix 7).
Phase 2: Coding.	In this phase, segments of data that appear potentially interesting, relevant or meaningful for your research question are identified. Code labels are provided to these (analytically meaningful descriptions). In reflexive TA, coding can be completed at a variety of levels e.g., from the very explicit or surface meaning (semantic) through to the more conceptual or implicit meaning	The codes were pre-set according to the activity theory triangle (e.g., subject, object, outcome, rules, community, division of labour and tools). The data was coded deductively based upon these codes. Once the data has been coded under these seven notes, I checked that the data was relevant for each code. I used NVivo to support with the coding of data (Appendix 8).

	(latent). The entire dataset was coded systematically and thoroughly. When completed, code labels are collated and then compiled into the relevant segments of data for each code.	
Phase 3: Generating initial themes.	In this phase, the aim is to identify shared patterns of meaning across the dataset. A cluster of codes that seem to share a core idea or concept and which might provide a meaningful answer to your research question are compiled. Theme development is an active process; themes are constructed by the researcher, based around the data, the research questions and the researchers' knowledge and insights. Where codes typically capture a specific or a particular meaning, themes describe broader, shared meanings. Once potential or candidate themes have been identified and addressed the research question, all coded data is collated relevant to each candidate theme.	I looked at the data within each code and began to identify shared meanings within subsets of the data. This is where I created main themes and sub themes. I then developed thematic maps in this stage.
Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes.	In this phase, the themes are checked for their relevance to the coded extracts and the full data set. The themes are checked to see whether they illustrate the most important patterns across the dataset in relation to the research question. Candidate themes can be collapsed together or may be split into new themes. Some candidate themes may be retained or discarded.	In this phase, I checked the themes for their relevance to the coded extracts and full data set. I checked to see whether the themes illustrated the most important patterns across the data set in relation to the research questions. Some themes were retained and some were discarded (e.g., coded data put within a different theme e.g., interests-academic = into professional).
Phase 5: Refining, defining and naming themes.	In this phase, each theme must be refined and defined. It is argued that the following questions are asked: "what story does this theme tell?" and "how does this theme fit into my overall story about the data?". Key activities in this phase involve writing a brief synopsis of each theme. It is also important for the researcher to decide on a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme.	In this section, I reviewed the themes (refined/defined them) and asked key questions about the overall story being told in relation to the research questions. In this phase, I renamed some of my themes so that they were more concise, punchy and informative.
Phase 6: Writing up.	The aim of this phase is to bring together the vivid data extracts to tell a coherent and persuasive story	Chapter five provides a summary of the findings.

about the dataset that addresses the research questions being asked.	

4.6.4 Advantages and disadvantages of using thematic analysis

Table 10 demonstrates a selection of some advantages and disadvantages of using reflexive thematic analysis as summarised by Braun & Clarke (2006; 2022):

Advantages	Disadvantages
Flexibility (e.g., theory, research questions, purpose, data collection etc).	The flexibility can lead to 'analysis paralysis' for those with less experience in conducting qualitative research.
It is an accessible method for those with less experience of completing qualitative research.	It does not have interpretive power if it is not used within an analytical framework that justifies the claims being made.
It is an easy and relatively quick method to use.	To avoid the risk of theoretical concepts being integrated into the analysis, the researcher must engage with theory prior to data analysis.
Supports with identifying similarities and differences across the dataset.	It has been described as being difficult to define guidance for higher level analysis.
It can generate unanticipated insights.	

4.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, an outline of the research design and methodology has been presented. A description of activity theory was provided along with a rationale for using it within this research study. Data analysis methods were also described. Chapter five will provide a summary of the findings, where the themes and subthemes developed by using reflexive thematic analysis will be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

5.1 Chapter introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the five EPs' who participated in this research are presented. The semi-structured interviews were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis with the aim of providing a rich picture of individual EP practice. As outlined in chapter four, the data was analysed deductively using the nodes from the activity theory system (subject, object, outcome, rules, community, tools and division of labour). Visual representations of the data within each node will be outlined and figure 9 demonstrates the way in which findings are presented. Figure 10 demonstrates a summary of the key themes and subthemes that were identified across the dataset. This chapter will also summarise the primary and secondary contradictions that were identified within the data. The findings will be used to answer the following research questions:

- Research question 1: In what ways do EPs' conceptualise anti-racism within their practice?
- Research question 2: What factors did the EPs' perceive to support and constrain their anti-racist practice?
- Research question 3: What contradictions were present within the activity systems and what implications do these have for EP practice?
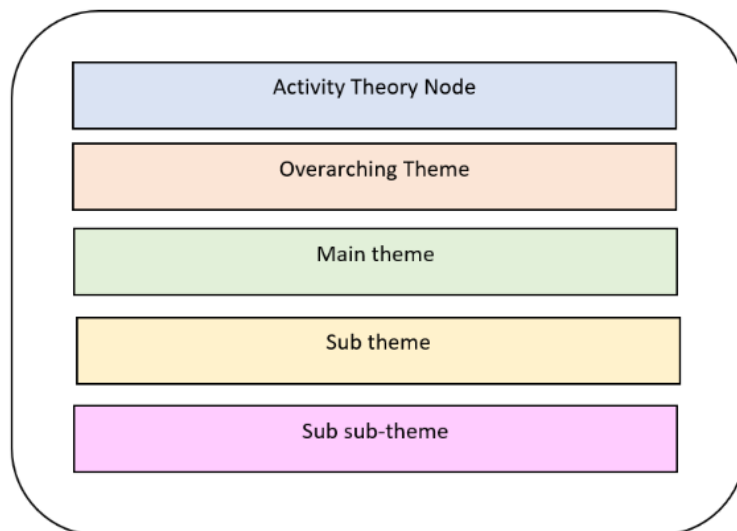
Figure 9: A visual colour key to demonstrate the representation of themes.

Subject:

Perspectives of qualified EPs'
EP roles (previous and current)
Interests (personal and professional)

Rules: **National: Support – Socio political climate** (increased discourse and resources). **Organisations** (Guidance and resources).

National: Constraint – Current political climate (limited discourse, media, publications, funding cuts and lack of transparency). **EP system** (representation, recruitment, capacity).

Local: Supports – EP System (working groups, time); **Service/leadership commitment** (prioritisation) **Local authority** (prioritisation).

Local: Constraints: EP system (time/funding, representation, traded service, skills); **Local context:** schools, demographic, social capital) **Local authority**: perception, lack of representation, policy).

Individual: Support: Personal values, personal experience, Professional experience (leadership roles, being reflective, skills, time) **Community** (shared interest/conversations).

Individual: Constraint: Capacity/time; personal reflections (lived experience, increased vulnerability, language).

Tools:

Concrete tools: Research (CPD, academic research, books and resources). **Organisations** (professional bodies, Government, Charities/unions).
Social media: (Twitter, campaigns).
Assessment/approaches.
Abstract tools: Increased communication (EPs', supervision).

Object:

Construction of anti-racism (professional/personal)

Anti-racist practice:
Service level (EP team and development/working groups)
Individual level (Assessment, training, supervision) and critical reflection of practice).

Outcome:
Individual outcomes (confidence and smaller goals)
EP Practice outcomes (assessment, research, training, consultation, supervision, team meetings).
Service/Local authority outcomes: service users are listened to, policy development, curriculum and knowing the demographic)
Greater representation

Community:

EP colleagues: Working groups (EP and representatives from other teams, EP led)
Wider professionals: (local authority, guest speakers, social care).
Future practice: (Families, local communities, EP service, academics, researchers).

Division of Labour:

Sharing of work: (shared leadership, working group)
Personal reflections: time constraints, need for additional roles, lack of labour division.

Figure 10 – Thematic map of themes and subthemes identified within the seven nodes of activity theory

5.2 Findings presented under the activity theory nodes

For each node of the second generation activity model, a visual map to illustrate the themes and subthemes will be presented (5.2.1- 5.2.7). For each interview, the audio recording was transcribed (see Appendix 9 for an example) and then analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Initial maps of the participants' data were developed (Appendix 7). The data was analysed deductively, using the activity theory nodes and the findings are presented below. In regard to the structure of the analysis, nodes 1-5 were used to analyse the first research question and nodes 6 and 7 were used to answer the second research question. Whilst the overall activity of EP work is considered as a unit of analysis, it can be broken down into component parts that consider additional units of analysis such as 'rules' which determine the actions of individuals (Hasim & Jones, 2007). Inspired by other research studies that have specifically explored supporting and constraining factors (Mandair, 2021; Krause, 2018), a decision was made to focus on the lower section of Engeström's second generation activity theory and specifically the rules section for research question two (1999a) as it enables a macro level of analysis of the factors that support and constrain EP work (O'Shea. 2019). Furthermore, the second generation activity theory model offers multiple layers of analysis and in this research study, research question 1 provides a descriptive analysis of the activity being completed, whereas research questions 2 and 3 provide more of analytical analysis. As outlined in chapter four, there are multiple and diverse ways in which activity theory can be applied and this has given inspiration for the structure of analysis in this study (Leadbetter, 2017).

5.2.1 Subject

Within activity theory, the subject is the person or individual's perspective with whom we are exploring. In this research, five participants took part and shared their views in relation to their role and their personal and professional interests within the topic of anti-racism. Figure 10.1 presents the key themes and subthemes that were identified within the 'subject' node.
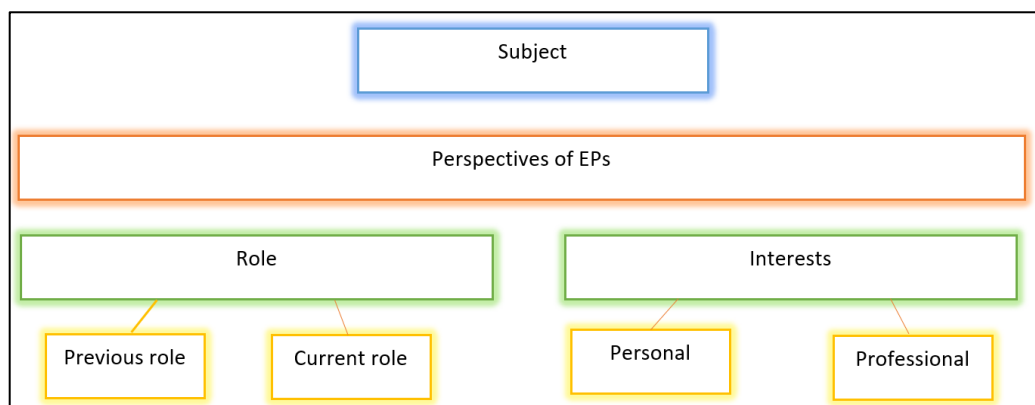
Figure 10.1: Thematic map demonstrating the themes and subthemes for the 'subject' node.

The five participants interviewed were employed within 4 different EP services within the West Midlands. The participants shared a combined 28 years of experience. One participant was a senior EP and four were main grade EPs'. Several participants had lead roles within their service that linked to the topic being studied (e.g., ELSA, promoting racial equality, anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice). Participants shared a variety of experience that they had gained prior to qualifying as an EP (e.g., teaching, working as an assistant EP, providing support in special schools and working within traded services). The themes identified within the 'subject' node highlight that their personal and professional interests and experiences could be influencing factors within this area of practice.

5.2.2 Object

Within the activity system, the object is defined as something that is being worked on and/or acted on by the subject (Engeström, 1987). The object can also be described as the focus of activity and is understood as being difficult to define within the activity system (Leadbetter, 2017). This is because *"…there will invariably be a lack of clarity about what the object is, and this object is likely to be interpreted slightly differently depending on a range of factors, but particularly upon the motives of the individuals"* (Leadbetter, 2017, p.256). To support with the clarification of the object being discussed, pre-interview discussions were completed as outlined in chapter four.
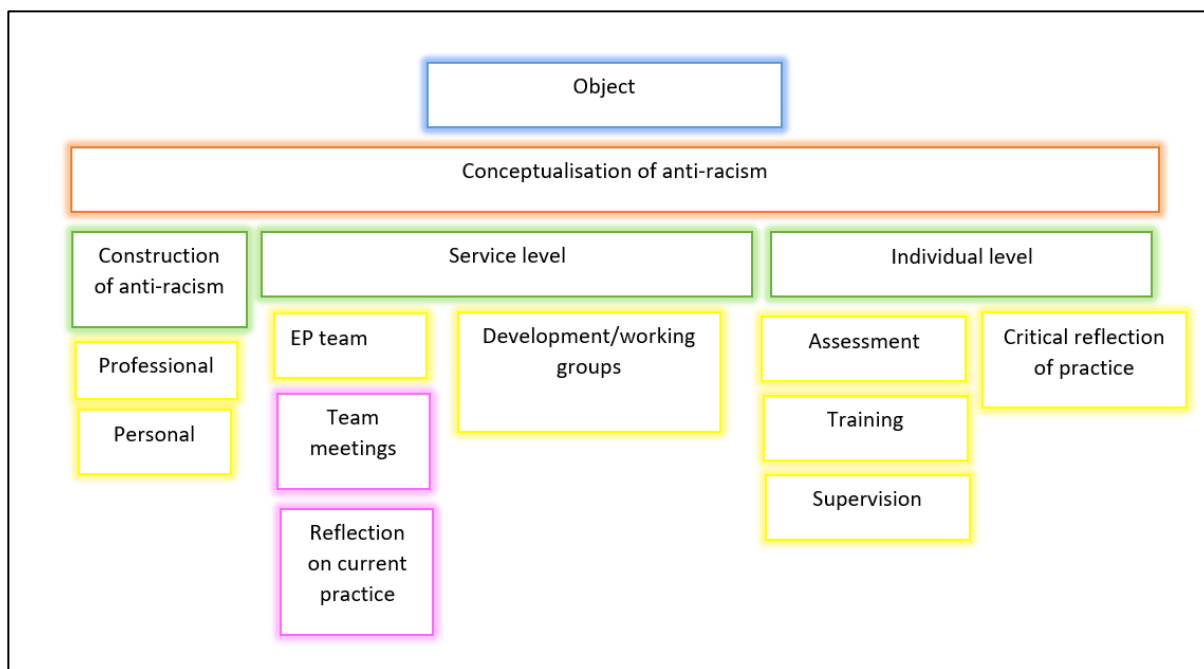
Figure 10.2: Thematic map demonstrating the themes and subthemes for the 'object' node.

Figure 10.2 demonstrates the themes and subthemes within the 'object' node. For research question one, 'In what ways do EPs' conceptualise anti-racism within their practice?', the thematic map highlights a range of ways in which the participants conceptualised anti-racism within their professional practice.

Participants shared their perspectives on what anti-racism meant to them, both on a personal and professional level. On a personal level, and more broadly speaking, participants referred to anti-racism as being something that is 'active' where actions are taken to reduce oppression. Their conceptualisations included taking steps to reduce oppression, challenging systems and discourses and interrogating existing inequalities and considering how these can be reduced. One participant also shared that it was important to be an ally/supporter and that being curious about the mechanisms through which racism plays out in society is key. Notably, one participant shared that the term 'promoting racial inequality' was a helpful way to construct anti-racism as it emphasises taking action and being proactively involved.

Object
Personal construction

Evie: *"…I think for me, anti-racism is about knowledge and action kind of combined…anti-racism is about self-reflection, self-learning and self-understanding….a really fundamental part of anti-racism is action, taking measurable actions that lead to a positive change for people of colour".*

Poppy: *"…my experience is that people who are kind of committed to anti-racism are those who have kind of acknowledged that they have racial bias…..and you've committed to kind of doing that work yourself and kind of trying to undo what you've learnt".*

Participants also shared their constructions and perspectives of anti-racism within their professional work. A range of perspectives were shared that illuminated the importance of the systems and structures within which they were working. Participants also reflected on how their professional constructions were impacted upon by their current practice.

Object
Professional construction

Sarah: *"…it's important that we have critical appraisal of what we are doing, it's not just what makes us comfortable or what makes us reduce the traded hours…it is what is most suitable for this child".*

Evie: *"…I think it's, it's like a niggling thought at the back of your head like, when you are practising as a psychologist, if I'm kind of saying I'm being anti-racist, I've got the knowledge now, I've worked tirelessly to get that knowledge, but what am I actually doing differently now?".*

Aimee: *"…I guess I have had questions in recent years about, you know, have I, have I started to ignore the concept of anti-racism in my professional life, because I'm mostly*

Participants further conceptualised anti-racism by providing examples of anti-racist practice at an individual practitioner level and at an EP service level. At a service level, anti-racism is discussed within EP team meetings although the extent to which varies, which was highlighted in some reflections provided by the participants. One participant described how the topic is revisited in team meetings on a half termly basis whereas others shared that they were in the initial stages of raising it within team and service meetings.

Object
Service level (EP Team)
Poppy: *"…so yeah we're very much at the stage of, I guess, communicating to people [in the team], that it should be discussed".*

Service level (EP team) – Reflections on practice
Ava: *"…I would be curious if other services are at the very beginning of this, or if there is something about working in a predominantly white area that has meant that we've not been confronted with racism perhaps in the way that other EPs' and services might have been".*

In regard to how 'anti-racism' is being worked on and/or acted on at a service level, participants talked about being part of working groups, developmental groups or partnering with other colleagues to look explicitly at anti-racism, but also more broadly, anti-oppressive practice. Participants described how the working groups were formed, and they shared that initial discussions, prior to the formation of the working groups, happened following George Floyd's death and the Black Lives Matter movement. Some of the working groups are more established than others (i.e., work has been ongoing in the last few years) whereas others are in the initial stages of gathering information and described themselves as being early on in service wide work. For the more established groups, participants described how the actions of the group were identified within service development plans.

Object
Service level (Development/working groups)
Sarah: *"…it's taken us about [time] to start to devise a development plan just because of the amount of data, and actually fine tuning what works".*

Evie: *"…a working group* [was set up] *when we all started to return from the pandemic…that group was kind of brought together, to really think about how, as a psychology service, we might be able to support…".*

The participants discussed some of the working group's priorities and goals. They also described activities that have been completed within the working groups to support with discussions around anti-racism. Examples included the use of a PATH to support with the development of a vision and action plan, use of questionnaires to explore EP views, development of scripts for planning meetings, researching ways to elicit data on the demographics of service users and providing time and space for discussion. Further description of these goals and how the work was divided is presented in the 'outcome' and 'division of labour' sections. Furthermore, one of the participants described how the working group had expanded since its inception to include professionals from services outside of the EP team.

In addition to the activities being completed within working groups, participants also discussed activity at an individual level. Participants reflected upon their knowledge of anti-racism in aspects of their practice such as the use of assessments, supervision and training. Participants argued the importance of using culturally sensitive forms of assessments and alternatives to cognitive assessments (e.g., dynamic assessment). Participants also discussed 'race' in supervision with their peers and with trainee EPs'. One participant mentioned the use of transcultural supervision as a mechanism to explore implicit aspects of identity and described the positive impact of this upon their supervisory relationship. One participant shared that anti-racism training had been delivered within schools and the local authority and that positive feedback had been collected.

Object
Individual level
Assessment
Sarah: *"…for me it's in my practice I suppose it's, it's utilising the tools that are supportive in ensuring that we are not oppressive in our practice…for example, if we look at standardised assessments, that is generalised and used on a white population…and so if I'm using it with children who may not have the kind of cultural exposure to certain terminology, their disadvantaged in how they perform in that context".*

Evie: *"…yeah assessments, I'd love them to be more diverse culturally".*

Supervision
Poppy: *"…I think what I'm doing currently….. is trying to bring up 'race' more explicitly in supervision".*

Finally, participants shared critical reflections of their practice in relation to anti-racism. An example of this was highlighted in their use of language and the impact of this. They shared the importance of being reflective practitioners in the work that they were doing and the impact this has for the communities in which they serve. When writing reports, participants shared

reflections about the accessibility of them, the language that is used and the implications of any power dynamics. Some participants described the need to talk about children from ethnic minorities more within their planning meetings, when perhaps they weren't being explicitly raised by schools to ensure that a range of children are being supported.

Object
Individual level - Critical reflection of practice

Evie: *"…I still worry about offending because I use the term people of colour because it seems to be of the moment quite a well appreciated term. But I completely understand that some people will find that highly offensive, and that does worry me."*

Poppy: *"…I think the main thing for me at the moment is, erm, again like I said, my own confidence in bringing it up, bearing in mind how uncomfortable it makes people".*

Ava: *"…I am often aware of the risk of saying the wrong thing, the risk of causing offense…I think it's a difficult conversation to have, erm, depending on other people's experiences and understanding".*

5.2.3 Outcome

Within the activity system, the outcome describes what is hoped to be achieved (Engeström, 1987). The thematic map below outlines the themes and subthemes analysed within the 'outcome' node. The map demonstrates a range of outcomes that were identified, both at the personal and professional level. The outcomes also extended beyond the EP service to local authorities and the wider EP profession. Figure 10.3 shows the themes and subthemes for the 'outcome' node.
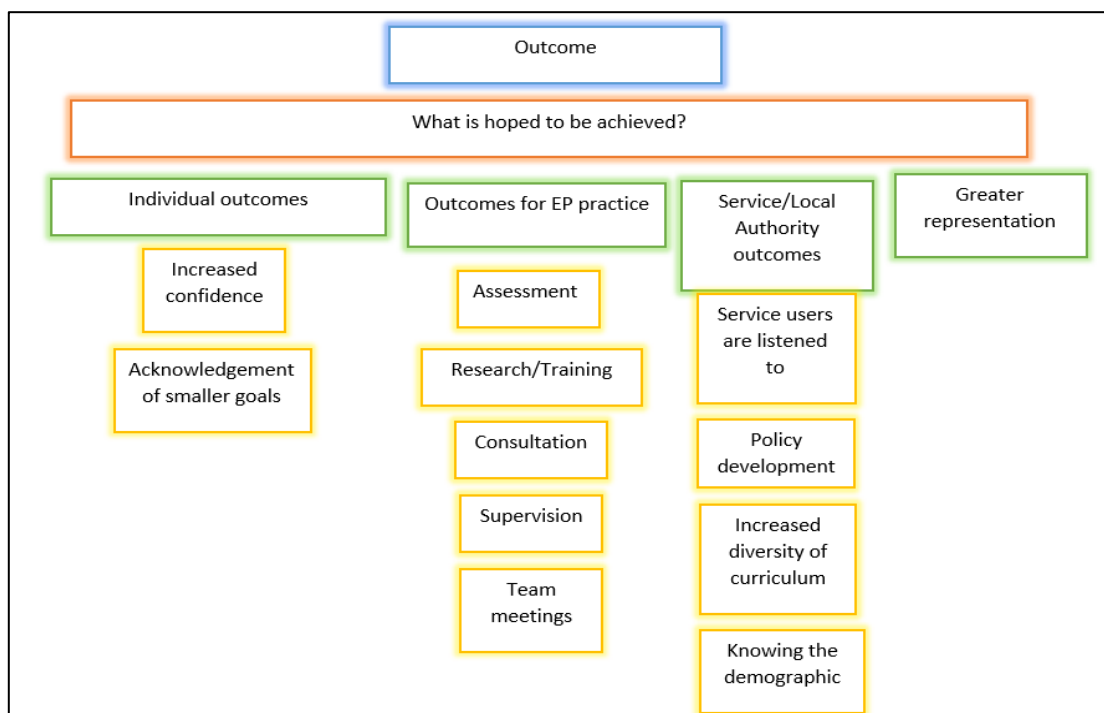
Figure 10.3: Thematic map demonstrating the themes and subthemes for the 'outcome' node.

At an individual level, participants shared that developing their confidence in this area of practice was important to them. Having conversations with others, being reflective, and developing positive relationships with schools were identified as being central factors to promoting increased confidence.

Outcome
Individual level – Increased confidence

Sarah: *"…I think that the outcomes for me is, on a practitioner level, that we are confident in identifying well what is discrimination, what is racism, how do I go about having difficult conversations…".*

Poppy: *"…I think what was helpful was the conversation we had…..I think that would help my confidence, because I'll be able to go and say this happened, and I felt really uncomfortable about it"*
.
Evie: *"…I think for me, the only thing that improved my confidence was constant exposure. Constant exposure to reading …. Talking about it and just letting the words fumble around on your tongue and come out wrong and then eventually after multiple times of saying it and trying it, it just gets a little easier".*

Participants discussed the importance and acknowledgement of having lots of smaller, identified goals as opposed to one, ultimate end goal. It was suggested that having mini goals and identified time markers in order to complete activities, would helpfully keep a focus on the activity and that the work of the development groups will be an ongoing activity. This was in response to an acknowledgement that anti-oppressive practice will never be 'done' and instead goals will be continually renewed. Furthermore, one participant shared that an outcome of this work is that it is considered by white psychologists on a daily basis.

Outcome
Individual level – acknowledgement of smaller goals

Evie: *"…I think it's probably one of those topics where there is no end goal.. if we've got complete parity amongst all of our data we capture, and we've got the lived experience of people saying, actually, I feel heard, I feel equal. I feel that there's equity, I feel that I'm recognised, I don't experience microaggressions in the workplace….I think that would be the ultimate end goal…that seems so far away from where we're at now…so I guess for me it's about breaking it down into smaller achievable goals".*

Aimee: *"…we probably need to have some more definite, definite markers, you know, time markers to say right by this point, you know, we would hope to achieve this".*

In addition, participants talked about outcomes more generally within EP practice. A variety of examples were given, from their perspectives, as to the intended outcomes of anti-

racist practice. For example, developing culturally sensitive assessments, developing improved systems in consultation, and other EPs' within the service being able to deliver anti-racism training. Other outcomes such as the concept of 'race' being considered during formulation and being discussed in supervision were also identified. One participant discussed an interest in completing anti-racism research in secondary schools. It was also important for continued discussion and training to be organised for EPs'. One participant shared that for co-production to occur, it is important that a safe space is provided for EPs' to be able to talk about this.

Outcome
EP practice
Consultation
Evie: *"…I'd like us to have better systems in terms of consultation… if one of our parents or carers speak a different language, then they will be offered at the end of the consultation for their language to be translated on the reports".*

Team meetings
Poppy: *"…one of my ideas that I want to share is like…maybe to read a kind of book around anti-racism and I thought 'me and white supremacy' might be a good start, and then have discussions as you work your way through".*

In addition to this, there were several examples of intended goals/outcomes for wider systems and stakeholders. For example, developing diverse curriculums in schools and developing opportunities, as part of understanding local demographics, in hearing the lived experiences of children and families from ethnic minority backgrounds. Furthermore, participants expressed the importance of liaising with council representatives for policy development. Participants considered the importance of having policies in place to promote racial inequalities and reflected upon how the principles would be enacted in practice.

Outcome
Service/Local authority
Service users are listened to
Aimee: *"…as I say, ultimately, that we have children, young people, and families, feeling that they are, listened to, that their experiences are heard, and that they are treated fairly".*

Ava: *"…is about making sure that all groups, and I use that word carefully… that they're being worked with…they're being listened to…that the learning is taking place with them".*

Curriculum
Evie: *"…one really important goal is that the curriculum is just much more diverse and that there are lots of different stories and that history is told in much more kind of factual ways… because that's where it all begins isn't it, kids learning about the world".*

Finally, participants shared perspectives of having greater representation both within the EP profession and within local authority/councils, particularly at the senior leadership level. By increasing the diversity within workforces, it was identified that this would hopefully prioritise diversity, equality and inclusion throughout organisations. One participant extended this to include gender and socioeconomic status. It was important that the profession is more representative of society so that strengths can be drawn from having practitioners of varying protected characteristics.

5.2.4 Tools

Within the activity system, it is understood that an activity involves artefacts or tools. The tools might be concrete/physical (e.g., an object or instrument) and they might also be abstract/psychological (e.g., language, processes or frameworks) (Leadbetter, 2017). Figure 10.4 demonstrates the themes and subthemes from the 'tools' node. A range of concrete and abstract tools were identified. EPs' also reflected upon the tools that they had available to them.
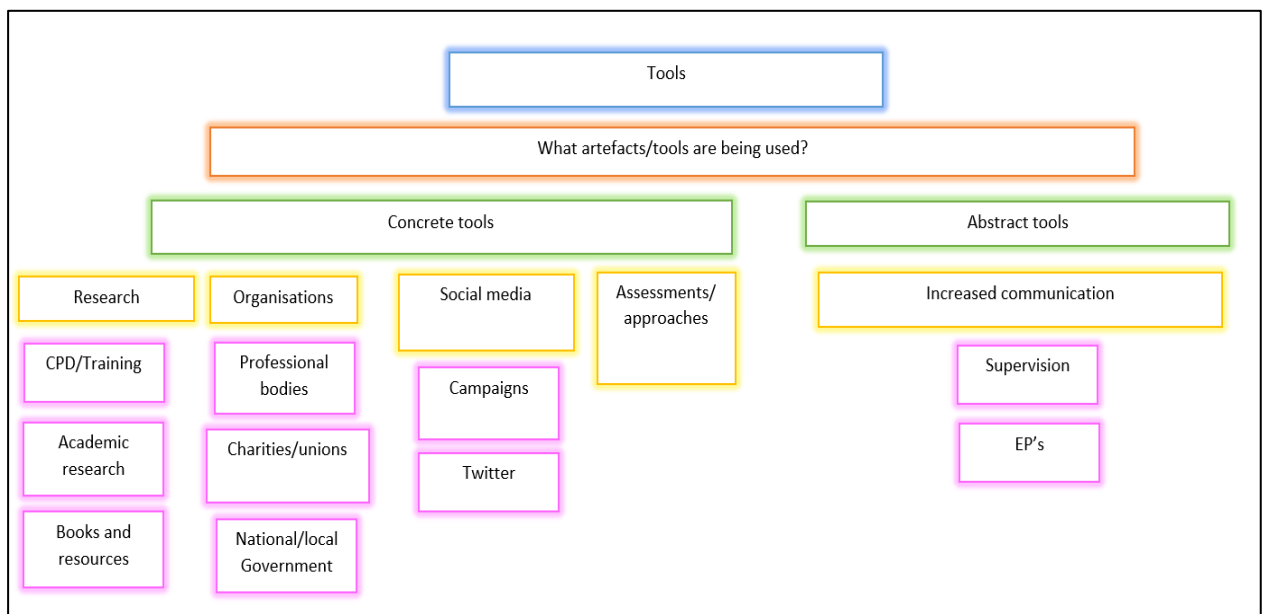
Figure 10.4: Thematic map demonstrating the themes and subthemes identified within the 'tools' node.

Participants shared that their use of research was a key mechanism for gathering information and knowledge relevant to this topic and that having access to research was important for facilitating anti-racist practice. Participants identified specific universities and academics who have explored anti-oppressive practice and that they had reached out to them to support with gathering information. Research itself was identified as a helpful tool for participants. Participants reflected upon research that had been shared as part of CPD/training

days. In addition, they shared how textbooks, podcasts, webinars, websites, YouTube videos, audio books and research articles have influenced their anti-racism knowledge and understanding. Specific books such as "Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race" (Eddo-Lodge, 2018), "Me and White Supremacy" (Saad, 2020) and the "Six Stages Framework" (M'gadzah, 2022) were mentioned.

Tools
Concrete Tools – Research
CPD/Training
Poppy: *"…the ** conference, and there was a PEP there talking about the journey she's been on in her service….that was really helpful".*

Academic research
Evie: *"…access to university library resources….really helpful tools to me and they are tools that I feel are something that I can bring as a unique contribution as a psychologist".*

Ava: *"…like the University of Birmingham…have the centre into research into race and education…I was fascinated by the work of people like David Gillborn".*

Books and resources
Evie: *"…books, research articles, podcasts. There's just so much content out there which individually helps me to grow on my anti-racism journey".*

In addition to research, participants referenced several tools that have been documented and/or published by organisations that were helpful for their practice. For example, the audit developed by the DECP was referenced, along with resources that have been published by the BPS, AEP, local Governments and the Anna Freud network. The resources supported them to reflect upon the processes, audit their skills and develop their knowledge.

Tools
Concrete Tools - Organisations
Professional bodies
Sarah: *"… so there is the DECP (2006) audit, erm, and that's a really good tool"*

Charities and unions
Evie: *"…NEU, for example, they've got an anti-racism audit and chart of the schools. Anna Freud network has got absolutely loads of anti-racism content on their website that's all freely available for schools, including PowerPoints and all sorts."*

National/local Government
Aimee: *"…the Local Government Association's key element guidelines for implementing the Equalities Act in councils."*

Evie: *"…Conservative Government. They've recently commissioned the Cred Report".*

Several participants referenced Twitter as a tool that supported their knowledge and developed their awareness of anti-racism. Twitter was identified as being a helpful tool in regard to reaching out to academic and EP communities. The Black Lives Matter campaign and the No More Exclusions Movement were also discussed. It was acknowledged that after these campaigns, a volume of resources were shared and this was helpful.

Tools
Concrete tools – Social media
Twitter
Aimee: *"…we've sort of tried going out through Twitter through um you know, through various personal contacts through West Midlands networks"*

Ava: *"…On Twitter, if I see researchers or academics commenting on race…..it is an opportunity for me to hear voices that I would not have previously heard".*

Campaigns
Poppy: *"…one of the most supportive things was with Black Lives Matter, was suddenly people were sharing masses of resources".*

Finally, participants referenced assessment tools and approaches that they use in their professional practice to support with eliciting young people's views. Dynamic assessment, talking mats, narrative approaches, the ideal self and personal construct therapy tools were described as positively lending themselves as tools to support conversations. In addition, culturally sensitive assessment approaches were considered. Participants acknowledged that being critical in their practice was important and that using tools that develop their confidence to have difficult conversations was paramount. Notably, the range of tools described suggests that tools are chosen based upon their suitability and with equality at the forefront of their thinking.

Tools
Concrete tools – Assessments and approaches
Sarah: *"…looking at some of the other assessment tools that are out there that kind of take the language barrier so I know there is an assessment that I used…..it took out the language element of assessments so you know that numeracy is universal, erm, and you can assess some cognitive functions where you are not solely reliant on language and that's really useful for certain populations".*

In addition to the concrete tools described, participants also referenced abstract tools which centred around language. Talking to other EPs' about anti-racism within the development groups and wider networks was perceived as helpful. The community was also highlighted as a helpful tool in regard to gathering voices and lived experiences. EPs' shared

that supervision was a helpful tool as the safe space enabled EPs' to discuss 'race'-related issues and talk through ways to approach difficult conversations sensitively.

Tools **Abstract tools – Increased communication** **EPs'**
Aimee: *"…the knowledge and experience of the EPs' in the groups which are really really important to draw on".* Evie: *"…conversations in the working group, conversations with you know people with lived experience and just as much dialogue and discussion as I can get really".*

5.2.5 Community

This component of the activity system explores who might be involved in the activity. Participants described a range of different stakeholders who have been involved in this activity and they also described a range of stakeholders that they would like to be involved.
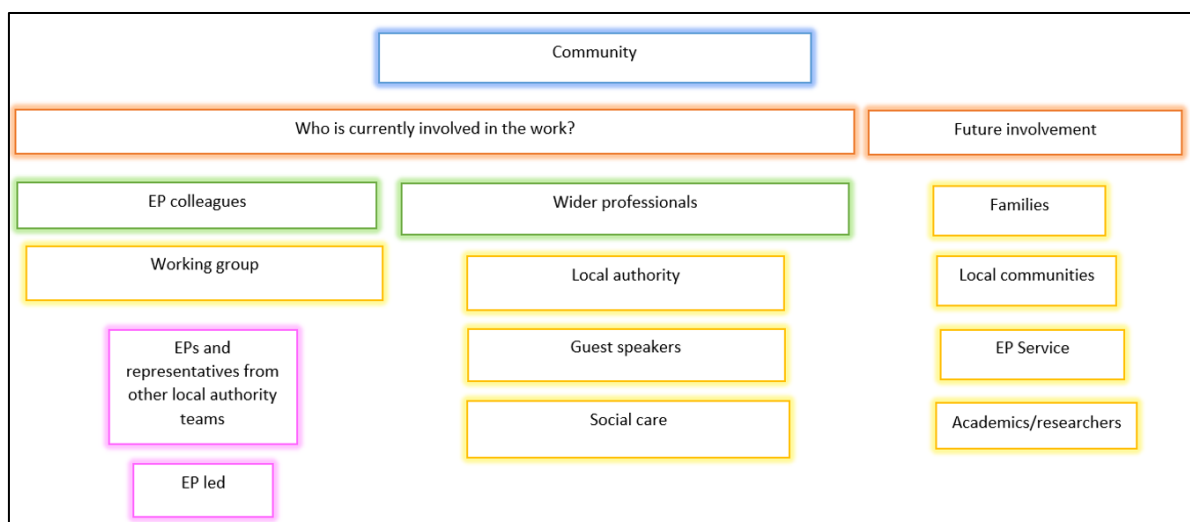
Figure 10.5 Thematic map demonstrating the themes and subthemes identified within the 'community' node.

One of the key communities, as identified by the participants, was the other EPs' who were identified as being part of the working/development groups. Participants shared that those in the working groups meet on a half termly basis and that they joined voluntarily through expressions of interest. Some working groups are bigger than others (e.g., groups can range from 6-15 members). One working group was initially composed of EPs', and the group then broadened out to include representatives from different SEND services. Within the working groups, several participants shared that they took responsibility for the working

group, it's organisation and implementation. In the working groups, professionals are discussing anti-racism and the action being taken.

Community
EP Colleagues – Working group
EP led
Sarah: "*…we asked for interest, erm and we got so many people, you know, so many different backgrounds, erm, senior leaders, trainees, assistants, erm and also main grade EPs'".*

Aimee: "*…there are EPs', who have a particular interest in this topic who are meeting and who you are, I guess this links to division of labour……you know, going away and saying right well, I'll look at this particular policy, and I'll contact these services…".*

In addition to the EPs' and representatives within the working/development groups, several participants shared that they had contacted other professionals to support them with work in this area. Participants discussed having conversations and working alongside various teams and leaders within local councils, utilising guest speakers and working alongside colleagues within social care. Having conversations with diversity and inclusion teams within the councils were helpful in terms of problem shooting activities, reviewing training to see if it was fit for purpose and exploring views. This was described as providing reassurance to the participants that the activities of the working group were along the right lines. Participants valued having conversations with wider professionals. One participant shared how being offered informal support through having open conversations was important as there was a collective understanding in the potential loneliness of doing work in this area.

Community
Wider professionals
Local authority
Aimee: *"…I've been in touch with [….] at the Council and looked at the EDI policy and some of their resources…".*
Guest speakers
Evie: *"…Where can we support our kind of knowledge? Um, we've had guest speakers. We've had somebody come in from a school that are doing some really nice work and they talked about their anti-racism policy."*

Social care
Poppy: *"…I think one of the problems will be is social care and education are very separate as they often are, and I think, I suppose one of the other benefits actually might be they seem much further on than we are….they've got to the point where they've been developing tools which they think might help them".*

Finally, participants suggested a range of stakeholders and communities that they felt should be a part of this work in the future. It was important that in the future, children, young

people and their families are consulted and that their views and voices are gathered. It was hoped that local community groups could be identified, although it was acknowledged that funding cuts have led to the reduction of working youth clubs. In addition, it was suggested that EPs' could complete further work with other professional groups such as academics and researchers, so that increased psychological knowledge could be used in educational settings.

Community – Future practice
Families
Ava: *"…hopefully we will be moving towards working with and hearing voices but are we inviting stakeholders into those conversations? Are we inviting children to get their views? Are we inviting parents and their views?....Are we sort of working on a community level?....arguably not at the moment, but maybe this [work] could be positioned as kind of the precursor to that".*
Local communities
Aimee: *"…I think that's really important so I hope that we can try and access local community groups, if we're thinking about the Equalities Act…can we discuss our policy development with those community groups….I think those are kind of important things."*

EP service
Poppy: *"…I think I would hope that there would be, I would hope that the whole service will be a community when it comes to this work, because I think it's kind of a strange one to have for a specialism, because it's something that should be part of everybody's work….you don't want to have people in the service who had additional training on anti-racism, and some that haven't".*

Academics/researchers
Ava: *"…if you think of all of the research that's coming from say, the centre for research into race and education, could we not be pivotal in terms of being a bridge between that research and the kind of practical day to day life in school".*

To summarise, participants considered the communities of people that they are currently working with and those they feel that they would like to work with more in the future.

Research question 2: What factors did the EPs' perceive to support and constrain their anti-racist practice?

To support with answering this research question, the findings from the nodes 'division of labour' and 'rules' will now be outlined.

.2.6 Division of Labour
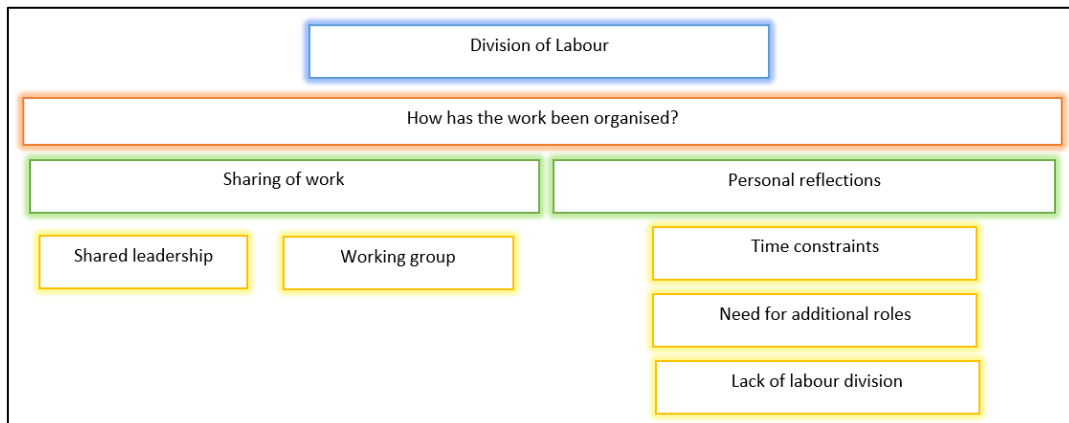
Figure 10.6: Thematic map demonstrating the themes and subthemes for the 'division of labour' node.

The division of labour node within the activity system, explores how the work is shared and considers how the roles might be organised. Figure 10.6 outlines the themes and subthemes for the division of labour node.

Participants discussed shared leadership and described how the work of the development/working groups had been shared amongst those within it. For those within development groups, the participants could identify an EP or pair of EPs' who were leading on the group. Participants shared that sub teams were created for the purpose of dividing the work amongst the team. The activities being completed within the subgroups were interest led. Participants described that the sub teams voted on specific tasks that they would complete, set themselves a period of time to complete them, and then returned to the main group to share their findings.

Division of Labour
Sharing of work
Shared leadership
Sarah: *"…In our meetings, we then kind of divvy up what individuals are going to do….".*

Working group
Sarah: *"…at the moment people have gone away to do tasks…..the subgroup went and looked at all of the different theories, came back and presented that to our group".*

Evie: *"…we put a few tasks out and asked people to kind of vote on what they're more interested in, and then it got kind of divvied up that way,…we've got a couple of subgroups".*

Participants critically reflected upon the efficiency of the working groups and shared that time was a key factor for this. Some participants felt that the labour was not being divided and that additional roles were needed in this area of work, to support with gathering information.

Division of Labour
Personal reflections
Time constraints
Evie: *"…there's only so much time that people can give freely."*

Need for additional roles
Poppy: *"…talking about division of labour, which I've been thinking about as well is that at the moment, I'm not aware that we are collating information about the ethnicity of the children we are working with…so this is an admin kind of role there, I think, for somebody to collate that for us".*

Lack of labour division
Ava: *"…so maybe the labour, the division of labour, it's not divided is it? At the minute, it exclusively sits with the people who have an interest in that area, and who are curious to think about that area."*

5.2.7 Rules

Within the activity theory model, rules refer to the factors that support and constrain the activity (Engeström, 1987). Rules can be explicit (e.g., set by laws and contracts) and implicit (e.g., cultural norms, values, embedded routines). Supporting and constraining factors were explored at the individual, local and national level.

5.2.7.1. Individual level

At the individual level, participants shared that their personal values and experiences (personal and professional) were supportive factors in their anti-racism work. Having ethnic minority family members and friends were shared as being supportive. Participants shared that being afforded time to complete this work within the development groups was a supportive factor and that in one case, additional time was being afforded to complete anti-racist work on a more regular basis. In addition, having an interest in this area that is shared with other EPs'/professionals is also perceived as being a supportive factor. Furthermore, acknowledgement that conversations regarding anti-racism are happening at both the personal and professional level were perceived as supporting factors.
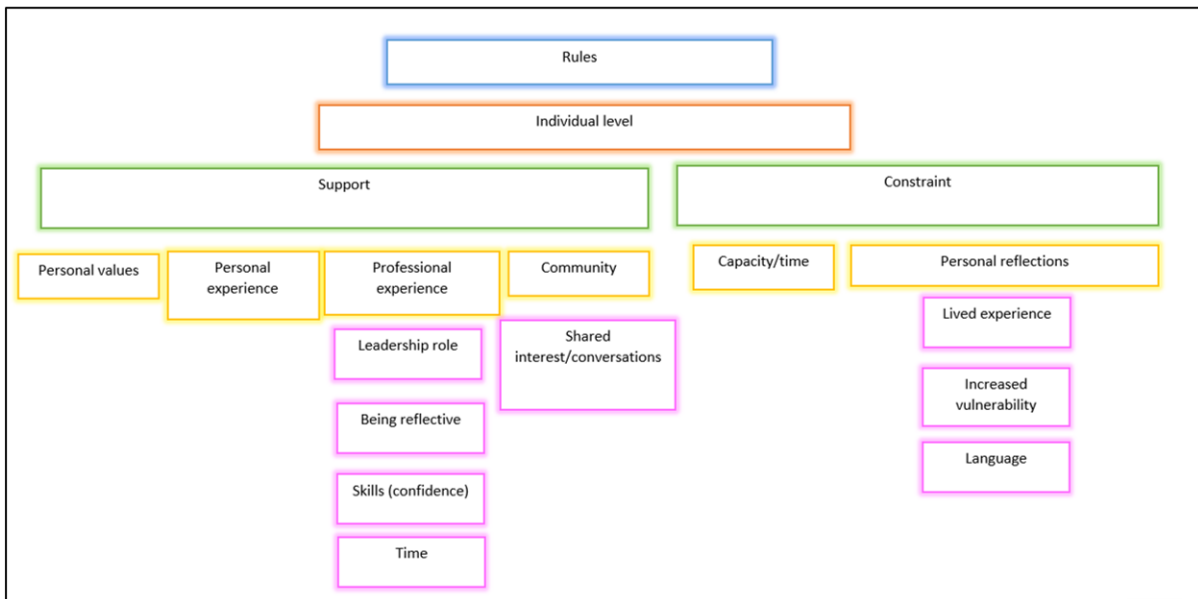
Figure 10.7: Themes and subthemes within the Rules (individual) node.

In regard to the constraining factors at an individual level, time and capacity were identified factors. Participants would like to be able to do more work in this area but acknowledged that time and capacity were constraining factors for this. Several participants reflected that they felt an increased vulnerability within this work. For example, that being white and not having the lived experience, might result in feelings of discomfort for black and brown people. In addition, they reflected on their language and felt cautious about having conversations due to the risk of causing offence.

Rules – Individual Level
Supporting factors
Personal values
Sarah: *"…motivation to change is a big element. You know how motivated are you to move your practice on or to have critical thought or to go against status quo, you know it comes back to your belief systems ultimately, do you believe these race structures occur.."*

Professional experience
Leadership role
Evie: *"…for example, there was an incident of racism, at a secondary school, and my EP colleague asked me to come along to support with some debriefing of students that have been affected by it".*
Being reflective
Ava: *"…I think that was something for me, and maybe it should have come sooner than this. But there was something around the time of George Floyd's death, and those BLM protests, that I think for me brought to the forefront the fact that actually, I should be being more anti-racist."*
Time
Sarah: *"…it's time, even with our development group, we've got this wonderful development plan. I get time to erm, to do some of the development work".*

Rules – Individual level
Constraint
Capacity/Time
Evie: *"…yeah, time is a huge barrier, and I think that's why passion, it goes a long way".*
Aimee: *"…allocation of time, you know which I alluded to earlier is a little bit of an issue".*
Personal reflections
Evie: *"…it's quite lonely and taxing work…all of these kind of doubts and questions…especially of fear, that kind of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, might look to me as if I'm like an imposter imposing on this discussion when I don't have any lived experience, and although my goal is so far removed from that….I worry that for some people, my very presence in this space is discomforting….so it's not that anybody's made me feel like that, it's all internal".*
Poppy: *"…I have felt quite isolated sometimes in doing this work… my experience has been that if I talk about it explicitly with my kind of black or brown colleagues, they're quite comfortable talking about it….but when I raise it with my white colleagues, you can feel the discomfort and not wanting to say the wrong thing".*
Ava: *"…I feel I have to tread really cautiously and I suppose then on a personal level there might be a temptation not to have that conversation or shy away from it through fear of saying the wrong thing, being taken the wrong way, erm, causing offence".*

5.2.7.2 Local level

At the local level, participants shared several factors that they perceived to support and constrain work in this area. Supporting factors were identified within the EP system which involved having the working groups and being afforded the time to complete work. Additionally, having support, commitment and prioritisation from senior leaders and within the service, was also seen as supporting this area of work. Finally, having support from the local authority and it being prioritised as a service commitment was seen as a key supporting factor.

Figure 10.8 demonstrates the themes and subthemes identified within the 'rules – local node'.

Similarly, aspects of EP practice were also identified as being constraining factors. Time, funding, representation, skills and being in a traded service were all factors that participants perceived to be constraining factors at a local level. There was recognition that the statutory load is increasing, and this in combination with other factors facing current contexts (e.g., difficulties in recruiting EPs'), means that there is potentially less time and funding available for the group work. Participants described that as a result of these competing factors, that project work can be easily side-lined. Furthermore, it was noted that there is limited diversity within senior management posts, at the local authority and service level.

Participants identified local contextual factors that they felt were constraining their work (e.g., schools, lack of discourse and social capital). One participant shared that when offering anti-racism training to schools, that some schools, particularly those with a majority of white students, were more reluctant to accept the offer of training. In addition, the invitation to act was perceived as coming from the schools and the forces that impact upon a SENCO's decision to discuss groups of children over others were considered. The demographic was also seen as a principal factor. One participant raised the concept of parental requests for assessments and wondered whether families with more social/cultural capital could be impacting upon the groups of children being referred into the service.

Rules – Local Level
Constraining factors – Local context
Schools
Evie: *"…I offered the training….but the schools that have got real minority, you know, like a huge white British majority, I find that they're often more reluctant, erm, so yeah I think that's a local challenge and a constraint".*

Parents -Social Capital
Aimee: *"…I do worry sometimes that in a traded services where schools are buying in our services, and we're therefore, to some extent, at the beck and call of what schools want us to do….how much of our work is dictated by parents who shout the loudest…. You know those parents who've got the knowledge…..education….confidence".*

Furthermore, constraining factors within local authorities were also identified (e.g., anti-racism perceived as being divisive, lack of representation and policy). It is not enough to have a policy in place where a 'box has been ticked'. Enacting a policy is important and funding constraints were identified as a constraining factor for this.

Rules – Local Level
Constraining factors
Perception
Evie: *"…they're basically saying that kind of like talking about this, is that it is divisive, and it's dangerous and we need to, you know, stop going on about the difference between black and white people or you know black and Asian, ethnic minorities versus white people because that ends up divisive".*

Lack of representation
Poppy: *"…sort of a local authority level I still think that one of the barriers is that senior managers are just not very diverse".*

Policy
Aimee: *"…I think some of those policies are rather woolly, vague, and just too aspirational about just studying targets, and not actually enough flesh on the bone, about how you actually meet those targets, or indeed, addressing some of the uncomfortable difficulties we've got".*

5.2.7.3 National level

At the national level, participants shared several factors that they perceived to support and constrain work in this area. For factors that support anti-racist practice, nationally recognised events such as George Floyd's death and the Black Lives Matter Movement, resulted in increased discussions regarding 'race' and an increase in resources and materials were published as a result. These events precipitated the development of the working/development groups. The production and dissemination of guidance and resources, to the EP profession nationally, were identified as supporting anti-racism work. In addition, these resources were perceived as demonstrating a commitment to highlighting anti-racism within Psychology more generally. Resources produced by the DECP, Anna Freud network, NEU, AEP and BPS were mentioned. In addition, EPs' referred to groups that have been set up within the BPS for example.
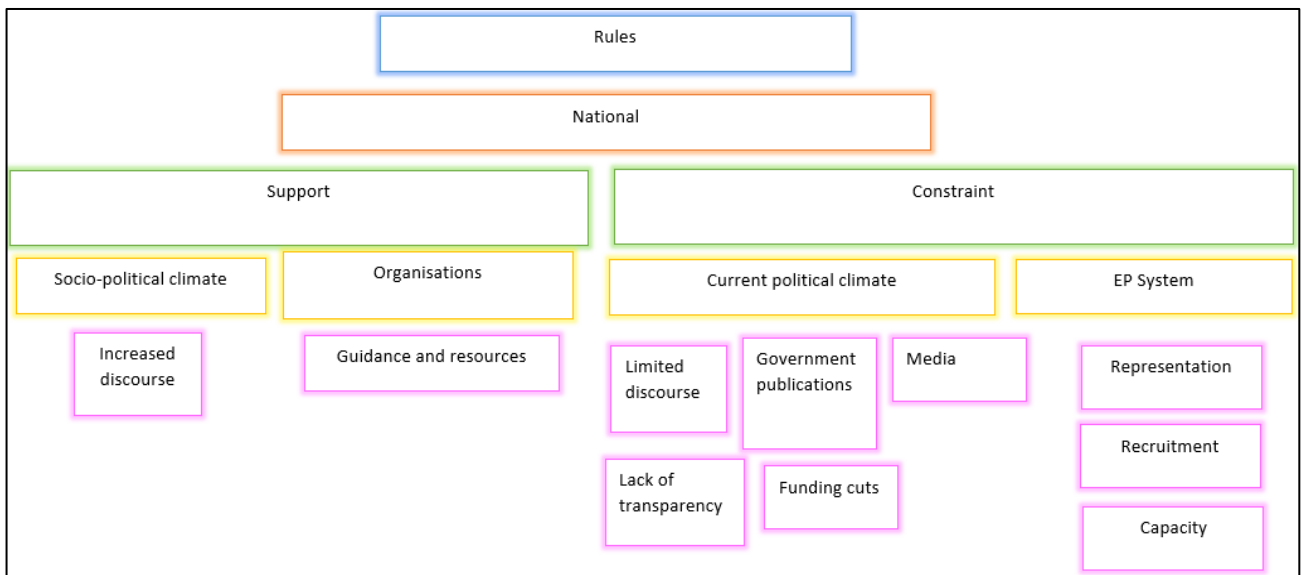
Figure 10.9: Thematic map demonstrating the themes and subthemes for the 'Rules' node (National).

Rules – National level
Supporting Factors
Socio-political climate- Increased discourse

Sarah: *"…following George Floyd's death….there are lots of EPs' who were emotional about the impact of it and having personal discussions with their family and it raised so much, just nationally, erm, across the world".*

Ava: *"…Yeah so I think um at a national level, I think more and more conversations are being had about race, and how racism plays out".*

At the national level, participants shared a range of constraining factors that impact upon anti-racist work, including factors related to the political climate and EP system. Prior to national events such as George Floyd's death, participants perceived that anti-racism was a taboo topic and not spoken about as much as it is now. A lack of transparency in national documentation was raised, in addition to reflections on the Cred Report (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021a). This report for instance, was described as one of the biggest challenges at the national level facing the anti-racism movement, and as such, was perceived as being unhelpful. The impact of the media and the ways in which reports are conceptualised has been identified as a constraining factor for entering into conversations. Funding cuts and austerity has resulted in a reduction in community groups which is perceived to be another constraining factor to this area of work. Finally, national constraints within the EP profession were identified. Difficulties in recruiting EPs', existing EPs' having the capacity to promote anti-racist practice at systemic levels and having representation were all identified.

5.3 Contradictions within the findings

Research question 3: What contradictions were present within the activity systems and what implications do these have for EP practice?

Finally, this section of the chapter will explore contradictions found amongst the findings. Two levels of contradiction are explored; primary and secondary contradictions as described by Engeström (1987). As described in chapter four, primary contradictions refer to the tensions within a single node and secondary contradictions refer to tensions between different nodes in a system (Engeström, 1999). After the data had been deductively analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, contradictions were located by reviewing the themes within and between nodes. Primarily, the majority of contradictions were identified within the 'rules' node which suggests that this is the area of the activity system with the majority of tension. A selection of quotations from participants that demonstrate the contradictions can be found in Appendix 10 and 11.

5.3.1 Primary contradictions

At an individual level, participants shared that having increased conversations and regular dialogue regarding this topic was supportive. However, despite a recognised increase in 'race'-related dialogue, participants reflected on whether they had the right language to have these conversations. Furthermore, participants found that using resources and research to support their understanding of this topic was helpful, along with listening to those with lived experience. Despite this, participants reflected upon their vulnerability in leading upon this aspect of practice. For instance, not having lived experience and not having found other colleagues to go on an anti-racist journey with were examples of this. The implications of these contradictions for individual EP practice will be discussed in chapter six.

At an EP service level, participants shared that being given time to complete this work was supportive. EP services had provided EPs' the time to complete work at an individual level and within a developmental/working group. This contradicted however with recognition from participants that time was a significant barrier to completing this work. The work was recognised as being challenging and additional time was needed for conversations and reflection within supervision. Contextual factors such as an increase in statutory assessments were suggested as accounting for the difficulties in providing additional time for this work. Furthermore, EPs' shared that the work had been divided amongst those within the working groups and that individual EPs' selected from a range of activities. Whilst this was perceived as supporting the implementation of anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice at the service

level, this was also perceived as a constraining factor, in that the work was not being completely divided amongst the service. Finally, having a working group that is led by EPs' was seen as a supportive factor as it enabled progress to be made. However, this contradicts with the idea of a 'leadership' and 'champions' model as it was suggested that anti-racism should be a key part of everybody's work. This demonstrates the complexity of the 'activity' being worked on by the EPs'.

At a local level, pre-existing anti-racism work was something that was being completed within local authorities, and this in addition to the local authority's prioritisation and commitment was described as being a supportive factor in completing this work. However, this contradicted with being able to explore anti-racism work at the local level as it was shared that initially this was not easy to do. There were some reflection from participants about the perception of anti-racism work being 'divisive' and feelings of comfortability by those in senior posts. Finally, at a national level, the increase in discussions following George Floyd's death, along with additional resources and guidance were described as supporting anti-racism practice. However, participants shared that prior to George Floyd's death, anti-racism was perceived as a taboo subject that was not spoken about. Furthermore, national reports that suggest that racism does not account for disparities within education were described as constraining factors to anti-racist practice. The implications for EP practice based upon the local and national factors that were perceived to support and constrain practice will be explored in further detail in chapter six.

5.3.2 Secondary contradictions

Whilst EPs' described examples of the work that they were completing in this area of practice which is understood in this research as the object of study, the delivery of work was impacted by their individual contexts and systems. For example, delivering training to schools was perceived as being an important aspect of the work. However, working within a traded service was perceived as a constraining factor, explained in part by the capacity of other professionals within the team to support with this. This suggests that the outcomes of the working groups and individuals leading on this, may impact the practice of all EPs' within a team. Furthermore, EPs' made reference to tools that they have used and read (e.g., the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report, 2021a) and described how they have been challenged. This suggests that the tools, research and resources that EPs' use to inform and support anti-racist practice need to be considered within their contexts. Finally, having regular conversations regarding 'race' and being exposed to this topic was seen as supporting EP confidence. However, having a lack of confidence in the language and terms used and feeling increased vulnerability in the possibility of offending others were seen as reasons to

avoid having conversations. This research suggests that anti-racist EP practice is impacted by factors at the individual, local and national level and the complexities of this will be considered in further detail in chapter six.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the findings from the five participants who took part in this research. The findings were analysed deductively using the seven nodes of the second generation activity theory model. Chapter six will present a discussion of the findings in relation to the research and literature.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

6.1 Chapter introduction

Within this chapter, the key findings that were described in chapter five, will be discussed in relation to the research questions outlined within this research study. The themes and subthemes will be discussed, and reference will be made to the findings that overlapped between the activity nodes.

6.2 Purpose of research

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences and perceptions of EPs' and anti-racist practice, outline factors that support and constrain this practice and consider the implications of these. As outlined in chapters two and three, there have been political, social, historical and cultural events that have contributed to the changes in defining racism and anti-racism. The continuing complexities associated with the terms 'race', racism and anti-racism, has led to changes in terminology and our understanding of these. Whilst policy and legislation such as the Equality Act (2010) have responded to racial inequalities within education (The national archives, n.d.), research outlined in chapter three demonstrates that racial inequalities can disproportionately account for the disparities identified within the attainment, exclusion, youth justice sector, identification of SEND and policing of hair for ethnic minority children. International events such as George Floyd's death and the Black Lives Matter Movement have resulted in further discourse, increased awareness and a renewed commitment to address issues of racism (Chartered Management Institute, 2020). Professional bodies that support the EP profession state that there is a legal and ethical duty to be aware of the issues of oppression that exist within society (BPS, 2017). Whilst there has been some research that explores the concept of racism and the EP profession (Bolton & M'gadzah, 1999) there is acknowledgement that continued research is needed within this area (Sultana, 2014).

6.3 Research findings

6.3.1 Research question one: In what ways do EPs' conceptualise anti-racism within their practice?

The research findings suggested that EPs' discriminated between their personal and professional constructions of anti-racism. They gave examples of how anti-racism informed their individual EP practice and their practice within the EP service. Furthermore, participants provided a range of examples of what they hoped to achieve and similarly, discriminated

between outcomes on a personal level, individual EP practice and at a service/local authority level. Finally, participants described the tools that they use to support their practice in this area. The varying ways in which EPs' conceptualised anti-racism within their practice will now be discussed.

6.3.2 Individual conceptualisations

6.3.2.1 Constructions of anti-racism

Participants defined anti-racism in several ways and this could be explained in part, by the fact that the term has changed throughout time (Gillborn, 1995). Anti-racism was conceptualised as developing knowledge, acknowledging racial biases and as promoting racial equality. Although the object was described in slightly different ways, which is acknowledged within activity theory (Leadbetter, 2017), all participants referred to taking action which has been described as a defining feature of anti-racism within research (Miller, 2021; Thomas, 2022). Furthermore, participants described what anti-racism meant to them professionally and they reflected upon the systems and structures that their work was a part of. Whilst participants did not refer to any models of reflection, they suggested that being reflective was important when constructing anti-racism in practice, supporting the view that positive outcomes can be identified when reflective frameworks are used to consider 'race' in practice (Mitchell-Blake, 2020). The interview process itself, was highlighted and valued by participants as being a positive opportunity to talk about this aspect of their practice and reflect upon it in further detail.

6.3.2.2 Constructions of practice at the individual level

There are five core functions of the EP role (e.g., assessment, intervention, research, training and consultation (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010). Participants referred to several of these core functions (i.e., assessment, training, research and consultation) during the interviews in addition to providing critical reflections on their practice. Some participants highlighted concerns in relation to the use of standardised cognitive assessments on children and young people from ethnic backgrounds, which reflects key findings found in 2006 from the DECP working party on anti-racism (BPS, 2006) and from previous research. In Bolton and M'gadzah's study (1999), issues relating to models of assessments and challenging inequality were raised. Booker et al (1989) argued that cultural variables should be considered when analysing test results and Sakata (2021) suggested that when they are not considered, this can have negative implications for children and their families. Hiermeier & Verity (2022) outline the issues of racism in intelligence testing and advocate the need for assessors to consider their own biases and choice of assessment. Attempts have been made to standardise

assessments to make them more representative of the sample that are assessed, such as the British Ability Scales 3 (BAS3) (GL Assessment, 2011). In a recent blog published by the DECP, the issues surrounding assessment were acknowledged and a commitment to updating the guidelines on assessment were outlined (Rhodes, 2023). Whilst participants highlighted concerns regarding assessments and identified alternative ways to assess children, further research on assessment tools that are culturally responsive by EPs' in the UK would be beneficial. Anderson (2018) argues that in order for EPs' to make an informed decision on the use of assessment, they must have knowledge on cultural difference and the problems of cultural bias. This in addition to the concerns raised by participants in this study, suggests that continued learning and research is key to implementing assessments that are anti-oppressive. However, in addition to the issues surrounding assessment tools being anti-discriminatory, it is important to consider the wider factors that may contribute to staff requesting standardised assessments such as concerns in relation to attainment. As discussed in chapter three, there is research that demonstrates the misplacing of young people into ability groups (Connelly et al, 2019) and when considering this in relation to other barriers such as disproportionate SEND labelling and exclusions, there are likely going to be implications for the young person's sense of belonging and identity within the school (Bagley, 2020). In order to promote a sense of belonging, EPs' could utilise research that challenges the barriers and constraints being experienced by children and young people. This could include research around the policing of hair (Equality Act Review, 2022) and supporting schools to amend their uniform policies in order to promote acceptance of individuality, identity and inclusion (Bagley, 2020). This could also include research surrounding the misplacing of students in attainment groups and supporting schools to consider the benefits of mixed ability sets (Bagley, 2020). Finally, understanding the wider psychological implications that these barriers/constraints have for young people is paramount. Supporting schools to be collaborative whereby they co-construct solutions and use strength-based and future-focused thinking could change the narrative within schools and positively impact the school system (Bagley, 2020).

Participants shared that the topic of 'race' was being discussed within supervision and transcultural supervision exercises for example, were valuable in helping to explore aspects of identity that were less implicit. The importance of ensuring a supervisory relationship that is accepting, affirming and sensitive to racial differences has been identified (Pieterse, 2018) and similarly identified within the literature, having an identified safe space in order to have 'race'-related discussions is important for EPs' (Soni, Fong & Janda, 2022). Talking to others in supervision was perceived as a supporting factor for individual EP practice. Whilst the reasons for this were not fully explored, research has shown that discussing racial identities in

supervision can positively develop supervisory relationships (Wind, Cook & McKibben, 2021). Tools such as the Social GGRRAAACCEESSS framework (Burnham, 2012) can support with this. Tools that provide a structure for discussion could be supportive for those EPs' who feel less confident to discuss 'race'-related concerns in supervision.

Participants also conceptualised anti-racism as being within the training aspect of their role. Anti-racism training has been delivered to some schools and the importance of considering culture and identity when planning training sessions was shared. Lewisham Educational Psychology Service for example, outlines that as part of their anti-racism commitment, they will provide training, adopt a 'culturally responsive approach' and consider the use of assessments (Lewisham Council, 2022). The University of East Anglia have also, as part of their anti-racism commitment, outlined that tutors will attend 'race' related training as part of a plan to decolonise the curriculum (Thomas et al., 2020). As outlined by Sakata (2021), whilst there is likely variability amongst EP services in the training and resources that are shared, individual EPs' need to share their experiences of culturally responsive practice. Delivering training in this area highlights that service users are receiving CPD, demonstrating a commitment from EPs' in raising awareness. However, tensions were outlined in regard to the delivery of training from an EP capacity perspective. Rather than training being delivered by the EP who is 'leading on it', it was hoped that other EPs' would have confidence to do this and that having time to shadow training, talk to colleagues and learn from others may support with this. However, delivering training to schools and service users is something that will need to be considered within service delivery models. It could be argued that external charities such as Anti-Racism in schools and education (ARISE, 2022) may be better suited to delivering training in schools. However, EPs' valued the importance of planning and delivering training in this area of practice, suggesting that anti-racism is considered important within the training and research function of the EP role, therefore demonstrating the importance of EPs' receiving effective anti-racism training themselves (Demie, 2021a).

Furthermore, EPs' have the opportunity to use aspects of their role (e.g., training, consultation and research) to acknowledge the aspects of school systems that act as barriers to anti-racist practice in relation to themselves and others. As discussed in chapter three, having knowledge and awareness of factors impacting upon children and young people such as setting/streaming, disproportionate SEND labelling, exclusions and policing of hair in schools; can play a critical part in EPs supporting schools to unpick and prevent the layers of disadvantage that children and young people are experiencing in relation to their skin colour (Bagley, 2020). For example, supporting schools to complete a whole-school audit, anti-racism

pledge and/or policy could play a significant role in helping practitioners to understand the disparities that exist and plan out actions that are focused at preventing these. An example of this could be in relation to exclusions. For example, EPs' could share up-to-date national figures of exclusion rates alongside local rates to staff and contextualise this with research that highlights the disproportionate numbers of black children being excluded (Wallace & Joseph-Salisbury, 2022). In addition, as identified within the research, EPs' could discuss their knowledge of the No More Exclusions (No More Exclusions, 2022) organisation and their role in supporting schools.

6.3.2.3 Individual outcomes

The second generation activity model provides a way of exploring the perceived outcomes of the learning that is taking place (Engeström, 2001). Participants identified a range of outcomes/goals/hopes for practice at the individual, EP practitioner and service/local authority level. At an individual level, developing confidence with defining racism and having difficult or uncomfortable conversations were identified. It is acknowledged that this topic can elicit feelings of fear in regard to saying the wrong thing and that having uncomfortable conversations plays a key part in allowing us to explore our perceptions and enhance social awareness (M'gadzah, 2022). However, if EPs' felt more confident in their practice in approaching 'race'-related discussions, this might alleviate worries of saying the wrong thing, causing offence, and in avoiding the conversation altogether. Whilst further research exploring the ways that might support this would be helpful, having a safe space to reflect in supervision (Soni et al., 2022) and access to resources to facilitate discussions such as those outlined by Sultana & Simon (2020) may support with developing EP confidence.

A possible explanation for the limited confidence shared by EPs', could be in relation to language. As identified in chapter three, the terms used have changed over time and there is recognition and acknowledgement that racism is a highly contested term (Thomas, 2022). EPs' reflected upon the difficulties associated with particular terms and the implications this may have for others (e.g., 'people of colour') which is recognised in research. The term 'people of colour' has gained popularity in America as it does not refer to a minority group being subordinately placed in society (Black British Academics, 2023). However, it is argued that the term 'people of colour' should not be used as it removes the individual identities of people that are categorised within the term (ONS, n.d.). Acknowledging the ever-changing landscape of terms used and the implications this has for service users and professionals, in addition to the way in which they intersect with other aspects of identity (Crenshaw, 1989) is critical in challenging social oppression. The findings suggest the importance of having open

discussions around this and learning more about how we form constructions regarding our ethnic identities. Part of conceptualising anti-racism for EPs' in this study was through being reflective. EPs' reflected on the terms they use and suggested awareness on the implications this would have for themselves and others. This reflects some of the key principles outlined within the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2021a) such as respect and integrity.

EPs' shared that it was important for smaller goals to be identified as anti-racist practice was perceived as ongoing and something that will continue to require action, suggesting that it is subject to change and development. To support with the identification of goals, EPs' discussed tools such as the framework for developing an anti-racist approach by the National Education Union (NEU, 2022a). The DECP checklist that provides a framework for self-assessment for promoting racial equality has been used to review practice (BPS, 2006). Academic resources available from universities, including the research published by the Centre for Research into Race and Education (CRRE) at the University of Birmingham were signalled as being supportive (University of Birmingham, 2023b). In addition, the resources available on the Anna Freud network website were identified as being helpful, which suggests the value of using evidence-based approaches in practice. The NEU's framework for developing an anti-racist approach in schools incorporates a whole school approach and seeks to support educational settings in establishing anti-racist priorities and values (National Education Union, 2022a). In addition to these, having increased communication with colleagues and drawing upon the knowledge of others was valuable. The tools outlined in chapter five have contributed to the EPs' knowledge of anti-racism. As argued by Warmington (2008) *"...tools are transformed during the development of human activities and carry with them particular cultures or historical remnants; thus, they are a means for the accumulation and transmission of social knowledge"* (p. 7-8). The use of tools within activity theory systems are dynamic, and the variety of tools identified by EPs' suggests how a range of tools and technologies can be used to mediate activity (Warmington, 2008). The tools outlined (both concrete and abstract) were used to mediate anti-racism activity and this varied across EPs', which could be explained in part, by the socio-cultural contexts in which their activities were taking place.

Importantly, these tools have played an important role in developing EPs' knowledge of anti-racism and they were identified as being relevant and helpful in regard to developing authentic anti-racist practice.

6.3.3 Constructions of practice at the Service/Local authority level

6.3.3.1 Service Level

Whilst there appears to be limited research in the UK that specifically explores the activity of anti-racism practice and EPs', all participants interviewed described being part of working and/or development groups or liaising with other colleagues in planning anti-racist practice at a service level. A working group are a group of colleagues who work collaboratively to develop an aspect of practice. Leading on anti-racism within EP services is not something that is new. In an article published by Booker and colleagues (1989), a senior EP was provided with three sessions a week to promote anti-racism work across the service. More than 30 years on, this research highlights that EPs' are continuing to lead upon anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice, demonstrating that services see it as an important part of their development. In addition, services are using performance checklists to self-assess how they promote racial equality (BPS, 2006) and various actions at the service level are being completed with the aim of promoting diversity and challenging oppression (BPS, 2020a). Participants described the current and future work of the working groups and reflected upon the progress that they had made.

6.3.3.2 Outcomes for EP services/local authorities

A range of outcomes at the EP service and local authority level were identified, which similarly relate to some of the core functions of EP practice (i.e., consultation, assessment and research). Developing a policy that is approved, implemented and addresses inequalities were key outcomes for EPs'. The checklist for promoting racial equality addresses policy development (Williams, 2020a) which was acknowledged in this research. Similarly, to the individual goals outlined above, policy development was perceived as an ongoing commitment, which reflects the concept identified by EPs' that anti-racism will never be 'done' and will continue to require action, commitment and opportunities to reflect and review. However, developing a policy as an action requires time, collaboration and research and these should be considered within the service development plan.

Hearing the voices of 'service users' and ensuring that they are listened to, was a key outcome identified at the service level. Gathering pupil views (Ingram, 2013) and those of parents and carers during consultation (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) are a key part of EP practice and EPs' highlighted the importance of understanding the communities in which they serve. As argued by Saxton (2017), EPs' need to develop their understanding of the diverse populations they serve as part of their commitment to social justice. This could be carried out

in several ways. In consultation, EPs' could refer to culturally responsive consultation approaches such as those outlined in Parker et al's (2020) study. However, EPs' will benefit from time in supervision to develop their understanding of such approaches in order to develop their confidence (Sakata, 2021). Participants shared that collecting data on the children and young people who are accessing services would support their understanding on the proportion of children from ethnic minorities receiving support, demonstrating the importance of understanding and recognising diversity (BPS, 2017). They also identified that there is an administrative role for this which would need to be considered.

6.4.1 Greater representation

EPs' shared that having greater diversity within the EP profession and within local authorities was important which reflects the actions outlined in the DECP statement (BPS, 2020a). By having greater representation of ethnic minority colleagues, EPs' hoped that this would increase the diversity of cultures, increase the diversity at senior leadership levels, resulting in EP services that are more representative of society. In the Member survey on equality, diversity and inclusion issues published by the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP), the majority of ethnicity groups reported by colleagues were matched to the wider population (apart from Asian/British who were slightly underrepresented) (AEP, 2021). Whilst the data in this report contrasts the perceptions held by EPs' in this study, EPs' valued greater representation, suggesting that cultural diversity within the profession is important. Furthermore, the member survey reported that 130 participants responded, 'yes' to receiving discrimination/harassment in the workplace on the basis of 'race' (AEP, 2021). To further understand issues surrounding representation and anti-racism, the research field must be open to a range of perspectives and methodological approaches (Cavendish et al., 2020) and explore the actions being taken to promote cultural competence and ethnic diversity within the EP profession (Bham & Owen, 2020).

6.5.1. Research question 2: What factors did the EPs' perceive to support and constrain their anti-racist practice?

As outlined by Leadbetter (2017), activity theory as a framework can be applied to any situation where there is human activity, as it focuses on tools, mediation and tensions. Whilst Leadbetter asked *"…what supports or constrains the work"* within developmental research workshops, I thought that these questions could be utilised within this research study as a way of dynamically applying activity theory to explore anti-racism practice (2017, p.271). A range of factors were identified that support and constrain practice, contextualised at the individual, local and national levels, which will now be discussed.

6.5.2 Individual level

EPs' showed interest, motivation and a commitment to anti-racism which was conveyed through their personal values and experiences. Their intentions to lead and develop anti-racist practice were shared (Thomas, 2022) and they valued being given additional time to do this. It could be argued that the additional time supported the development of key skills and leadership within this area. Having a community of people where interests and knowledge could be shared were valued. Embracing conversations, researching and learning about anti-racism, suggests that there is dialogue happening amongst professionals (Warmington, 2008). By engaging in this dialogue, both formally and informally, systems of racism can become examined and challenged (Cavendish et al., 2020). Although the activities were divided amongst professionals within services, it could be argued that the activities were aligned within community psychology principles. A core value of community psychology is to develop alliances, advocacy and accompaniment (Kagan, 2015) and by sharing ideas, reflections, experiences and knowledge regarding anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice with others, within a community of professionals, this was argued to support their individual practice. This suggests that working collaboratively with others can be helpful in promoting individual learning (Roth, 2004) which links to the concept of the zone of proximal development (Engeström, 1987). Being in a working/development group has encouraged EPs' to learn more about this aspect of practice using collaborative approaches.

However, EPs' felt that capacity/time were constraining factors when leading upon this and that factors such as an increase in statutory work and working within traded services could account for this. Nationally, an increase in statutory assessment work for EPs' has been identified as a limiting factor for focusing on developmental and preventative work (DfE, 2019). Collaborative project work that is forward looking and contributes to professional development is valued within the profession (Frederickson, 2003) and having sufficient time to complete this development work was important to EPs' in this study. It is important to consider however, the contextual factors surrounding EP service delivery. The financial challenges combined with a *"…fragmented education system"* and the need for services to *"…trade to survive"* have brought additional challenges and pressures to EP contexts (Hardy, Hobbs & Bham, 2020, p.4). It was beyond the scope of this thesis to further explore the contextual factors that could impact upon time for development work, but working proactively and strategically were valued.

Finally, not having the lived experience, or feeling as though they didn't have the language or confidence were perceived as constraining factors. This was described by one participant as being a contradiction between a commitment to being anti-racist but

experiencing feelings of vulnerability at the same time (e.g., espoused theory versus theory in use). As developed by Argyris (1980), espoused theories refer to the things that we say that inform our actions, and theories in action refers to the things that we actually do. EPs' described their commitment and motivation in being anti-oppressive and anti-racist (i.e., espoused theory) and recognised the importance of taking collaborative action. However, this research suggests variability in the actions as perceived by the EPs' across varying elements of their practice. This could be explained in part, by the idea that becoming anti-racist is a journey as described in chapter three. EPs' do not feel this is a tick box type exercise where activities can be completed. Instead, they perceive it as an ongoing commitment. This in addition to their worries about not having lived experience, suggests that it is important for EPs' to learn, understand and challenge their own perceptions (M'gadzah, 2022).

6.5.3 Local level

The development of anti-racism practice both individually and within working groups was perceived to be in part, explained by the prioritisation of leaders within the service and local authority which was identified as a supporting factor. This suggests a commitment from services in reflecting upon practice, systems and structures (Desforges, Goodwin & Kerr, 1985). EPs' have a duty to recognise discrimination based upon 'race' and ethnicity (BPS, 2017) and challenge it within their practice (Barwick, 2020). Beyond this, for change to occur, it is argued that a commitment at the individual and organisational level is needed (M'gadzah, 2022) and the findings from this research suggest commitment at both levels. However, participants also identified constraints at the local level. For example, time to complete development work was considered as a constraining factor. Furthermore, the context in which EPs' worked was important. Working in what was described as a mainly 'white population' was identified as a factor that impacted upon this being confronted in casework. Additionally, that the students being discussed in planning meetings might not be representative of the children within those communities and that pressures from service users with perceived 'social capital' impact who is being discussed. These reflections relate to the issues of social capital theory proposed by Bourdieu (1986), highlighting that EPs' are considering intersectionality in their practice, and the relationships that exist between social and cultural capital and issues of 'race'. This has potential implications for how EPs' raise such issues within planning meetings for example.

As described above, participants perceived that a constraining factor to this work was having limited diversity within senior management posts and there being a perceived lack of representation within EP services. This aligns with the recognition from the DECP that diversity

should be promoted within the EP profession (BPS, 2020a). However, this was not sufficiently expanded upon within interviews and it would be important within future research to further explore the impact of this. M'gadzah (2022) argues that selection processes and recruitment policies can impact upon the appointment of psychologists both at a conscious and unconscious level. This suggests the importance of proactively considering anti-racist approaches at an organisational level. In addition, commitments and change are needed both *"…bottom-up as well as top down"* (Thomas et al., 2020, p.2).

6.5.4 National level

At a national level, the guidance and resources that have been shared in response to an increase in 'race-related' discourse have supported EPs' work. These tools represent a place to go for EPs'; somewhere that they can retrieve resources that can be used to develop knowledge and practice. In addition, the rise in BPS/DECP groups and commitment in raising awareness of racism through publications have helped to raise awareness and confidence (BPS, 2020b). The increased awareness and sharing of resources have been partly explained by George Floyd's death and the BLM movement (Sambaraju & McVittie, 2021) which was identified by EPs' as supporting anti-racism practice.

Constraining factors at the national level pertain to the ways in which the media conceptualise issues of 'race'. The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report (2021a) argued limiting impact of racial bias within schools. This was perceived as a constraining factor due to the power it has in reframing the need to complete research or activity in this area. Whilst it could be argued that this report offers a counter argument to the issues relating to 'race' within aspects of education, the objectivity of the data within the report has been criticized (Tennison, 2021). To summarise, EPs' acknowledged the range of national resources published that relate to anti-racism within education. Most of the resources that EPs' shared were described positively in supporting their knowledge and practice. However, it also suggests the need for ongoing research and practice in this area (BPS, 2020a).

6.6 Research Question 3: What contradictions were present within the activity systems and what implications do these have for EP practice?

Contradictions within activity systems can be described as tensions or dilemmas that can contribute to change (Roth, 2004). Contradictions can also be highlighted between activity systems (Leadbetter, 2017). A key tension and primary contradiction within anti-racism practice was identified within the rules node. Within activity theory, the rules are argued to determine the action of the individual (Hashim & Jones, 2007). Tensions were identified at the

individual level (e.g., confidence and skills); the local level (e.g., being in a traded service and prioritisation of work) and at the national level (e.g., increased discussion) and therefore implications for EP practice go beyond the individual, demonstrating the complexity of anti-racism and how it is situated within broader socio-political contexts.

6.6.1 Individual level

At an individual level, the findings suggest that despite an increase in communication and 'race'-related dialogue that is happening in relation to the work of the development groups, EPs' experienced vulnerability in doing this work for several reasons. Not having lived experience, limited confidence in their language and use of terms, or not having others to go on the journey with were all examples of this. This is similarly acknowledged within the literature as people can feel uncomfortable in discussing anti-racism and may worry that they will say the wrong things (M'gadzah, 2022). However, having the conversations is argued to support the process of change as we begin to understand the values, perceptions and experiences of others (M'gadzah, 2022). As argued by Agyeman and Lichwa (2020), EPs' are taught to consider and challenge systems that are oppressive or not inclusive, but despite this, we may feel less confident to do so during consultation for example which has implications for practice. EPs' should demonstrate curiosity, ask questions and challenge negative narratives (Aygeman & Lichwa, 2020). We should also accept the discomfort or uncomfortable feelings as being part of the process in challenging systems and accepting accountability (Wright, 2020). However, we also have a responsibility to be aware of our own feelings and the implications of these, and therefore having a safe space to discuss these feelings are of critical importance. There is therefore potential in using reflection frameworks and tools to guide discussions regarding 'race' and 'race'-related dialogue within supervision. There is a recognition from EPs' that they have a responsibility and duty to challenge racism (Barwick, 2020), yet in doing so, there is also a recognition that receiving support from other colleagues may support them in doing so.

6.6.2 EP Service/Local Level

Within the EP service, being part of working/development groups and being given time to complete this work were perceived as supportive factors. Whilst leading on anti-racism practice within the EP service was described positively, there was acknowledgement that the activity was not being divided beyond the working group, and that a 'leadership/champions' model could be problematic. An explanation for this is the recognition that anti-racist practice is something that all EPs' should be considering, which is recognised within standards of proficiency (HCPC, 2015; Barwick, 2020). However, at a service level, this research suggested

that a variety of activities were taking place within the development groups (e.g., self-assessment tools, training, learning about the demographics, liaising with other colleagues etc) and that dividing the labour amongst small groups of colleagues was helpful. Furthermore, EPs' reported that their services had committed to and were prioritising anti-racism work which was identified as a supportive factor. A recent image circulated on social media (Figure 12) offers a distinction between what some services think anti-racism is and what anti-racism actually is.
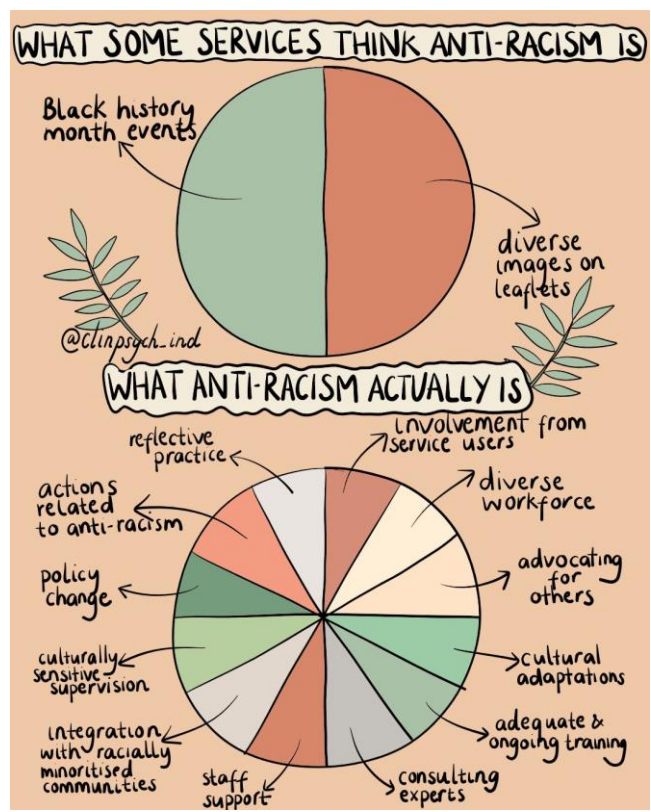
Figure 11: A visual image produced by @clinpsych_ind (Ind, 2021) and shared on Twitter which offers a distinction between the ways in which services conceptualise anti-racism.

This demonstrates the various actions that being anti-racist entails, and many of these were discussed by participants at a service level. For example, having greater representation (i.e., diverse workforce), developing policy (i.e., policy change) and having ongoing training (i.e., adequate to ongoing training).

Anti-racism has been conceptualised in a variety of ways both individually and between services and therefore implications for practice should be considered at both the individual, local and national levels, which will be outlined in chapter seven.

6.6.3 Secondary contradictions

The individuals leading on anti-racism work within their services perceived their work to be important and valuable to themselves as individuals, their colleagues and service users. However, the individual work being completed has potential implications for the EPs' within the service. Providing anti-racism training was identified as an example of such within this study. Constraining factors such as time and being within a traded service, suggest that the distribution of anti-racist activities across a service could be impacted. Whilst time in meetings to discuss ongoing practice is recommended by the DECP (BPS, 2020a), anti-racism is one aspect of practice amongst many others that also requires time, research and reflection. It could also be argued that whilst recommendations for services to evaluate their development is needed (BPS, 2006), that one or two EPs' within a service should not necessarily have to carry the responsibility for this. Working collectively in groups has been significant in bringing about systemic change (BPS, 2021b) and it would be interesting to explore the impact of the working groups in the future.

The tools EPs' used were identified as being contradictory and this is likely explained by the fact that individuals will use tools in a variety of ways to support and mediate their practice. Having a bank of resources, websites, podcasts, books and articles for instance may support EPs' with developing their knowledge and confidence in this area. However, due to the complexity of this topic (Gillborn, 1995), as highlighted by the findings in this research, it is important to recognise that tools and their use should be considered by the individual and within their contexts.

6.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the findings in relation to the three research questions. It has sought to discuss the primary and secondary contradictions that were identified and implications for practice will be explored in chapter seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

7.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter will begin by reviewing the strengths and limitations of the research methods used and a personal reflection on completing this research will be presented. This chapter will consider the implications for EP practice and outline ideas for future research.

7.2 Review of research methods

7.2.1. Strengths

Firstly, using activity theory as a tool to explore an element of EP practice was an identified strength in this study. As a legitimate tool for exploring tasks and activity completed by EPs' within a range of domains (Leadbetter, 2017), activity theory helped to explore the conceptualisation and experience of anti-racist practice by EPs'. Activity theory offers the opportunity to broadly explore activity (Engeström et al., 1991) and is suited to qualitative and interpretivist research (Hashim & Jones, 2007). By using the second generation activity theory as a descriptive and analytic device, elements within activity systems have been identified (Leadbetter, 2017). The value of using activity theory in this research is important, as it recognises that activity is located within cultural, social and political contexts (Hashim & Jones, 2017). Furthermore, the use of a case study approach enabled a rich exploration of individual practice for the five EPs' interviewed (Coolican, 2014). Whilst case studies are criticised for lacking in generalisability, this research was not seeking to do so (Punch, 2009). Finally, this study sought to understand the ways in which EPs' conceptualise anti-racist practice, and an interpretive research design supported the process of understanding this practice in context (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

7.2.2. Limitations

Several limitations in this research study can be identified. Firstly, whilst the pilot interview provided the opportunity to consider the feasibility of the interview questions in a flexible and exploratory way (Robson & McCartan, 2016), not all of the questions were answered which resulted in the data not being included in the study. It would have been preferable to have included pilot data into the study, however the process was used more as a way of reviewing the sensitivities associated with the topic and the interview questions being asked.

Another limitation of this research is that there is bias in the sample that was selected. When recruiting EPs', I did not want to limit the selection to only those who may be leading or

involved in this aspect of practice. There will likely be EPs' who aren't formally involved in anti-racism or anti-oppressive practice project work but that may have been interested in reflecting upon this aspect of practice within this research. Whilst I accounted for this in the introductory email and participant information form, the participants who volunteered were all involved in leading or developing this aspect of practice. As the sample were self-selected, they are not representative of the population and the findings cannot be generalised (Gray, 2018). Furthermore, the sample size was small, and whilst additional attempts were made to seek further participants, this research did not reach the sample size expected within qualitative research (e.g., between 10-30) (Gray, 2018). Finally, I decided not to include trainee EPs' in the planning of the research and this is a limitation. Future research exploring anti-racism within the profession should include the experiences and perceptions of trainees.

A further limitation of this research is that I did not provide an opportunity for participants to resolve the contradictions that were identified, as there was no further involvement with participants beyond the interviewing stage. Activity theory provides an opportunity for contradictions to be identified so that new ways of working can be considered (Leadbetter, 2017). However, whilst this study was not seeking to identify new ways of working, there may have been benefits to further discussing the findings of the research with participants. As such, the activity framework could have been used as an organisational development approach, or as development work research so that identified tensions could be worked upon (Engeström, 1999b). Activity theory has been criticized for limiting opportunities at the individual level to theorise, practice and criticize, with its focus being predominantly on the learning taking place within the system (Wheelahan, 2004). However, participants shared that they valued the opportunity to reflect on their practice and that the activity theory provided a helpful framework to do so. Furthermore, activity theory could be perceived as a complicated way of exploring activity, particularly as it is used to support organisational change (Leadbetter, 2017). However, the framework recognises the importance of historicity and having the opportunity to ask questions about the tools that EPs' use and how the labour is divided, has resulted in an interesting insight into the work and experience of a select number of EPs'.

7.2.3 Critical reflection

Finally, another limitation that could be considered within this research are my values and the impact this may have had throughout the research process (May, 2011). To counter this, I used supervision to reflect upon the research journey and sought continued advice from university tutors. Similarly, to the perspectives shared by EPs', I feel critical about the language and terms that I use. When researching 'race' related issues, researchers use language that

"…seem[s] as if they have always existed and always will and that they are watertight, bounded off, discrete categories" (Walters, 2012, p.112). It is not an intention within this research to define people, their values or experiences (Walters, 2012). Troyna (1993) suggests that research into racism should not be guided by a particular 'group' of people, but rather those with particular '…*values*' (p.16)*,* and it is those values that I have continued to remind myself of throughout this research journey. I accept that terms and our understanding of these change and it is not my intention to cause discomfort or offense. I recognise that the terms I use may be constructed by others in different ways and through talking to other colleagues, friends and family, and through continued research, I have sought to use terms that are socially and politically correct at this moment in time. I have continually reflected upon "*…my own whiteness"* (Blair, 1998, p.13) and considered the context in which my research is placed within. I recognise that as a white researcher, I do not have lived experience (Connelly & Troyna, 1998). However, it is and will continue to be, an ongoing commitment of mine to be anti-racist. In doing so, this research forms a part of that unique journey (M'gadzah, 2022).

7.3 Implications for Educational Psychology

7.3.1 Implications for EP practice

At the individual level, within the five core functions of the EP role, practice that is committed to being anti-racist and anti-oppressive will be informed by research into 'race', education and educational psychology. For example, the use of culturally responsive assessment tools, evidence-based interventions, training that is informed by recent research and supervision that is culturally responsive. EPs' may consider how issues of 'race' intersect with other social factors such as class, gender and identity, and how these can change dependent upon context (Walters, 2012). In attempting to understand the educational system in which we are part of, EPs' should continue to reflect and review the changing contexts in which racial inequalities exist (Gillborn, 1995), particularly those discussed in chapter three (e.g., SEND identification, exclusion, attainment, misplacement in ability groups, policing of hair and the youth justice system). EPs' have a responsibility to practice in a way that proactively challenges discourses by addressing power imbalances and questioning referrals (Rollock, 1999). However, as recognised by Anderson (2018), EPs' should be aware of possible fears associated with having sensitive conversations and reflect upon their own identities in order to promote cross-cultural practice skills. Having time to discuss these in supervision, with colleagues and in groups is something that may support EP confidence in this area.

In addition to developing knowledge and awareness of anti-racist approaches through engaging with relevant literature and research, there are implications for then using this knowledge in a way that develops authentic anti-racist practice. Drawing upon the knowledge of within school factors (e.g., streaming, exclusions, policing of hair etc) that act as barriers to anti-racist practice is critical and has the potential to impact the ways in which we address our work. Furthermore, understanding the psychological implications of such barriers and their relation to children and young people's sense of belonging and identity is fundamental. This knowledge can be used within core aspects of the EPs' role (i.e., consultation, research, training) in order to promote anti-racist practice and address the disadvantage, inequality and discrimination that is being faced.

At the local level, there is a role for EP services in monitoring student outcomes, and gathering demographic information that helps to build a picture of who is accessing EP support. Gaining the views of service users and developing an understanding of the lived experiences may benefit EPs' knowledge of their working context. Providing opportunities for service users to be heard, by working collaboratively, may provide ways in which EPs' can develop their confidence in 'race' related talk within sociocultural contexts (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). As identified within this research, services could consider the accessibility of the consultation and written records that are produced, seeking support from translation services where possible.

At the local and national level, there is a continuing need for EPs' to receive updated training and CPD on issues of 'race'. Training that is informed by CRT and seeks to promote anti-oppressive practice should continue to be offered. Training can then be adapted and cascaded to schools and communities, should this be an action identified by individuals and services. Services could consider the continued commitment and prioritisation of anti-racism evidenced within their service development models. Time should be allocated for this work to be completed and EPs' would benefit from having opportunities to share their knowledge, research and skills within the EP community. Tools such as the DECP checklist may support services to reflect upon their systems and structures. Furthermore, future research and tools that are developed to aid anti-racist practice at the individual and organisational level should be cascaded across the profession.

To summarise, the key implications for practice as identified from this research are conceptualised within the role of the EP and the EP service/system. Figure 12 provides a visual illustration of the key implications for EP practice following this research study.
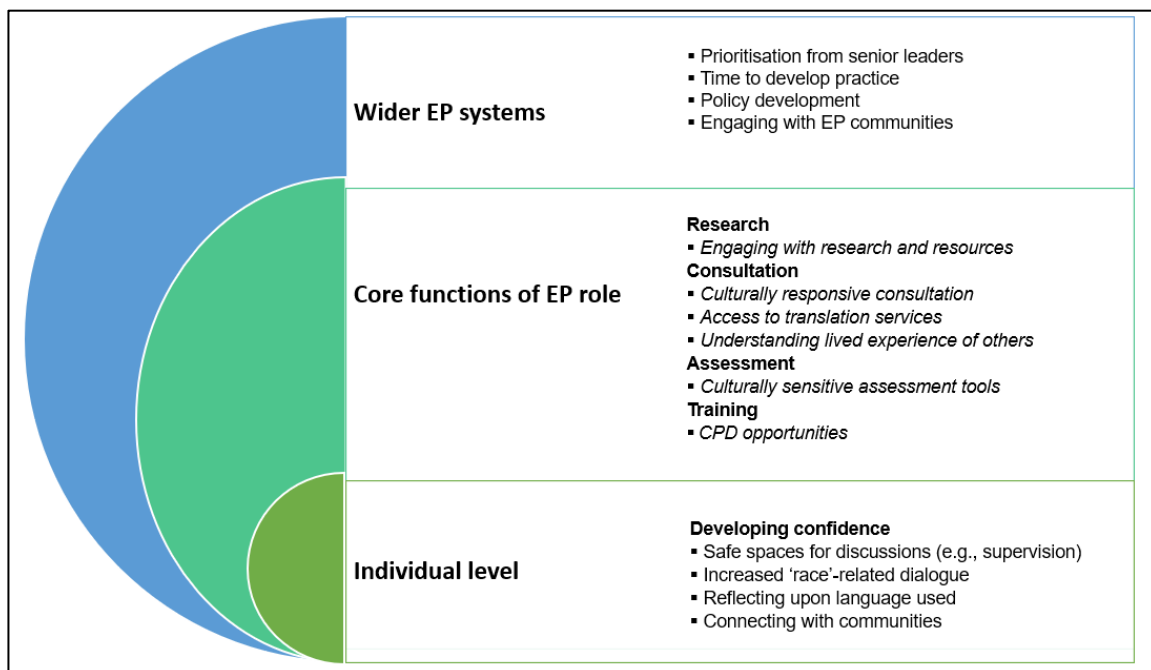
Figure 12: A visual illustration of the key implications for EP practice drawn from this research.

To summarise, taking action individually and within groups, being reflective, learning through research, developing confidence and engaging in dialogue were all ways in which EPs' conceptualised anti-racist practice. Whilst developed by the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP), Figure 13 reflects some of the findings outlined in their article and how they can be applied in action to promote racial and social equality (DCP, 2021). By taking individual and collective action that involves sense-making, reflection and reviews, positive change can happen (DCP, 2021). Figure 13 provides a more holistic picture of working towards racial equality and this process could be considered with EP practice..

7.4 Considerations for future research

A range of variables and factors influenced the development work of EPs' in this study and whilst this research helped to identify those, it did not offer opportunities to explore each aspect of practice in greater depth. Therefore, the following considerations for researching anti-racism within EP practice in the future, might include;

- Researching anti-racist practice more explicitly within the five core functions of EP practice (e.g., consultation, assessment, research, intervention and training).
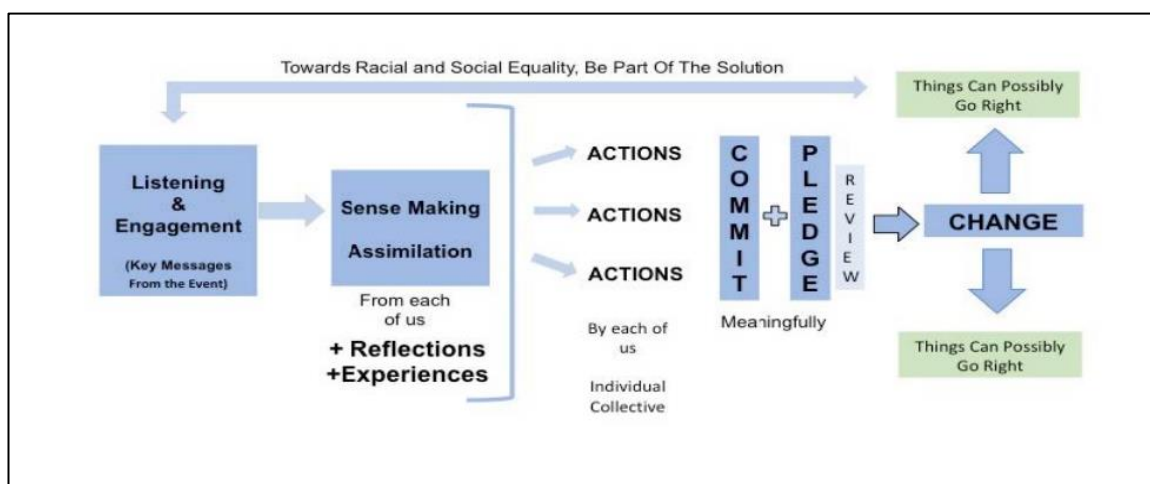
Figure 13: A visual developed by the Division of Clinical Psychology that demonstrates a process towards racial and social equality (DCP, 2021

- Researching anti-racist practice across a broader range of professionals within the EP profession (e.g., trainee EPs', senior and PEPs') and across varying local authorities within the UK.
- Researching the views of young people, parents/carers, educational professionals and EPs' in this area of practice using mixed methods.
- Implementing activity theory as an organisational development approach (Leadbetter, 2017) to expand upon working practice at a service level.
- Implementing activity theory as an analytical device within one EP service where the activity, experiences and perceptions of EPs' can be explored and reviewed to support with service development.

7.5. Concluding comments

This research sought to explore EPs' perceptions and experiences of anti-racist practice. Anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices are being developed at the individual and service level and a range of activities, tools, and outcomes were shared. By using the second generation activity model to explore practice, a range of factors were identified in supporting and constraining anti-racism work. This research has highlighted that anti-racism activity is shaped by social, cultural and political systems and that national events, research and guidance can influence the way in which anti-racism work is carried out. These factors are positioned within individual contexts and several implications for practice and future research have been considered. However, these implications should be considered in context, as it is possible, that the conceptualisations and activities of anti-racist practice will vary both at the

individual and service level. For change to happen, a commitment to research and conversations regarding anti-racism should be prioritised. Finally, having space to reflect upon racism, anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice should be encouraged.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Introductory email to PEPs'

Email to PEP

Dear [insert name]

I hope you are well. I was wondering if you would be able to share the information below with the EPs' within the service as I am hoping to recruit participants for my research study. I am currently enrolled on the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology course at the University of Birmingham. The purpose of this email is to request your permission to invite contact with the educational psychologists (EPs') employed within the [insert name] Educational Psychology Service and invite them to participate in my doctoral research project.

The inclusion criteria for the study is that participants are:

- Registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC registered).
- Employed within a West Midlands Educational Psychology Service.
- For educational psychologists who are currently taking a lead/involved in shaping work on anti-oppressive practice (anti-racism) within their service or within their practice.
- For educational psychologists who may be interested in exploring this area of practice within this research study.

I welcome EPs' who would be interested in participating to reply to EVS439@student.bham.ac.uk. After expressions of interest, a selection of EPs' will be invited to participate in the study. I've attached a document that provides further information regarding the research and if there are any questions regarding the research, please contact me on the email address above.

Thank you in advance,

Kind regards,

Emma Barber

Appendix 2: Application for ethics review form

Section 1: Basic Project Details

Project Title: A socio-cultural activity theory exploration into educational psychologists' understanding and implementation of anti-racism practice in the West Midlands.

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: Nick
Last name: Bozic

Position held: Academic Supervisor
School/Department School of Education
Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address: n.m.bozic@bham.ac.uk

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: Mrs
First name: Emma
Last name: Barber

Course of study: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology
Email address: evs439@student.bham.ac.uk

Project start and end dates:
Estimated start date of project: 01/05/2022
Estimated end date of project: 01/07/2023
Funding:
Sources of funding: Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed research is to explore educational psychologists' understanding and implementation of anti-racism practice within the West Midlands. The research aims for educational psychologists to be at the centre of this research. Thus, educational psychologists who are involved in supporting the shaping of anti-racism practice and who are interested in this area of practice within their local authority will be approached to participate in this research. The research endeavours to provide an in-depth exploration of the understanding and operalisation of anti-racist practice held by the educational psychologists to illuminate their unique contributions within this area of practice. By utilising sociocultural activity theory, the research hopes to consider EPs'' perceptions of wider systemic factors which are related to anti-racist practice.

Research aims:

What are the aims of the research?

The aims of the research are to explore anti-racism approaches within educational psychology practice and to develop an understanding of these within the wider social and cultural context of EP practice.

The research aims to be exploratory by:

- Examining what educational psychologists understand to be 'anti-racism' within their practice. (*Understanding what anti-racism is)*
- Examining the types of work that the educational psychologists are doing to explore how anti-racism is embedded within their practice, and the wider activity systems of which they are part of. *(How do they operationalise it?)*

Background rationale:

1. **Recognition of the importance of challenging structural racism/being anti-discriminatory within Educational Psychology Practice:** There are several governing bodies/frameworks that support the Educational Psychology as a profession. These governing bodies have responded to concerns regarding the promotion of racial equality within services. For example, the British Psychological Society (BPS) (2006) argued that EPs' need to understand the racial inequalities experienced within the education system and that services need to evaluate their standing in relation to anti-discriminatory development. In 2020, the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) wrote a statement titled "DECP pledge to challenge structural racism". Within this statement, they outline a commitment to "promoting practice that helps our members challenge unequal or racist practice in the communities we serve". In 2020, the Division of Clinical Practice (DCP) published an article "Racial and social inequalities: Taking the conversation forward". Within this article, it is

argued that it is important to acknowledge "the difficulty and emotional labour involved in thinking about inequalities, power dynamics and racism". The position paper is intended to begin conversations and engagement with stakeholders to counter racial inequalities, acknowledging the importance of people acting, supporting and learning from communities.

Educational psychologists once qualified, are eligible to be recognised as a member of the 'health and care professions council' (HCPC). Within the HCPC standards of proficiency (2015) there is a requirement for psychologists to be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice. In addition, the BPS guidelines (2017) argue the need for psychologists to understand the interchangeable use of the terms 'race', and the importance of our understanding in terms of the problems with equality, fairness and availability of services. These documents demonstrate the importance and relevance of anti-discriminatory practice within the Educational Psychology profession. A part of the educational psychologist role is to understand how diversity impacts students, schools and wider communities and it is therefore relevant to our role in knowing how best to support stakeholders with 'race' and 'ethnicity'. The proposed research endeavours to learn from the educational psychologists in terms of their understanding and experience of promoting this within their practice.

2. **Understanding 'Race', 'Anti-racism' and its meaning:** The literature outlines that there are variations in society on how 'race' is conceptualised (DCP, 2020). Furthermore, that race is a socially constructed concept that uses categories to differentiate between groups of people to establish systems of power (DeCuir Gunby et al, 2014). It is argued that the social construction of race is a way of grouping or ranking people into distinct racial groups based upon their skin colour, language and physical features for example (Carter, 2007). Booker et al (1989) argue that issues of racism are complex, pervasive and affect our life experiences including how we work. This research will endeavour to explore the concepts or 'race', 'racism' and 'anti-racism' within the literature review to explore the various definitions of anti-racism before agreeing on a definition for the purpose of the research.

3. **A gap is evident in the literature:** In 1989, Booker and colleagues explored anti-racist practice in an inner London local educational authority (LEA). They argue the importance of finding the time to address anti-racism in practice and that EPs' need to change their attitudes as well as those held by others. However, this was some time ago. Whilst there has been research conducted into Educational Psychology practice within the areas of culture, particularly within theses, there continues to be acknowledgement amongst practitioners that more research needs to be completed. Anderson (2018) explored educational Psychologists' cultural competence and found that generally EPs' feel competent to work with culturally diverse groups but that there were also areas of practice that could be improved. Sakata (2021) argued the need for exploring cultural sensitivity in more detail within the different functions of the EP role. Ashraf (2016) identified that it would be interesting to explore the voices of EPs' in non-urban locations to gain an insight into the impact of 'race' on the practice of EPs'. Furthermore, it is argued that there is a gap in the literature on the use of qualitative research methods on eliciting the views of EPs' in the UK (Ashraf, 2016). However, whilst there is evidence that has focused upon cultural competence, very little research has explored the role of EPs' promoting racial equality

(Sultana, 2014). Thus, this research hopes to explore the unique experiences and perspectives of EPs' who are promoting anti-racism within their practice to provide illumination within this area. Also, the proposed research provides a novel way of doing this by aiming to use a specific framework e.g., a second generation activity framework as an analytical device to support discussions amongst ways of working (Leadbetter, 2017). So, activity theory will affect the design of the interview schedule.

4. **Positionality and researcher reflexivity:** I have a personal and professional desire to undertake research within this area of practice, for several reasons including supporting others experiencing racial discrimination. Research argues the importance of researchers to reflect on their positionality in exploring who they are racially and culturally (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). I will endeavour to make it clear within the research that I am a 'white researcher'. I will employ ongoing reflective practice, with ongoing peer discussions and supervision to mediate this.

5. **Implications for practice:** *Through better understanding of the facilitating and hindering factors which contribute to the understanding and implementation of anti-racist practice, current policies and practices can be reflected upon.*

Research questions:

Research Question 1

- What do Educational Psychologists understand 'anti-racism' to mean within their practice?
- What are educational psychologists doing to promote anti-racism in their practice?

Research question 2: What are the socio-cultural factors that mediate the development of anti-racism approaches in EP practice?

- What factors did EPs' say constrained their anti-racism work (rules – constraints?)
- What factors did EPs' say supported their anti-racism work (rules – supports)?
- What role(s) did the EPs' assume within their service anti-racist work (division of labour)?

Research question 3:

- What contradictions were present within the activity systems and what implications do these have for future anti-racist EP practice?

Expected outcomes:

The aim of this research is to explore educational psychologists (EPs') understanding and operationalisation of anti-racism within their practice. It also aims to explore the factors that constrain and support their work within this area of practice. Thus, the main objective of the project is to illuminate experience and perspectives, not to necessarily provide generalisable outcomes.

It is expected that this research will contribute to and develop the research currently available around educational psychologists and 'race-related' matters within their practice.

It is expected that the findings will have relevance for the EP profession. It will have implications for EPs' to reflect and inform their own practice when considering this area of practice within the work that they do.

Additionally, I hope my findings provide a platform for EPs' who are working to challenge structural racism to be listened and heard. If a trainee educational psychologist or educational psychologist was to research the ways that EPs' are working within this area of practice, I would hope that they would be able to learn more about the efforts that are being made to challenge structural racism.

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.

A multiple case study design will be used to gain an in-depth understanding of EPs' understanding and operationalisation of anti-racism in practice. A case study design will be utilised because it enables the researcher to explore themes and subjects, but from a much more focused range of people (Gray, 2018). The case study approach supports explanatory issues and helps to illuminate key features which is what is hoped this research will achieve. Semi-structured interviews will be used within the case study design to explore all participants perceptions of the facilitators and constraints of understanding and operationalisation of anti-racism within their practice. Interviews are a way for the researcher and participant to work in collaboration to uncover and interpret the participant's meaning-making of a particular topic. This case study can be described as a 'snapshot' case study as it aiming to explore an issue within a period of time (Thomas, 2015). Furthermore, Thomas (2015) argues a further subdivision can be drawn within multiple case studies which is that of a parallel case study design. In the parallel study, the cases are all happening and being studied at the same time which will be the aim of this research, rather than using a sequential case study design (Thomas, 2015). In this research, the cases refers to specific educational psychologists, bounded by exploring a specific perception/experience of anti-racism within their practice, in a specific educational psychology service (within the West Midlands) and time frame (at university). It would be desirable to have more than one EP respondent from each service, so as to build up a more elaborated activity system model of this area of EP practice. It aims to be an illustrative case-study as it is exploring individual perceptions and experiences. **Stage 1 –** The first stage of this research will be contacting Principal Educational Psychologists in the West Midlands about the research (Appendix A). I am aiming to then email the educational psychologists to arrange a time to discuss the project with them over the phone/video call or in person, if possible. I would aim to cover the research aims, participants criteria, the type of information required e.g., an understanding of what anti-racism means to them and learning more about the work that they are doing within this area.
Stage 2 – A pilot interview will be conducted prior to the main data collection. This will provide an opportunity to trial the interview schedule (Appendix D) and make any necessary adjustments if needed. **Stage 3 –** Prior to the interview, all educational psychologists will be provided with an information sheet describing the research and explaining the use of the second generation activity framework (Appendix C) **Stage 4** – Interviews will last approximately one hour with each participant. The aim will be for interviews to take place online either using Zoom or Microsoft teams. If more than one participant from a local authority express an interest, it may be that data is collected through the use of a focus group. In this case, questions from the interview schedule outlined in the appendix will also be used. **Stage 5 –** Thematic analysis will be used to identify key areas in response to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data will be analysed using a two-stage sequential analysis. The first stage of analysis (the initial inductive stage) will involve eliciting the themes strongly linked to the raw data). The second stage of data analysis will be deductive, driven by the Activity Theory framework, which will help to reduce the data into pre-existing coding frames (seven nodes). This type of analysis will aim to provide a rich description of the information related to

each AT node – which is argued to be useful when investigating an area that is under researched (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

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.

I am currently on placement at Warwickshire Educational Psychology Service. The research is aiming to sample educational psychologists from within the West Midlands as that is the geographical area/county that I am currently working within.

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.

The study will aim to recruit a number of educational psychologists from a number of local authorities (e.g., two or three) within the West Midlands so that I am able to build a separate model of the activity system operating in the different local authorities. The educational psychologists will be employed within an Educational Psychology Service. The specific gender and ages of potential participants is unknown. The following inclusion criteria will be applied for the Educational Psychologists:

- Registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC registered)
- Be employed within a West Midlands Educational Psychology Service
- For educational psychologists who are currently taking a lead/involved in shaping work on anti-oppressive practice/anti-racism within their service or within their practice.
- For educational psychologists who have an interest in anti-racism within their practice.

Exclusion criteria
- Trainee educational psychologists

- **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.

A purposive sampling technique will be used. Firstly, I will identify the names of the Educational Psychology Services within the West Midlands and the associated Principal Educational Psychologists. I will then contact the Principal Educational Psychologists in the West Midlands about the research project by distributing a research advertisement and study information sheet (Appendix A). I will ask the Principal Educational Psychologists to distribute my advertisement with their teams/colleagues for potential participants to volunteer.

It is hoped that EPs' will make voluntary contact with the researcher via email. I will provide the EPs' with an information sheet which details the project aims and aim to discuss this further with them online, by telephone or by face to face contact if possible/necessary (Appendix B). I will then share a consent form with the EPs' (Appendix C). Once informed consent has been gained, I will provide a pre-interview email with a brief overview of what to expect (Appendix E). The aim of this will be to reduce any potential anxiety in relation to the exploration of participants' understanding and implementation of anti-racism within their practice.

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.

Informed consent for the Educational Psychologists will be gained from the Educational Psychologists themselves (Appendix C).

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 summary of the information they provided in the interview will be given to them at the end of the interview. This will aim to recap the information they provided as well as to re-check the information they said is accurate. It will also provide EPs' with an opportunity to clarify their response, change or add anything that they would like to.

Feedback of the main findings will be shared with all participants once the research is complete and has been written up as a formal report.

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.

Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw, up until two weeks after the interview or focus group, at the time of consent. All participants will have my contact details should they wish to withdraw from the project after the interviews have taken place.

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).

Data can be withdrawn up until two weeks after the interview.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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)?

Interviews will be recorded online using Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The audio recordings will then be transferred onto a computer and backed up onto an encrypted external hard drive, the files will be password protected. The password will only be known to the researcher, myself. The files will immediately be deleted from the devices once the files have been transferred. Once my viva is completed, all recordings will be deleted from my computer and external hard drive. The University Birmingham Code of Practice for Research indicates that all interview data should be stored and retained for 10 years. Once this time has passed, all data will be destroyed, which will involve paper documents being shredded and computer files being deleted.

Anonymity cannot be offered as the research involves conducting face-to-face interviews (online). To ensure confidentiality, participants will be informed that their names will not appear in the final report, nor will any other identifying information. Pseudonyms will be used, and a key will be kept by the researcher to enable the identification of a participant's data. Any other data in the transcripts that references identifiable places or people will also be given a pseudo name or removed from the transcript. This will be stored separately from the data in a password protected file on the University of Birmingham's BEAR Data Share to ensure data is stored securely and can be withdrawn on request. Some information about the participants (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, length of time in role) and the local authority (e.g., demographics, composition of teams) may be gathered and included to provide contextual and background information. Participants will be informed that excerpts from interview transcripts will be included in the final write-up of the research project, provided that there are no risks that quotations would render participants identifiable.

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:

All efforts will be made to ensure participants' data is treated as confidential. There is a risk that individual participants could be identified, if they disclose to other participants within the West Midlands or within their services that they have consented to take part in the research. The risk will be minimised by the researcher not disclosing the name or any other identifying information about other participants. In addition, the names of participants will not be reported in the written presentation of the research. Although some information about the participants (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, length of years in the role) and their local authority (e.g., size, demographic of team) will be reported. Direct quotations will not be used where their content or wording may constitute any risks to participants' identifiability.

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).

Electronic data and transcripts of the interviews will be stored on the University of Birmingham BEAR DataShare system and an encrypted external hard drive, to which the researcher alone will be able to access.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Immediately after each participant interview, the electronically audio-recorded data will be transferred from the computer/audio-recording devices to a password-protected folder on University of Birmingham's BEAR DataShare. The audio files will then be erased from the computer/audio-device. Electronic transcripts and notes will be held in a password protected folder on University of

Birmingham's BEAR DataShare and an encrypted external hard drive. Printed transcripts, written notes and consent forms will be scanned into and stored in the UOB BEAR DataShare system.

In accordance with university research policy, data will be stored on UOB's BEAR DataShare for 10 years after completion of the project. A 10-year enquiry date will be set for the electronic data stored on UOB's 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 am not aware of any national or local approvals required to carry out this research.

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 ☒

Please include a printout 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

The following benefits/significance of the research can be understood as the following:

1) **Insight:** It will provide a unique contribution to an understanding of how educational psychologists' conceptualise anti-racism within their practice and how they apply this within their practice. This contributes to an identified gap within the literature. It will provide insight into the experiences of educational psychologists and what they believe supports and constrains their operationalisation of anti-racism within their practice. This may allow practitioners to reflect on their own practice. Having the time and space to review features of anti-racism within their practice, may benefit participants in the sense that it might act as a helpful reflective exercise. For example, it may prompt actions or next steps regarding their own practice.

It is hoped that the research may allow for reflections about how educational psychologists approach anti-racism within their work and the implications this has for the service users that they support.

2) **Case study Methodology:** An aim of this research is to gain a rich, detailed understanding of anti-racism in EP practice by examining cases in detail, which case study methodology enables (Thomas, 2015). The insight and the richness that case studies provide, are argued as being a unique strength within research (Coolican, 2014).

3) **Contribution to the literature:** There is currently a gap identified in the literature for this particular aspect of practice within the EP profession. A lot of the research into culture, and cultural competency is based within the US. Statements have been written by guiding frameworks e.g., the BPS, DECP, AEP etc but there continues to be a need for more research to be conducted within this area of practice.

Risks of the research

Outline any potential risks (including risks to research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research, the environment and/or society and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.) ***Please ensure that you include any risks relating to overseas travel and working in overseas locations as part of the study, particularly if the work will involve travel to/working in areas considered unsafe and/or subject to travel warnings from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (see*** https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)***. Please also be aware that the University insurer, UMAL, offers access to RiskMonitor Traveller, a service which provides 24/7/365 security advice for all travellers and you are advised to make use of this service (see https://umal.co.uk/travel/pre-travel-advice/).***

The outlining of the risks in this section does not circumvent the need to carry out and document a detailed Health and Safety risk assessment where appropriate – see below.

The risks to the research are deemed to be minimal, however the following have been noted:

Emotional distress: If a participant becomes emotional or upset before, during or after the interviews. As a part of the reflective nature of the participants engaging in the semi-structured interviews, and reviewing their understanding of the terms e.g., 'race', 'racism' and 'anti-racism', it could lead to participants reflecting upon their own personal experiences which may lead to them experiencing an emotional response to the discussion. For example, if participants reflect on a specific case experience which may have been particularly distressing. Furthermore, participants may reflect upon their own personal experiences of racism or discrimination. If I sensed that participants were becoming distressed at any time, I would interrupt the interview, inviting feedback on whether the interviewee would like a short break or prefer to discontinue the interview. In addition, participants will be encouraged to reflect on this process in their own supervision that they receive, should they feel this would be beneficial to them. There will also be a space for participants to contact the researcher, should participants feel they would like to, following the interviews.

All participants will be made aware that they do not have to answer any questions if they do not want to. They will also be reminded that they can take breaks at any point during the interview. After the interview has been conducted, there will be a conversation with each participant in which they will be fully debriefed and will be able to ask any questions that they have. Participants will also be provided with my contact details and those of my supervisor, should they have any questions or concerns after the interview. They will also be reminded of their right to withdraw their information along with the time frame.

Positionality: A key assumption of interpretivist research is that knowledge is situated in relations between people, known as 'situated knowledge' (Thomas, 2013). The person doing the research takes a central role in the discovery of this situated knowledge, therefore assuming an undeniable position within the research (Thomas, 2013). Thomas (2013) implores the interpretivist researcher to accept their subjectivity and offer a full discussion of positionality so that readers know who they are and where they stand. I will aim to explicitly outline my positionality. It is important that I am aware and reflect upon my position as a 'white researcher'.

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 <u>provide a copy of this with your application</u>. 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:

No

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:

No

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 ☒
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. ⊠

Appendix 3: Interview schedule

ACTIVITY THEORY NODE Issue/Topic	Possible questions	Possible follow up questions	PROBES
SUBJECT: Introductions Natural introductions from interviewer and interviewee, recap purpose of meeting… Ethics reminder	Tell me about your role within the service e.g., the number of years in your role, within this service and any responsibilities you may have held/special interests…..	What drew you to that position of responsibility?	Go on
OBJECT: Warm up	*The focus of today's interview will be around 'anti-racist practice…..* What does 'anti-racism' mean to you in your professional practice? What are you doing within your service for this aspect of practice? What are you doing individually in your work to promote anti-racism within your practice?	What role does this play on a day to day basis? What is the focus of the work? Is this work planned currently or is it planned for the future?	Can you tell me more? And….?
OUTCOME: Main body of Interview	What is/was the end goal? What do you hope to achieve? What would you consider to be the success criteria?	In what way do you know? How is this known in the team?	Really? Can you tell me more?
RULES: Main body of Interview	What factors do you think support work in this area of practice? ….. at the national level? ….. at the local level? …… personal level? What factors do you think constrain work in this area of practice? …at the national level? …local authority level? …personal level?	How do you know this? How do you feel about this?	Can you tell me more? Really?

			Go on..
COMMUNITY: Main body of Interview	Is there anyone else that is currently or has been involved, in promoting anti-racism work? Who else, in the wider community, was indirectly involved?	How does this impact your role? What happens then? How do you feel about this?	Can you tell me more?
DIVISION OF LABOUR: Main body of Interview	How is the work shared? Could it be more efficient? How are roles organised?	How do you feel about this? How do you know?	Can you tell me more?
TOOLS: Main body of Interview	What tools/resources are you using to promote or apply anti-racist approaches within your practice?	Have you found them to be useful? How do you know?	Tell me more about that.
Cool Off	Is there anything that you would like to ask? Is there anything that you would like to add? Ethics (reminder of consent/right to withdraw/confidentiality etc)		
Closure	Thank you very much for your time….. Goodbye		

Appendix 4: Consent form

Consent Form

Dear participant,

Thank you for volunteering to take part in this study.

It is important that you understand the aims of the research and what your participation will entail before you decide to provide informed consent. To make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to take part in this research study, please consider the information on the Participant Information sheet and do not hesitate to ask any questions before deciding whether you would like to participate or not.

Consent to participate

The decision to participate in this study is entirely yours. If you decide that you would like to participate in this research and contribute to illuminating a unique contribution that EPs' have within anti-racism and their practice, you will be required to sign this consent form that indicates your informed willingness to engage in this research study. If you do decide to participate in this research study, you will be free to withdraw from the study up until two weeks following the semi-structured interview.

Research Procedure

Participation in this study, requires individuals to participate in a semi-structured interview with myself. This will take place online via Zoom. It is anticipated that the online interviews will last for approximately one hour. Audio recordings will be made of participants' responses and notes will be taken during the interviews. Participants' identities will remain confidential. Names and other information which may compromise the participants' identity will be removed from the write-up of the study and pseudonyms or arbitrary initials will be used instead.

Possible advantages and disadvantages of participation

It is hoped that this study will allow you the time and space to reflect on your understanding and experience within the area of anti-racism within your practice. It will also offer the opportunity to discuss what constraints and supports, if any, you may face in your practice in a non-judgemental environment. It is hoped that this study will illuminate the practice that is currently happening by EPs' to promote anti-racism in their practice.

Discussing 'race', 'racism' and 'anti-racism' are sensitive and, can be considered as controversial concepts and it may be that sharing your perspectives and experiences may be difficult. If you find that some questions evoke an emotional response, you may choose not to answer them. You may also choose to stop the interview at any point.

Further Information

The aim of the information provided in this consent form, and the Participant Information sheet is to provide you with an overview of the research study and to allow you to consider whether you would like to contribute to this exploratory study of EPs' practice within anti-racism. If you have any further

questions which you would like addressed, please do not hesitate to contact me or my research supervisor on the contact number/email provided below.

If you would like to participate in this study, please fill in the consent form below:

Participant's Declaration:

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided within this consent form and the participant information sheet and I agree to take part in the study described above. I understand that I will be free to withdraw at any point, and that any data can be withdrawn up until two weeks following the semi-structured interview, without giving a reason. I also agree to anonymised quotes from my interview may be used in any publications or presentations of further academic study. I understand that any personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential and anonymised by the use of pseudonyms within data analysis and writing. I confirm that I have been offered the opportunity to ask questions and that any questions have been answered.

Please sign below to give consent to participate in the project.

Educational Psychologist name (please print):_____

I have read the attached information and give consent to taking part in the project.

Signed (signature) _____

Please sign below to give consent for voice recording to be used in your interview.

I know that voice recording will be used in the interview and that the recordings are confidential and for the use of the researcher only. I give my consent for voice recording to be used.

Signed (signature) _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Participant information form

Appendix B – Participant Information Form

Preliminary Study Title: An exploration into Educational Psychologist's understanding and implementation of anti-racism practice in the West Midlands. A socio-cultural activity theory.

Thank you for your interest in my research investigating educational psychologist's (EPs') understanding and operationalisation of anti-racism within their practice.

My name is Emma Barber and I am a trainee educational psychologist in the third year of my doctoral studies at the University of Birmingham. I am currently on placement at Warwickshire County Council. For Volume 1 of my thesis, I would like to explore EPs' understanding and operationalisation of anti-racist practice within their practice. Thank you for volunteering to time to take part in this research study.

What are the research aims?

The aims of the research are to explore anti-racism approaches within educational psychology practice and to develop an understanding of these within the wider social and cultural context of EP practice. The research hopes to provide an in-depth exploration of the understanding and operationalisation of anti-racist practice held by the educational psychologists (EPs') to illuminate their unique contributions within this area of practice.

The research aims to be exploratory by:

- Examining what educational psychologists understand to be 'anti-racism' within their practice.
- Examining the types of work that the educational psychologists are doing within anti-racism to explore how it is embedded within their practice.

It also aims to explore the factors that constrain and support their work within this area of practice. The second generation activity theory framework (Engestrom, 1987) will be used as a framework to guide questions within the semi-structured interviews. Thus, the main objective of the project is to illuminate experience and perspectives, not to necessarily provide generalisable outcomes.

What would the interview be about?

I am interested to find out about:

- What do you understand 'anti-racism' to mean within your practice?
- What are you doing within your practice (e.g., consultation, training, research, assessment, intervention) to promote anti-racism in practice?

What are the socio-cultural factors that mediate the development of anti-racism approaches in your practice?

- What factors (if any) do you believe constrain promoting an anti-racism approach within your practice?
- What factors (if any) do you believe support the promoting of an anti-racism approach within your practice?

- What role(s) have you had/or currently are having within your service? Is there anybody else involved in supporting you with this area of work?

Key information about the research project:

- The interviews will be recorded. Only I, Emma, will listen to the recording.
- Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. This means:
  - Your name will be changed in the formal report. This means that only I, Emma, will know who said what.
  - Locations, demographic information or any other information that could identify you as a participant or the service in which you are working within, will also be changed.
  - The recorded interviews will be kept in a password-protected and secure format.
- If you decide that you no longer wish to take part then you can withdraw your data up to two weeks after the date of the interview. This can be done by using my contact details which can be found below.

If you consent to participating, please read the information outlined on the consent form and sign accordingly.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have any questions or would like to talk through the information provided please feel free to contact me at EVS469@student.bham.ac.uk or emmabarber@warwickshire.gov.uk.

My supervisor is Dr Nick Bozic and he can be contacted at N.M.BOZIC@bham.ac.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Emma Barber
Trainee Educational Psychologist
University of Birmingham

Appendix 6: Activity Theory diagram (O'Shea, 201

Activity Theory Prompt Sheet

Tools

What is being used?

- Activity always involves artefacts (or tools)
- Tools can be concrete/physical e.g., machines, instruments, materials etc
- Tools can be abstract/psychological e.g., language, knowledge, previous experience etc

What is being worked on?

- Can be physical or conceptual
- Acted on by the subject
- The intention that motivates the activity

Subject

From whose perspective are we looking?

To achieve what?

What is the end goal?

What is hoped to be achieved?

Community

Who else is involved?

Rules

What supports or constrains the work?

- Rules which govern the activity
- Can be explicit e.g. set by law, contracts etc
- Can be implicit e.g., cultural norms, values, embedded practices/routines etc

Division of Labour

How is the work shared?

How are roles organised and demarcated?

Who is responsible for what?

Diagram ('O'Shea, 2019)

146

Appendix 7: Initial mind maps (Phase 2 of TA)

Participant ① = Initial notes.

AT is a great lens to look at this topic.

In LA for 3 years (Assistant) and Trainee. Used to be a teacher. Leads for ELSA.
Interested in cognition + learning + how this links to this topic.
Interested in strength based approaches.
Interested in underrepresented/ marginalised + how attainment is imp for them.

• Constraints.
Taboo subject.
EP meeting → raised issues in a meeting. Don't have demographic data. low % of those getting into EP profession from ethnic backgrounds. National - lack of transparency + openness to change. Don't know how to navigate it - or don't want to?
Time + Capacity → statutory demand is high?
• Support → Buy in from the SLT. Willing to engage, CPD days. Good to see DECP groups to raise profile of topic. Authority level too - personal-motivated - drive. Seniority → enacts change. Anti-oppressive module - VOB.

• Oppressive tools eg standardised assessments
• DECP 2006 Audit → support questionnaire (widely administered)
• Organisational change - Schein
• PATH
• 5 Areas of our work
→ consideration for our language. Consider accessibility + translation opportunities
• DA
• Talking mats

Tools

Subject

Rules

Contradiction within

Community

Object → **Outcome**

Division of Labour

Grass roots initiatives. Mentorship programmes. Unconscious bias. EDI training in communities - private/public companies.
Senior level - local authority.
did approach EP service - but need to consider - purpose + outcome of this.
15 people within developmental group. Meet every half term.
Developing a report.

Report will be shared.

Lead-promoting racial equality development group. By following george floyd death.
Asked for interest, got so many people showed interest.
Did a PATH Vision - Leader promoting racial equality. (do it 'with' rather than 'to' organisational change theory + implementation

Constructed differently by different people.
The term 'anti-racism' can be divisi... Prefer the term 'promoting racial equality + equity'. = Promoting suggest action. → Actively involved, promoting racial equality.
Decompose systems/structures that promote racism = make effective change. become more confident in being anti-oppressive.
Use of term from 'working development group.
3 anonymous questionnaire to service
Suctions are on service development pla... + being promised by SLT. Stay in being critical. Using suitable assessments. difficult conversati... TEP/Supervision. peer. transcular Training.

practitioner level - we can identify diversi... having confidence to have conversations need to look @ systems - policies. need to be skilled practitioners.
Profession to be representative of soci... (Men/Race →) Increase in diversity in services of EPs.

EP + 1 other EP. her together + no longer trade.
want plan to be ratified by SLT.

Policy development + CPD agend... (goals)
Subgroup on organisati... change. Presented to grou...
→ looking at interpretors → what is the process?
Report + action plan.
→ collaborating with families group. Co-collaborate.

147

Appendix 8: Example of coding in NVivo (Phase 3 of TA)

Appendix 9: Excerpt of transcript (Evie)

Evie: Yeah. So yeah, lots of mini goals really to answer your question. The end, the end goal is total equity.

INT: Yeah

Evie: lots of miniature goals on a very long road towards achieving that I think.

INT: Yeah and that it kind of comes within that whole journey element doesn't it of people individually and organizationally, I guess, going on a journey and being able to break that down into parts. For example, you know with the EP team, do they, do they know themselves where, where they hope to be? So, for example, like you're saying earlier with them shadowing you during the training. Is it a case of they know actually, I hope to be in a position where I can know this all by myself, so therefore I can deliver it in my own schools, and off you go. So do they they kind of see the kind of map, if you like, of where the plan is,

Evie: I think, for the for the training definitely. So, the hope is that the ones that have shadowed me will partner up the next time and deliver it themselves, but with taking somebody with them.

INT: Yeah

Evie: Yeah, then, that person will then partner with someone else, so that it's not just me.

INT: Yeah, ok.

Evie: having to partner up with every single member of the staff in all these different schools because it's just not viable um in the time that I've got available. So yeah, I think there's a clear goal in terms of that. Um, I'd say that those goals are less clear for the team at large with things like assessment and consultation. Um, I think the team, you know we've got an amazing and lovely team in *** erm but I think a lot of people they're not as confident to discuss this, they are a bit cautious about getting it wrong, you know like a lot of people, so yeah I think, maybe the goals are less clear for the team at large other than the training where I think there is a nice clear goal because it's simple isn't it.

INT: Yeah.

Evie: The mission is to get all trained. And how is this kind of partnering up and and rolling out so that one's nice and clear but I'd say less clear in the the facets of the work.

INT: Yeah. Do you think, think, there's a way of trying to encourage their confidence with the say, having these difficult conversations, and I don't know if there's necessarily an answer, but just like…

Evie: I think, for me, and the only thing that improved my confidence was constant exposure. So,

INT: um

Evie: constant exposure to reading and to listening and also to constant exposure about talking about it and just letting the words fumble around on your tongue and come out wrong and then eventually after multiple times of saying it and trying it it just gets a little bit easier.

INT: Yeah

Evie: you know I still do trip over my words sometimes, erm, I still worry about offending, because I use the term people of colour because it seems to be of of of the moment quite a well appreciated term. But I completely understand that some people will find that highly offensive, and that does worry me. But I don't know of a term at the moment that's kind of as popular and is accepted among the communities that I'm hoping to work alongside. So, I think there will always be a level of hesitation.

INT: Yeah.

Evie: But I think, yeah, how the team improves is why I keep discussing it in our team meetings, doing some of their own self-reflection and reading and listening and watching. Um, That's the only way it's gonna it's gonna make a difference to anybody.

INT: Yeah ok.

Evie: Moving forwards so, yeah they've got work themselves and we've got work as a team to constantly keep it on the agenda and not as a standard item where everyone's like "ooh what do we talk about?" you know actually genuinely sharing practice and thinking, troubleshooting and such like.

Appendix 10 – Primary Contradictions (Findings)

Location in the activity theory model	Contradiction	Quotation from participants' interviews
Rules	Individual – Support – Professional experience - Being reflective Vs Individual – Constraint – Personal reflections - Language	*"…it feels for me on a personal level that those conversations are happening more and more"* (Ava) vs. *"…so, constraint at a personal level, I suppose, is that I haven't got the language, or maybe I have, I constantly worry that I haven't"* (Ava)
Rules	Individual – Support – Professional experience – time Vs Individual – Constraint – Capacity/time	*"…all of my anti-racism work just comes out of this kind of development time"* (Evie) *"…I get time to do some of the development work"* (Sarah) Vs *"…I'm using that time but it's really taxing…time is a huge barrier"* (Evie) *"Time is a massive constraint and it feels like that plays out on every level….time to reflect…time given for supervision…time for conversations…"* (Ava).
Rules	Individual – Support – Professional experience – Skills (confidence) vs Individual – Constraint – Personal reflections – Increased vulnerability	*"…just the continued research and development, continued reading…widely listening, you know, to the people of colour, to the people who've got that lived experience"* (Evie) *"…I know it's more than just doing kind of reading but I've certainly discovered some fantastic resources"* (Poppy). Vs *"…I have no lived experience. All of these kind of doubts and questions"* (Evie) *"…I haven't found anyone within the EP world to go on that journey with"* (Poppy).
Rules	Local – Support - EP System – Time Vs Local – Constraint – EP system -Time	*"…time has been given for us to meet as a group"* (Ava) Vs *"…how are you going to navigate giving individuals time to do this when we know statutory demand is high at the same time"* (Sarah).
Rules	Local – Support – EP System – Working/community group Vs	*"…support our work at the local level….the existence of the working group"* (Ava) *"…mentorship programme, people looking at unconscious bias and you know, equality, diversity and inclusion training in so many different communities"* (Sarah)

	Local – Constraint – EP System – Traded service	Vs *"…services are a business as well and where does this come in within the business structure"* (Sarah) *"…I've always been curious about the impact that that has [being in a traded service] in terms of who a service is able to work with and support"* (Ava)
Rules	Local – Support – Local Authority – Prioritisation Vs Local – Constraint – Local Authority – Perception (Divisive)	*"…there's so much going on and lots going on with [local authority'] as well"* (Sarah) *"…at the local level for me in my local authority…push on this agenda has been massively supported"* (Evie) Vs *"trying to talk about anti racism outside of the EP world….the doors were shut on me".* (Evie)
Rules	National – Support – Socio-political climate – Increased discourse Vs National – Constraint – Current political climate – limited discourse	*"…that kind of came together after a lot of discussion following George Floyd's death"* (Sarah) Vs *"…I think at a national level…before covid and George Floyd's death, I think it was a taboo topic, we didn't talk about…"* (Sarah) *"…they said that the data isn't arising because of racism, yet they haven't given alternative explanation as to why they think there are discrepancies…isn't very helpful, especially when its coming from your kind of elected Government"* (Evie).
Division of Labour	Division of Labour – Sharing of work – working group Vs Division of Labour – Personal Reflection – lack of labour division	*"…we've divided the work accordingly on that level….drawing on that wider EP community"* (Aimee) *"people have chosen out of a range of options available to them"* (Ava) Vs *"…so maybe the labour, in terms of division of labour. It's not divided, is it?"* (Ava)
Community	EP Colleagues – Working Group – EP led Vs Future involvement – EP service	*"…a couple of us have taken a lead on this, and made some significant progress"* (Aimee) Vs *"…I think it's a strange one to have as a specialism, because it's something that should be part of everybody's work…I don't think that kind of champions model can be good"* (Poppy).

Appendix 11 – Secondary Contradictions (Findings)

Location in the activity theory model	Contradiction	Quotation from participants' interviews
Object vs Rules	Conceptualisation of anti-racism – Individual level – Training Vs Local – Constraint – Traded service/capacity	*"…really important thing I'm doing at the moment is delivering training"* (Evie) Vs *"…it's been a challenge logistically in terms of how to get this training rolled out….when it's a traded service"* (Evie)
Tools vs Rules	Tools – Concrete – Organisations – Government vs National – Support – Organisations – Guidance and resources	*"…conservative government… they've recently commissioned the Cred Report"* (Evie) Vs *"…the Cred Report, I know colloquially has been called the no Cred Report… because it's been really really challenged*" (Evie)
Rules vs Outcome	Rules – Individual – Constraint – increased vulnerability Vs Outcome – Individual outcomes - confidence	*"…there might be temptation not to have that conversation or shy away from it through fear of saying the wrong thing, being taken the wrong way"* (Ava) Vs *"…the only thing for me that improved my confidence was constant exposure"* (Evie)