

**This Conversation Is About Race: Exploring Educational Psychologists' Experiences of
Promoting Racial Equity**

Tassaree-Jaja Wilson

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Acknowledgments

I dedicate this research to the Black and Global Majority Heritage children, young people, and families whose lives, presence, and truths continue to reveal and challenge inequities within educational systems and institutional practices. You have the right to be valued, heard, and to experience safety, exactly as you are. The pursuit of racial equity and justice is a collective responsibility to which we are all accountable. This work is for you, and because of you.

For my family and friends, I deeply appreciate you. Thank you for being my space to simply be during this work. It was not an easy process, but it was an honest one. In the quiet of that work, I refined my voice. It became part of the story of this research, a body of work that is distinctly mine and grounded in commitment to my community. I committed myself to it day after day, encouraged by the love, grace, and support you have given me throughout. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Tavi course team and to the community of trainees and EPs who have offered encouragement and solidarity. You have inspired me to reflect on the weight of this work, the uniqueness of this journey, and the ways in which I honour my values in serving the community.

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Abstract

Racism remains a deeply embedded systemic feature of the UK education system, shaping the everyday experiences of Black and Global Majority Heritage children and young people. Although legislation, policies, and professional guidance influenced by sociopolitical movements have sought to challenge institutional racism, racial inequities continue to manifest in the practices and outcomes of school communities. These enduring disparities highlight the need for critical reflection and systemic transformation, underpinned by Critical Race Theory and a Critical Realist paradigm, to better understand and disrupt the structures that sustain them. This qualitative study addresses a gap in the literature concerning the applied practice of educational psychology. It explores two interrelated concerns: how anti-racist practice (ARP) is enacted and sustained within Local Authority (LA) Educational Psychology Services, and the conceptual ambiguities surrounding the promotion of racial equity (PRE) in education. Eight LA Educational Psychologists participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews, analysed through an iterative process of Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Four overarching themes were constructed to represent how participants navigated their roles, agency, and ethical commitments to PRE within interconnected personal, relational, and institutional contexts. Participants' accounts illustrated that engagement with PRE was shaped through ongoing reflexivity, ethical tension, and the influence of leadership and team cultures, alongside the embedded dynamics of whiteness within professional norms. The analysis attends to the affective, relational, and situated nature of this work, affirming that ARP is contextually produced within wider systems of power, culture, and structural constraint.

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List of Abbreviations

ARP – Anti-Racist Practice

BGMH – Black and Global Majority Heritage

BLM – Black Lives Matter

BPS – British Psychological Society

CRT – Critical Race Theory

CR – Critical Realist / Critical Realism

CYP – Children and Young People / Child and/or Young Person

DfE – Department for Education

EP – (Qualified) Educational Psychologist; Main Grade Educational Psychologist

EPS / EPSs – Educational Psychology Service / Services

HCPC – Health and Care Professions Council

LA / LAs – Local Authority / Local Authorities

NQEP – Newly Qualified Educational Psychologist

PEP – Principal Educational Psychologist

PSED – Public Sector Equality Duty

PRE – Promoting / Promotion of Racial Equity

RTA – Reflexive Thematic Analysis

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SEP – Senior Educational Psychologist

TEP – Trainee Educational Psychologist

UK – United Kingdom

1. Introduction

1.1 Chapter overview

This qualitative exploratory study seeks to address significant gaps in the literature concerning the applied practice of educational psychology. This study explores two interrelated concerns: how anti-racist practice (ARP) is enacted and sustained within Local Authority (LA) educational psychology services (EPSs), and the conceptual ambiguities that surround the promotion of racial equity (PRE) in education. While there is a growing body of literature on institutional racism in the United Kingdom (UK) and the need for social justice in education and institutional practice (Kuria *et al.*, 2023; Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022), limited research exists on the role of educational psychologists (EPs) in addressing racism in education. Furthermore, the lived experiences of LA EPs navigating ARP within the structural and cultural constraints of LA systems remains underexplored. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring how EPs experience, reflect on and respond to racism in their practice.

Guided by a Critical Realist (CR) paradigm and underpinned by Critical Race Theory (CRT), the research draws on in-depth semi-structured interviews to investigate how systemic conditions facilitate or hinder the effective and sustainable implementation of ARP. The data were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), generating insights into the challenges EPs face and the strategies they adopt when working to PRE within educational settings. This chapter provides an overview of the sociopolitical context in which the research is situated, attending to the structural and institutional dynamics that continue to reproduce racial disparities within the UK education system, while also recognising the policy, legislative, and professional initiatives that have sought to address these inequities. By examining these systemic issues, this chapter establishes a critical context for understanding how EPs engage with the promotion of racial equity (PRE) in education. It then outlines the

researcher's reflexive stance, providing a rationale for this study and its relevance to both practice and research. Key terminology used throughout the thesis is defined, and the chapter closes with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.2 Sociopolitical context

Racial inequity in UK education has been reproduced through longstanding sociopolitical conditions that shape schools, services, and professional practice. This section examines key sociopolitical movements, national legislation, and policy guidance to provide an overview of how racial disparities have been addressed and sustained within education. It also explores the evolution of ARP, focusing on its development within educational psychology and the expanding role of EPs in PRE. Situating the profession within its wider sociopolitical landscape contextualises how EPs operate within systems marked by racism and structural inequality and how their practice may contribute to its reproduction, with consequences for the educational outcomes of children and young people (CYP). This analysis provides a foundation for assessing the profession's current and future engagement with ARP, particularly in light of growing calls for systemic change in education.

1.2.1 Relevant legislation and guidance

A range of legislative frameworks and policy guidance has been introduced in the UK to address racism and promote equality within public institutions, including education. Race equality legislation in the UK reflects decades of political struggle and incremental reform, as seen in the Race Relations Acts of 1965 and its iterations, which were implemented in response to activism and civil unrest. These Acts were often criticised for their narrow focus on overt forms of discrimination and inefficient enforcement, which left structural inequities largely unchallenged (Solomos, 2003; Sooben, 1990). The recognition of institutional racism

in the Macpherson Report (1999) marked a turning point, shaping subsequent policy frameworks and placing greater responsibility on public authorities.

Equality Act (2010) introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Criminal Justice Alliance [CJA], 2021), which requires public bodies, including schools and LAs, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equal opportunity, and foster good relations. Earlier legislation, including the Human Rights Act (1998), Children Act (2004) and the Education and Inspections Act (2006), sets out the responsibility of schools and other educational institutions to support the well-being of children, and ensure their safety and welfare, emphasising the child's right to education without discrimination. More recently, initiatives such as the Department for Education's (DfE) Behaviour in Schools guidance (DfE, 2024a), the Inclusive Britain Action Plan (Cabinet Office, 2022), and resources from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2020a), have sought to operationalise equality within the education system.

Translating these legislative frameworks into meaningful change remains a profound challenge. Observable disparities do not solely constitute institutional racism in education; deeper generative mechanisms operate across structural, cultural, and agential domains (Bhaskar, 2008; Archer, 1995). These mechanisms are often invisible and entrenched, shaping policy interpretation, professional practice, and organisational cultures in ways that reproduce inequality, which may still be present where institutions appear to meet legal obligations (Gillborn, 2015; Arday, 2021). The persistence of racial disparities within education presents the disjuncture between the empirical level of legal compliance and policy discourse and the real level at which institutional norms, values, and historical legacies shape lived experience (Danermark *et al.*, 2002). The enduring impact of coloniality, the normalisation of whiteness in institutional practices, dominant discourses, universal policy frameworks, and the underrepresentation of minoritised professionals all contribute to a system in which racial

injustice is structurally embedded (Quijano, 2000; Gillborn *et al.*, 2012; Warmington, 2020; Arday, 2022). For example, the overrepresentation of minoritised children in exclusions is often rationalised through behavioural frameworks and educational policies that misinterpret cultural and communicative differences expressed by CYP (Rollock, 2016; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020). This exemplifies how exclusionary practices are not isolated incidents but manifestations of structural mechanisms that operate within and are reinforced by existing systemic conditions, thereby reproducing racial disparities across UK education.

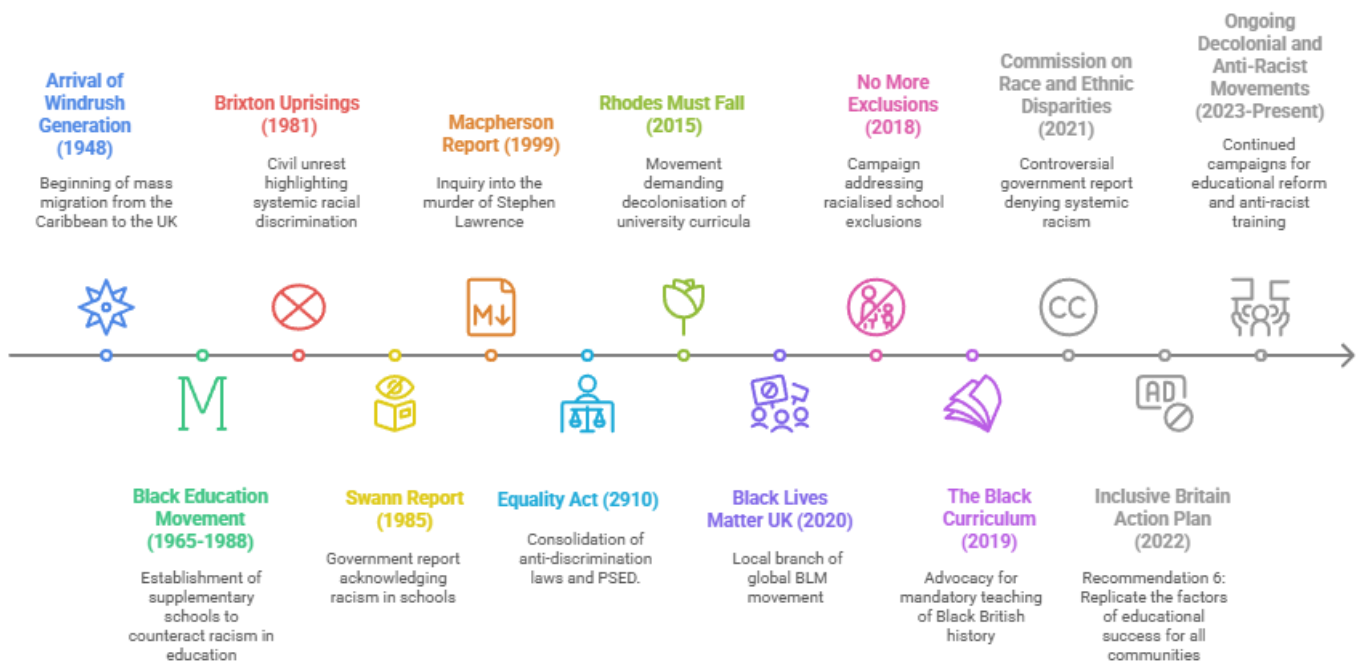
Translating anti-racist legislation and guidance into practice requires disrupting the generative mechanisms maintained within systems and institutions. This disruption may be observed as addressing the whiteness of leadership structures, challenging deficit-based framings of minoritised learners, and embedding critical professional reflexivity as a core dimension of educational practice (Frankenberg, 1993; Lander, 2011; Bhopal, 2018). Institutions have not yet fully realised anti-racist and inclusive legislation in education and wider practice, as reflected in the ongoing efforts to reconfigure entrenched norms, power relations, and resource distribution within public services in the pursuit of equitable service delivery.

1.2.2 Racism in the UK

Sociopolitical movements have long served as catalysts for societal change, amplifying marginalised voices, evoking public discourse, and placing renewed demands for accountability on institutions and professionals to critically examine their role in responding to systemic injustice. See Figure 1. These events and movements within the UK have exposed racism across education, healthcare, social welfare, and law enforcement, revealing a growing societal recognition that achieving justice requires a deliberate disruption of structures upholding whiteness.

Figure 1

Timeline of sociopolitical anti-racist events and movements in the UK



The timeline, illustrated in Figure 1, presents a snapshot of a comprehensive journey of the persistence of institutional racism in the UK. From the arrival of the Windrush Generation in 1948, through the Brixton Uprisings of 1981, the Macpherson Report published in 1999, and the Equality Act (2010), to more recent developments such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) UK in 2020 and campaigns for inclusive curricula, these moments emphasises the ongoing interplay existing between legislation, public inquiries, and activism which work to expose and contest inequities across education and broader society. The resulting discourse has prompted reflection on enduring questions about systemic negligence, institutional injustice, and the possibilities for transformation. The response from professional practice, within the ecology of UK education, has been an evolving effort to engage in work which

promotes meaningful change at a systemic level within these institutions (Bateman, 2023; Cameron & Maginn, 2009; Warmington, 2020).

1.2.3 Politics of race in education

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) report, widely known as the Sewell Report, encapsulates broader cultural and political narratives surrounding British identity and the ways race is constructed and contested in contemporary society. Examining the report, therefore, provides insight into how official discourse frames racial equity and anti-racism in the UK context. Published in March 2021, in response to sociopolitical movements for racial justice following the resurgence of BLM, the report was conducted during heightened public scrutiny of systemic racism within a climate of national introspection and civil unrest. Chaired by Dr Tony Sewell, the commission represented a self-authorised government inquiry into the causes of ethnic disparities across sectors such as education, employment, health, and the criminal justice system.

The authors asserted the contested claim that institutional racism no longer exists in the UK, while presenting an argument that public conversations should instead centre on narratives of racial progress, resilience, and personal aspiration. It framed inequality and racial disparities in the UK through a lens of personal responsibility, attributing disparities to cultural values and family structures, while largely downplaying the impact of systemic and institutional factors. While personal and cultural factors undoubtedly influence experiences of racism, the Sewell Report's commentary frames racial disparities in ways that are abstracted from the context of sociopolitical history and the ongoing role of institutions, instead evoking ideals of individual liberty, meritocracy, and formal equality. This perception constructs a vision of British society as fair and inclusive, implying that racial disparities stem from attributes of individual factors rather than the result of systemic injustice. This framing may be understood as an authoritative denial of the lived realities of minoritised people, as it

erases the structural nature of racism. For professionals working in education, this fragmented and individualised understanding of racism poses a significant challenge to developing coordinated, systemic responses to inequality.

Concerning education, the Sewell Report emphasised the academic success of some minoritised groups as evidence that structural racism no longer serves as a significant barrier to attainment. However, this framing obscured enduring systemic inequities and the prevailing observable racial disparities reflected in education, such as the disproportionate exclusion of Black pupils, the racialised identification of special educational needs (SEN), the underrepresentation of minoritised professionals in senior roles, and the ongoing dominance of Eurocentric curricula (Arday *et al.*, 2020; Strand & Lindorff, 2021; Teager & Yef, 2023; Tikly, 2021; Warmington, 2020; Worth *et al.*, 2022). Dominant narratives which reframe structural inequalities as matters of individual or cultural failure further contribute to the depoliticisation of racism and reinforce public misconceptions of institutional injustices (Warmington, 2020). Furthermore, the Sewell report received criticism from scholars, educators, activists, and community organisations, who challenged the report's conclusions by citing decades of research documenting systemic racism in the UK (British Medical Association, 2021; Institute of Race Relations, 2021; Lander *et al.*, 2021; Race Equality Foundation, 2022; Tikly, 2021). Framing the report as an evidence-based intervention intended to identify the causes of racial inequality and provide policy recommendations was challenged by critical reviews, which raised concerns that the report gave limited attention to the structural foundations of racial disparities. Moreover, the report's outcomes were further explored in Inclusive Britain the government's "practical actions" plan, the response to the Sewell report, which aimed to promote fairness and opportunity, by foregrounding "need, not ethnicity," reiterating its emphasis on a universal need-based approach to achieving equality. (Minister of State for Equalities *et al.*, 2022). The actions align with the findings proposed by

the Sewell Report, which raises a consideration for its influence on professional practice and the legitimacy of anti-racist work and its' framing of individual need, circumventing opportunities for systemic critique or collective reform within a socio-political climate that depoliticises racial inequity.

1.2.4 Racial inequity and the school community

Within the education system, the resulting racial disparities and persistence of racism are represented in experiences such as school exclusion, curriculum content, pupil-staff relations, and limited access to psychological support and other necessary resources (Adams, 2024; Gillborn, 2008; Race Equality Foundation, 2022; Strand & Lindorff, 2021). The presence of racial disparities reflects a growing recognition that achieving justice requires a deliberate disruption of structures that uphold institutional racism. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in youth-led, parent-supported community-initiated movements within educational contexts across the UK, particularly among schools serving racially and ethnically diverse populations. These actions have included legal challenges and digital testimony campaigns, which have sought to challenge overt institutional practices perceived to perpetuate racism and exclusion.

High-profile incidents, such as the treatment of Child Q, the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, and institutional recourse on cultural expressions like hairstyles or hijabs, further highlight the ongoing inability of educational institutions and professional practices to meaningfully engage with issues of race and culture (Adams, 2019; CHSCP, 2022; EHRC, 2020b). Teachers and school staff from BGMH backgrounds report being disadvantaged in pursuing leadership roles, as well as overt discrimination and emotional exhaustion from experiences of racism in practice (Bradbury *et al.*, 2022; DfE, 2023, 2024b, 2024c; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Sharp & Aston, 2024). Similar patterns of marginalisation are reported by BGMH parents, particularly when advocating for their children concerning safeguarding and

SEND. This marginalisation compounds racial trauma and a lack of accessible, culturally responsive information about their rights and entitlements within the education system (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Piper *et al.*, 2022; Rollock *et al.*, 2014).

The discursive interventions that reframe racial disparity through culture and socioeconomic narratives, represented by the Sewell Report and Inclusive Britain, stand in contrast to the persistent structural disparities within education. Despite being particularly visible in racially and ethnically diverse areas such as London (ONS, 2021), the gap between political narratives of progress and the lived realities of minoritised learners, families, and staff underscores how race intersects with education and highlights the ongoing challenges educational institutions face in translating legislation into meaningful, inclusive practice. Consequently, these inequities remain visible in the educational outcomes and well-being of minoritised learners (Carter, 2023; Demie & McLean, 2017; DfE, 2023; Friends, Families & Travellers, 2023; Hutchinson & Reader, 2021; Salisbury *et al.*, 2021; Tereshchenko *et al.*, 2020; Wallace & Salisbury, 2021; YMCA Europe, 2023). Moreover, some of the most entrenched structural barriers in education, such as the exclusion of BGMH parents from decision-making, remain significantly underrepresented in overt political discourse. Although these dimensions of systemic inequality are well documented in academic research and institutional data (Demie & Strand, 2006; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Rollock *et al.*, 2015), they are often overlooked in mainstream policy responses and public campaigns. This dissonance existing between the lived realities within diverse community groups and the societal capacity to recognise and enact systemic transformation underscores the enduring disparity between commitments to equity and their substantive realisation in practice.

1.2.5 Racial inequity and the practice of educational psychology

A network of statutory, professional, and policy-led governing bodies shapes educational psychology in the UK. The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is the

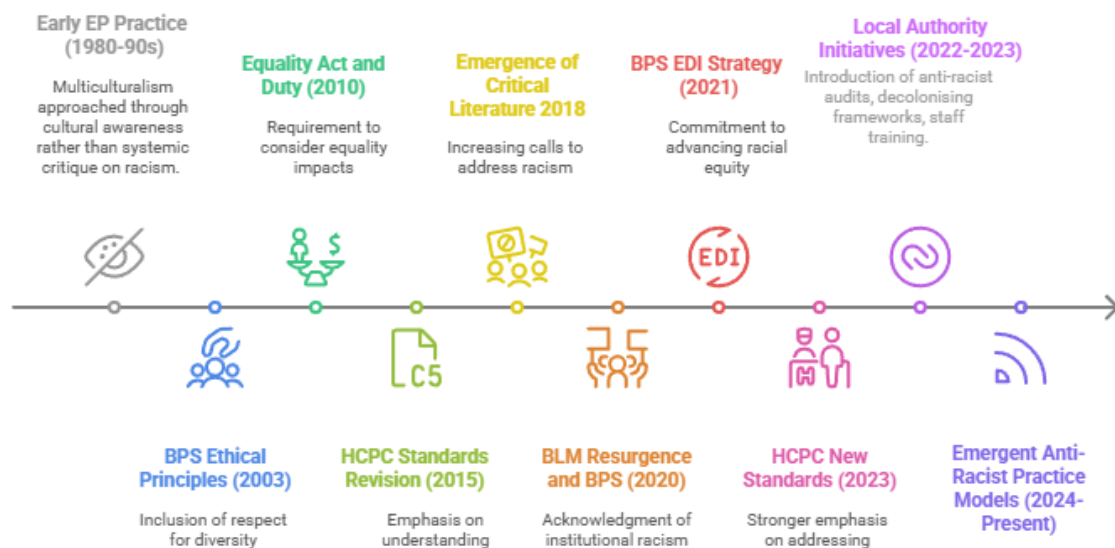
statutory regulator. It maintains the register of practising EPs and ensures they meet defined standards of proficiency, conduct, and continuing professional development (CPD). While not a regulator, the British Psychological Society (BPS) accredits training programmes and sets ethical and professional standards that guide the direction of the discipline. In England, the Department for Education (DfE) significantly influences the profession through its oversight of education policy and commissioning training places via the Educational Psychology Funded Training (EPFT) scheme. This involvement shapes workforce planning, training availability, and expectations around service delivery within LAs. The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) also plays a key role as a professional association and trade union, representing EPs in employment matters and contributing to national discourse on workforce conditions and educational reform. Collectively, these bodies contribute to the structural landscape in which UK educational psychology operates.

The authority of LA EPs is underpinned by statutory duties, ethical obligations, and their distinctive role within educational systems to use psychological knowledge to assess, consult, and intervene at individual, group, and systemic levels within education and wider practice. Functionally, EPs support children's learning and wellbeing, building capacity within the school community to contribute to inclusive practices, which aim to promote equality, challenge systemic barriers, and enable meaningful educational participation for all CYP. The profession and its governing body's engagement with racial inequities has been consistently shaped by ideological currents and professional limitations that, until recently, have constrained its potential to function as a transformative force in education. See Figure 2. Working under the Children and Families Act (2014) and the Equality Act (2010), particularly PSED (CJA, 2021), EPs are legally mandated to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and foster inclusion. These legislative frameworks confer a formal responsibility to identify and challenge educational practices that sustain inequity, including

institutional racism. In addition to statutory obligations, LA EPs are bound by professional codes established by the HCPC and BPS. The HCPC (2022) standards require psychologists to act with integrity, challenge unlawful or unethical practices, promote equality and inclusion, and confront prejudice and discrimination. Similarly, BPS guidance (2019; 2021b; 2023) highlights the importance of working ethically in diverse communities and understanding systemic disadvantage. These frameworks provide EPs with both ethical authority and a professional mandate to engage in ARP; the impact of stigmatising beliefs and structural inequalities is a core expectation within the EP role, reinforcing their responsibility to PRE across all levels of educational provision. Furthermore, EPs are expected to demonstrate a nuanced understanding of identity, including race, ethnicity, religion, and how their intersections shape experiences of access and opportunity.

Figure 2

Timeline of key developments shaping ARP in educational psychology



Note. The timeline shows how statutory duties, professional standards, and sociopolitical movements have progressively influenced EP practice, culminating in recent LA initiatives and emerging ARP models.

Earlier iterations of professional guidance, such as the BPS Practice Guidelines (2017) and the Educational Psychology Accreditation Handbook (2019), framed diversity primarily through cultural sensitivity and individual reflexivity. These frameworks promoted respect for difference and encouraged self-awareness among practitioners; these tools did not explicitly acknowledge racism as a systemic and institutional issue. Consequently, the profession's response to racial inequity was often depoliticised, grounded in liberal discourses of inclusion and tolerance rather than in structural critique or anti-racist resistance. This framing was reflected in the practice's evidence-based reluctance to interrogate psychology's historical role in legitimising deficit-based narratives of minoritised children, facilitated in biased assessment practices, the marginalisation of difference, and the disproportionate identification of SEND in minoritised groups. By locating problems primarily within CYP or their families, early practices risked reproducing racial inequalities rather than disrupting them (Coard, 1971; Kumar & DeCuir-Gunby, 2022; Rhodes, 2023; Strunk & Andrzejewski, 2023).

Despite these limitations in early practice, recent developments in professional standards suggest a growing recognition of these issues and a shifting ethos within the practice. The updated standards and competencies guiding the proficiencies for practice, including the BPS Quality Standards (2022), BPS Accreditation Standards (2023), and HCPC Standards of Proficiency (2023), mark a significant departure from earlier passive formulations to address inequities in education. These revised standards explicitly call on EPs to challenge systemic injustice, engage critically with power and privilege, through addressing systemic mechanisms, such as institutional racism, exclusionary policy practices, and organisational cultures that sustain racial inequity in education, to centre equity at the core of practice. Critical engagement with the legacy of psychology's complicity in racial injustice and with the structural power dynamics invites EPs to function as systemic change

agents, supporting CYP and families while also influencing the organisational and policy contexts that perpetuate inequality.

1.2.5.1 LA EP practice. The practice of the EP within an LA context is distinctive due to the systemic, multi-layered nature of the role and the profession's embeddedness within the intersection of psychology, education, and public service delivery. LA-based EPs operate within statutory and community-facing structures, enabling them to work across individual, group, and organisational levels. This positioning allows EPs to influence policy and practice, supporting improved outcomes for CYP with their capacity for direct casework, consultation, and wider systemic interventions, often in close collaboration with school and wider professional community members. The statutory nature of LA services also places EPs at the centre of key responsibilities such as Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs), in line with the SEND Code of Practice (SEND CoP) (DfE & DoHSC, 2015). For Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEPs), placements in LAs provide critical experience in navigating the complexities of educational systems, building skills in consultation, assessment, and multi-agency working. The BPS stipulates 300 days of the three-year doctoral programme must be spent on placement, with 130 days allocated to each of the final two years of training. These placements expose TEPs to the realities of service delivery within diverse communities, often under conditions of limited resources, while providing opportunities to engage in research and systemic initiatives that reflect local priorities and contextual needs of their school communities. Within this dynamic and often challenging environment for practice, LA EPs and TEPs are uniquely positioned to respond to educational inequities, promote inclusive practice, and enact meaningful contributions toward systemic change.

1.3 Researcher reflexivity

As a Black woman of Caribbean heritage, born in Jamaica and now living in the UK as a first-generation migrant, my understanding of justice, equity, and resistance is grounded in lived experience and shaped by the legacy of those who have historically challenged oppression. My Christian faith and the values of service, community, and dignity embedded within it inform my commitment to advocacy. These convictions guide how I engage with CYP and families from BGMH communities. This research reflects a desire to enact equity through educational psychology.

There was a time when, as a migrant, I interpreted difference primarily through the lens of culture. While multicultural spaces offered a language of celebration and belonging, they often obscured the racialised structures underpinning exclusion. Without a lexicon for whiteness, institutional racism, or epistemic exclusion, I lacked the tools to articulate these experiences, a form of hermeneutical injustice limiting my ability to make sense of social reality (Fricker, 2007; Vygotsky, 1986). My understanding developed as I engaged with critical scholarship and professional training, which enabled me to reframe both past and present experiences systemically and politically. This personal transformation has reinforced my belief that equipping EPs for ARP requires a commitment to reflective engagement with one's lived experiences. I believe navigating marginalisation and recognising complicity in oppressive systems can provide insight and critical tools to engage with ARP.

My professional journey prior to doctoral training further shaped this orientation. I worked across educational and community settings in London and Kent, supporting CYP structurally excluded, minoritised and marginalised within their systems. As an intervention lead within further education colleges, I worked with 16–19-year-olds least likely to succeed post-education, confronting the compounded effects of racism, deprivation, and institutional neglect. Earlier, my roles as a learning support assistant, inclusion unit support, and SEND

mentor exposed me to the realities faced by CYP in UK education. Collaborating with families, teachers, and multi-agency teams allowed me to see the limitations of universal provisions within inclusion and education. These roles cultivated my safeguarding and person-centred practice while revealing the deeper epistemic barriers CYP and their families encountered.

In these moments of noticing the assumptions shaping pathways, I critically interrogated the systems I was part of. As a youth mental health ambassador and mentor, I saw the transformative potential of community-rooted support, particularly when grounded in cultural awareness and trust. These experiences have profoundly shaped my identity as a TEP and fuelled my ongoing concern with how ARP is conceptualised and enacted in EP practice.

I am aware that my positionality shapes the production of my knowledge, the framing of my research questions and the interpretations of my findings. My encounters with epistemic injustice as both learner and practitioner have sharpened my sensitivity to aspects of this work. Therefore, I position this work as a hopeful reimagining of what educational psychology can become, where equity is embedded in systemic, relational, and culturally responsive action within education and the wider sociopolitical systems serving the communities in the UK (Freire, 1970).

1.4 Rationale

The genesis for this research was a reflective conversation with the Principal Education Psychologist (PEP) responsible for the service in my first year as a TEP. During this conversation, I raised my reflections in our discussion that in order to see change in the community we were serving, it would be necessary to meaningfully embed ARP as an essential aspect of inclusion, rather than an addition to the core functions of the role. This marked a turning point in how I began to understand the role of educational psychology in addressing racial inequities. Most notably, I saw a frequent conflation of ARP with cultural

competence. While cultural competence centres on learning about different cultures and promoting inclusion, ARP involves a sustained, reflexive commitment to challenging the institutional manifestations of racism, whiteness, and power. In this sense, culture extends beyond ethnicity to include the attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions that shape professional understandings of SEND, education, learning, parenting, support, and race, as well as other interrelated aspects of inclusion. As a TEP, it became apparent that the legacy of multicultural education, with its focus on tolerance and celebrating diversity, had often depoliticised conversations about race in education. It was my understanding that this reduced issues of racism to interpersonal understanding, rather than matters requiring structural change (Gillborn, 2008; Lander, 2014). These limitations were compounded by a lack of shared conceptual clarity within training and professional discourse, where ARP frequently folded into broader diversity and inclusion agendas (Bhopal, 2018). I also observed that naming racism and white privilege remained uncomfortable topics, particularly within a predominantly White, middle-class profession. This discomfort often led to cultural competence being used as a ‘safe’ alternative, which I believe undermined the personal and professional labour required for genuine anti-racist work (Rollock, 2016; Williams *et al.*, 2022). These concerns were reflected in the lack of consistency and critical depth across training materials intended to prepare TEPs for meaningful engagement with ARP.

These reflections became the starting point for deeper enquiry and research. Over time, I became increasingly curious about the broader function and role of the educational psychology profession concerning social justice in education. I was drawn to how PRE could be embedded at the core of what we do as EPs, rather than treated as a peripheral concern. This study is rooted in that ongoing curiosity. It seeks to explore how LA EPs understand, experience, and PRE in practice, while also considering what conditions might be required for transformative change.

In framing this research, I recognise that a broader conceptualisation of educational justice is necessary. Without such a systemic orientation, efforts toward inclusion risk failing to disrupt the deep-rooted mechanisms that continue to reproduce racial inequities. For LA EPs, this requires navigating the tension between working as agents within systems that may perpetuate inequality and actively striving to promote equity-oriented change. Understanding how LA EPs experience and enact this role offers valuable insight into what is currently possible within the profession and the constraints, contradictions, and opportunities that shape efforts to PRE within practice.

1.4.1 Relevance for practice

The LA EP is uniquely positioned within the UK education system, working alongside school staff, families, and multi-agency professionals to support CYPs through systemic, consultative, and individual work. This positioning allows EPs to act as agents of change, challenging the inequitable structures and practices that contribute to educational disadvantage.

Recent professional standards and national policy developments have increasingly framed equality, inclusion, anti-oppressive and anti-racist values as central to ethical practice. However, there remains a gap between this aspirational discourse and the lived realities of practice. Meaningful implementation requires moving beyond the surface of policy and engaging directly with the social, historical, and epistemic conditions that shape practice. By identifying and challenging the causal mechanisms underpinning institutional racism within practice, policy can move from symbolic compliance to genuine transformation (Archer, 1995; Danermark *et al.*, 2002). LA EPs frequently operate within systems shaped by longstanding inequalities and, at times, resistant to change. As such, their work is marked by complexity and tension, particularly when efforts to address racism and promote equity clash with dominant institutional cultures or policy constraints. The potential for EPs to

meaningfully contribute to racial equity within education remains underexplored and, in many settings, under-realised. This research creates space for critical reflection and dialogue. Exploring the experiences of LA EPs offers insight into the possibilities and tensions that exist when translating the practitioner's orientation of anti-racist commitments into everyday practice.

1.4.2 Research aims

The research reported in this thesis explores LA EPs' experiences of engagement with ARP through PRE within practice. This study seeks to achieve this by exploring the following research questions (RQs):

1. How do underlying sociopolitical structures and mechanisms shape EPs' ability to PRE and enact ARP?
2. What are the lived experiences of LA EPs who PRE in practice?
3. What role do LA EPs play in supporting systemic change?
4. What factors facilitate or limit the PRE in practice?

1.5 Key terminology

This thesis uses terminology with awareness of its social, political, and historical weight. Terms were selected to reflect the language used in the relevant literature and current professional discourse, while recognising that language is contested, evolving, and shaped by power. Therefore, using these terms is intentional and reflexive, acknowledging the tensions between standardised professional language and the lived, situated meanings generated within ARP.

1.5.1 Anti-racist practice

Anti-racist practice (ARP) is the deliberate and sustained effort to identify, examine, and transform the structural and institutional conditions that reproduce racial inequities. This

approach moves beyond abstract commitments to fairness, calling instead for a critically reflexive practice that addresses both interpersonal forms of prejudice and the systemic workings of whiteness, privilege, and exclusion (Gillborn, 2005; Kendi, 2019).

ARP recognises racism as a historically entrenched and structurally sustained phenomenon. It understands equity as equal treatment and achieving just outcomes through acknowledging social, political, and historical disadvantage. Central to this approach is the interrogation of underlying mechanisms, such as institutional bias, epistemic injustice, and racialised power relations, that shape experience across personal, cultural, and systemic levels (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 2014; Bowleg, 2021; Crenshaw, 1991; Leonardo, 2009).

1.5.2 Institutional/ systemic racism

Institutional and/or systemic racism is the overlapping ways in which racism is embedded within both organisational practices and social structures, such as education. At the institutional level, this includes the policies, routines, and cultural norms within schools or LA services that result in unequal treatment of learners and families based on race. At the systemic level, racism encompasses the legal, economic, and cultural frameworks that sustain racial hierarchies, such as funding formulas, assessment regimes, and professional norms that privilege white experiences as standard.

This thesis draws on Macpherson's (1999) influential definition of institutional racism, which conceptualises it as the collective failure of an organisation to provide appropriate and professional services to people due to their race, culture, or ethnic origin, often manifesting through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping. This conceptualisation is expanded by Sue and Spanierman (2020), who highlight the structural discrimination of racial groups through institutional policies, practices, and cultural norms that uphold these inequalities.

1.5.3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the critical examination of how multiple social identities, e.g. race, disability, ethnicity, culture, and religion, intersect and interact to shape individuals' experiences of advantage and disadvantage (Mirza, 2013). This definition is informed primarily by Mirza's UK-based perspective, given its direct relevance to educational research in this context, alongside Crenshaw's (1989) foundational work on intersecting forms of oppression.

By centring how systemic power operates through these intersecting identities, intersectionality reveals the material and social conditions that produce and sustain inequalities. Furthermore, these inequalities are acknowledged within the significance and impact of how overlapping identities shift over time, across policy landscapes, and within different institutional settings.

1.5.4 Minoritised

Minoritised acknowledges that individuals are not inherently minorities but are positioned as such through systemic processes of marginalisation. As Campbell-Stephens (2021) asserts, minoritised refers to those who are socially, politically, or economically subordinated without consent, particularly BGMH individuals affected by racism in the UK.

This social positioning can result in internalised oppression, identity conflict, and exposure to microaggressions, which negatively impact lived experiences related to mental health and well-being, education, and social mobility (Fernando, 2010). The term draws attention to how colonial legacies, institutional racism, and social hierarchies continue to shape power relations (Gillborn, 2005).

1.5.5 Positionality

Positionality is the ongoing process of recognising how one's social identities, power relations, and lived experiences are shaped by the contexts in which knowledge is produced, and practice is enacted. This includes critical awareness of how factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, and professional status influence one's perspective, values, and interactions within systems shaped by racial inequity and institutional racism (Collins, 2000; Kessi, 2018; Milner, 2007; Pillay, 2021). The notion of positionality also reflects the interrelation of agency and structure, wherein the practitioner is a product and response to historically situated relations of power and privilege (Bourdieu, 1990; Mertens, 2010).

1.5.6 Race and ethnicity

Race is a social construct historically and materially grounded in power relations, yet it is also shaped by human agency. Race is a stratifying mechanism that operates in the material world through inequalities in resources, opportunities, and access to social capital. However, the meaning and salience of race are continuously reproduced through social practices, discourses, and the lived experiences of individuals. The social significance of race has material consequences observed through experiences of oppression, discrimination, and privilege, which contribute to social inequities within education (Gillborn, 2008; Kendi, 2019; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2022; Tuck & Yang, 2014).

Ethnicity, in contrast, is a social process encompassing shared cultural practices, heritage, and identity. This thesis acknowledges the agency of individuals and groups in negotiating their ethnic identities within socio-historical contexts. As Jenkins (2008) observes, ethnicity is not fixed, but a dynamic process shaped by interaction, history, and social positioning. It exists in the material world through institutions, social norms, and policies that recognise or marginalise cultural practices. However, the power structures

surrounding ethnicity, such as colonial histories and the current globalisation of cultures, shape individual experiences and societal structures (Gunaratnam, 2003). Ethnicity may be understood as an expression of cultural difference and a product of systemic power relations. While race and ethnicity exist in material terms, their social significance is mediated by other social factors, and they operate within structures of inequality that transcend individual experiences.

1.5.7 Racial discrimination and racism

The term racial discrimination captures forms of unequal treatment that stem from socially constructed ideas about race and are embedded in broader systems of power. Racial discrimination refers to actions or decisions, intentional or unintentional, that disadvantage individuals or groups based on their racial identity. These actions are typically shaped by implicit biases, stereotypes, and dominant societal narratives that frame minoritised people in limiting or negative ways (Stangor, 2016).

Racism extends beyond individual prejudice to encompass the structural and institutional processes that sustain racial hierarchies. It operates across multiple levels, interpersonal, organisational, and systemic, and is maintained through explicit practices and subtle, often normalised forms of exclusion. These may include disparities in resource allocation, the silencing of minoritised voices, and the perpetuation of racial stereotypes (Elias, 2015; Sue & Spanierman, 2020). In this way, racism can be recognised as a set of visible acts or attitudes and a mechanism that structures inequality, embedded in historical legacies and material conditions.

1.5.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity in educational psychology refers to the ongoing process by which practitioners critically examine how their values, social identities, and assumptions shape

their professional actions, interpretations, and relationships (Finlay, 2002; Johnson & Duberley, 2003). Unlike general reflection, reflexivity involves turning the lens inward to interrogate how one's positionality influences interactions with clients and what is perceived as legitimate knowledge or intervention, particularly in contexts involving race and equity (Elias, 2015; Sue & Spanierman, 2020). In doing so, EPs acknowledge their embeddedness within systems of power, enabling more ethically responsive and socially just practice (Winter, 1989).

1.5.9 School community

The idea of the school community is the collective group of individuals and institutions. Inclusive of CYP as learners, staff, families, and external stakeholders, such as LAs and community organisations. Collectively, members share responsibility for shaping a school's culture, values, and educational outcomes. Beyond physical proximity, this community is characterised by shared goals, norms, and relationships, which contribute to a collective sense of belonging and identity.

The school community exists within structures influenced by sociopolitical context. Considered psychologically, a strong sense of school community promotes identity, inclusion, and achievement, whereas an exclusionary environment can lead to feelings of marginalisation and reduced opportunities, especially for minoritised learners (Archer *et al.*, 2010; Crozier & Davies, 2007). Therefore, the school community is not only a space of interaction but also one where power dynamics shape experiences, opportunities, and educational outcomes.

1.5.10 Whiteness

Whiteness is conceptualised in this thesis as a system of racial privilege that shapes both ideological and material aspects of society. It operates as an invisible norm, positioning

white cultural experiences and values as the default, while marginalising BGMH members of society. Whiteness is embedded in everyday beliefs, policies, and practices, conferring unearned advantages to White individuals and systematically disadvantaging others. This system functions as an ideological framework that naturalises racial hierarchies and as a material reality, creating inequities in access to resources, opportunities, and social capital. Whiteness is reinforced by structural and institutional practices that uphold racial disparities in education (Frankenberg, 1993; Gillborn, 2008; Lipsitz, 1998; Tatum, 1997).

1.6 Structure of thesis

This chapter has introduced the research study and my motivations for pursuing it, providing initial context for the research. Chapter two reviews available literature and research relevant to the role of the EP and its engagement in ARP, to establish this study's theoretical and professional context. This review will be used to present how ARP has been conceptualised within educational psychology, highlighting gaps in existing research, and supports a critical exploration of EPs as potential agents of change within systems which are shaped by and sustain institutional racism. Chapter three presents the methodology of this research, outlining the philosophical positioning, research design, data collection, and analysis methods. This chapter justifies the chosen qualitative approach and explains how it aligns with this study's aim to explore EPs' engagement in PRE within the institutional context of the LA. Chapter four will present the findings of the RTA. Chapter five will then present a further discussion of the findings and implications for practice and research. Chapter six presents the conclusion of this study by giving some closing reflections on the work and my experience of undertaking this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Chapter overview

As discussed in Chapter 1, institutional racism remains deeply embedded within educational systems, producing persistent racial disparities across school communities. The introduction outlined the professional, ethical, and policy landscape shaping EP practice, including frameworks that emphasise equality, inclusion, and social justice. Building on this foundation, this chapter adopts a reflexive and critical stance to review and interpret the existing literature. It examines how race, equity, and ARP have been understood within educational psychology, how EPs have engaged with and responded to these issues in practice, and how their experiences reflect the broader systemic and relational conditions in which anti-racist work is situated. In doing so, the review moves beyond discourse to consider how principles of equity and justice are enacted within the everyday realities of professional practice and how these are shaped by wider structural and institutional forces.

A central aim of this chapter is therefore to identify and critically evaluate gaps within the existing literature. The review examines how EPs experience and responds to institutional racism, with attention to the structural and cultural conditions that support or constrain meaningful and sustainable ARP. The chapter concludes by justifying the study's adoption of a Critical Realist (CR) paradigm, which facilitates exploration of the layered, relational, and institutional dimensions of PRE within EP practice. This review has not only informed the design of this research but has also shaped the research questions that guide the study. This chapter critically engages with insights from the literature to provide context for the empirical study presented in this thesis. Additionally, it offered guidance for this research design and methodology, ensuring a thorough exploration of the roles of EPs in PRE within their practice. The literature review questions (LRQs) are:

1. What does the literature report about race, ARP, equity (or inequity), and the role of the EP?
2. How does the EP role respond to racial inequities in societal systems in practice?
3. What have been the experiences of LA EPs in PRE and ARP?

The synthesis that follows integrates empirical studies and reflective commentaries to explore how LA EPs have engaged with the PRE in practice. Key themes identified across the literature include the importance of reflexivity, relational practice, emotional labour, and the institutional barriers that shape equity work within educational contexts. Despite a growing awareness of the need for ARP, there remains limited research on the sustained implementation of such approaches within educational psychology, particularly in LA contexts.

2.2 Reflexivity

In engaging with the literature on ARP within educational psychology, the interpretation I have presented has been shaped by my own social positioning and relationship to the issues of race, power, and equity explored throughout this thesis. My background in research and my personal and professional experiences working with minoritised communities have informed how I approach this body of work. These experiences make me particularly attuned to the emotional labour involved in confronting racism in practice and to the systemic structures that influence, enable, or constrain anti-racist engagement. This standpoint provides interpretive depth but also necessitates ongoing reflexive awareness of how my perspectives may influence meaning-making within the research.

While my commitment to equity work may sensitise me to themes, such as the affective demands placed on EPs engaging in ARP, I remain critically open to recognising

institutional constraints that shape and limit the possibilities for sustained ARP. These structural conditions are frequently underexplored in the literature but are central to understanding the realities of ARP within LA contexts. Moreover, with guidance through supervision and engagement with spaces for learning acquired throughout my academic and training experiences, this review reflects my responsibility as a researcher to critically examine how educational psychology has responded to systemic racial inequity. I approached this review with an explicit commitment to my ethical responsibility as the practitioner-researcher to engage with the literature analytically and reflexively. I am not positioned outside the dynamics I critique; I am part of the broader EP practice and research implicated in these systems. This reflexive stance underpinned the critical lens used throughout this literature review. In doing so, I hope to offer a rigorous and ethically grounded account sensitive to the current literature's potential and limitations.

2.3 Search strategy

A Scoping Literature Review (SLR) was undertaken to map the under-researched area of racial equity and ARP within LA EP practice. A systematic literature review was initially considered. However, the focus of this work is to map, i.e., scope, the existing literary landscape, particularly exploring topics such as systemic inequities, which have historically marginalised critical race perspectives within the field of educational psychology (Gillborn, 2008; Tricco *et al.*, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2014). Given the limited volume of peer-reviewed studies focused explicitly on racial equity within the context of LA EP practice and recognising that significant knowledge often resides in grey literature, such as practitioner reports, internal evaluations, and policy documents, an SLR provided the necessary methodological flexibility to explore what was made available (Munn *et al.*, 2018; Peters *et al.*, 2020).

2.4 Search engines

The scoping search for this study was conducted in multiple phases, starting in September 2023 to support the creation of this research's protocol for ethical consideration, followed by an additional search in January 2024 to refine search terms and gain a broader understanding of this research area. The scoping review for this thesis was completed between August and November 2024. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were set a priori, aligned with identified research questions and the Equality Act (2010) context. These criteria were first established during the protocol development process and then refined during subsequent searches. Minor adjustments were made following the initial search, which had initially produced a large volume of irrelevant material. See Table 1. To ensure comprehensive coverage, the Discovery Host was used to systematically search the following databases: APA PsycINFO, APA PsycArticles, Education Source, and ERIC. I selected these databases for their extensive coverage of educational psychology and racial equity and their ability to provide access to peer-reviewed articles, books, and relevant grey literature. At the initial search stage, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied through the filter functions of the Discover Database. Filters limited results to peer-reviewed journals, English language, and publication dates from 2010 onwards, in line with the Equality Act (2010) and HCPC competencies. Only studies focused on EPs in UK LAs or education settings were retained. This ensured that the search remained targeted and relevant before the manual screening process began. A limitation related to the use of the Discover Database as a meta-search tool for efficient cross-database retrieval is that meta-searches are inherently less sensitive than searching each database individually (Booth *et al.*, 2021). This means some relevant studies may have been missed at the retrieval stage. To minimise this risk, supplementary searches were conducted on open-access platforms such as Google Scholar. Specific grey literature sources were targeted for more comprehensive coverage, which supported my identification

of recent research, practitioner insights, and reports from outside formal academic publishing, contributing to a deeper understanding of the literature available within the field. This included doctoral theses, internal service reports, and professional publications, which I deemed necessary to capture experiences and innovations that may not appear in peer-reviewed journals. This approach is particularly relevant for practitioner-led initiatives that engage with ARP and PRE, ensuring a holistic understanding of how practitioners address systemic inequities in real-world settings and acknowledging the limitations and sensitivities of institutional publications.

I sourced grey literature from institutional repositories and through targeted outreach in professional networks. Moreover, I sought out reports and documentation from school community organisations that had publicly committed to PRE and engaging in ARP. This supported my ability to identify reports and policy documents not captured in academic databases. Further efforts to capture unpublished literature involved mopping-up strategies, including direct communication with practitioner-researchers and researchers, participation in conferences and professional forums, and exploring organisational reports unavailable through formal publication channels. Special focus was on identifying reports from LA EPSs working on PRE and ARP in educational contexts.

Table 1

Inclusion/ exclusion criteria for scoping search

Consideration	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Participants	Educational Psychologist, qualified to work in the UK Experience working within the role	Articles focused on other professionals (e.g., teachers) without explicitly mentioning EPs.

Focus and Methods	Qualitative Methodology for data collection.	Quantitative, focusing solely on outcomes studies without experiential/ contextual data
	Empirical studies on race, racial equity, and ARP within educational psychology.	Studies not related to racial equity or EPs or Educational Psychology Practice.
	Research that includes first-hand accounts or qualitative data from LA EPs.	Literature that does not focus on educational psychology or racial equity.
	Explores participants' accounts, thoughts, narratives, and dialogue regarding racial equity in UK education from members employed by an LA.	Insufficient details to identify reference or no abstract to screen.
	Theoretical discussions on the role of EPs in addressing racial inequities.	
Location	Schools within the UK	Schools outside the UK
	Educational Setting within the UK	Studies which focus on educational settings or institutions outside the UK
	Local Authority in the UK	Local Authority or equivalent outside of the UK
Article	Primary Source	Secondary Source: Review or Synthesis of other literature.
Type of Publication	Published Literature	
	Peer Reviewed	
	Empirical research	
	Academic material where relevant due to the limited evidence base i.e. thesis (Publicly available, rigorously reviewed by academic supervisors and examiners	

in the process of academic reviews,
supervisory approval, or institutional
evaluation)

Date of Publication	Publication date between 2010 and the present.	Before 2010.
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This corresponds to the Equality Act
(2010) legislation, which introduced
and named nine protected
characteristics, PSED, which further
informs anti-racist, anti-discriminatory
and anti-oppressive inclusive practice.

EP Role competencies: 2019 and HCPC
Competency 2023

2.5 Refining search terms

The search terms for the scoping review were first defined in September 2023 and piloted during the initial search. Following test runs, the Boolean terms were refined in January 2024 to improve the specificity and relevance of the retrieved literature. See Table 2. The search focused on terms relating to “anti-racist practice,” “racial equity in education,” and “educational psychology practice,” alongside related synonyms and concepts. To ensure inclusivity, a combination of keywords was employed to reflect the complexity of the topic. These refinements were guided by the inclusion and exclusion criteria established during the protocol stage, enabling a more focused exploration of how ARP is integrated into educational psychology, with attention to both theoretical and practical dimensions.

2.5.1 Search terms

- Quotation marks (“”) were used around phrases that needed to be found in the exact wording in which they were written. E.g., “United Kingdom”.
- An Asterisk (*) was used to truncate words so any associated words would be included. E.g., ‘Rac*’ would also search for ‘race, racism, racists, racial etc.’
- The search terms connected to a keyword or phrase within a category were linked using the Boolean Operator ‘OR’, e.g. Educational OR School.
- Searches were then combined with the Boolean Operator ‘AND’.
- ‘TI’ next to a term denotes items which should only appear in the title to limit the scope of the search and produce more relevant results.

Table 2

Search terms used in scoping review

Search terms	Element of the research Question	Group of search terms	Search results
1	Qualitative or Mixed-Method with qualitative design or data collection method	experienc* OR attitude* OR opinion* narrative* OR view* OR construc* OR account* OR perception* OR reflect*	6,726,694
2	Educational Psychologists	“Educational Psychologist” OR Education* Psycholg* OR TI “Local Authority Educational Psychologist” OR "LA EP"	30,056
3	Racial	Race OR raci*	844,644

4	Inequity	"racial inequity" OR inequ* OR disparit* OR discriminat* OR oppress* OR relat* OR bias OR injustice	5,840,169
5	Equity	"racial equity" OR "anti-racist" OR equ* OR Fair* OR justice OR impari* OR balanc* OR partity OR object*	3,655,234
6	Promoting (active/ action)	encourag* OR support* OR facillitat* OR advocat* OR champion* OR cultivat* OR endors* OR sponsor* OR nurtur* stimulat*	3,991,895
7	Within the UK	London OR British* OR "United Kingdom" OR UK OR Britain OR Wales OR Welsh OR Irish OR Ireland OR Scotland OR Scottish OR England	3,439,429
8	Educational Institutions	school OR education* setting* OR academ* OR "educat*" OR primary OR secondary OR community OR "Local Authority" OR	11,503,227

nursery OR school OR
college

2.6 Search results and critical appraisal

Table 3 outlines the individual searches undertaken as part of the scoping review, applying the pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria alongside Boolean operators. Each search combined different clusters of terms relating to inequity, equity, educational psychologists, and the UK educational context. These searches generated between 171 and 579 records when focusing specifically on inequity or equity, and over 7.3 million records when equity and inequity were searched more broadly. When all search terms were combined, 400 potentially relevant records were identified for screening. In addition, a “mopping-up” process captured 16 further items of grey literature through professional networks, organisational repositories, and citation chasing.

Table 3

Searches for literature review questions

Search	Title of search	Search terms	Initial search results
1	EP Inequity Search Term	1 AND 2 AND 3 AND 4	171
2	EP Equity Search Term	1 AND 2 AND 3 AND 5	579
3	Equity or Inequity (9) (not a complete search)	4 OR 5	7,354,781

4	All search terms to identify the eligible literature in discovery	1 AND 2 AND 3 AND 6 AND 7 AND 8 AND 9	400
5	Mopping up	Collating grey literature outside of the initial search	16

2.6.1 Critical appraisal extension

Although formal critical appraisal is not mandatory for scoping reviews, a systematic approach was undertaken to ensure rigour, clarity, and transparency of the work undertaken. This process enhanced the transparency and replicability of literature selection. Following retrieval, the quality and relevance of all included sources were appraised using the TAPUPAS framework, which evaluates transparency, accuracy, purposivity, utility, propriety, accessibility, and specificity (Pawson *et al.*, 2003). However, TAPUPAS did not fully capture the racial, political, and practice-based dimensions central to this study. To address this gap, the appraisal framework was extended through the application of a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating. Conventional appraisal frameworks and much of the literature tend to be framed in broad terms of inclusion or social justice. However, in this thesis, I resisted subsuming race into such general categories of justice, which risks diluting its specificity and reproducing epistemic erasure (Gillborn, 2008). Instead, the RAG criteria were explicitly anchored to engagement with race, racial equity, and ARP. This decision reflects my position that race cannot be reduced to, or hidden within, broader equity discourses (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Warmington, 2020).

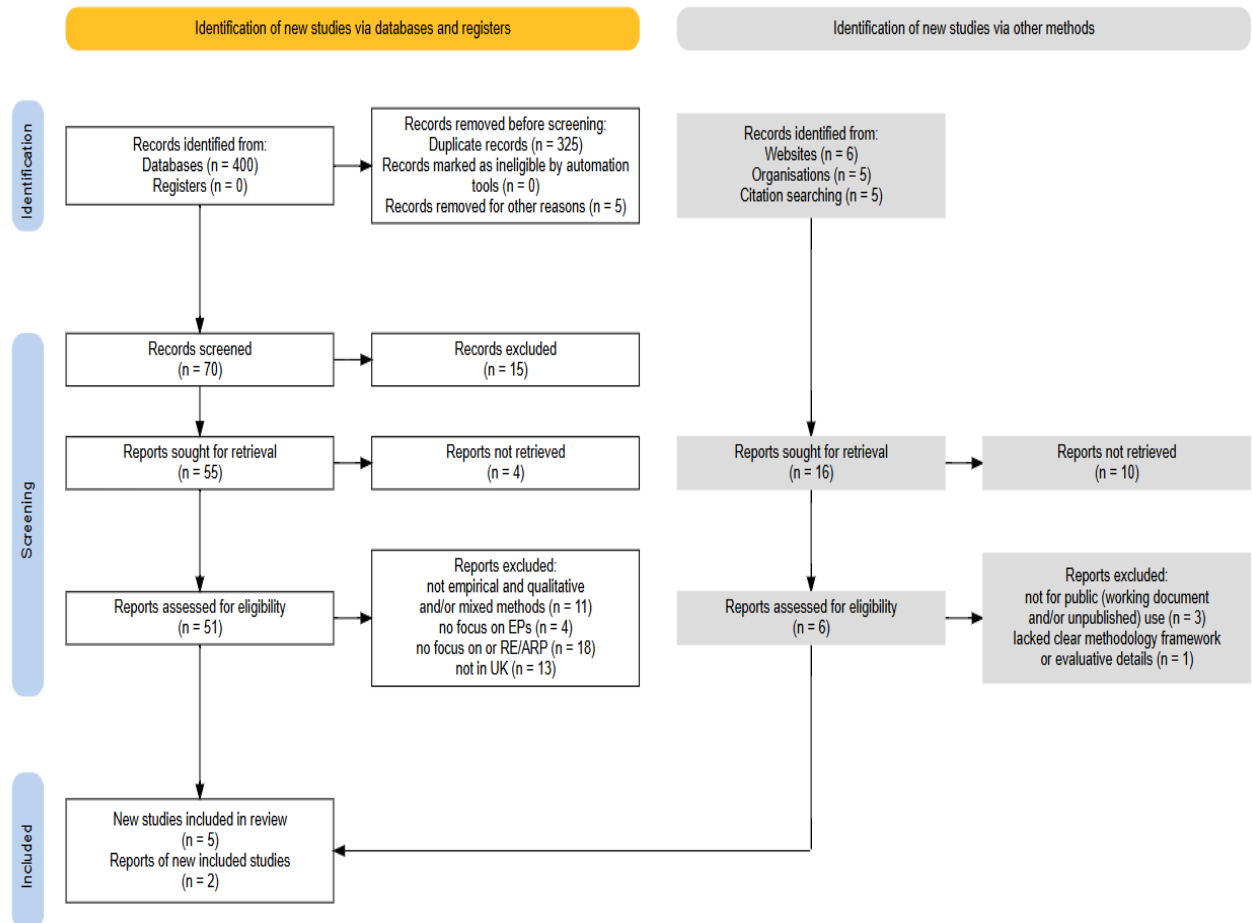
The RAG framework was used to classify overall rigour and to represent dimensions often absent in conventional appraisal models, including engagement with race, ARP, and

racial equity; acknowledgement of the societal structures and contexts of the EP role, such as wider sociopolitical influences; provision of recommendations with transformative potential for equity in EP practice; and applicability to LA EP contexts, either directly or through adaptation. In this way, the RAG system operationalised the critical extension of TAPUPAS, ensuring that issues of positionality, whiteness, and racism were considered in the appraisal process. See Appendix A. This dual approach was adopted to acknowledge the political and ethical dimensions of literature selection, particularly concerning race and inequity, and to foreground relevance, reflexivity, and transformative potential over strict methodological hierarchy.

To be included in the final synthesis, papers had to meet the TAPUPAS criteria and achieve a RAG rating of ‘Green’ across the critical dimensions. Amber-rated papers were retained only where they offered significant contextual or practice-based insights into institutional practices, practitioner voice, or power dynamics. Red-rated papers, which did not sufficiently meet methodological or relevance thresholds of the inclusion criteria, were excluded. Ultimately, seven papers met these thresholds and were selected for review. This process was documented in an audit trail for transparency and consistency of decision-making. This adaptation was designed to recognise that such considerations are often underrepresented in conventional appraisal models. To mitigate interpretive risk, accompanying analytic memos were produced to ensure reflexivity and transparency in their inclusion. See Appendix A. The results of these searches, together with the outcomes of the appraisal process, are represented in the PRISMA Flow Diagram of this scoping review, which presents how records were retrieved, screened, excluded, and included for analysis in relation to the literature review questions. See figure 3.

Figure 3

PRISMA flow diagram of the scoping review conducted for this literature review (Haddaway et al., 2022)



2.7 Limitations of this scoping review

The inclusion of grey literature was necessary to capture perspectives and evidence otherwise excluded from peer-reviewed sources, particularly those representing marginalised voices and practice-based knowledge. However, some sources lacked transparent methodological frameworks or evaluative detail, limiting the applicability of conventional appraisal techniques. Consequently, assessing credibility required a more interpretive and reflexive approach, guided by the TAPUPAS principles, and operationalised through the RAG framework. TAPUPAS did not include an explicit criterion for evaluating racial equity or

anti-oppressive practice. While elements such as Propriety and Specificity consider ethical and contextual standards, these dimensions do not directly address the justice-oriented values central to anti-racist research. This necessitated additional critical reflection to appraise the relevance of each source and its alignment with principles of racial equity and anti-oppressive practice. Moreover, the interpretive nature of the thematic synthesis required ongoing reflexivity to avoid overgeneralisation, particularly when integrating insights from methodologically diverse sources. The exclusion of international literature, while purposeful to maintain contextual relevance to UK based LA EP practice, may have constrained the diversity of perspectives represented. Similarly, the decision to exclude quantitative-only studies prioritised depth of experiential insight but may have limited engagement with large-scale trends. These decisions were deliberate, reflecting this study's commitment to depth, context, and reflexive coherence over breadth and generalisability.

2.8 Appraisal of the selected literature

This section critically evaluates the seven selected studies concerning their paradigmatic positions, theoretical underpinnings, author positionalities, contextual grounding, research aims, methodologies, participant characteristics, data collection methods, and alignment of findings with their respective research questions. The evaluation is integrated using the TAPUPAS and RAG framework (Pawson *et al.*, 2003) to assess the literature's suitability, trustworthiness, and quality. To demonstrate transparency and amplify rigour, Table 4 summarises the seven studies that met the inclusion criteria.

Table 4

Summary of the seven studies included in the scoping review

Author (s) and RAG rating	Study Type / Paradigm	Aim (Race/ARP Focus)	Participants and Context	Methodology / Data Collection and Analysis	Key Findings (re: Race/ARP)	Themes (linked to LRQs)	TAPUPAS Appraisal
Apontua <i>et al.</i> (2023) Amber: useful but methodologically limited.	Professional article; Reflective practice commentary.	To share strategies and reflective approaches that support racial equity within EP practice.	Reflections from EPs across UK LAs (no formal participant sample).	Practice- based reflections with case examples and narrative synthesis.	Advocated systemic support, supervision, and practical ARP strategies. Limited empirical grounding.	Strategies for practice (LRQ2). Supervision and support (LRQ3).	Transparency: Partial, reflective not empirical. Accuracy: Limited detail. Purposivity: Practical orientation. Utility: Service strategies offered. Propriety: Well-intentioned but reflexivity weak. Accessibility: Clear. Specificity: Not systematically evidenced
Bateman (2023) Green: explicit race focus and	Doctoral thesis; Participatory Action Research with CR orientation.	To interrogate whiteness, power, and reflexivity in	Six co- researchers (three EPs and three	PAR with focus groups, reflective journals, and	Supervision enabled engagement with whiteness. Discomfort, power	Reflexivity and whiteness (LRQ1 and LRQ3).	Transparency: High, reflexivity explicit. Accuracy: Strong coherence of data and claims. Purposivity: Explicit

robust reflexive account.		educational psychology, exploring how practitioners engage with ARP.	TEPs) from one EPS.	thematic analysis.	and ambivalence were central to ARP reflexivity.	Emotional labour (LRQ3). Systemic silence (LRQ2).	focus on whiteness and ARP. Utility: Supports reflexive ARP. Propriety: Ethical co-construction. Accessibility: Insider-outsider stance explicit. Specificity: High
Bei & Knowler (2022) Green: strong theoretical race focus.	Peer-reviewed article; CRT with counter-storytelling.	To theorise systemic racial inequities in school exclusion through CRT and counter-storytelling, offering critical narratives that challenge deficit perspectives.	CRT-informed counter-storytelling with narrative construction and thematic interpretation.	Exposed systemic racism in exclusion policies. Developed counter-narratives to resist deficit framings.	Resistance narratives (RQ3).	Structural racism critique (LRQ1 and RQ2).	Transparency: CRT stance explicit. Accuracy: Strong theoretical synthesis. Purposivity: Clear disruption of deficit narratives. Utility: Provides CRT framework for EP practice. Propriety: Critical and ethical orientation. Accessibility: Accessible theory. Specificity: High
Chase (2020) Amber: partial engagement with race.	Doctoral thesis; Interpretive study with CR influence.	To explore how EPs engage with sociopolitical reflexivity in practice, including partial	Six EPs from one LA EPS.	Semi-structured interviews with interpretivist	Tension between neutrality and sociopolitical or anti-racist commitments. Identity dilemmas and ethical dissonance.	Sociopolitical reflexivity (LRQ1 and LRQ2). Identity work (RQ3).	Transparency: Clear methodology. Accuracy: Adequate, limited race analysis. Purposivity: Broader sociopolitical focus, race partial. Utility: Insight

		engagement with race and anti- racism.		thematic analysis.			into positioning. Propriety: Ethical, reflexivity inconsistent. Accessibility: Clear. Specificity: Some race focus, not sustained
Done <i>et al.</i> (2021) Amber: strong relevance to inequity but limited explicit race analysis and methodological depth.	Peer-reviewed article; exploratory qualitative / conceptual critique.	To examine EPs' perspectives on off-rolling and exclusionary practices in schools, with attention to their ethical and systemic implications for marginalised pupils.	Sixty-five EPs across UK LAs.	Online qualitative survey with open-ended questions, analysed thematically. Interviews were also conducted as part of the wider project, are not reported in this article.	EPs described ambiguity and uncertainty about exclusionary practices. Traded service models and accountability pressures limited their capacity to challenge. Off-rolling framed as an ethically complex practice with disproportionate impact on marginalised pupils.	Institutional constraints (LRQ2); professional dilemma / identity tensions (LRQ3); role of EP in exclusion (LRQ1).	Transparency: survey design and sample are clearly reported. Accuracy: claims align with plausible but insufficiently evidenced analytical jumps between data and conclusions. Purposivity: focus aligns with stated aim. Utility: raises awareness of systemic constraints. Propriety: ethical implications addressed, but reflexivity limited. Accessibility: clear writing, policy relevance. Specificity: moderate to strong links to exclusion discourse.

Francis (2022) Green: strong engagement with race and reflexive identity work.	Doctoral thesis; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with Critical orientation.	To explore how EPs understand and enact change to reduce racism in schools through reflexivity and identity work.	Four EPs of working in UK LA practice.	Semi-structured interviews analysed with IPA.	Engagement with ARP involved emotional toll and identity negotiation. Racial identity, positionality shaped how participants approached practice, described strategic withdrawal to protect wellbeing, engaged in subtle forms of resistance and advocacy.	Identity and positionality (LRQ1). Resistance and advocacy (LRQ2). Emotional labour and reflexivity (LRQ3).	Transparency: Clear IPA design, with reflexivity considered. Accuracy: Rich interpretive depth, though limited generalisability due to small sample. Purposivity: Aims closely aligned with method. Utility: Privileges EP voice and experience of racial discrimination. Propriety: Ethics and positionality acknowledged. Accessibility: Clear and readable. Specificity: Strong focus on race and identity in EP practice.
Tobin <i>et al.</i> (2023) Amber: reflections relevant to equity, diluted race focus, and	Professional reflective article; Constructivist / practice commentary.	To reflect on the current state of racial equity in EPS and identify barriers and enablers to	Reflections from EPs across multiple EPSs (no formal participant	Reflective commentary and professional dialogue, not structured	Presented barriers to equity in EP practice. Reflexivity acknowledged, inconsistently applied. Race often discussed under broad	Institutional barriers (LRQ2). Practitioner reflections and positioning	Transparency: Limited due to lack of methodological detail. Accuracy: Anecdotal and practice-focused. Purposivity: Equity lens present, but race diluted. Utility: Some service relevance. Propriety: Well-

weak methodological depth	equitable practice.	sample reported).	empirical data.	“inclusion” narratives rather than explicitly.	(LRQ1 and LRQ3.	intentioned, reflexivity weak. Accessibility: Professional language, widely readable. Specificity: Low given absence of empirical rigour.
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In line with the inclusion criteria, the selected literature are grounded in qualitative paradigms, particularly interpretative, CR, or constructivist perspectives. Bateman (2023) and Francis (2022) align their work with participatory action research (PAR) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), respectively. These approaches are well-suited for examining lived experiences, identity formation, and systemic inequities. Done *et al.* (2021) adopted RTA and a poststructuralist critique rooted in CR, enabling them to link empirical-level experiences with real-level structures in practice. While situated in critical paradigms, Tobin *et al.* (2023) and Apontua *et al.* (2023) offered less clarity in theoretical grounding. Overall methodological specificity was generally strong, though transparency varied. According to TAPUPAS, the specificity and accuracy of methods were highest where study designs are well justified, and reflexivity is explicit. Together, these studies reflect a range of paradigmatic and methodological approaches, all contributing to a shared conclusion that while individual commitment to anti-racism is strong, systemic, and cultural barriers inhibit sustainable change. The literature reveals three key gaps, which I identified to be limited longitudinal data evaluating the impact of ARP strategies, limited demographic representation in participant samples, and insufficient analysis of institutional policy mechanisms.

Trustworthiness of the literature was enhanced in studies where the author's positionality was made explicit. This was by Bateman (2023), Francis (2022), and Chase (2020), who engaged explicitly and reflected on reflexivity by acknowledging their racial identity, professional roles, and ethical stance. Francis's identification as a Black EP and Bateman's reflection on whiteness brought important dimensions of authenticity and situated knowledge. In contrast, Tobin *et al.* (2023) and Apontua *et al.* (2023) provided valuable reflections but with less depth in reflexive engagement. The appropriateness of these studies, a key TAPUPAS criterion, was mostly upheld through ethical attention to power and representation, though reflexivity was inconsistently applied.

The research methods employed were appropriate for each study's purpose. Semi-structured interviews (Chase, 2020; Francis, 2022), practitioner journaling (Bateman, 2023), and large-scale qualitative surveys (Done *et al.*, 2021) allowed for in-depth, experiential, and systemic insights. Done *et al.*'s (2021) online questionnaire gathered input from 65 EPs across multiple service types, providing scope and relevance. Bei & Knowler (2022) used composite counter-stories in line with CRT, prioritising theoretical and political insight over empirical generalisability. Across most studies, specificity and accuracy were supported by well-justified data collection and analysis procedures, although some lacked detailed methodological descriptions, such as Tobin *et al.* (2023). As per TAPUPAS, the accuracy and utility of these designs vary: those based on empirical engagement such as Done *et al.* (2021) and Francis (2022) score more highly than those relying on abstract or anecdotal reflection.

Participant samples varied considerably. Done *et al.* (2021) reported clear participant characteristics, such as their role type, sector of practice (e.g. LA/private), and experience, whereas others, Chase (2020), and Bateman (2023), had smaller, purposive samples. Francis' (2022) use of IPA justifies a small sample size of four, given the focus on depth. Some studies lacked demographic data, such as Apontua *et al.* (2023), which limits transferability. The composite data in Bei & Knowler (2022) adds depth to CRT analysis but limits empirical reliability. Overall, the transparency of participant characteristics was mixed across the literature, highlighting variability in how accessible and appropriately representative findings are across the literature.

A strength across the studies is their coherent alignment of findings with research questions. Done *et al.* (2021) explored how EPs interpret and respond to off-rolling, identifying themes of conflicted identity, manufactured legitimacy, and ambiguity. Francis (2023) captured the emotional toll of anti-racist work. Bateman (2023) and Chase (2020) highlighted the role of supervision and relational safety in addressing whiteness and

complicity. The authors' analyses respond directly to their research aims and extend current understanding of how EPs navigate ARP within systemically constrained environments.

The purposivity and utility of these studies, as per TAPUPAS, were consistently high, indicating their strong relevance for theory and practice. Studies demonstrated varying degrees of trustworthiness. Done *et al.* (2021) offered transparency in sampling, analysis, and theoretical framing for their study. Moreover, Bateman (2023) and Francis (2022) followed rigorous qualitative protocols, utilising journaling, IPA, and reflective engagement to strengthen credibility. While informative of participants' experiences in practice, Tobin *et al.* (2023) and Apontua *et al.*'s (2023) presentation of the participants' experiences lacked methodological detail. The reports are helpful for practice-informed reflection; however, the findings are less dependable for evaluative claims about practice impact. Including systemic critique and critical reflexivity enhanced the credibility of several studies.

Transparency, accuracy, and propriety were strongest in studies with rich methodological detail and author reflexivity. The selected literature provides a contextually rich, methodologically diverse, and theoretically grounded exploration of ARP in educational psychology. The strongest studies demonstrate high trustworthiness through transparent methodology, reflexivity, and alignment with critical paradigms. While varied in depth, the scoping review has yielded a body of work that strengthens the credibility of the thesis inquiry into PRE by EPs in UK LAs.

2.9 Literature synthesis

A data charting framework was developed to extract the following from each source: study type, aim, methodology, participant details, key findings, themes, and relevance to LRQs. Extraction was guided by relevance to systemic practice, EP positioning, and explicit engagement with racism or racial equity. Studies were reviewed individually and mapped

across shared conceptual dimensions which related to the literature review questions. See Appendix B, which summarises the seven included literature. The core evidence base for this review consists of seven selected studies identified through the scoping process, spanning peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, and doctoral research. Alongside these, this review draws upon statutory frameworks and professional guidance for contextualisation, such as the PSED (CJA, 2021), HCPC standards (2022), and BPS ethical codes (2019, 2020, 2023), and situates findings within the professional and legislative landscape. This wider literature is therefore used to contextualise and connect the study's themes to EP practice, rather than to generate themes within the literature synthesis itself. Including these sources ensures that the synthesis reflects both the research evidence in the seven studies and the regulatory and ethical structures that formally position EPs as agents responsible for promoting inclusion and challenging discrimination in practice.

2.9.1 The role of educational psychology and racial disparities in practice

Statutory frameworks and professional guidance position EPs as key agents in promoting inclusion and challenging discrimination in UK education under the PSED (CJA, 2021) and ethical codes of practice from the HCPC (2022) and BPS (2019, 2020, 2023). EPs engage in systemic reform, strategic consultation, and advocacy to support educational equity. These duties suggest a capacity for educational psychology to be influential in facilitating the PRE in education systems and school communities. However, the literature reveals that institutional and systemic structures frequently constrain the operationalisation of ARP throughout education. These frameworks are referenced here to contextualise the findings; the themes themselves are drawn from the seven included studies.

Bei and Knowler (2022) exemplify how ostensibly neutral educational policies, such as behaviour management systems and academic streaming, are enacted in ways that disproportionately disadvantage BGMH CYP. The study considers policies presented as

objective and universal; these frameworks often reinforce racial disparities by failing to account for systemic disadvantages that shape CYP behaviour and communication, such as access to learning and opportunities for success. With these policies embedded in the educational landscape, the ethical obligations of EPs to disrupt exclusionary practices are challenged by factors such as the prioritisation of race-neutral discourses and the dominance of SEND frameworks over work focusing on racial equity (Chase, 2020; Bei & Knowler, 2022).

A CR framing, evident in the work of Chase (2020) and Done *et al.* (2021), foregrounds how EPs operate within complex systems that shape and constrain their practice. While the profession publicly affirms values of diversity, inclusion, and equality, race and racism remain peripheral in educational psychology discourse, which is evident in the limited availability of relevant research in the current evidence base and service-level objectives in practice. For example, SEND frequently dominates the inclusion agenda, relegating race to marginal initiatives. These narratives are also compounded by wider professional norms, which Chase (2020) critiques as ideological mechanisms that deter EPs from explicitly addressing race and racism in education, thereby challenging ARP compatibility with dominant professional expectations.

Done *et al.* (2021) further examine how marketised models of traded service delivery incentivise EPSs to prioritise relationship maintenance with schools, even at the expense of challenging exclusionary practices. Using RTA within a CR paradigm, they analysed 65 EP responses and revealed how systemic funding arrangements and accountability structures shape discretion and silence challenges. Despite the reports of a high individual commitment to equity through challenging processes such as off-rolling, which disproportionately impacts BGMH CYP, their study found limited examples of sustained service-level transformation.

Empirically, their findings link traded service pressures directly to school-level decisions, illustrating how organisational imperatives can dilute the values of social justice in education.

In contrast, interpretative approaches such as Francis (2022), drawing on IPA with a relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology, privilege subjective experience and introspection. This study offers emotionally rich accounts of ARP identity work and internal conflict. Francis identifies how Black EPs are positioned in addressing race-related issues in educational settings and practice. This positioning is not self-established but imposed by team dynamics and external client expectations, such as from schools, highlighting the externally driven nature of reflexive demands. Francis's participants also described enacting strategic withdrawal from race-related dialogue to safeguard their emotional well-being and professional identity in environments ill-equipped to contain the weight of the communication. While reflexivity is framed within this research and relevant literature as internal and relational, participants also engaged in subtle forms of resistance, including racially informed case formulations and informal peer support. These actions underscore that while action is often conceptualised as identity work or critical dialogue, it may also extend to interpersonal advocacy and culturally responsive practice.

Bateman (2023) offers a perspective that combines epistemic relativism with a CR ontology through a PAR approach. This combination enables deeper theorisation of how systemic and intrapersonal factors intersect. Bateman's study explores whiteness and discomfort in EP practice. It presents the narrative that while many white EPs express discomfort about race-related discussions, they often lack the organisational support to process these tensions productively. The PAR design facilitated collective learning and reflexive growth, contrasting with the more individualised sense-making in Francis' (2022) accounts.

CR research, such as Done *et al.* (2021) and Bateman (2023), foreground systemic constraints, and institutional reform, whereas interpretative paradigms emphasise affective and relational dimensions. This comparison underscores the autonomy expressed through the professional agency of EPs in shaping their evidence-based practice through their epistemological and ontological lens. These commitments influence how practitioners acquire knowledge, interpret experiences of race and education, and determine what constitutes legitimate action in ARP. For example, in IPA (Francis, 2022), the action expressed by the participants is internal and identity-based, while in CR studies (Done *et al.*, 2021), it involves direct engagement with exclusionary school policies or funding systems. These paradigmatic contrasts are not simply methodological but deeply influence the theorisation of impact and resistance toward racism and its resulting disparities in education. Synthesising these insights exposes a structural contradiction; professional reasoning within education and organisational priorities often offset ethical commitments to PRE. This contradiction underscores the need for service-level reform that embeds systemic advocacy into the delivery model of EPSs.

2.9.2 Institutional and structural barriers to ARP

Done *et al.* (2021) demonstrate that EPs working in traded models often adopt a critical friend stance, preserving school relationships at the expense of direct challenge. This contributes to what the researchers state as "bare psychology," where the study evidences a reluctance among EPs to engage in overt critique due to fear of reputational risk or contract loss, highlighting service-level constraints with concrete implications for practice. Chase (2020) extends this analysis through a Q-methodological study underpinned by critical hermeneutics. Among the findings, they identify three participant factors reflecting divergent levels of political engagement. Factor one, EPs promoted community resilience without systemic critique; Factor two, more politically radical, comprised mostly non-EP participants; and Factor three, supported justice in principle but upheld traditional change models. This

suggests a disciplinary misalignment; while many EPs support PRE in principle, their training and institutional context often orient them toward depoliticised practice.

Accountability structures reinforce this misalignment. Frameworks such as the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2019), a mandated national accountability mechanism, reference diversity and inclusion without interrogating racism, structural power, or whiteness, legitimising external compliance and influencing the system's capacity to account for the influence of these factors in the lived experiences of the school community. Similarly, these processes are reflected in school behaviour policies and curriculum benchmarks such as Progress 8 (DfE, 2025), the National Curriculum (2014), and behaviour guidance (DfE, 2024a) that govern all LA-maintained educational settings. These guidelines often frame 'equity', a term seldom explicitly defined in statutory frameworks, through attainment or behaviour outcomes without acknowledging racialised barriers to inclusion. Furthermore, although regulatory bodies such as HCPC and BPS offer ethical guidance, the literature shows these are inconsistently interpreted in practice and, more broadly, throughout education. Non-mandated and local interpretations of structures to engage with ARP, such as service-level audits, traded contract evaluations, and supervision models, vary across LAs, contributing to a fragmented accountability landscape in education and practice. Chase (2020), Done *et al.* (2021), and Francis' (2022) findings demonstrate that EPs' efforts to preserve professional viability in working relationships often led to the practitioner adapting interactions through indirect or coded forms of ARP, which risked diluting transformative intent at the systemic level. These adaptations reflect EPs' delicate balance between ethical fidelity and navigating institutional expectations. A TAPUPAS-informed appraisal reveals a pressing need to examine how these standards are operationalised across services, particularly in LA contexts. Across paradigms, a consistent theme is present that institutional structures shape how ARP is understood and enacted.

2.9.3 Reflexivity, emotional labour, and the limits of individual practice

Reflexivity is widely promoted as a professional virtue in EP practice, especially concerning anti-oppressive practice and ARP. However, the literature reveals contradictions between this ideal and the institutional contexts in which EPs work. Bateman (2023) participants reflected on feelings of ambivalence, paralysis, and emotional withdrawal when engaging with race and whiteness. The study raises a consideration of the structures available to appropriately support the processing of the emotional tensions of engaging with racism, which compounded their internal conflicts. However, peer discussions within PAR groups, often while experiencing emotional difficulties, enabled productive learning and ethical growth for practitioners. This aligns with Bateman's use of reflective journaling and facilitated group dialogue to examine how organisational silence and prevailing whiteness norms restrict meaningful reflexivity. Risk-averse service cultures, in discouraging politically charged reflection, effectively neutralise even well-intentioned anti-racist efforts.

Done *et al.* (2022) contribute a real-level view of how systemic structures complicate reflexive engagement. EPs experienced their role in maintaining school relationships and honouring anti-racist values, particularly within traded service contexts where schools held purchasing power. Several participants reported avoiding engaging in more risky engagements for fear of losing contracts and perceptions of them in practice. Others described the emotional tension from remaining silent during exclusionary practices, leading to internalised conflict when their ethical values diverged from service expectations. The emotional toll of these dilemmas was considerable; many EPs experienced guilt, disillusionment, and fatigue, with some describing a gradual disengagement from ARP altogether. The authors' analyses illustrate that reflexivity can risk becoming an unsustainable and demoralising form of personal labour when unsupported by systemic structures.

Three contradictions were evident: reflexivity is promoted but rarely scaffolded at the service level, the emotional burden of ARP is unevenly distributed across racialised lines for practitioners, and professional guidance across education systems for professionals lacks mechanisms to support the implementation. Collectively, these insights demand institutional responses that move reflexivity from personal labour to collective responsibility.

2.9.4 Trainee and early-career EPs

Early-career EPs and TEPs often enter the profession with a strong social justice orientation, bringing enthusiasm, critical awareness, and a desire to challenge systemic inequalities. Commentaries within Tobin *et al.* (2023) and Apontua *et al.* (2023) reflect this commitment while articulating their institutional constraints. While these accounts offer rich practitioner-led insight, they express the emotional dissonance and structural isolation that TEPs face in services where ARP is not embedded across organisational structure. The constraints experienced by early-career EPs and TEPs are structural and cultural, often shaped by limited spaces focused on race, underdeveloped application of policy frameworks, and dominant cultures that reward neutrality. Without formalised support, the accounts suggest that initiating and sustaining ARP falls disproportionately on practitioners, raising concerns considering professional expectations for trainee support outlined in HCPC standards and BPS training frameworks.

Done *et al.* (2021), not directly focused on TEP experiences, add further clarity through a CR lens to identify how early-career EPs may experience 'negotiated ambiguity' and 'conflicted identities' when attempting to uphold anti-racist values within traded service contexts. Participants expressed frustration with their inability to challenge exclusionary practices such as informal off-rolling, particularly when school actions were obscured by unclear record-keeping. The dominant pattern involved adopting a critical friend position, where EPs sought to maintain rapport with schools while indirectly addressing unlawful

practices. This was framed as a necessity to avoid being "not allowed back in the building." Despite recognising the importance of challenge, EPs felt service structures and power dynamics constrained their advocacy. This position offered psychological self-protection but diluted the transformative potential of ARP, reinforcing a form of "bare psychology" (Done *et al.*, 2021).

Bateman (2023) provides further nuance, showing that some EPs experience paralysis or avoidance when confronting whiteness and power. However, while participants initially felt ambivalent or emotionally withdrawn, PAR's structured and collaborative format helped reframe discomfort as a space for growth. This contrasts with accounts of processing in other studies where no such scaffolding was present. Without institutional investment in such spaces to facilitate this work, T EPs, regardless of racial identity, may be left to navigate ethical tensions alone. Variations in how ARP is scaffolded, addressing these issues across EPSs in response to the context of their LA, further complicate this picture. These inconsistencies underscore that TEPs' capacity to contribute to ARP depends significantly on their placement and positionality in the EPSs' context. This synthesis raises the potential to focus on the LA EP context, where practitioners' experiences implementing their values of social justice are considered in the context of the structural, cultural, and relational features of their professional environments.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the SLR and the findings, which illustrate a growing professional awareness of ARP and the continuing challenges of embedding it meaningfully within educational psychology. Furthermore, it also identified several underexplored areas, particularly the lack of conceptual clarity and limited empirical investigation into how PRE is understood, operationalised, and sustained within LA EPSs.

While existing research offers valuable insight into individual reflexivity and the emotional labour involved in anti-racist work, it often overlooks the relational, systemic, and institutional factors that influence EPs' meaningful engagement with ARP. The perspectives of BGMH children, families, and communities also remain notably absent, alongside sustained accounts from LA EPs. This absence represents a form of epistemic injustice in which those most affected by inequities and those positioned to challenge them are excluded from knowledge production. Although many practitioners may demonstrate firm personal commitments to PRE, their efforts are frequently constrained by traded service models, depoliticised professional norms, and inconsistent applications of statutory frameworks. The literature, therefore, suggests a need to move beyond a focus on individual commitment toward the development of institutional mechanisms that support sustainable and systemic ARP.

In response to these gaps, the following chapter outlines the methodology for this study, which is grounded in a CR paradigm. This paradigm allows analysis of both agency and structure, clarifying how personal reflexivity, professional identity, and wider socio-political conditions intersect to influence EPs' ability to engage meaningfully with PRE. By focusing on the lived experiences of EPs within a London LA, this research aims to address the research's current reliance on individualised accounts by identify the systemic enablers and barriers that shape ARP in practice and offer insights into how anti-racist commitments can be embedded more meaningfully and sustainably within the profession.

3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter outlines the methodology of this research study. The following details the research paradigm, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and approach to data analysis of the findings. It also addresses epistemological and ontological considerations, researcher reflexivity, and ethical procedures. This chapter aims to provide a transparent and comprehensive account of how this research was designed and implemented to explore how EPs working in an LA context engage with ARP and PRE in their professional roles.

The preceding literature review established the growing recognition of ARP within educational psychology. However, there is limited empirical research on how ARP is understood, operationalised, and sustained within LA EPSs. Much of the existing literature emphasises individual reflexivity and ethical intent, often overlooking the broader organisational, systemic, and institutional factors that shape EPs' capacity to engage in ARP. This study adopts an exploratory stance, as it aims to uncover the experiences of LA EPs in PRE and identify the underlying structures and mechanisms that influence this work in practice. This study aims to move beyond professional and academic discourse into exploring practical pathways for LA EPSs to embed the PRE and ARP as core elements of professional identity and practice.

Table 5

A summary of the framework used for this research

Research Element	Description
Research Question	What are the experiences of LA EPs in PRE in practice?
Ontological Position	CR

Epistemological	CR
Position	
Theoretical	CRT
Approach	
Methodology	Qualitative
Method of Data	Semi-Structured, In-Depth Interviews
Collection	
Participants	8 HCPC-registered EPs from London LA EPS, purposively sampled for their engagement in PRE and engaging in ARP.

3.2 Research paradigm

Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe paradigms as encompassing ontological considerations, i.e., the nature of reality, and epistemological considerations, i.e., how we know reality, as well as the methodological approach taken to investigate the phenomenon with which a study is concerned. This study explored the situated experiences of LA EP in PRE within educational systems and professional practice. The phenomenon under investigation was how LA EPs engage with, navigate, and respond to the challenges of embedding principles of racial equity within the structural, institutional, and relational contexts that shape their practice. It observed how LA EPs' efforts to PRE are informed, the structures and mechanisms through which it is mediated, and how ARP has been enacted within the complex dynamics of policy, institutional culture, and educational practice.

3.2.1 *Phenomenon*

This study explores how LA EPs experience and PRE across educational systems and professional practice. It investigates how they navigated the challenges of embedding racial equity principles within the structural, institutional, and relational contexts that shape their work. This study also examined the factors that informed their efforts, the mechanisms that

influenced them, and how ARP has been enacted within the dynamics of policy, institutional culture, and educational practice.

3.2.2 Ontology

This study has been grounded in a CR ontology, which acknowledges that while our understanding of social phenomena is shaped by perception and social context, objective reality exists independently of human awareness (Bhaskar, 1978). CR suggests that participants' reality can be understood through three domains, distinguishing between what the participant experienced or observed (empirical). Also, what happens within their practice, whether observed or not (the actual) and the underlying structures and mechanisms that generate events. By adopting a CR paradigm, this study acknowledged that knowledge is always partial, mediated, and situated, yet still allows for reasoned claims about the structures shaping practice. CR permits attention to individual agency within these structures. While racism is recognised as a structural and enduring issue, this study also considers how EPs resist, reinterpret, and challenge these constraints. This ontological position supported a layered analysis that attended to the visible manifestations of racial inequities in educational contexts and the deeper generative mechanisms that reproduce inequity over time. Throughout this research, I aimed to uncover the mechanisms shaping EPs' experiences and to consider how these might be disrupted to support more equitable practice.

3.2.3 Epistemology

Aligned with this ontological approach, this study adopted a CR epistemology, which asserts that while reality exists independently of perception, our knowledge of it is shaped by social, historical, and cultural contexts. This framework supported my exploration of how institutional power, race, and positionality influence how participants interpret their roles and their ability to PRE. I grounded this study in my commitment to epistemic humility,

recognising that my understanding of racism, both personally and professionally, is shaped by my own lived experiences and positionality. I acknowledged that my role as a researcher influenced how I interpreted the data and engaged with participants during their contributions to the process. Moreover, recognising that participants' experiences of racism and equity may have differed significantly from mine, I prioritised engaging with their perspectives with openness and sensitivity. Although participants primarily articulated their engagement with ARP through personal and relational narratives, their accounts are understood as embedded in and shaped by structural, institutional, and societal mechanisms. In line with the CR paradigm, this study also explored the dynamic relationship between agency and structure in shaping how participants engaged with ARP. While participants' narratives were situated and individually constructed, the analysis sought to identify how these accounts are informed by broader institutional, cultural, and systemic forces (Bhaskar, 1978; Fletcher, 2017).

3.2.4 Theoretical underpinning

This study was underpinned by CRT, which provided a lens for understanding how racism and racial inequities are embedded within educational systems. CRT challenges dominant ideologies such as neutrality, meritocracy, and universalism by highlighting how institutional racism operates through structures, including funding allocation, disciplinary policy, professional conduct, and organisational culture. These structures continue to shape educational outcomes for CYP, even when individuals may not consciously engage with issues of race or inequity. Within this study, EPs were positioned as professionals with the authority and ethical responsibility to engage with and address racial inequity. The focus was therefore on how EPs understood, enacted, and experienced PRE within educational systems. The CRT underpinning was applied interpretively to illuminate the generative processes, the structural, relational, and discursive mechanisms, which sustain or disrupt racial inequities in EPSs and the wider educational context. In doing so, CRT supported an analysis attentive to

how power, race, and professional practice intersect, revealing how racism operates in overt acts and through everyday institutional norms and professional systems of practice.

3.3 Methodological approach

The methodological approach adopted in this study was qualitative and exploratory, designed to examine how EPs engaged with PRE within the structural context of LA practice. The research was informed by a CR paradigm, which holds that social structures such as racism and whiteness have real effects, even when they are not directly observable. This perspective enabled an exploration of the institutional conditions that shaped EPs' work and how those conditions were experienced, interpreted, and negotiated in practice. Complementing this, the study was underpinned by CRT, which recognises racism as ordinary, systemic, and embedded within policies, practices, and professional cultures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT provided a lens through which to examine how power and racism operated within EPSs and how EPs experienced these dynamics. It also foregrounded the tensions and emotional labour that can arise when speaking about race in professional contexts. Together, the CR–CRT framework supported a focus on both the structural mechanisms of racism and the discursive and relational ways in which these were acknowledged, navigated, and contested within EP practice.

This theoretical framing was operationalised through a semi-structured, in-depth interview-based methodology underpinned by RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Semi-structured interviews enabled an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences while remaining responsive to what was expressed in the conversational flow. The interview schedule was designed to prompt reflection on participants' understandings of racial equity, the institutional and policy frameworks they worked within, and their perceptions of enablers and barriers to PRE in practice. RTA supported a non-linear and interpretive approach to analysis, allowing space for contradiction, ambiguity, and emotional complexity to surface. The method aligned

with a CR paradigm while being theoretically informed by CRT, which foregrounded the operation of power and racism within structural and discursive processes. Reflexivity was central throughout the analytic process, supporting an awareness of how my positionality and worldview influenced interpretation and theme development. Together, this methodological approach enabled a deep, contextually grounded investigation of how PRE was constructed, constrained, and sustained within the professional lives of EPs working in LA contexts.

The purpose of qualitative research is often to describe and explain events and experiences, as well as to facilitate transformation (Willig, 2013), which aligns with the exploratory purpose of this study. By adopting a CR–CRT conceptual framework, the study aimed to generate knowledge that revealed the underlying structures and mechanisms producing observable phenomena, explained their causes, and enabled transformative action within social and institutional contexts. Within CR, knowledge was viewed as causal and contextually informed, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical change, an orientation reflected in the study’s design and research questions. The research focused on the experiential knowledge of LA EPs, particularly those with direct experience of engaging in ARP and addressing racial inequity within education. By prioritising participants’ lived experiences, the study moved beyond abstract or purely theoretical discussions to foreground real examples from their experiences as trainee and qualified EPs, exploring how institutional racism and systemic barriers had shaped their capacity to PRE and engage in ARP within school communities. The analysis examined how EPs navigated their own experiences of institutional racism while working within systems that perpetuated disparities in the lived experiences of BGMH members of the school community. This approach, therefore, shifted emphasis away from conceptual debates and discourse about PRE towards the voices of those directly engaged in the everyday realities of ARP within educational systems.

3.3.1 Research design

This study adopted a qualitative, exploratory research design, guided by a CR-CRT framework. This design was chosen to capture the depth and complexity of EPs' experiences of engaging in ARP and PRE within LA contexts. A qualitative approach was particularly suited to this study's aims, as it enabled an exploration of the meanings, values, and social processes underpinning participants' professional experiences. The CR-CRT framework positioned knowledge as contextually situated and interpretive, recognising that participants' accounts were shaped by broader structural mechanisms and discursive forces that sustain racial inequities in educational systems. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to generate rich, detailed narratives that reflected participants' lived experiences and reflections on practice. RTA was applied to the data to identify, interpret, and develop themes through a reflexive, iterative process (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This analytic approach aligned with the CR-CRT framework by enabling attention to both the underlying generative mechanisms that shape experience and the relational, emotional, and discursive ways in which these are expressed. Reflexivity was embedded throughout the research process to acknowledge how my positionality, assumptions, and professional experiences influenced interpretation.

3.3.2 Approach to data collection

Interviews were conducted individually and in person with participants from Maroon Vale's EPS. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and took place in a private meeting room within the EPS building to ensure comfort, confidentiality, and psychological safety. The semi-structured format offered a flexible framework that supported both focus and openness, enabling participants to shape the direction of the conversation according to what felt most meaningful to them. This dialogic approach aligned with RTA, in which meaning is co-constructed through interaction and reflection between researcher and participant. The interview schedule functioned as a guide, inviting reflection on participants' understandings

of PRE, their engagement with ARP, and the institutional and relational contexts that influenced their work. The in-person setting allowed for the capture of non-verbal cues and emotional tone, both of which supported a deeper interpretive engagement with participants' narratives. Throughout the process, I remained attentive to my own positionality, recognising how my professional background, lived experience, and emotional responses could influence the dialogue and interpretation of meaning. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim. Reflexive notes were written immediately after each interview to capture contextual observations, initial interpretations, and emotional resonances that emerged in the room. These notes served as an integral part of the analytic process, supporting the iterative and interpretive engagement central to RTA and the critical reflexivity foregrounded within the CR–CRT framework.

3.3.3 Reflexivity in the research process

My positionality is an analytic resource that shapes what I notice, how I interpret, and how I come into knowledge of a reality which exists independently yet is understood through my situated engagement with it. Supervision, memo-writing, and field notes were used to surface assumptions, expand interpretations, and trace how my perspectives co-produce meaning with participants. In alignment with RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019) and a CR orientation, I recognise that I am not a neutral observer but a meaning-maker who actively generated knowledge through reflexive engagement with the data. My insider-outsider status concerning the profession and my racial identity within predominantly white institutional structures shaped access and interpretation in complex ways. I entered this research with a strong ethical and political commitment to PRE, grounded in personal experience and professional observation of how minoritised children and families are positioned within educational systems. While this stance provided the emotional and intellectual grounding for this study, it also demanded ongoing reflexivity. Throughout data collection and analysis, I

kept a reflexive journal and engaged in supervision to examine how my expectations, assumptions, and emotional responses shaped the interpretative process of meaning-making.

During interviews, my shared professional identity with participants as fellow EPs helped build rapport and psychological safety, especially when exploring complex and sensitive topics such as racism, whiteness, and institutional complicity. At the same time, I was aware that my racial identity might elicit particular forms of disclosure, solidarity, or silence. In some cases, I sensed hesitancy, defensiveness, or attempts to “get it right,” reflecting the affective tension that often accompanies discussions of race in predominantly white professional spaces within the wider sociopolitical context of the UK. I sought to hold these moments with care, not as failings, but as data revealing how emotional labour and moral positioning shaped participants’ engagement with ARP.

My positionality also influenced how I interpreted the data., I viewed participants’ accounts not only as individual expressions but as reflections of broader structural, cultural, and discursive mechanisms. I was particularly attentive to moments where participants invoked whiteness, expressed ethical discomfort, or described navigating institutional boundaries, recognising these as evidence of generative mechanisms underpinning EP practice. At the same time, I remained cautious of over-interpretation, especially where participants’ meaning was ambiguous or emotionally complex.

The thematic development process was deeply reflexive. I resisted the urge to categorise prematurely or sanitise the complexity of participant experiences. Instead, I actively generated themes through an iterative and reflexive process, embracing dissonance and contradiction. For example, themes such as *Fluid Tension* and *Relational Reflexivity* were developed by noticing patterns of struggle, negotiation, and affective labour that participants did not always name explicitly, but which resonated with my own professional and personal

experience. Here, reflexivity is the vehicle of analysis to surface and reflect on assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Finally, I acknowledge that my commitment to equity shaped what I noticed in the data and what I sought to amplify in the write-up. I chose to centre narratives that revealed tension, vulnerability, and resistance, rather than coherence or resolution. These offer the most honest account of what it means to engage in anti-racist work within structures that often resist transformation. I do not present my interpretation as an objective truth, but as one situated in reflexive reading, offered with humility and openness to alternative perspectives.

3.4 Sampling strategy and participant recruitment

Purposive sampling was used to recruit EPs who were engaged with PRE and ARP in their professional roles. Although interest was expressed by several PEPs across different boroughs, sustained engagement was established only with Maroon Vale (pseudonym), where the PEP actively supported recruitment by sharing the invitation and encouraging participation within their team. This institutional endorsement reflected a genuine commitment to the study's focus and resulted in all participants being drawn from the same EPS. While the concentration of participants within one EPS was not intentional, it created an opportunity to explore the cultural and systemic conditions of a single service in greater depth. This outcome was understood as a contingent feature of the research process, revealing organisational readiness and contextual factors that shaped openness to racial equity-focused inquiry. The study design and research questions remained appropriate, and the implications of this sampling configuration were considered when interpreting and assessing the transferability of findings. This outcome was viewed as highlighting the generative mechanisms that influence institutional engagement with racial equity work, positioning the findings as contextually specific yet conceptually informative for other EPS contexts.

3.4.1 Recruitment process

The recruitment process began with initial engagement with PEPs across various London boroughs. Given the high percentage of BGMH populations in many of these areas, I anticipated the likelihood that the LA EPSs were engaged with CYP and families from minoritised backgrounds. However, despite interest from other boroughs, Maroon Vale's EPS was the first to express a strong and ongoing commitment to participation. This early engagement from PEPs in Maroon Vale provided the basis for focusing recruitment on this borough. I opted for self-selection among the EP participants, after initial gatekeeper approval, individual EPs were invited to volunteer based on their relevance to this research and their comfort in discussing race and equity. Some PEPs initially suggested nominating participants from their teams; however, I declined this approach, as it would limit the autonomy of individual EPs and could risk pressuring participation in a context where power and relational dynamics are significant. Ensuring that participation was voluntary and based on personal readiness was essential for the ethical integrity of this research. I aimed for a diverse sample of participants, including representation from BGMH practitioners, to amplify voices often marginalised in educational psychology research (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Rollock *et al.*, 2015). At the same time, I was cautious of the potential emotional burden of asking BGMH EPs to speak about their own experiences of racism in a professional context. It was essential to provide them with agency and autonomy to engage in such sensitive dialogues if they were willing to share in their participation.

3.4.2 Sample size and rationale

For this study, I aimed to recruit eight to ten participants, per current guidance for RTA (Fugard & Potts, 2015; Wutich *et al.*, 2024). This is considered an appropriate sample size for a small qualitative project, particularly when the aim is to gather rich, in-depth insights. The final sample comprised eight EPs, each purposively selected for engaging with

ARP within Maroon Vale's EPS. In keeping with RTA, the focus was on achieving depth and thematic richness rather than data saturation, with sufficiency reached once the dataset enabled the development of meaningful, well-supported themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

3.4.3 Participants

Eight HCPC-qualified EPs participated in this study, providing a range of perspectives and experiences related to PRE in practice. As presented in Table 5, although participants shared the same LA context, they varied in gender, heritage, years of qualification, and seniority within the service.

Table 6

The participants' of this research

Pseudonym	Gender	Heritage	LA EPs' Role in Service
Clarendon	Female	Black British (Caribbean)	Assistant PEP
Mary	Female	White (British)	Newly Qualified EP (NQEP)
Trelawny	Female	Mixed (Caribbean/British)	Senior EP (SEP)
Catherine	Female	Black British (Caribbean)	NQEP
Manchester	Female	White (Irish)	SEP
Hanover	Female	White (British)	PEP
Portland	Male	Black British (Ghanaian)	EP
Elizabeth	Female	White (British)	NQEP

3.4.4 Access and equity

Fairness and accessibility were central considerations in recruitment and participation. A self-selecting approach was adopted to ensure that involvement in this study was fully voluntary and informed. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, data use, and researcher contact details, and were given time to ask questions before deciding whether to participate. This process ensured participants' autonomy and protected against coercion, consistent with the ethical principles previously outlined. Although initial recruitment targeted several London boroughs, logistical challenges meant that only Maroon Vale's EPS was able to provide the sustained engagement required to proceed. Maroon Vale's early commitment enabled data collection to continue while maintaining attention to diversity and representation. Ensuring participation from BGMH practitioners was particularly important, given their underrepresentation within educational psychology (Tuck & Yang, 2014). On reflection, while the sample included practitioners identifying as Black British (African and Caribbean), White British, White Irish, and Mixed-Race (White and Caribbean), it did not fully reflect the range of ethnic identities present within the profession. This limited the extent to which the study could represent the full diversity of EP perspectives, a limitation acknowledged in relation to the CRT underpinning that guided attention to race and structural inequity. The overrepresentation of female participants was also consistent with demographic patterns across the profession, which remains predominantly female (Lyonette et al., 2019). Future research could explore how male EPs, particularly those from minoritised backgrounds, experience PRE and ARP in a predominantly female professional environment.

3.4.5 Strengths and limitations of research design

The use of semi-structured interviews supported a flexible and reflective process through which participants could share their experiences in depth, generating rich,

contextualised insights into how they PRE and engaged with ARP. This design facilitated the exploration of personal meaning-making and the institutional dynamics shaping EP practice. A key strength of this qualitative approach was its capacity to capture the complexity and emotional texture of participants' accounts, consistent with the reflexive and interpretive stance of RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021). However, the interpretive depth achieved through qualitative inquiry inevitably limits the scope for statistical generalisation beyond the participants represented here. The aim was not generalisability but the generation of theoretically informed insights into the generative mechanisms and structural conditions influencing practice. This focus on depth and meaning-making reflected the study's ontological and epistemological commitments, where understanding the underlying mechanisms shaping experience was prioritised over numerical representation or statistical comparison.

Quantitative data were not collected alongside interview responses. While such data may have provided a complementary means of analysing how EPs' reflections translated into service-level processes (e.g., report writing, consultation models, or policy change), this research intentionally prioritised depth and reflexivity over breadth. The focus was on producing contextually embedded insights that illuminate systemic dynamics rather than extrapolating findings to all EPs, services, or educational contexts. Eight in-depth interviews were conducted between August and November 2024 with EPs from Maroon Vale EPS, each lasting up to 90 minutes. Participants chose whether to meet in person within a private, low-traffic meeting room at the EPS building or to participate remotely via a secure video platform. Questions were iteratively refined to balance personal reflection with critical analysis of systemic issues, maintaining emotional sensitivity and psychological safety. See Appendix C. Although the study was not designed as a single-case investigation, the clustering of participants within one London-based EPS led to a case study-like

configuration. This offered the opportunity to explore institutional culture, leadership, and systemic structures in greater depth but limited the range of perspectives available.

Within a CR-CRT framework, this outcome was viewed as a contingent but meaningful feature of the research process, revealing generative mechanisms such as institutional readiness and openness to discussions of race and equity. The findings are therefore positioned as contextually grounded yet analytically transferable, contributing conceptual and theoretical insights relevant to other services and professional contexts. The CR-CRT framework strengthened the study's explanatory potential by linking participants' lived experiences to wider systemic and historical processes. CR facilitated attention to the causal mechanisms, such as traded service pressures or procedural constraints, that shape EPs' ability to enact ARP, while CRT situated these mechanisms within wide systems of power and professional cultures. However, because participants were recruited through self-selection, the sample represented EPs already engaged with or committed to ARP and PRE. While this amplified the voices of ethically driven practitioners, it excluded those who may resist or disengage from equity-focused work. These absences are themselves significant, as they present how whiteness, silence, and resistance operate as generative mechanisms within educational psychology, shaping what is voiced and what remains unspoken.

RTA was well-suited to exploring these complexities, as it recognises that meaning is actively constructed rather than passively discovered. The analytic process was inseparable from my positionality, theoretical commitments, and emotional responses. Without sustained reflexivity, as Bateman (2023) and Francis (2022) caution, there is a risk that interpretations might unconsciously reproduce institutional norms or reinforce dominant narratives about race and professionalism. I remained mindful that my engagement with participants' narratives was mediated through my own understanding of racism and positional experience. The findings, therefore, represent situated interpretations co-produced between myself, as the

practitioner-researcher, and participants within particular cultural and structural conditions (Finlay, 2002). It is also acknowledged that institutional racism and racial inequity are complex, multi-layered phenomena that cannot be fully captured through a single qualitative design. As Tobin et al. (2021) and Done et al. (2021) argue, EPs often operate within organisational contexts that constrain their capacity to challenge systemic inequalities. Such pressures may have limited participants' openness in discussing professional dilemmas or frustrations, given concerns about institutional repercussions. These silences are themselves data, revealing how power structures shape what can be safely articulated within professional spaces. Future research could adopt an explicitly intersectional framework to examine how race, gender, class, and other social categories interact to shape EPs' experiences of ARP. Such an approach would build upon this study's CR-CRT foundations, enhancing the explanatory power of findings by uncovering how multiple axes of inequality intersect to influence practice. Despite its limitations, the research offers an important contribution by illuminating the contextual, structural, and relational conditions that enable or constrain racial equity work within EPSs.

3.6 Data analysis strategy

The data set comprised transcripts of the semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed verbatim shortly after each interview, enabling close and sustained engagement with the material (Poland, 1995). Transcripts were cross-checked against audio recordings to ensure accuracy and were anonymised using pseudonyms to protect participant identities (Kaiser, 2009; Roulston, 2010). RTA was selected as the method of analysis for this study (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2021). RTA supports a flexible, non-linear, interpretive approach to data analysis, allowing space for contradiction, ambiguity, and emotional complexity to surface. The method is compatible with this research paradigm, as it seeks to surface meaning from lived experience while remaining attentive to the structural and discursive forces

shaping that experience. While traditional notions of saturation aim for data repetition, RTA, particularly as described by Braun and Clarke (2021), emphasises thematic richness and depth. The focus is on generating insightful and nuanced interpretations, not on exhaustiveness. From this perspective, sufficiency was achieved when the data collected allowed for developing meaningful, well-supported themes rather than exhaustive coverage of all possible views. This allowed for a contextually grounded exploration of how PRE and ARP were interpreted and enacted in a real-world LA EP practice. I maintained a reflexive research journal to document insights, uncertainties, and personal reflections throughout the process (Etherington, 2004; Finlay, 2002).

3.6.1 Consideration of data analysis approaches

Before adopting RTA within a CR-CRT framework, for data analysis, I considered two alternative qualitative methodologies, IPA and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). While both offered valuable conceptual and analytical insights, they were ultimately considered less congruent with this study's CR ontology and its specific research aims. IPA is grounded in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Initially, IPA seemed suitable for this study due to its structured approach to capturing the richness and emotional depth of participants' lived experiences. Its focus on the double hermeneutic, making sense of participants' own sense-making, is aligned with the reflexive stance adopted in this study. However, IPA's strong interpretivist orientation presents epistemological tensions when aligned with CR. IPA foregrounds individual experience, whereas CR-CRT asserts that such experiences are shaped by deeper, often unobservable, social structures and generative mechanisms of racism and whiteness (Bhaskar, 1978; Archer *et al.*, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The idiographic focus of IPA, which prioritises individual meaning-making, risked underrepresenting the broader systemic and institutional mechanisms, particularly systemic racism, and structural power, which were central concerns of this study. In contrast,

RTA offers greater conceptual flexibility and is more compatible with a CR paradigm. RTA allows for exploring individual experiences and shared patterns across participants' accounts while enabling critical interrogation of language, power, and positionality. This flexibility suited RTA to this study's focus on PRE and ARP among LA EPs.

Similarly, I considered Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which aligns more closely with CR's concern for revealing the social structures that condition practice (Fairclough, 2001). CDA's focus on language allows for the analysis of how EPs discuss and negotiate discourses on race and equity. However, while discourse shapes social realities, as I have experienced in my sociopolitical development and observed in legislation and professional guidance changes, CDA's strong focus on language risks reducing participants' experiences to discursive constructs alone. Social reality is constructed through discourse, and this process can sometimes obscure the affective, embodied and relational dimensions, overlooking the deeper structural forces that shape individual experience, which is essential for understanding the nuanced ways EPs engage with ARP (Craib, 1997; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). While CDA provides valuable insights into discourse, it does not always allow for exploring these underlying generative mechanisms, a central concern of CR, given this study's aim to capture both the lived, affective dimensions of participants' work and the structural influences on PRE in practice.

RTA's approach was particularly well-suited to this study's aims, as it provided a flexible and reflexive framework which enabled my analysis of participants' accounts while situating them within the wider socio-political and epistemic conditions of EP practice. RTA's emphasis on the researcher as an active meaning-maker coheres with CRT's commitment to positionality and counter-storytelling, while its compatibility with CR allowed me to examine how racial equity and ARP are shaped by both lived experiences and the generative mechanisms of systemic racism. This layered, theoretically informed approach supported a

rigorous exploration of how EPs engage with ARP within complex and shifting institutional landscapes.

3.6.2 Phases of analysis

The six phases of RTA, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021), guided the analytic process. RTA provided a methodologically and epistemologically coherent approach for exploring participants' accounts, consistent with the CR-CRT framework underpinning the study. Central to this approach was the understanding that meaning was actively and reflexively constructed through my theoretical lens, positionality, and interpretive judgement. Analytic memos documented how my perspectives shifted throughout the process, ensuring that interpretations were auditable as situated products of meaning-making rather than claims of objectivity.

3.6.2.1 Phase one: Familiarisation. I immersed myself in the interview dataset by repeatedly reading each transcript and making detailed annotations of early observations, analytic questions, and moments of resonance or discomfort. My engagement extended beyond what participants said to how they said it, attending to tone, silence, and rhetorical framing. This process fostered an initial understanding of the professional and emotional conditions under which EPs speak about racism, PRE, and professional identity. Following transcription and preliminary note-taking, I intentionally paused to create psychological distance, using research supervision to interrogate my assumptions, particularly those about how equity work is imagined versus how it is enacted in practice. When I returned to the data, I approached it with renewed reflexivity and curiosity, asking: What is being said here, why now, and with what implications?

3.6.2.2 Phase two: Generating codes. I undertook manual coding, approaching each transcript as a situated narrative shaped by structural, institutional, and relational forces. My

epistemological stance informed this process; I attended to semantic meanings (e.g., references to policy, professional roles, and inclusion) and latent meanings (e.g., discomfort, ambivalence, or institutional silence around race). I also reflected on absences, what was not said, and the boundaries of professional discourse that constrained what could be voiced. Coding was treated as a political and interpretive act, shaped by ongoing reflexive consideration of how whiteness, ethics, and institutional norms influence meaning-making.

3.6.2.3 Phase three: Constructing initial subthemes. I collated and reorganised related codes to identify shared patterns of meaning. These subthemes were actively constructed through my interpretive engagement with the data and informed by theoretical concepts such as interest convergence (Bell, 1980), whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), and commitment to praxis (Ladson-Billings, 1998). During this phase, I explored the tensions that emerged when participants framed ARP as an individual ethical commitment rather than a systemic responsibility. I also noticed how discourses of inclusion and SEND were sometimes used to sidestep explicit conversations about race, an interpretive insight that later informed theme development.

3.6.2.4 Phases four and five: Reviewing and defining themes. I refined and evaluated the themes for conceptual coherence, analytic distinctiveness, and fidelity to the data. Each theme was reviewed against the research questions and broader literature on racial equity in educational systems. I sought to preserve the contradictions and tensions within participants' accounts, recognising that complexity is intrinsic to lived experience. For example, the theme *Espoused Praxis* captured a dialectic of disruption and resistance alongside authority and complicity, reflecting the nuanced interplay between moral agency and institutional constraint. The naming and definition of themes evolved over several months (January to April 2025) through iterative engagement, supervisory dialogue, and theoretical reflection.

3.6.2.5 Phase six: Writing and interpretation. The analytic writing phase marked both the culmination and continuation of meaning-making. In constructing the analytic narrative, I sought to illuminate the discursive, relational, and systemic mechanisms shaping PRE within LA EP practice. Extracts were selected to illustrate each theme and to highlight moments of ambivalence, silence, or emotional dissonance in professional talk about race. Writing thus became an interpretive act, an extension of analysis, through which participants' meaning-making was situated within the broader institutional and socio-political context of LA service delivery and anti-racism in education.

3.6.3 Reflexivity and researcher position

Throughout all phases of conducting the RTA, I maintained an evolving commitment to reflexivity. I recognised how my insider-outsider positionality, shaped by my cultural identity, lived experience of racism, and professional practice, influenced how I made sense of participants' narratives. I treated it as a resource for insight and critical engagement. My interpretations were shaped through a deliberately dialogic relationship with the data, where meaning was co-constructed between myself and participants. I remained attentive to how my assumptions, values, and socio-political commitments participated in the analytic space and shaped my interpretations. Regular research supervision supported my commitment to epistemic humility and helped sustain curiosity during moments of emotional resonance with participants' accounts. For instance, I was encouraged to consider whether my own experiences of marginalisation influenced how I interpreted silences within the data. This reflexive questioning led me to reframe silence not as avoidance but as a possible expression of resistance, fatigue, or professional caution, opening new interpretive possibilities. Supervision thus played a crucial role in enhancing my conceptual clarity and rigour by prompting continuous interrogation of my analytical stance.

Alongside supervision, I engaged in reflective peer spaces and professional development seminars, which offered further opportunities to evaluate and refine interpretations. These forums challenged me to remain open to multiplicity and contradiction within the data, particularly difficult during the early stages of coding when I was most drawn to familiar experiences. They also encouraged me to question whether I had overlooked the influence of institutional fragility in shaping participants' narratives. I was reminded to remain anthropologically curious, making the familiar strange to resist premature closure in meaning-making. This was especially demanding when participants' accounts strongly resonated with my own experiences as a minoritised practitioner-researcher within a predominantly white institutional environment. Critical dialogue within supervision and peer reflection supported deeper engagement with how my insider–outsider position informed my empathy and analysis.

Field notes written immediately after each interview further deepened analytic insight by capturing contextual information that transcripts alone could not convey. These notes recorded emotional tone, power dynamics, and non-verbal cues, helping to identify moments of discomfort, resistance, or resonance between researcher and participant. Analysing these dynamics illuminated how power was negotiated within interviews and contributed to the study's methodological transparency and interpretive depth. The integration of supervision, reflexive writing, and field notes ensured the research process was conducted with integrity and sensitivity to the affective complexity of the topic.

Through this process, I aimed to practise what Geertz (1973) describes as disciplined subjectivity, remaining close to the data while maintaining critical distance. Reflexivity thus became a dynamic and continuous process through which I examined how my positionality shaped both the questions I asked and the meanings I constructed. This stance, consistent with Gunaratnam's (2003) emphasis on embodied insight, reinforced the importance of

acknowledging subjectivity as a methodological strength in producing situated and critically engaged knowledge. Reflexivity thus became a dynamic process through which I continually examined how my positionality shaped the production of knowledge.

3.7 Ethical considerations

This research was conducted in line with both the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) and the agreed Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust Department of Education and Training Research Ethics Committee (TREC) protocols. See Appendix D. My commitment to transparency was grounded in the belief that ethical rigour goes beyond procedural compliance and requires the active application of ethical values in practice. It requires ongoing reflexivity regarding the ways my values, experiences, and identity intersect with those of participants. The TREC committee process required me to assess the possible risks and benefits inherent in the researcher-participant relationship, especially concerning the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, such as PRE and ARP.

3.7.1 Informed consent

All participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form outlining the study's aims, the scope of their involvement, their rights, and how their data would be used. See Appendix E. Participants were reminded that consent was an ongoing process and could be withdrawn at any time, with all associated data erased, up to seven days after their interview and prior to the inclusion of their transcript in the dataset. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' explicit permission, obtained through signed informed consent, to ensure a complete and accurate account of their responses. Recordings were stored securely on an encrypted, password-protected device, and transcripts were anonymised with pseudonyms assigned to protect participant identities. As the practitioner-researcher, I was the only person with access to raw data, and all identifying information was stored

separately and securely. Data will be retained for the period required by institutional policy and securely deleted thereafter.

During the ethical approval process, the committee requested clarification on the risk assessment for both participants and myself, noting the potentially sensitive and affective nature of the topic. My initial submission did not provide sufficient detail on the practical steps to manage potential psychological distress. In response, I revised the ethical application to include a more comprehensive risk management plan that outlined specific measures to ensure emotional safety and well-being. These included clear signposting to support services, structured debrief procedures agreed with PEPs and maintaining flexibility within the interview process to allow participants or myself to pause or take breaks as needed. Participants were reminded throughout the interviews of their autonomy, including the right to withdraw, pause, or redact any identifying details from their accounts without consequence.

These revisions strengthened the ethical integrity of the study and enhanced my reflexive understanding of my role as a researcher. Engaging with the committee's feedback deepened my awareness of power and positionality within the research relationship and reinforced my commitment to prioritising participants' psychological safety and dignity at every stage of the process. This reflexive engagement not only ensured compliance with institutional ethics but also aligned with the values of CRT and RTA, where care, respect, and transparency.

3.7.2 Potential risks

Research regarding ARP can evoke discomfort or distress in participants, especially for those who have directly experienced racism or other forms of oppression. In facilitating space for discussion, I understood the importance of engaging participants with a nuanced

approach to ensuring participants' emotional safety (Karnieli-Miller *et al.*, 2009). In addressing these concerns, I actively aimed to create a flexible, supportive, and empathetic interview environment, using the physical space and schedule format. In the interview session, I encouraged participants to share only what they felt comfortable with and to communicate in the capacity they felt the most comfortable with, explicitly acknowledging the emotional weight of the topic in my effort to ensure that their well-being and psychological safety remained a priority throughout the process. I also communicated directly that if participants were distressed during the interview, I ensured the session could stop immediately, with the questions and recording ended. This allowed them to regain composure or, if necessary, end the interview, respecting their emotional limits, agency, and integrity.

I acknowledged that for participants, discussing the topic of race was closely tied to personal experience, which was considered in the risk assessment. Drawing on Bion's (2023) concept of containment, which I often engage with in my training, I worked to engage with participants and their emotions so that they could process and reflect on their experiences without feeling rushed or pressured, with the emotional content contained between us. I hoped this structure would allow for deeper engagement with their narratives, helping me better understand the emotional and relational dimensions of ARP. Some participants shared reflections involving colleagues unaware of their indirect inclusion in this study, and other professionals shared their practice examples. I ensured the upholding of participants' rights while respecting the integrity of their contribution within the bounds of the ethical framework set out by TREC with GDPR guidance, as explored above. I remained vigilant in maintaining confidentiality and adjusting quotations to reduce the risk of identifying others indirectly mentioned in their narratives.

3.7.3 Researcher-participant relationship

The researcher–participant relationship in qualitative research is particularly significant when exploring sensitive topics such as race and institutional power. As a practitioner–researcher, I was aware of the inherent power dynamics between myself and the more experienced participants. This imbalance required sustained reflexivity as I navigated how my positionality shaped both the interview process and the interpretation of participants’ narratives (Haverkamp, 2005). To mitigate these dynamics, I adopted a collaborative stance within the interview space, positioning the research as a co-constructed process of meaning-making (Freire, 1970). This approach was intended to create conditions for empowerment, ensuring that participants’ voices remained central while reflecting the relational and dialogic principles underpinning RTA.

Maintaining this collaborative stance required openness about my own position as a researcher committed to PRE. From the outset, I was transparent with participants about my motivations, values, and potential biases, acknowledging that these could shape the research process. Engaging in regular supervision provided a structured space to reflect critically on these tensions and to examine how my ethical commitments influenced data interpretation. Reflexivity within supervision was therefore essential to maintaining transparency and ensuring fidelity to participants’ contributions as we explored their experiences together.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the decisions made in developing the methodological framework for this study, including the adoption of a CR paradigm and the integration of a CRT framework to guide the research design and interpretive lens. It has justified the use of a qualitative, exploratory approach to investigate how LA EPs engage with ARP and PRE within their professional contexts. The chapter has also detailed the ontological and

epistemological assumptions underpinning the study, the rationale for employing semi-structured, in-depth interviews, the principles of RTA, and the significance of researcher reflexivity, supervision, and ethical integrity throughout the process. By adopting a methodology attentive to both lived experience and the wider institutional and structural conditions shaping practice, this study has sought to explore the complexities, tensions, and possibilities of engaging in ARP within Maroon Vale Borough EPS. In doing so, it recognises that anti-racist work is an ongoing, relational, and contextually mediated endeavour, shaped by the socio-political and organisational structures in which EPs operate. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.

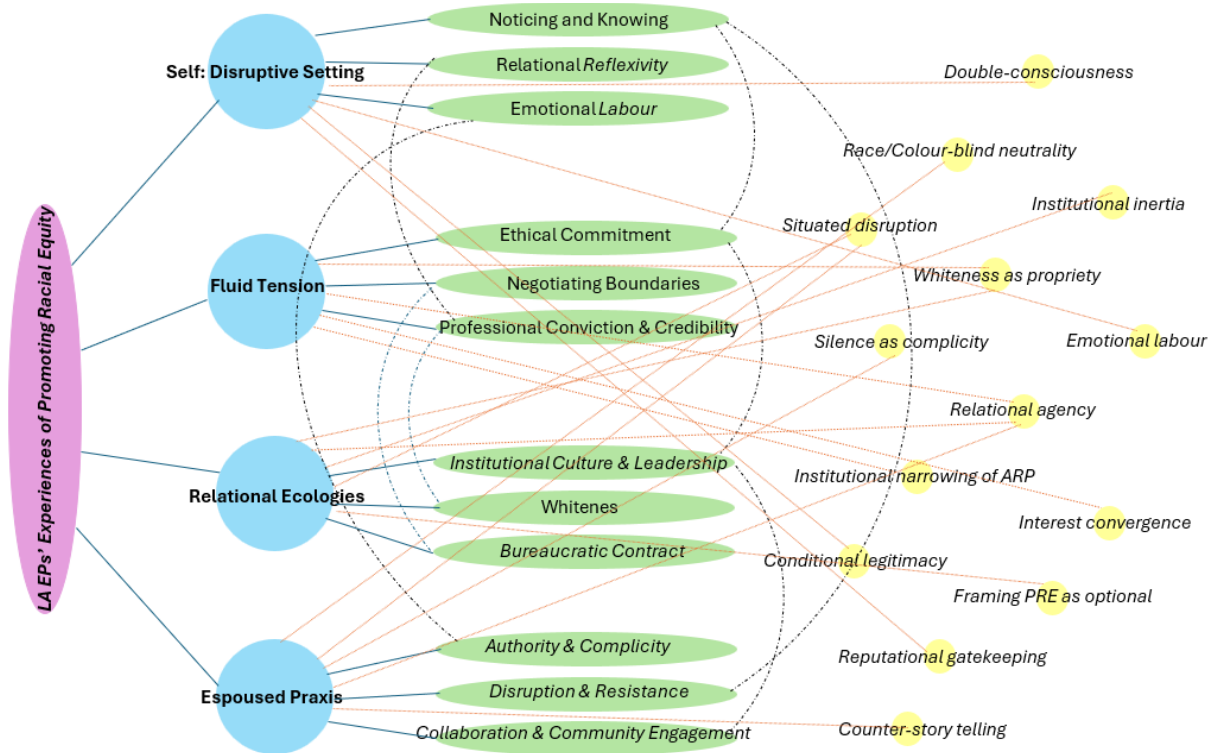
4. Findings

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the outcomes of the RTA conducted on the eight participants' in-depth semi-structured interviews. Guided by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019, 2021), the analysis followed an iterative and reflexive process aimed at generating themes that captured patterned meaning across participants' accounts. The analysis is structured around the overarching themes, presented as subheadings, with corresponding subthemes illustrating how participants' individual accounts converge into shared patterns of experience and meaning. Each overarching theme comprises three interrelated subthemes, which capture how LA EPs experienced PRE as a layered process. The themes reflect my active interpretation of participants' accounts through developed through an interpretive framing informed by the CR-CRT framework that attends to the generative mechanisms, discourses, and power relations shaping experience. I recognise that participants' reflections, which explored experiences across personal, professional, systemic, and enacted dimensions of practice, often characterised by tension and iteration, were shaped by personal meaning-making and wider social structures. See figure 4.

Figure 4

A thematic map of LA EPs' experiences of PRE was developed through RTA



Note. This thematic map was constructed through reflexive analysis. CR–CRT mechanisms (yellow) are used interpretively to illuminate generative processes, not as pre-existing analytic categories.

The first two themes, *Self: Disruptive Settling* and *Fluid Tension*, foreground the internal negotiations of role, identity, and conviction that participants described in relation to PRE. The analysis tells a narrative of how reflexivity, ethical commitment, and professional credibility unsettled participants' experiences of their professional identities while also expounding the emotional demands of addressing racism within LA EP practice. These themes reflect that the participants worked at the boundary between personal conviction and institutional expectation, where the scope of individual agency was both articulated and experienced as fragile.

In contrast, the latter two themes, *Relational Ecologies* and *Espoused Praxis*, extend the analytic story into the collective and systemic dimensions of practice. Together, they situate PRE as a process enabled, constrained, and enacted through relationships with leaders, colleagues, families, and communities. *Relational Ecologies* reflects how organisational priorities, leadership cultures, and service delivery systems shaped possibilities for equity work, while *Espoused Praxis* shows how participants engaged in resistance, collaboration, and accountability, co-constructing ARP within institutional and community contexts.

The four themes convey a narrative in which participants' experiences of PRE were simultaneously internal negotiations and outward practices, and the impact was often limited when carried by individual practitioners, but became generative towards change when supported through leadership, collaboration, and community partnership. Overall, my interpretation of the findings suggests that PRE was a layered endeavour, characterised by the personal reflexivity mediated through the professional role, relational practice, structured by systemic conditions, and enacted through everyday practice. The following sections provide a detailed analytic narrative of each overarching theme, showing how participants' accounts contributed to their development and how I actively interpreted patterns of meaning through a reflexive analytic process.

4.2 Theme 1: Self: Disruptive Settling

This overarching theme captures how EPs engage in ARP by actively disrupting social and institutional norms while working within systems that often resist such disruption, as well as the internal and external tensions that participants experienced in navigating their social identities and professional responsibilities. The overarching theme is represented by the subthemes, noticing and knowing, relational reflexivity and emotional labour, which speak to the participants' expressions of wrestling with discomfort, uncertainty, and accountability in their personal and professional selves. This theme reflects the experience of

engaging with PRE in systems that challenge dissent. It also affirms the political importance of reflexivity as a practice of ethical disruption. See figure 5.

Figure 5

Overarching theme 1: Self: Disruptive Settling thematic map.



4.2.1 Noticing and knowing

Participants described the iterative and reflexive process of becoming more attuned to how racism operates structurally in education and everyday practice. Through this process, they began to recognise and question reproduction patterns of racial inequities, moving

beyond surface-level explanations to consider how policies, practices, and professional norms sustain racial hierarchies. This process involved unsettling deeply rooted social and professional assumptions, navigating emotional discomfort, and holding professional vulnerability with the implications of power and privilege in their social positioning, experienced by the self, socially and in role. All participants expressed a growing self-awareness of institutional racism shaped by familial relationships, peer networks, and lived experiences in practice and training within the broader sociopolitical context of the UK system.

For BGMH EPs, racial identity was not separate from professional identity; rather, race was interwoven with how they were seen and positioned themselves in practice. Disruption was a continuous process of negotiating self, expertise, and legitimacy within white-majority systems. For Portland, navigating this tension involved preparing for professional environments in which he felt hyper-visible and potentially undermined. He shared, “I think schools were not particularly expecting a Black male, a young Black male, to be coming in as their EP. And so, with that comes the unknown.” Rather than internalise this, Portland grounded himself in what he framed as his “truth”, sharing, “I just said to myself, know your strengths, know your weaknesses, know your truth, and no one can use it against you ... know who your client is and do your job as best as you can.”

Portland’s narrative demonstrates not only a heightened awareness of external perceptions but also the conscious construction of professional identity as a protective strategy. This reflects his emergent agency and capacity to act reflexively within structurally constrained systems, resisting the internalisation of deficit-based beliefs often imposed on young Black men within racialised societies. However, his phrasing, “no one can use it against you”, also hints at an underlying vulnerability, revealing the defensive posture he feels compelled to adopt within predominantly white institutional settings to maintain his

capacity to engage with self in role. This implicit self-monitoring suggests that his expectations of himself as an EP are not solely self-defined but shaped in anticipation of how he might be misrecognised or questioned. The analysis brings into focus a racialised burden of representation, where professional legitimacy was not simply assumed but continually negotiated against dominant norms of whiteness. Portland's account suggests that for BGMH EPs', legitimacy was conditional, experienced as something to be earned and defended within institutional spaces. His narrative shows how strategies of self-protection and agency were entangled with structural conditions that reproduce inequity, while also revealing the fragile possibilities for resistance and re-positioning.

Catherine, meanwhile, voiced the affective dimension of this awareness:

I can't sit and pretend that good enough is good enough because it isn't, and it's not OK... I've had the benefit of people around me who, quite often, were White people who supported me when I needed help, so that I could achieve. So, depending on how one defines privilege, I've had the privilege..., but when I think about how some people who look like me are living...I can't let it go.

Her narrative challenges simplistic notions of privilege, instead foregrounding the complexity of navigating identity across intersecting axes. Her embodied discomfort became a generative force, a refusal to accept racial realism as capitulation, in which insight was translated into moral accountability. Catherine's account reflects a deep ethical conviction, an unsettled response to engaging with her racial identity, and how that identity is implicated in her efforts to PRE. Rather than arriving at a stable or resolved sense of self, Catherine's reflections suggest a dynamic process of self-interrogation, where her lived experience, proximity to whiteness, and professional role converge in tension. This reveals how racial identity may be a source of insight and a site of emotional labour. In this, Catherine wrestled

with the challenge of speaking from the margins while also being positioned to maintain the normative expectations of the profession.

Clarendon's account introduced another perspective, one shaped by omission in professional training, "We might have had a lecture or two on multiculturalism...we never explicitly talked about racism, so I can't even say that my experience on that one-year Master's training has really shaped my thoughts and feelings." This institutional silence supports CRT critiques of how liberal multiculturalism depoliticises race, suggesting that "noticing" does not always emerge from formal knowledge structures, but through relational and experiential knowing. Clarendon's earlier comments on the absence of race within training were later expanded upon in a further reflection:

I guess what's hard is that it wasn't something I was really taught to think about...so a lot of this awareness came from conversations, from seeing patterns in schools, and from my own experiences. It didn't come from the profession itself. That makes it harder because you're kind of left to figure it out on your own.

This reflection draws attention to how institutional silence places the burden of noticing and responding to racial inequity on the individual. Clarendon's account underscores how formal knowledge structures can depoliticise or bypass race altogether. Her realisation that her critical awareness emerged informally, through relationships, experience, and self-directed reflection, raises important questions about the profession's collective readiness to address racism within its own institutional faculties. Without structured, profession-wide engagement, the capacity of EPs to challenge racial inequity becomes reliant on personal conviction rather than embedded values or professional norms.

For some White participants, such as Hanover, the shift from detachment to awareness was triggered by affective disruption, "I wasn't getting it...I could hear the frustration, but I

wasn't really getting it...then I started reading white fragility...and I could see white defensiveness and rallying around White people who were upset." Hanover later offered further reflections that provided more context to her earlier experiences. She described how, during her time in a previous service, her understanding of ARP was limited, not due to a lack of care or intention, but because of how the professional culture subtly shaped what was seen as appropriate or acceptable:

Looking back, I think I was so focused on doing things the 'right' way...fitting within the service expectations...I didn't fully see how those expectations were silencing important conversations. I knew something didn't feel right, especially when we avoided naming racism or when we prioritised comfort over truth, but I didn't know how to challenge it then. I think I was complicit, even if I didn't realise it at the time.

This reflection marks a moment where complicity becomes visible, not only in hindsight, but through the process of leaving that environment and developing a new professional stance. This realisation reflects a morphogenetic shift, where exposure to alternative structures and relationships in a new service prompted a re-examination of her role and leadership style. Hanover continued,

Since moving into my current role, I've tried to do things differently. I've made more space for open conversations, even when they're uncomfortable. I think I underestimated how much influence I actually had in my old role...how much my silence might have signalled to others that it wasn't safe to speak. Now, I'm trying to lead in a way that doesn't just avoid harm but actively makes room for challenge and reflection.

Hanover's further reflection reveals the epistemic labour involved in rethinking one's leadership practice and foregrounds the transformational potential of discomfort. Her account

suggests that while power can initially constrain anti-racist action, particularly when bound by normative professional cultures, it can also be reoriented toward racial equity when held reflexively. Her shift in leadership reveals that PRE in practice is not static or purely ideological; rather, it is relational and situational, shaped by histories, contexts, and opportunities for re-engagement.

4.2.2 Relational reflexivity

Participants described their experiences of navigating external perceptions while reflecting on how they relate to themselves and their histories. Reflexive moments often emerged through supervision and informal and structured peer dialogue, which functioned as holding environments that enabled deeper self-examination beyond self and in relation to others. These relational spaces supported participants in critically engaging with inherited beliefs, positional power, and the structural implications of their identity. Relational reflexivity involved interrogating how social positioning influenced the interpretation of their professional role, particularly for participants, who reported a heightened awareness of how their presence might be read in school settings. Portland articulated this form of reflexive vigilance as constant adaptation, “I’m always adjusting depending on where I am. When I’m with the community, as a member of the community, it’s different. In professional spaces, I’m thinking about how I’m being heard or interpreted...that’s exhausting.” This quote speaks to the embodiment of double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), the psychological tension of navigating spaces where one's authenticity must be reshaped to meet external expectations. Portland’s experience of code-switching in professional environments was echoed in Catherine’s ongoing self-questioning, “There are times when you have to ask yourself, am I being neutral or am I being complicit? And that question keeps coming up.”

Although Portland and Catherine occupied different relational positions, Portland navigating the hypervisibility of being a young Black male EP, and Catherine reflecting on

her positioning as a Black woman with perceived proximity to whiteness, both described internal dialogues shaped by broader structures of whiteness. These internal conversations point to how structure and agency interact in the formation of ethical positioning (Archer, 2003). Moreover, their knowledge was evoked through processes of othering, through being misread, questioned, or made to feel out of place within institutional contexts. This experience of being positioned as the other functioned as a provocation, an affective disruption that demanded a response. Their reflections suggest that PRE was intentional and often elicited through relational dynamics and professional encounters. This underscores the epistemic function of marginalisation: the ways in which BGMH professionals are often made aware of inequity through the discomfort of exclusion, misrecognition, or silencing. Thus, their internal dialogues were not just acts of self-definition, but relational acts of resistance, produced in response to systemic conditions that marked them as different and demanded that they either assimilate or confront their experiences.

Two participants offered insights that revealed how power, positionality, and professional culture shaped their engagement with ARP and their capacity to create reflective spaces. Clarendon reflected on how race had long been absent from team discussions, and how the evolving sociopolitical climate created new openings for relational and institutional reflection, "... it's a combination of George Floyd ..., and then I think the team was ready at that time for conversations. We've never, never had conversations ...about race and racism and where we stand..." Her reflection demonstrates a shift in team culture, where previously unspoken or marginalised issues of race became more discussable, but only under the pressure of external events. Clarendon's use of "ready" suggests a relational and emotional threshold that had to be crossed before conversations could take place. This points to the contingency of psychological safety in anti-racist work, particularly when leadership cultures have historically avoided politicised conversations. This also reflects how institutional

change is often reactive rather than proactive, driven by sociopolitical rupture rather than embedded values.

Trelawny, by contrast, described how relational patterns of inequality played out in referral decisions and how she attempted to confront them:

I noticed a pattern of Black and mixed-race boys being referred to me for behaviour concerns...underlying them was either neurodivergence...significant trauma...I raised this with the SENDCO...but even when I explained these underlying factors...they weren't taken on board.

Her account reveals how relational reflexivity, in her case, extended outward, prompting her to name and challenge institutional patterns of racial harm. By raising these concerns in both one-to-one and system-level spaces (e.g. the SEND Advisory Board), Trelawny demonstrated a commitment to advocacy that moved beyond personal insight. Her actions align with the CR concept of morphogenesis, the process through which critical reflection evolves into agency capable of disrupting normative structures. Together, these reflections exemplify that relational reflexivity is personal and systemic. Whether in the context of team culture or school systems, participants revealed that PRE requires navigating the fragility of professional norms, the discomfort of power dynamics, and the ongoing challenge of translating insight into action.

4.2.3 Emotional labour

All participants described the psychological toll of self-monitoring and strategic identity translation as they attempted to assert credibility and disrupt dominant norms. Emotional labour was experienced not only as a form of affect regulation but as a relational and political act, holding discomfort in service of ethical commitment. Elizabeth explained the extent of this intentional work, "I'm constantly translating... my values, my language,

even my tone [when addressing racial inequity in practice]...it's not just about what I say, it's about whether I sound like the kind of EP they're used to hearing."

At first glance, this reflection reveals how whiteness operates as the unspoken standard within the profession, reinforcing whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), where legitimacy, professionalism, and credibility are mapped onto normative ways of being, speaking, and relating. Yet as a White practitioner, Elizabeth is not describing racialised othering in the same way as her minoritised peers. Rather, her reflection suggests something more subtly layered: a perceived gap between her emerging professional identity and the authoritative persona expected of an EP. Her repeated emphasis on "having to" translate her tone and values hints at an underlying frustration, possibly even an internalised pressure to suppress parts of her developing professional self in order to "fit." This may reflect anxieties around competence or legitimacy that are especially acute in early career stages when confidence is still forming, and feedback is more closely scrutinised. In this context, the "kind of EP they're used to hearing" becomes a symbolic figure, an imagined standard tied to experience, neutrality, and performative confidence, often coded in ways that obscure race, power, and class.

Thus, while Elizabeth may not be experiencing racial marginalisation, her comment shows how institutional norms produce expectations that can still feel alienating, especially when one's professional values, such as a commitment to PRE or emotional openness, sit uneasily within dominant service cultures. Her internal dialogue can be seen as a site of tension between structure and agency, where normative expectations are actively negotiated, resisted, or internalised. What becomes apparent is that emotional labour is about sustaining a coherent and credible self in the face of powerful cultural beliefs and practices. Elizabeth's translation work may signal a quiet resistance, but also a desire to belong, to be recognised, and to do the work well without having to fragment her sense of self in the process.

Mary reflected on this dynamic from a different angle, “I felt not very confident, and initially, I was very anxious that I’d almost be...told off or like I’d done something wrong...as I said, like white fragility...but then you know...I’m also white”. Her honesty reveals more than surface-level discomfort. The phrase “I’m also white” appears at once defensive, reflexive, and vulnerable. This was interpreted as a signal of how the psychological response is entangled with shame, uncertainty, and the cognitive dissonance of recognising one’s complicity in a system she may wish to challenge. Emotionally, her anxiety about “being told off” reflects professional self-doubt and a fear of moral failure, of being exposed as part of the problem, even when trying to do the right thing. This moment may be understood as a form of emotional labour specific to early-stage anti-racist awareness among White professionals. Mary is navigating the tension between the desire to show up ethically and the discomfort of confronting her own embedded privilege. Her words point to a psychological need to reconcile intention with the social meaning of her whiteness, particularly in contexts where race is being explicitly discussed. This marks an early stage of ethical reflexivity, a shift from pre-reflexive immersion in dominant whiteness-centred norms to a more self-aware positioning. Yet, an unstable shift, marked by vulnerability rather than clarity. The affective labour here involves holding the discomfort of not knowing how to speak without harm and the fear that engaging in conversations about race might expose one’s own complicity. Mary’s statement reflects what DiAngelo (2018) describes as white fragility, but it also hints at the possibility of transformation when defensiveness gives way to accountability. Her reflexive admission, “but then you know... I’m also white” suggests a growing awareness that allyship and discomfort must coexist, and that the work of anti-racism includes facing what whiteness means in practice, not merely acknowledging it in theory.

Catherine described emotional labour not as mere fatigue, but as a profound moral burden:

So that for me is when that emotional labour is what would break me...not fighting the system, but the whole idea that when I look in the mirror at myself, I cannot...say I did the best possible job I could for that child today. That would break me.

Her words frame emotional labour as a site of ethical rupture, a moment where professional responsibility collides with structural injustice, and where the cost of complicity becomes personally intolerable. For Catherine, a minoritised EP, the labour lies not only in naming injustice, but in preserving a sense of moral integrity amid institutional resistance. Importantly, she distinguishes between fighting the system and the deeper pain of knowing she has been unable to protect a child from harm. Her labour is relational, ethical, and deeply embodied.

In contrast, Manchester, a senior White European EP, described emotional labour in quieter terms, through observation, awareness, and the measured act of naming, “You get better at noticing the subtle ways racism shows up...naming it still feels risky.” Her use of the phrase “shows up” suggests a more ambient or indirect engagement with racism, one that requires attunement but preserves a degree of emotional distance. While this reflection acknowledges the persistence of risk, particularly in relation to institutional pushback, it does not carry the same weight of internalised rupture. Rather, it reflects the emotional cost of intervention within a professional culture that rewards neutrality and punishes disruption.

The contrast between these accounts reveals a crucial dynamic. Catherine is experiencing distress at the fear of inaction, while Manchester is cautious about the cost of action. This difference speaks to the unequal distribution of emotional labour in engaging with ARP and PRE, where minoritised EPs, expressed in the reflections of the participants,

are often emotionally tethered to the outcomes of systemic injustice, while their White colleagues, though ethically committed, may engage with a degree of buffer. These experiences reflect how emotional labour is shaped by positionality and power, and how internal conversations can differ in content and intensity depending on one's relationship to institutional norms (Archer, 2003). Catherine's account reflects racial realism, the knowledge that systems may not change, and still, integrity must be pursued, while Manchester's points to interest convergence, the idea that naming racism is permissible when it doesn't provoke institutional backlash. Together, their reflections show that emotional labour is not just about speaking out; it is about who bears the weight of the silence and what it costs to break it.

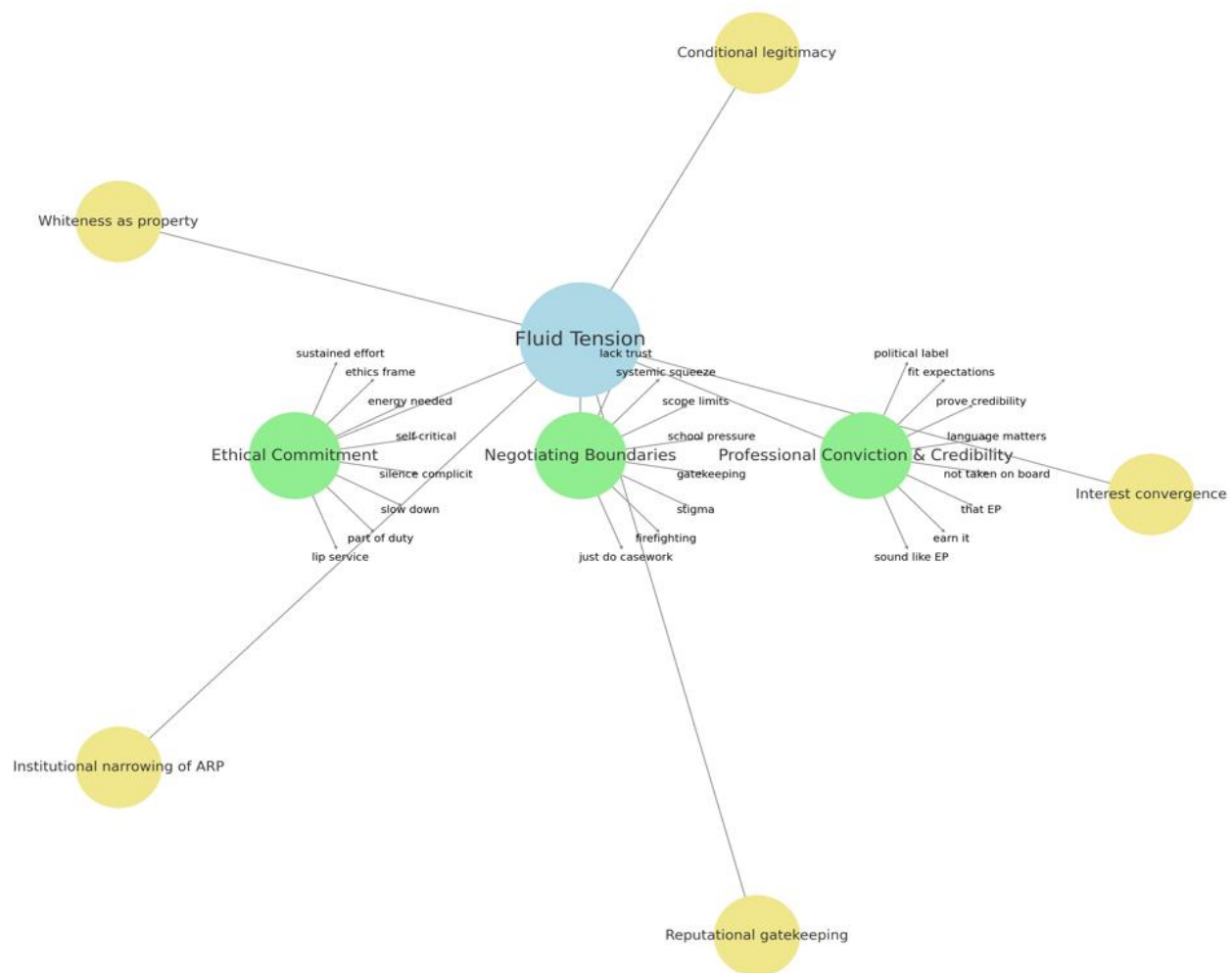
4.3 Theme 2: Fluid Tension

This overarching theme captures the dynamic tensions participants experienced in their efforts to PRE. Participants described navigating statutory responsibilities, such as Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) processes, often shaped by backlogs, commissioner-led priorities, and the inertia of institutional practice. They highlighted how educational systems continue to privilege narrow definitions of achievement that marginalise learners with differentiated needs and obscure the psychological significance of identity, representation, and belonging for minoritised CYP. This overarching theme is represented by the subthemes of ethical commitment, negotiating boundaries and professional conviction and credibility. These subthemes reflect of the participants' accounts of encountering compounding structural barriers and professional norms rooted in neutrality and proceduralism, which were experienced as subtly undermining equity-driven practice. Despite these constraints, participants expressed a strong moral and ethical commitment to advancing PRE in response to the needs recognised within their school community. Yet, their reflections repeatedly returned to the difficulties of enacting this commitment within systems not designed to sustain the work. The generative mechanisms underpinning these challenges,

such as the privileging of standardisation over contextually informed formulation, conditioned what forms of ARP were permissible or legitimised. See figure 6.

Figure 6

Overarching theme 2: Fluid Tension thematic map



4.3.1 Ethical commitment

All participants spoke with conviction about the ethical imperatives underpinning their engagement with racial equity work, consistently framing ARP as a moral obligation. For some, this commitment emerged from direct encounters with racism and othering; for others, it developed through critical reflection, witnessing racial harm, sustained self-education and a deep sense of responsibility toward minoritised communities.

Several participants described the resurgence of the BLM movement in 2020 as a key turning point. For more senior participants, particularly PEP, APEP, and Senior EPs, this moment catalysed renewed service-level dialogue and deeper individual and collective reflection. The BLM protests were seen as a response to global injustice and of ethical reckoning within the profession of educational psychology itself- raising urgent questions about institutional complicity, professional responsibility, and the values guiding EPSs.

Clarendon's framing of psychologists as being in a "unique position" to influence systems reveals an ethical stance grounded in professional authority and personal identity, emphasising the importance of "making sure we've got an anti-racist [approach], being more critical of our resources and our strategies and interventions in a way that I think we paid lip service to before". Her comments also considered how external sociopolitical movements can converge with internal team dynamics, creating openings for transformation that are professionally consequential and sustain the momentum for systemic response. In contrast, Hanover expressed discomfort with the institutional rush to demonstrate anti-racist credentials following the BLM protests. Her concerns were less about whether to act and more about how to act with integrity:

All this is doing this stuff to other people. And I was saying no, we need to do stuff with ourselves. So, I wanted people to slow right down and say you can't go out there telling other people how to do this when you haven't tackled this yourself.

At first glance, Clarendon's call for decisive action and Hanover's introspective pause appear to reflect opposing strategies. However, both underscore a shared imperative of accountability and reflexivity in PRE work. Their reflections collectively expose the tension between institutional visibility and ethical authenticity, a tension resonating with CRT's

critique of interest convergence, where PRE is only prioritised when it aligns with institutional interests.

Trelawny further enriched this complexity by foregrounding the emotional and professional toll of remaining committed to ARP in resistant systems, “Staying committed to anti-racism in a system that doesn’t always support it takes energy, but I see it as part of my duty, to the profession and to the communities we serve.” Her reflection affirms that ethical commitment in ARP is not sustained by moral clarity alone; it requires continual recalibration of practice. This account exemplifies the tension between ethical agency and systemic constraint, acknowledging the layered forms of resistance that practitioners face while affirming their capacity for intentional disruption. Elizabeth, a White NQEP, reflected on her early career experiences navigating the tension between silence and complicity, “At some point, I stopped trying to be neutral. I realised that silence was complicity and that as an EP, I had a responsibility to name things, even when uncomfortable.” Her comment highlights a shift from institutional compliance toward ethical resistance. This transformation reflects a developing ethical reflexivity and directly critiques the myth of neutrality, reinforcing that silence is complicit in maintaining racial disparities. These reflections demonstrate that ethical commitment in ARP is shaped by positionality, experience, and the relational contexts in which EPs operate. For some, like Clarendon and Trelawny, commitment is anchored in professional authority and systemic insight. For others, like Elizabeth and Hanover, it emerges through internal struggle and reflective leadership. Yet across all narratives, ARP and PRE were framed as an ethical imperative requiring sustained collective accountability.

4.3.2 Negotiating boundaries

Participants constructed accounts of how policy constraints, service delivery models, and entrenched norms about what constitutes “good practice” shaped and constrained the scope of their roles and the conditions under which racial equity work could be pursued.

These institutional boundaries reinforce dominant discourses of neutrality and depoliticised conceptions of inclusion. Within this context, negotiating boundaries was central to enacting ethical commitments and creating space for racial equity work. Participants described assessing when, how, and to whom to raise equity concerns, particularly in settings where such conversations were viewed as politically sensitive or outside the remit of the discipline and practice of educational psychology. Strategic boundary work involved adapting language, reframing casework, leveraging statutory mechanisms, and calibrating emotional expression in ways that aligned with professional expectations while disrupting systemic complacency.

Portland, for instance, positioned traded service models as limiting, reflecting on the consequences for systemic change:

Given the traded nature of our role...schools are just adamant that you just do casework...so we don't have enough time or capacity to actually do the systemic work where that's needed...It's not from the bottom up. It's from the top.

His reflection contributed towards a pattern of participants recognising commissioned service models as structural mechanisms that constrain opportunities for proactive engagement with racial equity work. Anti-racist work becomes contingent on school priorities, undermining its status as a core professional responsibility. This presents the tension between service design and practitioners' moral agency.

Hanover shared a similar concern about the superficial nature of traded interventions, "I feel like we get brought in to deliver something very specific and then we go... there's no time to build trust, to explore what's actually going on systemically. And without that, you're just firefighting." Her metaphor of "firefighting" evokes both reactivity and exhaustion, suggesting that participants' experiences traded work may preclude the slow, relational labour

needed to address structural inequities. It also points to how relational trust, a key condition for ARP, was experienced as being eroded by time pressures and transactional expectations.

Mary, Manchester, and Hanover described how these structural conditions were compounded by professional norms rooted in neutrality, proceduralism, and rigid statutory processes. Participants explained that while such norms are intended to safeguard objectivity, statutory frameworks like the EHCP, though designed to be inclusive, were often experienced as gatekeeping mechanisms when PRE was not embedded in their interpretation or application of inclusion. For NQEPs, boundary negotiation was experienced as particularly acute during training and early career phases. Elizabeth and Mary described how their commitment to ARP was at times dismissed as "idealistic," prompting them to anchor their critiques within statutory frameworks to gain legitimacy. Mary also spoke about the historically grounded mistrust some communities feel toward psychology services, "That stigma is based on fact.[BGMH families] don't see us, and then...they're less likely to get certain resources that they actually really need...I'm really passionate about inviting the community to join us...promoting racial equity and fighting the good fight." Her statement reframes community mistrust not as resistance or disinterest, but as a reasonable response to exclusionary and racist histories. This was interpreted as crucial in understanding how boundary negotiation involves relational repair and trust-building to meaningfully engage with PRE in service delivery. Her comments reflect counter-storytelling, surfacing marginalised narratives that challenge dominant professional assumptions and reveal the psychological costs of systemic exclusion.

Clarendon similarly challenged the assumption that minoritised families are disengaged, "We need to be visible in the community, not just when things go wrong. If we want families to trust us, they have to see us standing beside them, not above them." Her emphasis on visibility, solidarity, and humility repositions the EP as a relational agent

embedded within the communities they serve. This reflection speaks to the importance of cultivating relational depth within structural constraint and the need for systemic visibility that fosters long-term engagement rather than transactional contact.

Trelawny deepened this analysis by reflecting on how narrow constructions of achievement and success work to marginalise BGMH learners and those whose minoritised racial identity intersected with their neurodivergence, “there’s still a very narrow view of achievement that doesn’t always reflect the strengths or potential of our [CYP], particularly those from BGMH backgrounds. We don’t always consider identity, representation, or belonging as psychological needs...and that’s a huge gap.” Her critique was interpreted as drawing attention to how institutional definitions of success can operate as mechanisms of exclusion. For Trelawny and other participants, negotiating boundaries included resisting reductive framings and pushing for more expansive, identity-affirming understandings of psychological well-being.

Participants also highlighted the relational dimensions of boundary negotiation, how advocating for racial equity required moving carefully across lines of "solidarity" and "engagement with the role's authority", and "proximity to positions of influence". This meant tactically choosing when to disrupt, when to hold space, and when to step back to avoid being dismissed as “too political” or “biased.” These forms of self-monitoring echo earlier themes of emotional labour, underscoring how boundary negotiation is an act of resistance and self-preservation. Taken together, these accounts suggest that participants do not passively accept institutional limitations; rather, they describe strategically navigating, stretching, and occasionally subverting them. Whether through critical case formulation, supervision, or intentional reframing of psychological concepts, participants spoke of cultivating micro-spaces for equity work within systems that often deprioritise it. These everyday practices were interpreted as methods of pushing against dominant structures while preserving

professional credibility. Boundary negotiation was understood as a matter of professional scope, tied to ethical responsibility, relational trust, and the conditions under which anti-racist work becomes possible. It demanded that practitioners hold institutional contradictions without losing sight of their values, often working incrementally to reshape the very systems that constrain them.

4.3.3 Professional conviction and credibility

Participants consistently emphasised the importance of grounding their ARP in robust psychological theory and evidence-informed frameworks. I interpreted that this alignment was constructed as a matter of personal integrity and strategy to establish professional credibility in contexts where racial equity work was viewed with suspicion or positioned as politically sensitive. Participants understood that conviction alone, while ethically and emotionally powerful, was insufficient in institutional cultures that often privilege neutrality, standardisation, and proceduralism.

Instead, participants described the need for a dual orientation: moral clarity anchored in racial justice, and strategic credibility grounded in the language of psychological professionalism. They framed their work using recognised theoretical tools, including Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1992), attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1967; Ainsworth & Marvin, 1995; Stern *et al.*, 2022), trauma-informed models (Wallace, 2020), and culturally responsive frameworks such as the Power-Threat-Meaning Framework (BPS, 2018), intersectionality (Mirza, 2013), and the Social GRACES model (Burnham, 2013). These frameworks allowed participants to reframe equity concerns within a discourse that was intelligible and acceptable to schools, LAs, and colleagues, without diluting their anti-racist intent.

For many, this act of intellectual translation was a form of resistance to embed equity into dominant logics while resisting the marginalisation of racial justice work as “ideological.” However, participants also acknowledged that this translation came at a cost. The legitimacy of ARP is described as conditional, requiring constant justification to avoid being dismissed as unprofessional or overly political. Trelawny articulated this tension clearly when discussing the difficulty of reframing behaviour through trauma and neurodiversity lenses, “... even when I explained [neurodivergence and trauma], they weren’t taken on board ... these boys were on their way to PRUs or already excluded.”

Her reflection was interpreted as exemplifying how even well-grounded psychological interpretations struggle to gain traction when they challenge entrenched racialised narratives of behaviour. Despite her credibility, Trelawny’s voice, like the needs of the children she advocated for, was often disregarded. This resonates with institutional objectivity, where dominant definitions of professionalism obscure the ways racism is operationalised through “neutral” processes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Elizabeth spoke to the affective labour of continually asserting her credibility, “[translating] ... my values, my language, even my tone... just to be seen as credible. It’s not just about what I say, it’s about whether I sound like the kind of EP they’re used to hearing.” Her reflection highlights how professional credibility was constructed through proximity to normative whiteness, in terms of race, class, gender and institutional codes of conduct. Her efforts to “sound like” a credible EP suggest that legitimacy is not only about content but about performance, a set of unspoken rules embedded in the culture of educational psychology. This reflects how whiteness operates as property, assigning value and authority to certain ways of knowing, being, and speaking (Harris, 1993).

Mary's accounts positioned community mistrust as a rational response to historical injustice, challenging the notion that disengagement is the fault of BGMH families. Her emphasis on invitation and solidarity was understood as reflecting a shift in what credibility means, not simply the performance of expertise, but rather the embodied practice of relational accountability. Her use of counter-narrative, shows how participants constructed professional credibility as relational and earned through trust, visibility, and cultural humility (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Bei & Knowler, 2022), Clarendon expanded on the construction of earned credibility, especially in the context of systemic exclusion, "It's not that families don't care, it's that they've not seen psychology work for them. When you come in speaking their language... it shifts something. But you have to earn it." This quote was interpreted as encapsulating the emotional and relational dimensions of credibility. It reflects the emergent nature of trust, a property that arises when practitioners are able to attune to the realities of those they serve. Clarendon's emphasis on "speaking their language" underscores the need for psychologists to decentre institutional norms and engage more meaningfully with the cultural contexts and narratives of minoritised communities.

Trelawny added further nuance to the credibility dilemma, "...there are moments where I think, if I say this, will I be seen as 'that EP'? The one who always brings up race. But not saying it feels worse... like I'm abandoning what I know to be true." Her reflection exemplifies the emotional double bind, where to speak out risks marginalisation, but silence risks complicity. The figure of "that EP" was understood as signalling how racial equity work is often cast as deviant or excessive unless carefully packaged within dominant discourses. This reflects racialised expectations of professionalism and the psychological cost of maintaining credibility within whiteness-serving institutions. Her internal dialogue shows moral reflexivity, an internal conversation navigating agency within structural constraint (Archer, 2003).

Participants described peer support and leadership validation as protective buffers. When senior EPs modelled ARP as professionally legitimate, it was more likely to be embraced across teams. Catherine described her professional identity as shaped by a broader ethical vision:

I believe the psychological contract determines what I need to do ... between myself and the [LA] and the HCPC and the [BPS] ... my role is to contribute to the greater good ... what I can do to impact society.

Her view was interpreted as exemplifying an expansive reading of the EP role, one grounded not only in procedural accountability but in social justice and systemic impact. While her language is more ardent than some of her peers, it shares with Manchester's more pragmatic reflections the belief that ARP is a core feature of ethical practice, not an optional add-on.

These reflections collectively illustrated how credibility in ARP was constructed as negotiated, conditional, and deeply political. It was shaped by identity, institutional culture, and power, where being seen as credible often depended on conforming to dominant norms that obscured the significance of racial disparities. In this sense, professional credibility is not a static status; rather, it is an ongoing performance, one that is continually calibrated to balance integrity with influence, and to navigate the layered mechanisms within racial equity, which is either legitimised or marginalised within educational psychology.

4.4 Theme 3: Relational Ecologies

This overarching theme captures participants' reflections on how anti-racist work within educational psychology is fundamentally shaped by *Relational Ecologies*. These ecologies include organisational culture, leadership priorities, professional norms, and supervision practices. Participants explored how such contexts have supported or constrained

anti-racist engagement, with particular attention to how whiteness remains embedded within institutional practice. See figure 7.

Figure 7

Overarching theme 3: Relational Ecologies thematic map



4.4.1 Institutional culture and leadership

Participants' accounts illustrated how they conceptualised PRE as a process shaped by institutional and relational dynamics rather than as an individual endeavour. In particular, the roles of leadership, team culture, and shared responsibility were described as either enabling or constraining meaningful ARP. While individual conviction and reflexivity were viewed as

essential, participants emphasised that these personal qualities were necessary but insufficient for sustaining ARP. Their reflections suggested that lasting engagement requires structural and cultural conditions that embed anti-racist values across the system. Participants articulated a need for a broader reimagining of institutional infrastructure, one characterised by visible leadership commitment, the reinforcement of anti-racist principles, and collective investment across all levels of education and practice. PRE, in this framing, was understood not as a discrete act or ethical stance, but as a shared, relational responsibility that embeds anti-racist values across institutions and systems.

Leadership was constructed as a key enabler of ARP across several accounts. Participants described how senior leaders who explicitly prioritised PRE were seen to legitimise equity work by modelling inclusive values and creating space for critical reflection, dialogue, and change. Effective leadership was narrated as going beyond performative statements or one-off initiatives. Leadership involved establishing a consistent cultural tone, resourcing equity-focused work, and embedding anti-racism into core systems such as supervision, training, and evaluation. As several participants noted, leadership commitment signalled that ARP was not an optional or peripheral concern, but a shared organisational imperative. Team culture was framed as essential for operationalising PRE in practice. Participants spoke of the importance of psychologically safe and relationally supportive collective spaces where PRE concerns could be voiced without fear of dismissal. Peer relationships and supervisory spaces were described as vital for fostering critical dialogue, emotional resilience, and professional courage. A culture of collective responsibility and mutual accountability was considered crucial for moving beyond isolated or individualised responses to racism.

Conversely, participants also constructed that some institutional cultures they had experienced were obstructive to ARP. In such settings, PRE work was often rendered

invisible or devalued and sometimes viewed as ideologically risky. The emotional labour involved in navigating these spaces and the professional risks associated with raising equity concerns without explicit leadership backing were foregrounded in participants' accounts. Institutional silence and ambiguity around racism were seen to sustain the status quo, placing disproportionate burdens on those trying to challenge it. Hanover described her efforts to embed anti-racist values within team processes. Acknowledging her positional privilege as the PEP, she framed this as an opportunity to amplify the voices of minoritised colleagues:

Wherever I feel it's really relevant, and it's going to be heard. Even times when I don't think it's going to be heard, but I think it needs to be said. It's then that [my team] see my boss will support me. I am leading my team to have these brave conversations out there... that yes, what [Hanover] is doing with her team is actually coming from a LA drive as well...this isn't just like one team going off on its own doing this. This is embedded in like [Maroon Vale's] racial equity projects that have been happening in schools.

Hanover's comments were interpreted as articulating a model of leadership that was visible and systemic, positioning leadership as an enabler or constraint on ARP agency (Archer, 2003).

Catherine described a situation in which she encountered resistance from school leadership when completing a psychological report formulated through an anti-racist lens. She credited the support of her own leadership team with empowering her to persist, "They [senior leadership] stood with me and empowered me to engage with my convictions." This affirmation of her stance was echoed across multiple participants' accounts of how institutional support enabled them to act on their convictions.

Portland added that PRE must be embedded into institutional infrastructure:

What aspects of the school [are considering ARP] and how it runs? Will social graces impact behaviour policy, teaching and learning, leadership and management [...]

We're working with them and thinking about how they use their behaviour data in a non-prejudiced or discriminatory way.

This suggests that ARP should not be seen as an external or supplementary initiative, but rather as integral to everyday LA EP practice. Participants like Manchester and Trelawny echoed this sentiment, noting that without sustained reinforcement from leadership, PRE initiatives risk becoming superficial.

Leadership willingness is necessary but insufficient without widespread team 'buy-in' and support from the wider LA leadership. When isolated from relational investment at every level, leadership initiatives risk creating gestures of practice rather than transformative changes. (Manchester)

At first glance, Hanover's view that strong leadership enables brave conversations appeared to contrast with Manchester's warning that leadership alone is not enough. However, both converge on a central insight, that structural and cultural alignment were experienced as interdependent. Participants emphasised that such leadership was not about singular acts of authority but about cultivating conditions in which ARP could be normalised and sustained. This reflects an orientation towards acknowledging how cultural understanding of meanings, such as PRE, ARP and leadership, are situated and co-constructed, with participants' accounts illustrating how these practices were experienced as both enabling and constraining.

4.4.2 Whiteness

Participants spoke about how whiteness functions as a pervasive and often invisible normative force within educational psychology. They described it not only as an ideology but

also as a professional construct regulating what is considered appropriate, credible, and legitimate within practice. These accounts illustrate how participants actively positioned whiteness as shaping the boundaries of their work and constraining their engagement with PRE. Frankenberg (1993) theorised whiteness as an unmarked norm that privileges white cultural values while rendering them invisible to those who benefit from them. Participants' experiences echoed these ideas, describing how notions of neutrality, objectivity, and professionalism often align with cultural norms in practice and constrain racial equity-focused work (McIntosh, 1992). DiAngelo's (2018) notion of white fragility also resonated with participants. They described how institutional and interpersonal dynamics were experienced as protecting whiteness by discouraging critical engagement with race and maintaining comfort through race-negating ideologies. In these ways, whiteness was understood by participants as sustaining itself through the regulation of discourse and marginalising PRE efforts.

Portland illustrated this dynamic in his reflection on language norms:

I asked [coworker] if using slang or colloquialisms could be seen as a skill, but the response was that it's not professional, it's not proper. I reflected on that...what does that say about how I view young people and other members of the community who speak that way?

This reflection was offered as an example of how participants grappled with whiteness, hidden benchmarks for professionalism, and how Portland's reflexivity challenged implicit hierarchies. It also reflects an internal conversation as a basis for human agency in response to cultural conditioning. Hanover similarly problematised assumptions that racial representation alone can mitigate racism:

“I raised that racialisation of behaviour starts early...the early years lead responded quickly, saying many staff are Black or of mixed heritage, and so this wasn’t happening...I pointed out [with support of the evidence base] that racism can still occur.”

Although these reflections appear to address distinct concerns, one about language, the other about representation, both unmask whiteness as a structure that dictates legitimacy and marginalises other ways of being. Their insights align with the assertion that racism is embedded in everyday institutional practice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Manchester offered a systems-level observation, “What I find is, in the personal, it’s easier to talk about...I think at a [LA] level, there’s sometimes a resistance to thinking that race is playing a role at a systemic level...” Her reflection adds another layer to participants’ meaning-making, highlighting how whiteness functions not only as interpersonal avoidance but as a structure of institutional silence. Together, these accounts show how participants conceptualised whiteness as shaping the boundaries of professional credibility and structuring the emotional and cognitive demands of anti-racist work.

4.4.3 Bureaucratic contract

Participants spoke about how specific service commissioning models, particularly traded service arrangements, were experienced as embodying structural inhibitions to sustained engagement with PRE. Participants often narrated these models as being driven by outcomes and standardisation, and in turn as reinforcing a bureaucratic contract that limits the depth and scope of PRE in LA EP practice. The traded nature of Maroon Vale EPS was described by participants as measures which placed emphasis on contracting setting-led work, and outputs towards statutory processes, often at the expense of the trust-building and critical dialogue necessary for ARP. Participants spoke about their experiences of how time-limited

work curtailed opportunities for developing the relationships and reflective spaces required for systemic equity-focused change. In doing so, participants made sense of their experiences through a tension between their ethical commitments and their agency constrained by the systemic structures of commissioned service models.

Manchester reflected on this pressure:

“We’re trying...to bring it into even our statutory work...the constraints on the capacity are just the nature of the work itself...like two days to do a piece of statutory work that doesn’t really allow you to make a relationship that feels maybe safe enough [to talk about racial inequities at a systems level].”

Here, I interpreted this as a conflict between time-driven delivery and relational practice was narrated as underscoring the limitations of a bureaucratic contract that centres efficiency over equity. Participants described this tension in ethical and emotional terms. Portland called for structural realignment, “There should be space and supervision to talk about the individual [casework and concepts that support ARP and PRE] ...how would that translate back into the forward-facing [work]?” This statement reflects a desire to reconnect the ethical intent of ARP with systemic practice, a core tenet for transformation through internal deliberation and external change.

Mary added, “I don’t want anti-racism or even this idea of promoting racial equity to be an extra thing...it should be part of the ethical standard, part of the role. Not a choice.” Mary’s view as interpreted as a reflection of morphogenetic aspiration, a desire to shift structures in ways that better align with one’s internal moral positioning (Archer, 2003). The misalignment between personal ethics and structural design was consistently noted across participant narratives, as they described grappling with how their commitments could be constrained or enabled by institutional arrangements. The bureaucratic contract was

constructed as a constraining generative mechanism, narrated as limiting the depth of systemic PRE work by rendering it subordinate to performance metrics. However, participants also narrated practices of relational reflexivity, ethical resistance, and strategic advocacy as ways of expanding their professional remit and disrupting this constraint.

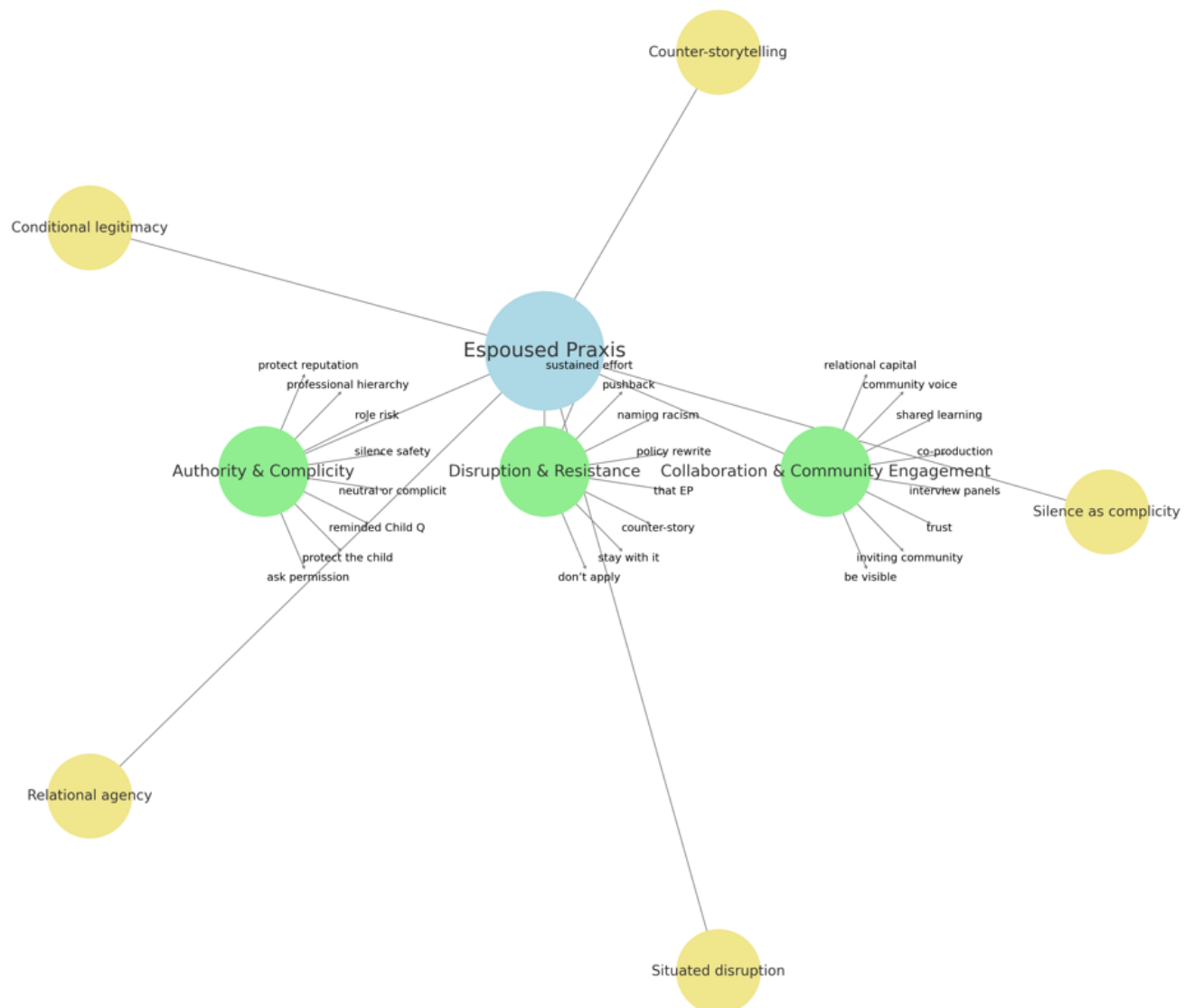
Collectively, these accounts construct the bureaucratic contract as a generative mechanism that mediates the relationship between individual ethical agency and institutional constraint. Within this system, efficiency and measurability often displace relational depth and critical engagement, narrowing the possibilities for sustained PRE. Yet participants' reflections also reveal that relational reflexivity and ethical resistance can serve as counter-practices, creating micro-spaces of disruption within an otherwise performative structure. These dynamic underscores the paradox of PRE within bureaucratic systems, where transformation must be negotiated through, rather than outside of, the very structures that constrain it.

4.5 Theme 4: Espoused Praxis

Participants' reflections explored a complex praxis that involved both individual agency and structural conditioning. Participants expressed strong commitments to equity and inclusion, yet the enactment of these commitments was shaped by systemic and contextual constraints. *Espoused praxis* thus becomes a space of negotiation, where values, limitations, and contradictions are continually navigated. Participants' accounts revealed that engaging in PRE is an ongoing, reflexive process requiring ethical clarity, critical self-awareness, and strategic action within complex systems. See figure 8.

Figure 8

Overarching theme 4: Espoused Praxis thematic map



4.5.1 Authority and complicity

Participants constructed their experiences of professional norms, institutional structures, and internalised expectations as intersecting in ways that shaped their ethical actions and their moments of constrained silence. Participants consistently acknowledged the complexity of navigating authority in a system that simultaneously enables and restricts anti-racist work. These accounts resonate with Archer's (2003) assertion that reflexive agents often find themselves constrained by systemic contradictions and must choose between institutional conformity and ethical fidelity.

Clarendon, Catherine, and Portland, for example, reflected on the emotional and relational negotiations involved in challenging institutional racism without damaging professional relationships or trust with schools. Trelawny recalled, “The CAMHS clinical nurse and clinical psychologist were engaging in what I perceived as adultification...They suggested [a nine-year-old girl] was flirting with the male nurse...I challenged them, reminded them of Child Q and the impact of such language.” Trelawny’s example illustrates the use of professional authority to disrupt harmful narratives. Her courage to confront colleagues, while maintaining relational integrity, exemplifies the emotional and ethical labour central to PRE. It also reflects interest convergence, where anti-racist interventions may only be accepted when they align with existing institutional comfort or reputational goals (Bell, 1980).

Elizabeth highlighted how the fear of jeopardising professional relationships, even with colleagues who share one’s racial identity, was experienced as inhibiting her from naming racism, “We all agree that institutional racism exists...and we’re just trying to protect the child.” Her hesitancy reflects the institutional pressure to remain neutral even when consensus exists. This reveals how complicity was constructed as manifesting not through intent, but through silence and strategic avoidance. I interpreted this as an illustration of the tension between agency and the conditioning structures of professional culture.

Manchester shared how naming race remained a calculated act, “I ask permission to talk about things like race...I suppose I’m acknowledging it could potentially be a sensitive subject...I don’t wanna also abuse the power differential that comes with my role.” This quote reflects the relational caution exercised by EPs in conversations about race and the emotional calculus involved in enacting one’s ethical commitments. This resonates with internal conversations as shaping moral deliberation, where the relational costs of action weighed heavily on participants’ sense of what was possible.

In contrast, Hanover demonstrated a more confident exercise of authority, “...becoming actively anti-racist is one of our service development plans ...it’s something to continue and grow and learn.” Her leadership example illustrates morphogenetic influence, where structural change was narrated as being facilitated by reflexive leadership and long-term systemic vision. Rather than viewing ARP as a project, Hanover positioned it as a continuous ethical and professional standard.

Collaboration and collective accountability were also identified as means of resisting complicity. Clarendon shared, “I try and make it a point...that I always had a community member on interview panels...they just bring an added perspective.” This action redistributes evaluative authority and embeds community voice into institutional processes, demonstrating a commitment to equity beyond rhetoric. Participants also reflected on the limits of institutional endorsement when it was not accompanied by genuine inclusion in decision-making. Clarendon expressed frustration, “There was a group of headteachers meeting to tackle race inequality ... I was told it was a space for headteachers only. The reason given was that our presence as EPs might compromise their sense of safety.” This exclusion exemplifies how performative inclusion can reproduce professional gatekeeping, maintaining the appearance of progress while reinforcing existing hierarchies. I interpreted this moment as a reminder that institutional power is often sustained through the regulation of participation, controlling who speaks, who is heard, and whose knowledge is legitimised (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Across narratives, participants framed authority as something to be used carefully but purposefully. From their accounts, I interpreted that silence was rarely neutral; it was a consequence of navigating institutional resistance. Even within these constraints, participants exercised action to PRE. These reflections show that complicity was experienced not as an absence of care or commitment, but as a by-product of institutional cultures that demand emotional containment and procedural conformity.

4.5.2 Disruption and resistance

Participants narrated intentional acts of disruption and resistance as part of their efforts to which they challenge racial inequities within and beyond their immediate professional contexts. Disruption and resistance were described to be embedded in the everyday interactions, formulations, and decision-making practices that shaped how services were delivered and whose experiences were acknowledged. Participants described a spectrum of resistance, ranging from subtle shifts in consultation language to more overt interventions in policy and practice. I interpreted these acts as counter-narratives, agentic interventions enacted within, and at times against, structural constraints. Across their accounts, participants exercised reflexive agency to navigate and reshape their professional roles despite institutional pressures to conform.

Trelawny's development of systemic accountability mechanisms exemplified strategic disruption, "...exit interviews when people leave to ask about their experiences of [PRE] in the service...becoming actively anti-racist is one of our service development plans..." By embedding the PRE into service structures, Trelawny used her seniority not simply to comply with organisational expectations, but to reframe what those expectations could entail. Her work reflects a morphogenetic orientation, seeking transformation through embedded, sustained, and structurally aligned change. Elizabeth illustrated a more interpersonal form of resistance, "He was saying, I don't think he's vulnerable because he's a Black boy... I said being a Black boy with additional needs makes him more vulnerable." I interpreted this account to be an example of racial or colour blindness and epistemic ignorance, where refusal to see race as a risk factor is itself a denial of institutional and systemic racism. Elizabeth's intervention challenged dominant narratives and was positioned as opening space for a richer understanding of the child's vulnerability. Mary shared how she resisted institutional avoidance, "The school shut that...kind of shut it down quite quickly... I then said I think it's

good to actually stay with this conversation because I can hear it's really important for that child." Mary's example was narrated as reflecting a relational form of resistance that centres children's voices and experiences, resisting the institutional urge to minimise discomfort. Her action was presented as an instance of using professional credibility to hold space for difficult conversations. Participants also engaged in collaborative forms of resistance. By challenging normative assumptions about who holds expertise, Clarendon also redistributed power and embedded equity into recruitment structures. Such actions were narrated as PRE by resisting institutional insularity and enacting counter-storytelling by creating space for marginalised perspectives.

Catherine shared how she worked with leadership to embed anti-racism into hiring practices "I asked our PEP to include in the advert that if you don't want to work in an actively anti-racist way, you shouldn't apply for a job here." This was described as a direct intervention in shaping the values and culture of the service. Catherine's action reflects not only professional conviction but also an understanding of how institutional messages set the tone for accountability. I interpreted her stance as both disruptive and resistant, presenting an assertion of agency enacted within, and in response to, structural hierarchies of race and professional power. For a minoritised NQEP to articulate this position to a White senior leader represents a moment of reflexive courage, where ethical conviction intersects with the risk of speaking truth to power. Furthermore, this act exemplifies how minoritised professionals may be able to navigate stratified systems, exercising morphogenetic agency to reconfigure institutional norms from within the system. Yet participants also described resistance being misinterpreted or restricted. Clarendon shared frustration at being excluded from a borough-wide race initiative, "I was told it was a space for headteachers only...even though there was no evidence of us being inappropriate or accusatory." This exclusion was narrated as illustrating the performative boundaries around racial equity work, where

participation is encouraged rhetorically but constrained structurally. Participants recognised that resistance often required careful navigation of relational politics, emotional energy, and professional credibility to effectively PRE.

Ultimately, disruption and resistance were constructed not as reactive or individualistic, rather as relational, ethically driven, and context-sensitive strategies to PRE within Maroon Vale's EPS. Participants resistance created space for different conversations, different interpretations of behaviour, and different configurations of professional practice. Their efforts were interpreted as challenging hegemonic norms of whiteness and a hopeful act of transformation.

4.5.3 Collaboration and community engagement

Participants narrated their efforts to engage with families, communities, and school leaders to co-construct ARP in ways that moved beyond individual action. This theme captured participants' active meaning-making around collaboration as both a professional stance and an ethical commitment. Collaboration was described not only as a method but as a value, one that affirmed the importance of relational accountability, cultural responsiveness, and collective responsibility in PRE. Participants recognised that sustainable ARP was dependent on building partnerships with members of the school communities and positioning these partnerships as ethical and strategically significant. These relationships were understood as social mechanisms through which institutional change could be enacted, reflecting how structural conditions shape and constrain professional agency. As Clarendon explained:

There's an online workshop on Saturday about working with the community... getting their ideas. Making sure that if we are doing any research on, with, about Black

children or for Black children, that we're working with the community... and learning from the community as well in a meaningful way.

These collaborations were narrated as enabling participants to bridge gaps between lived experience and service delivery. I interpreted these accounts as an illustration of how participants conceptualised collaboration as reciprocal learning rather than professional outreach, a recognition that communities hold essential expertise that should inform EP practice. Clarendon and Mary reflected on the value of relational continuity, which reframed community scepticism not as a deficit but as a legitimate response to historical exclusion. I interpreted this stance as an alignment with the centring of counter-narratives and the validation of historically marginalised voices as legitimate forms of knowledge. Such positioning resonates with centring the voices of those most impacted by institutional racism and reimagining expertise as distributed across roles and lived experience. Trelawny also highlighted how the school community's misunderstanding of the EP role can undermine trust, reflecting on the need for proactive engagement and visibility:

Through the trainee EP equity project... engaging in the community... the insight that we got from that the community didn't even really know how to differentiate us from CAMHS... I'd hope that going forward, we would do some active outreach work on that.

I interpreted this reflection as a representation of how limited visibility operates as a structural mechanism that reproduces inequity. Efforts to address these gaps were positioned as attempts to reshape relational and cultural structures that have historically marginalised communities. Participants also engaged in strategic partnerships with school leadership teams. Mary shared:

It's schools that have bought this programme... We'll be offering training and workshops to parents and teachers...the [Maroon Vale EPS] we're going to be working with the leadership team to look at their behaviour policy and their SEND offer policy, reviewing, revising, and adapting [at a systems level].

I interpreted this example as an illustration of how participants framed systemic collaboration as a route to embedding PRE into institutional frameworks. Here, relational partnerships were narrated as enabling schools and participants to reflect on and revise foundational practices. Elizabeth's reflections further illustrated how collaboration bridged divides between home and school, creating a space for shared accountability:

How can we come in and bring home and school together... We can help turn that splitting that's going on, 'you're all bad, we're all good,' and actually turn the conversation onto the child that we're all here to discuss.

Her account exemplified how participants viewed collaboration as a means of relational repair, where joint dialogue could counter divisive narratives and promote a shared sense of purpose around children's needs. Hanover, too, described collaboration as embedded within her everyday consultation practice, "I always try and end by co-constructing the next steps and maybe one or two outcomes, ways forward to support that child." This approach reflected participants' view that authority within PRE was relational and co-constructed, grounded in reciprocity, co-learning, and mutual accountability. Furthermore, I interpreted them as demonstrating how participants actively constructed collaboration as a discursive space where shared values and power could be renegotiated as an influence to shape the culture and values of the service itself to enact change.

At the same time, participants reflected on the barriers to meaningful collaboration. Clarendon, Manchester, and Hanover noted that PRE initiatives were often praised

rhetorically but lacked structural support, particularly when community voices challenged hierarchical norms. Clarendon explained, “Headteachers meet to talk about tackling race inequality... one workstream is about working with the community and another about pupil voice... I thought we needed to be part of that.” Her comment reflected participants’ awareness that sustaining anti-racist collaboration required redistribution of voice and influence within institutional hierarchies. These reflections illuminate the generative tension between agency and constraint, showing how practitioners exercised moral and relational agency within structures marked by institutional whiteness.

Across accounts, collaboration was understood as both a relational ethic and a structural intervention. Whether through family partnerships, school policy work, or community outreach, participants positioned collaboration as a mechanism for redistributing power and redefining whose knowledge counts in shaping practice. These narratives demonstrate how participants actively constructed collaboration as both a discursive and material space through which shared values could be enacted and systems transformed. Despite institutional constraints, participants remained committed to building alliances that redefined whose voices were legitimised and how power could be shared.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the RTA, highlighting four overarching themes: *Self: Disruptive Settling, Fluid Tension, Relational Ecologies, and Espoused Praxis*, with their subthemes. These themes represent how participants experienced and navigated the work of PRE in LA practice. The findings demonstrate how participants’ accounts reflected their agency and practice constraints, situating participants’ experiences of PRE within various structures, mechanisms, and professional practices. Chapter 5 will discuss the findings within the context of the wider literature, considering their implications, and reflecting on their contribution to professional practice.

5. Discussion

5.1 Chapter overview

Eight HCPC-registered EPs participated in this study, offering diverse perspectives on PRE from Maroon Vale EPS. Their accounts emphasise that PRE in educational psychology is a dynamic, relational, and context-dependent practice. These practices were shaped by each participant's identity, positionality, and career stage, offering valuable insights into how PRE is understood, enacted, and sustained across different organisational and socio-political contexts. Participants narrated that PRE was not a fixed set of actions but a dynamic, evolving commitment involving emotional labour, critical reflection, strategic decision-making, and responsiveness to community voices. This chapter reflects on my interpretation of participants' accounts, considering how the RQs guiding this study have been addressed and the broader implications for professional practice. It draws connections between participants' experiences, existing scholarship, and the sociopolitical structures that shape LA EP practice. In doing so, the discussion examines the dynamic relationship between EPs' internal reflexivity and the external contexts in which they work.

While Chapter 2 provided a foundational overview of relevant scholarship, additional literature was consulted during this study's discussion phase to support emerging interpretations and to contextualise the findings. Rather than providing definitive answers to the RQs, this chapter interprets the findings in relation to wider theoretical, professional, and systemic contexts. The focus is on the patterns, tensions, and implications identified through the RTA, considering how these insights extend understanding of the conditions that facilitate or constrain systemic change toward racial equity.

This discussion is structured around the four research questions that guided the study, which explored how underlying sociopolitical structures and mechanisms shape the EPs' capacity to PRE and enact ARP; how LA EPs experience and make sense of this work in practice; what role they play in supporting systemic change; and what factors facilitate or constrain the PRE within educational contexts. These questions are revisited through an interpretive synthesis of the study's key themes, analysed through the lens of CR-CRT to illuminate the interplay between individual agency and structural constraint. In doing so, this chapter situates participants' reflections within the broader professional, cultural, and institutional mechanisms that shape EP practice and considers how these insights advance current understandings of ARP and PRE within the LA context.

5.2 The influence of sociopolitical mechanisms on EP practice

I identified examples within participants' accounts that illustrated how national policies, SEND funding mechanisms, leadership cultures, and service models constrained the transformative aims of ARP. These were interpreted as conditioning structures, particularly the traded service model and entrenched professional norms of whiteness, which participants narrated as significantly shaping the extent to which EPs could exercise agency to PRE (Done *et al.*, 2021; Tobin *et al.*, 2021). Beyond these structural constraints, participants described a complex web of contextual and relational influences that further conditioned their practice. Leadership climates and organisational cultures were perceived as decisive, with supportive leaders enabling psychologically safe conversations about race, while performative or defensive environments reinforced silence and compliance. High caseloads, statutory demands, and traded commissioning models curtailed opportunities for reflective or preventative work, confining EPs to reactive, assessment-driven tasks. Participants also reflected that dominant norms of professional "objectivity" and neutrality constrained moral agency by discouraging explicit engagement with racial inequity (Farquharson *et al.*, 2022).

Access to critical supervision spaces and sustained anti-racism CPD was identified as an important enabling condition, yet these opportunities were inconsistently available across systems for professionals. Finally, community trust and historical patterns of exclusion were seen as shaping relational access, requiring ongoing visibility and engagement to rebuild confidence in the EPS. These interacting mechanisms, which are structural, cultural, and agential, collectively shaped the conditions under which EPs could enact ARP and influence systemic change.

Participants' reflections positioned ARP as a process of ongoing critical reflection on positionality. Through supervision and peer discussions, participants actively interrogated their internalised assumptions and the institutional norms shaping their understanding of professional identity. Mary and Elizabeth menarticulated a sustained commitment to allyship and ethical engagement. Their narratives underscored that meaningful ARP required humility, relational integrity, and solidarity with BGMH colleagues and members of their school communities experiencing racism in education. This form of relational reflexivity was narrated as enabling EPs to align their practice with the lived realities of those they served, challenging the professional norm of rigid boundary distinctions and emotional detachment shaping service delivery. These findings were situated within the broader sociopolitical landscape in the UK, characterised by tensions between formal commitments to equality and the persistence of structural injustice. While liberal frameworks of fairness and neutrality remain institutionally dominant, they are often ill-equipped to account for the enduring legacies of colonialism and dispossession that continue to structure educational inequality (Gillborn, 2015; Tikly, 2021). This critique was used to call for a move beyond universalist proceduralism toward equity-informed, culturally situated practice. The data were interpreted here as affirming this need, revealing how superficial commitments to "equality" can obscure or even undermine efforts toward PRE. A central example concerned the impact of the traded

service model. Participants described how commissioned EP work prioritised measurable outputs aligned with statutory requirements, leaving little room for preventative, community-based, or culturally responsive interventions. This aligns with the work of Lee and Woods (2017), who argue that austerity and marketisation have reshaped public services in ways that diminish professional autonomy and constrain systemic thinking. Participants in this study reported feeling restricted by these pressures, which undermined their ability to engage in sustained ARP or PRE across multiple levels of the school ecology. Such narrowing of EP practice is echoed in Bateman's (2023) critique of managerial cultures, which may be argued they serve to fragment and individualise anti-racist efforts. While Done *et al.* (2021) frame EPs' struggles in terms of ethical dilemmas, Bateman's psychosocial analysis adds depth by revealing how institutional cultures internalise and reproduce dominant norms. Similarly, Tikly (2021) further contends that the lack of systemic attention to equity marginalises PRE initiatives, while Francis' (2022) work demonstrates that PRE becomes peripheral without its integration into commissioning and accountability frameworks. Together, these authors point to an urgent need to embed ARP within institutional architecture, not just in individual commitments.

This study's findings also offer a layered nature of EPs' challenges. At the empirical level, participants reported tensions between their statutory duties and aspirations for social justice. At the actual level, institutional mechanisms, such as proceduralism, performativity, and traded models, constrained the scope for relational and preventative practice. At the real level, deeper generative mechanisms, such as institutional whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993; Leonardo, 2009) and Eurocentric epistemologies, continued to shape how inclusion is conceptualised and enacted. These mechanisms were narrated as sustained epistemic exclusions, marginalising racially situated knowledge and limiting the possibilities for ARP. This reflects Bonilla-Silva's (1997) notion of colour-blind racism, whereby claims to

neutrality obscure the racialised dynamics embedded within professional structures. Despite these constraints, participants also identified generative mechanisms that supported PRE. Racially literate leadership was found to be a vital enabler, where senior leaders modelled reflexivity, resourced anti-racist initiatives, and fostered psychologically safe spaces. EPs described feeling protected and empowered to act in alignment with their values. Critical supervision and peer dialogue were also cited as crucial, offering spaces for identity exploration, collaborative learning, and emotional processing (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). These findings were positioned as evidencing counter-spaces that functioned as sites of resistance to challenge dominant ideologies and disrupt the normalising effects of whiteness within professional practice, by enabling the centring of marginalised knowledge.

In Maroon Vale EPS, these counter-spaces were operationalised through embedding ARP within organisational structures and everyday activities, such as strategic planning through service-level agreements, CPD programmes, and feedback loops. Where this occurred, PRE was not left to the individual conviction of the practitioner, as it was positioned as a collective service-level organisational priority. The diversity of participants' heritages foregrounded the situated nature of self-in-role in relation to sociopolitical mechanisms shaping EP practice. Participants used their lived experiences as epistemic anchors to reconcile professional expectations of neutrality. This represented reflexive agency operating within structural constraints; it constituted an act of counter-storytelling that challenged whiteness as the unmarked professional norm (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). For White participants, this often involved confronting complicity and re-examining neutrality as a political stance, whereas for BGMH participants, lived experience provided a critical standpoint from which to name and resist racial inequities in practice. Collectively, these reflections illustrate how sociopolitical mechanisms mediate the possibilities for PRE and ARP, situating professional identity as both a site of tension and transformation. Wider

sociopolitical events, such as the resurgence of the BLM, served as moments of rupture, prompting reflection and opening discursive space for PRE work. Some EPs described embedding critically informed psychology into case formulations, consultations, and systemic work to influence change from within.

Nonetheless, my interpretation of the findings suggests that inclusive aspirations of PRE do not consistently translate into meaningful structural reform. Without explicit race-specific guidance, such as acknowledgement within the SEND Code of Practice (2015), racial equity work remains discretionary and inconsistently applied in practice. In many cases, participants reported that service leadership support from the authority of the LA lacked the resource allocation or strategic commitment required for sustainable change. In this context, PRE risks becoming performative, stripped of accountability or transformative intent. The continued dominance of whiteness as an institutional norm, articulated through professional norms of emotional restraint, professionalism, and ‘objective’ knowledge, was also described as reproducing dominant White, middle-class values embedded in foundational EP practice (Gillborn *et al.*, 2021; Hong *et al.*, 2025). These norms influence the engagement of alternative epistemologies by marginalised minoritised staff and communities, reinforcing the inequities ARP seeks to disrupt. I interpret this as a critique of universalist policy frameworks that fail to challenge the structural roots of inequality, instead reproducing them under the guise of fairness and professionalism. Despite these challenges, this study also points to pathways for transformation. Participants described how PRE work was made possible through relationships, supervision, leadership, and small-scale acts of resistance. While broader systemic mechanisms may constrain these actions, participants narrated how EPs can still exercise moral and professional agency within the institutional structures to create incremental yet meaningful shifts toward racial equity.

This discussion presents my interpretation of the study's four research questions through a reflexive and critical lens. It examines how sociopolitical structures shape EPs' capacity to PRE in relation to RQ1; how EPs navigate the tensions, dilemmas, and ethical demands inherent in this work as enquired in RQ2; how they position themselves as systemic actors within organisational and professional contexts as it relates to RQ3; and how the conditions within LA EPs' enable or constrain the sustainability of RQ4. My interpretation of the findings suggests that, for ARP to be genuinely embedded within LA EPS, the PRE must become part of the profession's structural, cultural, and procedural fabric. Achieving this requires both sustained professional commitment and institutional transformation, a shift from discretionary individual efforts toward the collective enactment of grounded, systemic change.

5.3 The EP as systemic actor and disruptor

Participants narrated that the practice of educational psychology within an LA context is often distinctive due to the profession's systemic and multi-layered positioning at the intersection of psychology, education, and public service delivery. LA-based EPs are embedded within statutory and community-facing structures, enabling them to work across individual, group, and organisational levels. This positioning was narrated as affording opportunities to influence policy and practice through casework, consultation, and systemic interventions, while also constraining practice through statutory responsibilities, particularly the demands of EHCP assessments, outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE & DoHSC, 2015).

Participants' accounts revealed that this systemic positioning offered both opportunities and constraints when PRE and engaging in ARP. While all participants were committed to PRE, their reflections revealed a tension between espoused professional values and constrained enactment, which I interpreted as emblematic of the dialectic between

agency and structure. I understood these accounts as reflecting how the conditions of practice both restrict and require disruption, positioning the EP as a professional whose agency operates within and against institutional norms.

Collaboration was consistently constructed by participants as both a relational ethic and a strategy for disruption. Working alongside school staff, other professionals, parents, and children to co-construct shared understandings and shape interventions responsive to the cultural and systemic realities of each setting. Rather than oppositional or individual enactment, disruption was narrated as relational and dialogic, a collective process of unsettling inequitable norms through dialogue, trust, and co-construction. Through my reflexive engagement with these narratives, I interpreted collaboration as a practice that embodies relational accountability, offering a means of enacting ARP through connection rather than confrontation.

The EP role was constructed from participants' accounts as negotiated and contingent, shaped by individual agency, relational dynamics, and the broader institutional ecology. Participants described enacting their role as systemic actors through intentional, reflexive engagement with their professional authority and strategic disruption of normative structures. This interpretation resonates with Archer's (2003) morphogenetic theory, which posits that agents can transform social structures through reflexivity and action, even when constrained. I interpreted participants' reflexivity as racialised and situated, reflecting how professional legitimacy and agency were unevenly distributed within institutionally racist cultures.

Several participants spoke about the challenge of working within systems they simultaneously sought to transform. Catherine, for example, framed her work as psychological advocacy, using her statutory responsibilities to call attention to racial disparities in CYP experiences of education. I interpreted this as a recognition that racism is

embedded in the routine functions of institutions, necessitating active resistance enacted through everyday professional roles rather than detached critique within professional discourse (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Other participants, including Mary, Trelawny and Clarendon, recounted moments of direct challenge, confronting exclusionary practices, questioning racial bias in assumptions, and disrupting deficit narratives around behaviour and ability. Though not always institutionally sanctioned, these acts were framed as ethical imperatives rooted in professional identity. Drawing on Bandura's (2002) concept of moral agency, I understood these accounts as articulations of moral resistance; participants did not position themselves as active agents who reinterpreted and subverted institutional norms in pursuit of racial equity. This mode of practice, however, was narrated as emotionally and professionally complex. Participants often had to balance advocacy with maintaining professional relationships. For NQEPs, this tension was particularly acute, as their positional authority was still forming. The need to appear credible, competent and manage stakeholder expectations sometimes constrained how explicitly they could challenge inequitable practices. I interpreted these dynamics as illustrating a stratification of disruptiveness, where those with greater seniority, whiteness, or symbolic capital could challenge more safely than others (Bourdieu, 1986). This uneven distribution of safety and legitimacy reflects epistemic injustice, shaping who can disrupt and whose voices are sanctioned within the professional hierarchy.

Despite these constraints, participants described embedding PRE into routine practice, co-opting consultation frameworks to raise critical questions, re-framing narratives in supervision, and using reflective spaces to interrogate assumptions. These empirical-level acts of resistance reflect how agency operates within constraint, creating incremental shifts in dominant epistemologies. These actions, while subtle, had a cumulative effect of destabilising dominant norms about what constitutes valid psychological knowledge, intervention, or

professionalism (Bateman, 2023). Participants' reflections suggested that such disruption was rarely a singular event, but an ongoing, reflexive process enacted through relational encounters. These practices operate across the stratified domains of reality. At the empirical level, we observe the visible enactments of ARP in consultations, case discussions, and professional meetings. At the actual level, these acts interrupt routines and open new relational and procedural possibilities. At the real level, they challenge the underlying generative mechanisms that sustain inequity in education, such as institutional whiteness, deficit epistemologies, and managerial cultures that privilege compliance over equitable engagement with racial equity. This analysis suggests that ethical disruption is integral to educational psychology's systemic mandate, challenging the profession's historical attachment to neutrality.

Participants' reflections also illuminated the relational dimensions of visibility and trust. Those committed to PRE spoke about the importance of authentic engagement and presence within the communities they served. Trust was described as emerging through visible involvement, dialogue, and cultural humility, particularly with BGMH communities. I interpreted these accounts as examples of relational disruption, where systemic transformation occurs through authenticity and reciprocity rather than authority or confrontation. By working collaboratively toward systemic change, EPs were understood to contribute to educational environments that value diversity, foster belonging, and promote psychological well-being. These accounts, therefore, exemplify how disruption, as narrated by participants, was enacted relationally, through connection, visibility, and shared accountability rather than through confrontation alone. This discussion reflects my interpretation of the study's four research questions through a reflexive and critical lens. The analysis considers how sociopolitical structures shape EPs' capacity for systemic disruption in relation to RQ1; how the lived experiences and professional identities of LA EPs inform

their capacity to challenge inequity and shape the forms and risks of disruption central to RQ2; how institutional cultures enable or constrain disruptive practice as explored in RQ3; and how unevenly distributed responsibility for racial equity and anti-racist work generates the ethical and emotional risks identified in RQ4. Taken together, these interpretations suggest that the EP's role as a systemic disruptor is both necessary and precarious, a reflexive practice of resistance that reveals, contests, and gradually reshapes the mechanisms that govern institutional racism in educational systems.

5.4 Experiences of ARP in LA EP practice

Within the participants' accounts, ARP was narrated as multifaceted, an endeavour that spanned intellectual, emotional, relational, and physical dimensions underpinning their engagement with PRE in practice. For participants, ARP was described as an embodied and situated practice that shapes their sense of self, emotional regulation, and professional engagement, particularly within systems resistant to structural transformation. These accounts illustrated how engagement with ARP was experienced as both personal and systemic, an ongoing negotiation between internal reflexivity and external constraint. Participants' experiences were mediated by racial identity, institutional history, and the racialised professional cultures that define credibility and legitimacy within EP practice. Even ethically committed practitioners described navigating institutional norms that privileged neutrality and devalued experiential knowledge. I interpreted these patterns as revealing how institutional cultures regulate emotion and belonging, shaping whose knowledge is legitimised in the profession. Participants conveyed that trust and ARP's transformative potential were undermined when institutions failed to uphold their side of the psychological and bureaucratic contract. Without systemic alignment, anti-racist efforts were experienced as ad hoc and precarious, heavily reliant on individual conviction rather than collective accountability. I understood this reliance on individual moral agency as symptomatic of a

broader structural mechanism within educational psychology, the devolution of responsibility from system to individual, in which emotional and ethical labour necessary to support PRE becomes individual responsibility. Participants' reflections on traded and procedural logics described how these models compressed time, formalised practice, and narrowed the conditions for relational or reflexive engagement. At the same time, whiteness was identified as an operating mechanism of credibility, setting affective and epistemic boundaries around what counted as professional conduct. Participants shared examples of how this dynamic encouraged self-surveillance and self-censorship, functioning as an institutional defence mechanism that preserved comfort and normative order. Through my interpretive analysis, I understood these accounts as revealing a recursive loop: the more emotional risk participants took in naming race, the more the system pathologised that expression as unprofessional. Breaking this loop required activating counter-mechanisms, such as race-literate supervision, explicit policy framing, and collective accountability, which redistributed emotional labour and legitimised conversations about race as professional rather than personal.

The theme *Self: Disruptive Settling* captured participants' negotiation of identity intersected with their professional responsibilities, producing what I interpreted to be a form of critical discomfort that was both generative and exhausting. This discomfort functioned as a mechanism of reflexive awareness, simultaneously prompting moral questioning and exposing the unequal distribution of psychological safety across racial lines. Subthemes such as noticing and knowing, relational reflexivity, psychological safety, and emotional labour highlighted the ongoing negotiation of credibility, legitimacy, and ethical responsibility.

Participants narrated ARP as both an internal practice of self-examination and an external systemic intervention. I understood emotional labour to be a defining and often invisible component of participants' experiences, challenging the dominant framing of psychological safety as an individual resource. Instead, it was described as a collective and

racialised condition, co-constructed within professional relationships and institutional culture. Unless addressed systemically, the burden of emotional labour was said to continue to fall unequally, revealing a generative mechanism of inequity, the privatisation of affective labour among those most affected by racism. This dynamic constrained ARP's transformative potential and reproduced within services the very inequities it sought to dismantle. Participants framed genuine progress as contingent on disrupting these professional hierarchies and ensuring that all voices are meaningfully included in institutional processes. As Williams *et al.* (2022) argue, reflexivity must be structurally supported for EPs to critically engage with how whiteness, class, and coloniality shape psychological practice. ARP, therefore, was not a checklist but a relational, political, and epistemic endeavour, constructed through dialogue, disruption, and ethical accountability.

For many participants, especially those from BGMH, PRE was narrated as more than a professional duty; it was communicated to be a moral and personal imperative. Portland articulated this dual burden by describing the emotional labour of "knowing your truth" while anticipating misrecognition in predominantly White professional spaces. I interpreted his account as an example of the embodied contradictions of Du Bois' (1903) double consciousness and contemporary experiences of epistemic surveillance. Participants' accounts collectively illuminated how normative constructs such as neutrality, emotional restraint, and proceduralism were perceived as expressions of institutional whiteness (Leonardo, 2009), reinforcing exclusion and limiting the safety and authenticity of minoritised professionals. Institutional frameworks such as the Equality Act (2010) and the PSED convey formal commitments to inclusion yet often overlook the embodied and emotional toll of anti-racist engagement. This reflects what Bhambra *et al.* (2018) and Warmington (2020) critique of the depoliticisation of race in policy, where whiteness remains unnamed and its effects unchallenged. This depoliticisation functions as a generative mechanism that sustains

institutional silence around racism; it operates to legitimise inequity through claims of neutrality. Catherine noted how emotional expression was often interpreted as unprofessional, mirroring Bateman's (2023) concept of whiteness as an institutional logic regulating affect, language, and legitimacy. Such norms suppress racial expression and enforce compliance with dominant cultural conduct, thereby regulating the emotional economies of educational settings. Participants linked these mechanisms to the everyday experiences of BGMH children, parents, and colleagues, whose sense of belonging and safety was mediated by these professional norms. Professional precarity experienced by participants was compounded in services that lacked race-literate supervision or where psychological safety was absent. Several described how the lack of reflexive spaces, critical dialogue, and race-conscious leadership contributes to isolation and burnout. These narratives reveal how the absence of reflexive spaces constrained agency, transforming potential for systemic change into emotional endurance. Participants repeatedly stressed that sustainable engagement required institutional commitment, not individual resilience.

Participants expressed scepticism about institutional rhetoric surrounding inclusion, particularly when stated commitments were not followed by meaningful structural action. This perceived dissonance between institutional discourse and practice often became a catalyst for reflection, especially among White participants, who described navigating discomfort and emerging awareness of their own positionality within systems that espouse inclusion while reproducing inequity. I interpreted these accounts as expressions of how performative inclusion operates as a sustaining mechanism of whiteness within professional cultures. This dissonance reveals the generative mechanisms that reproduce inequitable practices despite claims of progress. For instance, Mary described an internal conflict which she endured as her understanding of racism deepened through conversations in her personal relationships. Hanover's personal awakening created a sense of disconnect from her team, as

her growing awareness unsettled familiar professional dynamics. Elizabeth reflected on her tendency toward spectator empathy, acknowledging racism intellectually but struggling to move beyond observation. I interpreted these accounts as exposing whiteness as a positional norm that affords emotional distance and epistemic authority (Ahmed, 2007), a finding consistent with broader discussions of White educators' learning trajectories (Picower, 2009; DiAngelo, 2018). Participants also shared the risks involved in naming racism within institutional contexts. Some were instructed to remove race-related terms or soften descriptions of racial dynamics to protect reputational interests. I interpreted these practices as illustrating how whiteness operates as an institutional defence mechanism, one that prioritises safeguarding the presentation of institutional legitimacy and preserving the comfort of dominant groups over fostering racial equity as a virtue of inclusive practice. This neutralisation of race functions as a generative mechanism through which existing power hierarchies are maintained (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Peters, 2015).

The analysis engages with RQ2 and RQ4 by examining how systemic and structural conditions shape the emotional and relational dimensions of ARP. It also addresses RQ1 and RQ3 by illustrating how the absence of race-literate supervision, coherent policy mandates, and institutional accountability mechanisms constrains what EPs can meaningfully achieve in practice. What is considered in this interpretation is that embodied engagement with ARP constitutes a deeply situated, ethically charged, and institutionally mediated endeavour, one embedded within a stratified system in which racism both limits and provokes reflexive, and at times, disruptive forms of professional agency.

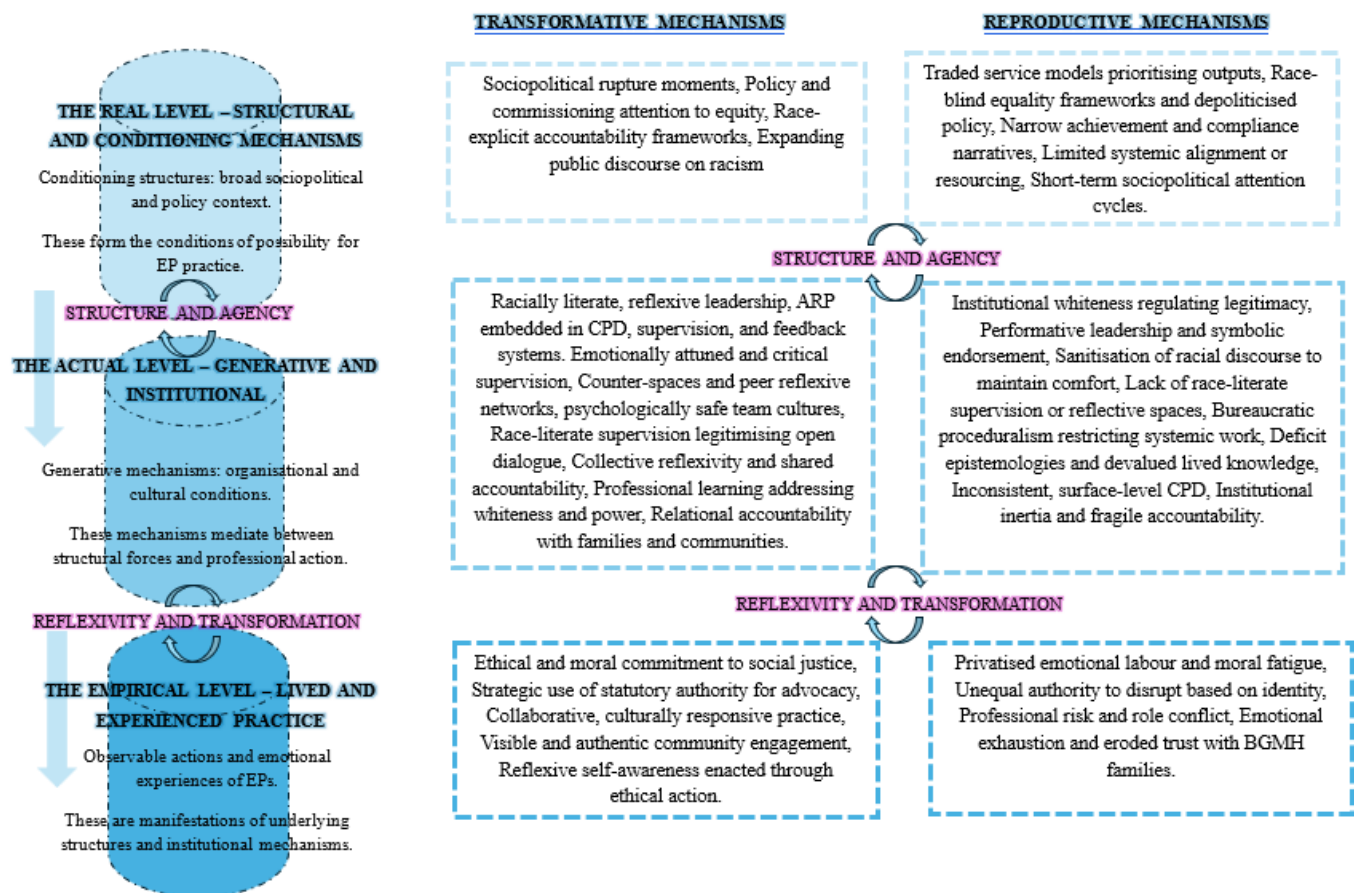
5.5 Mechanisms shaping PRE

Participants' accounts presented a range of facilitators and barriers that shaped their ability to engage in ARP and PRE within Maroon Vale LA EPS. These dynamics were interconnected, and facilitators often counterbalanced entrenched barriers; practitioners'

reflections revealed the tensions embedded in everyday practice. See Figure 9. The following will explore these generative mechanisms.

Figure 9

Multi-layered mechanisms facilitating and hindering EPs' capacity to PRE



Note. The figure integrates analytic and theoretical insights developed through discussion, not direct data extraction.

Supervision spaces and racially literate team cultures were narrated as vital facilitators in participants' experiences of PRE and addressing whiteness within LA EP practice. When supervision created emotionally safe and reflexive environments, participants described being able to interrogate internalised racial norms, legitimise lived knowledge within professional dialogue, and build resilience against systemic pressures. I interpreted these spaces as

operating as counter-mechanisms, enabling participants to exercise moral agency within constraining institutional conditions. However, participants questioned the sustainability and depth of these spaces, acknowledging the unequal emotional and professional burden placed on minoritised colleagues to sustain anti-racist reflection without broader structural support. Without institutional embedding, these mechanisms were experienced as fragile forms of relational accountability, often manifesting as emotional fatigue, moral strain, and weakened trust between the EPS and BGMH families.

This reliance on relational mechanisms drew attention to the central role of leadership. Participants recognised that sustaining racially literate and reflective cultures required organisational commitment rather than goodwill alone. Leadership commitment, therefore, was interpreted as a generative mechanism at the actual level, shaping the capacity to embed PRE meaningfully. When absent, endorsement of ARP and PRE was experienced as performative, positioning the EPS as complicit in maintaining racial inequities. In Maroon Vale, participants described how leadership integrated ARP into accountability processes and strategic planning, which helped sustain change beyond short-term initiatives. Leadership endorsement legitimised PRE, enhanced credibility with families, and protected practitioners from carrying the emotional weight of ARP in isolation. These reflections illustrate how leadership bridged structural and relational domains, translating ethical intent into collective, system-wide reflexive practice.

Leadership commitment was also closely tied to professional learning. Participants emphasised that the values signalled by leaders influenced the kinds of CPD that were prioritised and resourced. CPD was narrated as both an enabler and a mechanism of constraint to support participants' capacity to PRE. Training that explicitly addressed institutional racism provided practitioners with conceptual, political, and relational tools to challenge whiteness in practice, enabling EPs to move beyond surface-level diversity work.

However, participants described significant inconsistency across services, noting that CPD often focused narrowly on cultural awareness. Such provision left practitioners underprepared and, at times, reproduced the very inequities it sought to address. I interpreted this variability as reflecting the uneven distribution of epistemic resources within the profession, where access to race-conscious learning depended on leadership priorities rather than shared professional standards. This disjointed weight of responsibility reinforced the broader mechanism of transference, where accountability for ARP was displaced from organisational systems onto individual conviction.

Learning was also framed as relational and dialogic. Participants reflected that knowledge for effective PRE was distributed across families and school communities, positioning engagement with stakeholders as a parallel form of professional learning. Relational engagement was narrated as central to ARP, with co-constructed approaches that centred the lived experiences and cultural knowledge of CYP and families. I interpreted these accounts as exemplifying epistemic justice in action, where knowledge is co-created across difference and hierarchy. Participants emphasised the importance of recognising community leadership, drawing on cultural values, and incorporating stakeholder perspectives into service delivery. Where such partnerships occurred, families perceived EPs as collaborative and trustworthy; where they did not, interventions were experienced as imposed or irrelevant, undermining their legitimacy and transformative potential. These relational mechanisms at the empirical level demonstrated how epistemic justice can function as a counterforce to institutional whiteness, redistributing knowledge and responsibility across relationships. Yet, participants also reflected that individual conviction remained a core driver of equitable practice, particularly where organisational and community structures were lacking in capacity.

Ethical commitment and moral conviction were consistently narrated as sustaining forces that anchored participants' motivation. Participants described shared values of social justice that enabled them to persist in resistant or ambivalent environments. I interpreted this ethical grounding as a real-level mechanism of moral agency, giving practitioners courage to challenge inequity through consultation, casework, and dialogue. Yet, participants also questioned the fairness of relying so heavily on personal conviction, reflecting on whether the system offered sufficient time, protection, and support to sustain this work. This dialectic between moral agency and institutional constraint illustrates how resistance and reproduction coexist, with emotional endurance functioning as both strength and symptom. Participants' reflections also revealed how broader structural mechanisms amplified inequity. The traded service model positioned ARP as a commodified offer, contingent on schools' financial capacity and willingness to invest in equity-driven transformation. This systemic practice deepened inequalities, as schools serving the most marginalised populations were often least able to purchase support. Participants described how dominant achievement narratives in UK education, centred on compliance, data, and attainment, further marginalised relational and preventative work. I interpreted these mechanisms as manifestations of institutional whiteness and neoliberal performativity, which privilege Eurocentric epistemologies and constrain what counts as legitimate psychological knowledge or good practice.

The fragility of these structures became especially visible during periods of sociopolitical rupture, which briefly unsettled but rarely transformed established norms. Participants noted the influence of movements such as BLM, which temporarily legitimised discussions about race within Maroon Vale EPS and across the profession. However, they reflected that this momentum was episodic, raising concerns about sustainability once public attention receded. Participants questioned how systems might move from reactive to proactive engagement, embedding racial equity into everyday practice rather than responding

only to external pressure. My interpretation of participants' accounts suggests that transformation depends on the alignment of real-level, actual-level, and empirical-level mechanisms. While individual reflexivity provides a foundation for moral agency, sustainable change requires the institutionalisation of reflexive systems that legitimise, resource, and protect anti-racist work. Without this alignment, ARP remains contingent on personal resilience rather than collective accountability, perpetuating the very inequities it seeks to dismantle.

This discussion reflects my interpretation of the study's four research questions. In relation to RQ1, the analysis illustrates how sociopolitical structures constrained EPs' capacity to promote racial equity, limiting the space for systemic disruption within LA contexts. In addressing RQ2, participants' accounts illuminated the lived tensions, ethical dilemmas, and emotional labour involved in engaging with ARP, revealing the affective complexity of sustaining such work. RQ3 explored how EPs positioned themselves as systemic actors who co-constructed interventions with families, embedded critical understandings of race and SEND within everyday casework, and sustained dialogue through supervision and peer networks. In responding to RQ4, the analysis identified that EPs' practice was enabled by racially literate leadership, critical supervision, ongoing professional development, relational engagement, and ethical commitment, yet constrained by bureaucratic priorities, performative leadership, emotional fatigue, and institutional surface-level engagement. Collectively, these interpretations reveal how facilitative and constraining mechanisms operating across the real, actual, and empirical levels shape the conditions under which EPs can PRE and enact ARP.

5.6 Contribution to the profession and training

This exploratory study contributes original insights into how LA EPs navigate, resist, and enact ARP and PRE within the constraints of institutional structures and cultural norms.

Through rich narrative accounts, participants surfaced complex experiences of engaging in ARP across four interwoven themes: *Self: Disruptive Settling*, *Fluid Tension*, *Relational Ecologies*, and *Espoused Praxis*. These themes reflect the affective, relational, ethical, and structural dimensions of this work and highlight the generative mechanisms that both enable and constrain EPs' capacity to facilitate meaningful systemic change.

Synthesising insights from the CR–CRT framework, this study examines how systemic conditions shape EPs' PRE and engagement in ARP in practice, revealing the significance of mechanisms such as emotional labour, relational reflexivity, and moral agency as key forces mediating this engagement. My interpretation of participants' narratives reflects a layered and dynamic professional experience, identifying generative mechanisms across the real, actual, and empirical domains of practice. These mechanisms include professional norms shaped by whiteness, institutional inertia, and the constrained epistemic recognition of leadership and influence among stakeholders. Participants' accounts reveal that these dynamics are deeply entrenched within wider sociopolitical and historical structures that shape the UK's education system (Archer, 2003; Bhaskar, 1979; Gillborn, 2008). Despite decades of reform and activism, racial inequities persist across educational systems. As participants attested, institutional racism is not an abstract or historical concept; it is a tangible and persistent force, visible in the everyday dilemmas of professional practice where PRE work often remains precarious (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Strand & Lindorff, 2021). These findings underscore that meaningful transformation requires systemic, not individualised, responsibility for ARP, recognising the enduring influence of sociopolitical and historical structures on contemporary educational psychology.

This study contributes to reimagining educational psychology as a discipline and profession oriented toward a sustained and proactive engagement with racial justice. It foregrounds how institutional processes shape professional subjectivity and calls attention to

how dominant discourses influence engagement with PRE. These practices are often internalised unconsciously in organisations, enacted through language and practice, and reproduced via normative frameworks of conduct and accountability (Ahmed, 2012). A critical institutional lens, therefore, allows ARP to be seen not as a moral gesture of individual goodwill but as a collective endeavour to unsettle and transform the systems that obscure and reproduce racism.

Integral to this work is the ethical responsibility to engage with the unnamed, those marginalised experiences, silenced knowledge, and systemic harms often omitted from official narratives. While the language of institutional racism has been largely absent from contemporary policy frameworks, its effects remain viscerally present in the school community and the everyday practice of LA EPs. Participants' reflections make clear that racial inequity and institutional racism are lived realities, known in practice and school communities, even when underrepresented in policy and research. This disconnection reinforces the need for systems to hold space for what remains unsaid and to respond to the ethical imperative of naming, witnessing, and unsettling racism in education. Such engagement is not without precedent. The realities described in this study are grounded in a long history of grassroots resistance and anti-racist activism among BMGH communities in the UK, which we have only briefly engaged in this work, whose responses to injustice have shaped, challenged, and enriched the nation's educational and political landscape. In this way, PRE within educational psychology must therefore be understood not simply as a contemporary professional obligation but as a continuation of a broader, intergenerational struggle for justice.

The findings of this research are not solutions; rather, they are grounded insight into how EPs work within complex systems to support praxis-oriented efforts to support change. They surface a profession in motion, one that is navigating the tensions between tradition and

transformation. The implications that follow are therefore offered as invitations to collective action that encourage EPs and training providers to embed PRE as a shared systemic responsibility and to sustain ARP as a defining feature of educational psychology's ethical and professional identity.

5.7 Considerations for future research

Building on this study's findings, future research may adopt a range of qualitative, mixed-methods, and participatory designs, each aligned with exploring distinct dimensions of PRE and ARP within educational psychology. A longitudinal qualitative design could provide deep insight into how EPs' understanding and commitment to PRE evolve across the span of their professional lifespan. This may include narrative or life-history interviews, conducted over multiple points in time, tracing how beliefs, practices, and positionalities shift in response to changing institutional climates, leadership cultures and sociopolitical contexts. Drawing on RTA or IPA would allow for rich, idiographic insights into how professional identity and moral agency develop through practice.

For comparative research across LAs, a multiple-case study design would be particularly valuable. This approach could explore how differing organisational cultures, commissioning models and leadership practices influence the embedding of ARP in the LA services. Data might include semi-structured interviews, policy document analysis, and focus groups with EP teams, with cross-case synthesis identifying contextual enablers and barriers. Integrating a CR evaluation lens would support the identification of generative mechanisms operating across diverse settings, deepening understanding of how structural and cultural conditions shape racial equity work.

To foreground the voices of BGMH CYP and families, future research should adopt PAR or community-based participatory research (CBPR) frameworks. These approaches

centre on co-production and lived experience, positioning participants as co-researchers in the design, analysis, and dissemination of findings. Methods such as story circles, digital storytelling, or photovoice could capture rich embodied and situated knowledge that challenges dominant epistemologies and reimagines service delivery. A counter-narrative approach grounded in CRT would further legitimise experiential knowledge and support the politicisation of racial experiences in education and practice.

Future research could also examine the role of supervision in developing racial literacy, identity awareness, and emotional resilience among EPs. Within a CR–CRT framework, a design-based research or developmental evaluation approach could co-design and evaluate racially literate supervision models, using iterative feedback from focus groups, reflective logs, and video-stimulated recall interviews. A psycho-social lens, drawing on Bion's (1961) work on unconscious group process and Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) free association methods, could reveal the affective and defensive mechanisms that shape professional responses to race and power. Such inquiry would inform supervision practices that are both racially literate and psychologically attuned.

In investigating the emotional labour and moral strain of ARP, a mixed-methods approach may be particularly informative. Quantitative measures, such as adapted emotional exhaustion or moral distress scales, could be paired with qualitative interviews or written reflections exploring psychological safety, burnout, and identity conflict in relation to equity-focused practice. A critical interpretive synthesis of existing literature may also be used to map how emotional labour is theorised across professions engaged in equity work. Attending to these emotional and ethical dimensions would extend understanding of the psychological mechanisms needed to sustain anti-racist intent within systemic work. To interrogate how professionalism, neutrality, and objectivity are racialised within the discipline, future studies could employ discourse analysis or critical policy analysis. Examining EP training materials,

service policies, and published reports through a CRT-informed lens would reveal how whiteness is reproduced through language, silence, and assumptions about competence and care. Complementary autoethnographic or duoethnographic research by EPs could surface how internalised norms are navigated, embodied and resisted in daily practice.

Finally, a deeper inquiry into the intersection of race and SEND would benefit from critical ethnographic case studies in UK schools. These could explore how referral pathways, behaviour policies, and classroom practices differentially impact BGMH children with SEND. A multi-perspective design involving EPs, teachers, parents, and pupils would ensure a holistic understanding of the systems at play, and a Critical Disability Studies framework could help unpick how racism and SEND labelling intersect, exposing how policy and practice may inadvertently reinforce inequity. Collectively, these directions extend the CR–CRT framework’s potential to investigate both the psychological and structural dimensions of equity work. They highlight that advancing racial justice in educational psychology requires research designs that are dialogic, reflexive, and participatory, illuminating how systemic change is both constrained and enacted within the profession’s evolving moral and epistemic landscape.

5.8 Dissemination

I am seeking to publish findings from my doctoral research, which explored the experiences of LA EPs in PRE in practice, within two years of qualifying. This study, underpinned by a CR-CRT framework and using RTA, offers timely insights into how EPs navigate the emotional, systemic, and institutional dimensions of anti-racist work within UK educational contexts. Given its focus on racial justice, professional identity, and systemic transformation, this research aligns well with several journals that foreground equity and critical practice. The journals I am currently considering are *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, which provides an ideal platform for theory-driven, critical studies of race and racism in

education. *Educational and Child Psychology*, the *International Journal of Educational and Life Transitions (IJELT)* and the *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*. Publishing in these journals will not only contribute to the field's understanding of EP-led racial equity work but also support my development as a critically engaged, reflective practitioner.

The completed thesis will be shared with the EPS that participated in this research, ensuring that those who contributed are informed and can reflect on the implications within their local context. In addition, I intend to share the findings with TEP Voice, a trainee-led branch of the DECP committee that provides a platform for early-career perspectives and practice-based learning. Furthermore, I plan to present this research at the DECP TEP Conference, where it can contribute to broader professional discussions on ARP and systemic change within educational psychology.

Looking ahead, I hope to carry this work forward as a central area of interest in my evolving practice as an EP. I am particularly interested in developing systemic approaches to ARP that centre the voices of CYP, families, and the wider school community. This includes working collaboratively through bottom-up, relational, and contextually grounded approaches that challenge institutional norms and promote lasting change. In doing so, I recognise the potential of engaging with interdisciplinary teams for shared planning and learning; adopting transdisciplinary strategies that empower school staff and CYP to co-create practices; contributing to inter-agency collaborations that draw on wider community and service expertise; and embedding myself within integrated service structures that foster joined-up, equity-driven responses to addressing racial inequities. Through these forms of multi-disciplinary working, I aim to support more inclusive, just, and sustainable systems for those we serve.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter summarised my interpretation of the key findings within the context of literature and professional practice, offering implications for policy and practice, and future research and professional development in the field of educational psychology. This chapter has explored how LA EPs engage with ARP and PRE, often within systems that both enable and constrain their capacity to do so. Using a CR-CRT framework, the discussion has highlighted the key tensions and conditions shaping this work, ranging from traded service models and procedural constraints to leadership culture, whiteness, and emotional labour. Across the four overarching themes, *Self: Disruptive Settling*, *Fluid Tension*, *Relational Ecologies*, and *Espoused Praxis*, PRE was experienced as a dynamic, reflective, and emotionally challenging endeavour, requiring ongoing negotiation between personal ethics and institutional boundaries.

Participants described how they worked within and against institutional norms to uphold their ethical commitments to PRE, often with the support of racially literate supervision or leadership, yet frequently in professional isolation. While their strategies varied, all participants showed a deep sense of moral responsibility and professional care and commitment to the communities they served. This discussion has shown that meaningful engagement with PRE in educational psychology depends on structural alignment, relational safety, and a shared professional culture that recognises anti-racism as core to ethical practice and inclusion. Without these systemic conditions, PRE remains vulnerable to being framed as an individual choice rather than a collective, systemic and professional necessity within EP practice and the wider UK education system. The final chapter, Chapter 6, will now present the overall conclusions of this thesis, my reflections and final thoughts.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of LA EP in PRE within their practice. I approached the investigation of the four key research questions using RTA, informed by a CR-CRT framework. This research examined four interrelated questions concerning how sociopolitical structures, organisational dynamics, and professional identities shape the capacity of EPs to PRE. My interpretation of the findings revealed the dual positioning of the EP as constrained and agentic, capable of exercising moral and relational agency through critical reflexivity and systemic engagement. Participants' narratives underscored how agency was negotiated across layers of experience, where ethical intent met structural limitation, and resistance was enacted from within dominant systems. Facilitators of PRE included critical supervision, anti-racist informed CPD, racially literate leadership, and professional learning opportunities that explicitly addressed whiteness, power, and institutional racism. Relational engagement with peers and the school communities is a key enabler, fostering trust, collaboration, and accountability to PRE. Conversely, barriers to PRE operated across structural and relational levels, including institutional whiteness, bureaucratic constraints, emotional labour, symbolic or performative leadership, and institutional inertia. Through qualitative inquiry, this research presented how broader sociopolitical mechanisms, organisational conditions, and professional identities interact to shape the possibilities and limitations of equity-focused practice. Transformation depends not only on individual reflexivity but on the systemic alignment of organisational structures that legitimise, resource, and sustain ARP.

The findings highlight how the role of the EP, when enacted reflexively and relationally, can function as a systemic mechanism for influence, to challenge practices that reproduce inequity and epistemic violence within school communities and EPSs. My analysis emphasises the importance of critical reflexivity and moral accountability when engaging

with systems that perpetuate racism and racial inequities, calling for the profession to move beyond moral rhetoric toward embedded, collective responsibility for racial equity.

6.1 Reflections as a practitioner researcher

This thesis has been both an academic inquiry and a personal journey into what it means to engage in ARP as a reflexive practitioner-researcher. I set out to explore the experiences of LA EPs in PRE in practice. What occurred was a deeply reflective encounter with participants' insight and a sustained challenge to confront my professional positioning, assumptions, and complicity within the systems I sought to explore. Through this process, I have learned to value reflexive ownership in communication. At times, I experienced a profound concern about whether I could adequately honour the work and the experiences shared with me. This apprehension has been instructive; it cultivated a deeper sense of humility, care, and precision in my approach. Working to express complex and interconnected ideas clearly has underscored the power of language, not only as a medium for meaning-making but also as a mechanism that can either reinforce oppression or facilitate liberation. The adoption of a CR-CRT framework has shaped the design and interpretation of this study and continues to influence broader epistemological and ontological orientations as a practitioner-researcher. CR-CRT offered a framework that embraces contradiction, prioritises exploratory depth, and sustains belief in the possibility of social transformation. This work has made me more conscious, critically engaged, and willing to endure the discomfort required for growth.

I have also learned about the limits and possibilities of psychology in addressing racial inequity. As a practitioner-researcher, I confronted how the profession's historical silence on race intersected with my socialisation. I now understand ARP as a reorientation of role and identity, an ethical and epistemic transformation of practice. While the LA EP's psychological lens offers valuable tools for insight and intervention, without critical

reflexivity and an awareness of structural influences, psychological frameworks risk reproducing the very inequities they seek to dismantle. When misaligning with equity goals, these frameworks may inadvertently marginalise the lived experiences of members of school communities and practitioners, particularly BGMH people.

This thesis has deepened my respect for the relational, contextually informed, and co-constructed nature of ARP. This work has offered an opportunity to experience the role's potential for transformation and connection. At the same time, it has highlighted the risk of professional complacency when change is merely reactive to sociopolitical unrest and led by legislation, policy and guidance that do not translate into the contextual fabric of daily practice in education.

6.2 Final thoughts

This thesis has reaffirmed that to be an EP is to engage in continuous cycles of learning, unlearning, and reimagining. The findings challenge LA EPs to sustain critical engagement with their own positioning and complicity, and to act with what Freire (1970) calls critical hope. My commitment to this work, as a practitioner-researcher, is ongoing. The journey will continue to unfold through dialogue with communities and collaborators who shape my practice and hold me accountable to enacting the ethical and transformative aims envisioned in this research.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>

Appendix

Appendix A: TAPUPAS RAG SLR

Table A

RAG Rating reflecting my interpretation of the literature found in the scoping review.

The RAG was guided by the TAPUPAS framework (Pawson et al., 2003):

Transparency: knowledge should address how it was generated, clarify aims, objectives and all steps of the subsequent argument to give the readers an understanding of the underlying reasoning. Knowledge generation should be transparent to invite outside scrutiny.

Accuracy: knowledge should demonstrate that the information informing assertions, conclusions, and recommendations is both relevant and appropriate. Knowledge claims should be faithful to the sources used in production.

Purposivity: a demonstration that knowledge has followed the appropriate approach to meet the aims and objectives should be provided. In this, the approaches and methods used to gather information should be 'fit for purpose'.

Utility: knowledge should be 'fit for use', providing closely matched answers for the question. Knowledge should be appropriate to the information needs expressed by the researcher/s and the intention for its use.

Propriety: knowledge should be created and managed ethically and with proper care to all relevant participants. Adequate evidence of informed consent and the agreement of release (or withholding) of information should be demonstrated.

Accessibility: the presentational style should meet the needs of the knowledge seeker and not exclude any potential reader.

Specificity: knowledge must be perceived to measure up within its own domain by its participants and proponents.

R) It is not relevant to this topic and does not meet the criteria.

A) It meets some of the criteria and raises critical points for consideration.

G) Explicit and within the criteria

Title and Reference	Race/ Anti-Racist Practice/ Racial Equity	Reference to the context/societal structure of the EP role	Recommendations for Equity in EP Practice	Applicable to LA EP Context	Research Design
1. Rupasinha, J. (2015). Addressing an imbalance? EPs' considerations of ethnic minority cultural factors in assessments for autistic spectrum condition. Educational & Child Psychology, 32(2), 77–88. https://doi.org/10.5	Examines cultural factors in assessments for autistic spectrum condition (ASC), with a focus on considerations for minoritised groups.	Extends this discussion by examining how LA EPs consider cultural factors in assessments for autistic spectrum conditions among ethnic minority children.	The article highlights the need for EPs to be culturally competent and avoid ethnocentric biases that may lead to misdiagnosis or inadequate support. This reflects a broader call within the literature for LA EPs to engage with cultural diversity more meaningfully and sensitively.	Yes This study involves EPs' practices, potentially including LA EPs, in considering ethnic minority cultural factors in assessments within LA services.	The research design is empirical, based on interviews with EPs to explore their views and practices in assessing ethnic minority children. The qualitative approach provides insights into how EPs navigate cultural considerations.

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>2. Bagley, C., & Hallam, S. (2017). Is there a role for EPs in facilitating managed moves? <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i>, 33(3), 323–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2017.1324767</p> | <p>No direct mention of Race or racial equity; discusses the role of EP in facilitating managed moves.</p> | <p><i>Examine the role of LA EPs in facilitating managed moves, which are organised transitions for learners between schools.</i></p> <p>The study highlights EPs' ethical dilemmas, particularly when balancing individual learners' needs with the educational system's broader demands.</p> | <p>Managed moves are often used as an alternative to exclusion, and LA EPs play a crucial role in ensuring these moves are handled ethically and with the child's best interests in mind.</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>The role of EPs in facilitating managed moves within LA settings would likely include LA EPs.</p> | <p>Use case studies to explore EP involvement in managed moves, which helps illustrate how EPs can play a role in preventing exclusions and supporting equitable education outcomes.</p> |
| <p>3. Bateman, A. 2023. A Participatory Research Project Exploring EPs'</p> | <p>The study explores how EPs engage with concepts of Whiteness, white privilege, and the</p> | <p>Critically engages with how societal structures, particularly those shaped by historical and</p> | <p>EPs have the potential to challenge these structures by developing anti-racist</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>The study highlights the specific challenges</p> | <p><i>This thesis research is participatory action research (PAR) design, which is well-</i></p> |

Engagement with
Whiteness, White
Privilege and
Developing Anti--
Racist Practice.
Prof Doc Thesis
University of East
London School of
Psychology
<https://doi.org/10.15123/uel.8wwx7>

development of anti-
racist practices.

ongoing racial
inequalities, affect the
role of EPs. Highlights
how Whiteness is often
embedded in
institutional practices
and how EPs may
unintentionally
perpetuate these racial
inequities unless they
critically engage with
these concepts.

practices that confront
and dismantle
entrenched biases.
However, this requires
a conscious effort to
reflect on their own
positionally and the
broader societal forces
at play.

and opportunities
these professionals
face in promoting
racial equity.

LA EPs operate
within bureaucratic
systems that may
resist change, but
the study argues
that they can still
advocate for anti-
racist practices by
influencing policy
at the local level.
This might include
pushing for the
adoption of
inclusive policies
in schools or
providing training

suited for the study's
aims. PAR involves
participants actively in
the research process,
encouraging
collaboration and co-
creation of
knowledge. In this
study, EPs were not
just subjects but
contributors to the
research, engaging in
reflective discussions
about their
experiences with
Whiteness and
privilege.

The research
underscores that EPs, as
part of broader
educational and
psychological services,
operate within systems
that can perpetuate
institutional racism. By

acknowledging this, the study calls for EPs to reflect on their roles not just as service providers but also as potential agents of systemic change.

This involves challenging the status quo, particularly in how educational systems address or ignore racial inequities.

The EP role is explored as one that is inherently positioned within power structures, whether in schools or LAs.

for educators on how to address racial inequities in their classrooms.

Notes that LA EPs are in a unique position to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders, including policymakers, school staff, and families. By leveraging these relationships, they can work towards dismantling racial biases within their local educational

				systems and create more inclusive learning environments.	
4. Bei, Z., & Knowler, H. (2022). Disrupting unlawful exclusion from school of minoritised children and young people racialized as Black: using Critical Race Theory composite counter-storytelling. <i>Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties</i> , 27(3), 231–242. https://doi.org/10.1	Strong focus on racial equity, through CRT and counter-storytelling.	Applies CRT to explore <i>how LA EPs can disrupt the unlawful exclusion of Black minoritised children from schools</i> . The authors advocate for LA EPs to actively challenge these practices by raising awareness, supporting inclusion, and developing interventions that promote equity.	Using counter-storytelling, they highlight how exclusionary practices are often rooted in institutional racism, which negatively impacts the educational experiences of Black students.	Yes This study focuses on school exclusions of Black and minoritised learners, which is highly relevant to LA EPs who often work with schools to support these students. It highlights the systemic racial disparities in exclusion practices that LA EPs might need to address.	CRT and composite counter-storytelling to highlight the experiences of minoritised children in education, emphasizing the importance of narrative-based research in revealing the inequities faced by Black children.

080/13632752.2022

.2146225

5. Carroll, H. C. M. (Tim). (2015). Pupil absenteeism and the EP. *Educational Studies*, 41(1–2), 47–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2014.955731>
- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| No mention of Race, anti-racist practice, or racial equity. Discusses pupil absenteeism and educational psychology. | <i>Investigates the role of the LA EP in addressing pupil absenteeism, noting that absenteeism is often linked to underlying social, emotional, and psychological issues.</i> | Explores pupil absenteeism and the role of the EP in addressing this issue. While this study does not focus explicitly on race, absenteeism often disproportionately affects students from marginalised communities, implying a need for EPs to adopt a racially equitable lens in their work. | Yes, This paper examines how EPs, particularly those working in Local Authorities, address issues of pupil absenteeism. It provides practical insights into how EPs can support schools in managing attendance. | The study uses a qualitative research design, based on interviews and case studies, to explore how EPs contribute to managing and reducing absenteeism. |
|---|---|--|---|---|
- EPs can support schools by conducting assessments, working with families, and implementing interventions to improve attendance. This work is especially crucial for children from marginalised

backgrounds, where
absenteeism can be a
symptom of broader
socio-economic
challenges
(intersectionality?)

6. Done, E., Knowler, H., Shield, W., & Bayton, H. (2021). Rocks and hard places: Exploring educational psychologists' perspectives on 'off rolling' or illegal exclusionary practices in mainstream secondary schools in England.
- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| While not explicitly focused on race, the study brings attention to systemic biases that lead to exclusions, which frequently impact racially minoritised students disproportionately | Strong emphasis on how EPs are situated within broader, often marketised school systems, and how the dynamics of 'off-rolling' reveal structural tensions | Highlights the need for EPs to challenge unethical exclusion practices, but lacks detailed, anti-racist strategies or explicit equity-focused guidance | LA EPs about their role in identifying and challenging exclusionary trends | Based on a robust mixed-methods design (survey + qualitative follow-up), grounded in strong theoretical framing (Giroux/Ball/Agamben). |
|---|---|--|--|--|

Educational
Psychology:
Research and
Practice, 7(2), 1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.15123/uel.8q73q>

7. Chase, J. (2020). "You're either part of the solution or you're part of the problem.": Exploring the view of practitioners from a LA EPS, of a sociopolitical approach within UK educational psychology. *Explores EPs' views on adopting a sociopolitical approach within UK EPSs. It examines how practitioners respond to societal issues, potentially including Race and equity, within their professional practice.* Explores the sociopolitical approach within educational psychology, *emphasising that EPs are increasingly being called upon to engage with broader societal issues, including systemic inequalities.* This perspective suggests that EPs should work directly with learners and schools and critically examine the social, political, and cultural contexts that influence educational outcomes. EPs are encouraged to be part of the solution to social justice issues within the education system, advocating for *Yes* *This study is directly relevant to the LA EP context as it investigates the views of practitioners from a LA EPS on adopting a sociopolitical approach in their work* *The thesis research employs a qualitative methodology, using interviews to gather data from LA-based EPs about their perspectives on incorporating sociopolitical approaches into their EP practice*

			equitable opportunities for all learners.		
8. Doveston, M., & Keenaghan, M. (2010). Teachers and EPs working together: What can we learn? Support for Learning, 25(3), 131–137. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9604.2010.01451.x	No explicit mention of Race, anti-racist practice, or racial equity. Focuses on collaboration between teachers and EPs.	<i>Explore the collaborative relationship between teachers and EPs (education).</i> Noting that successful partnerships can lead to more effective support for learners. EPs can provide valuable insights into learner behaviour, learning needs, and strategies for inclusion, but collaboration requires mutual respect and	Discuss collaborative working relationships between teachers and EPs. While this paper does not directly address race, it shows how EPs can work with educators to promote inclusive practices, which could be extended to addressing racial disparities in classrooms. The authors suggest that regular communication, joint	Yes, the paper is relevant to LA EPs as it examines the collaboration between teachers and EPs, which is a common practice within LAs.	The study uses a qualitative research design, gathering data from interviews with teachers and EPs to explore their collaborative practices.

		understanding between professionals.	problem-solving, and shared goals are key to fostering productive relationships.		
9. Dunsmuir, S., Kennedy, E.-K., Lang, J., & Monsen, J. J. (2023). A Qualitative Review of Pre-Service Training of Educational Psychology Consultants in the United Kingdom. <i>Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation</i> , 33(3), 314–344.	No direct references to Race or anti-racism, focuses on pre-service training.	It focuses on the training of EPs, examining how pre-service education prepares professionals for the diverse challenges they face in practice.	Suggests that more emphasis is needed on preparing EPs for consulting with a diverse range of cultural and linguistic populations and equipping them with tools to manage the social justice dimensions of their work. This points to a gap in current training, where developing skills to address inequities in	Yes This paper is related to the LA EP context as it reviews the training of educational psychology consultants in the UK, which includes LA-based EPs.	Use a qualitative review to examine pre-service training in EP, exploring how training programs equip EPs to handle issues of equity and diversity in their future roles. <i>Not empirical research.</i>

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2022.2090949>

education is
paramount.

10. Gersch, I., Lipscomb, A., & Potton, A. (2014). The history of research by EPs into asylums, homes and special schools for children in England: Developing the concept of ‘the inclusive institution’. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(10), 1010–1025.
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| No explicit mention of | Explored the historical | Their work shows | Yes, the paper | This is a historical and |
| Race, anti-racist | development of | how the role of the EP | provides historical | archival study. The |
| practice, or racial | inclusive institutions in | has shifted from a | context for the role | authors review |
| equity. Focuses on the | the UK, reflecting on | focus on exclusion to | of EPs in special | previous research and |
| history of research into | the evolution of special | an emphasis on | education and | practices by EPs over |
| special schools and | schools, homes, and | inclusion, advocating | inclusive | time, analysing |
| inclusive institutions. | asylums for children | for systemic changes | institutions, which | archival data to trace |
| | with SEND. | that better meet the | are often linked to | the development of |
| | | needs of marginalised | LA responsibilities | inclusive institutions. |
| | | children. | in the provision of | |
| | | | SEND. | <i>Not empirical</i> |
| | | | | <i>research</i> |

11. Francis, Y. (2022). How can we reduce racial discrimination in schools. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis exploring how Educational Psychologists enact change. Thesis.	Yes. Critical aspects of racial equity and the importance of anti-racist practice in schools, particularly in addressing how EPs can work towards dismantling systemic racism within the education system.	EPs as agents of change who can both challenge and reinforce racial inequities. Critiques how EPs are positioned within educational structures and how they can use their influence to promote anti-racist practices in their daily work. EPs within the broader context of societal and structural inequalities. It examines how the educational system, as a microcosm of wider societal structures,	EPs are encouraged to challenge policies and practices within schools that perpetuate racial inequities. Increasing awareness and training on cultural competencies to better support racially minoritised learners and families. Working alongside schools, communities, and families to promote inclusive education and address systemic barriers.	Yes. The research is applied to the Local Authority (LA) EP context, examining how EPs in this setting can promote racial equity in their day-to-day practices. Supporting schools in developing anti-racist policies and interventions. Consulting with staff and students to address issues of racial discrimination.	<i>The thesis research</i> applied Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the research provides insights into EPs' lived experiences and perceptions when working towards racial equity, focusing on the barriers and facilitators they encounter.
--	--	--	--	--	---

		often reflects and perpetuates racial inequities. EPs, as part of this system, are in a unique position to either challenge or reinforce these disparities. The study likely discusses how EPs can serve as agents of change by promoting inclusive practices, critical reflection on bias, and systemic interventions that disrupt these inequalities.	Using evidence-based practices and disaggregating data to identify and address disparities affecting racially minoritised learners.	Acting as change agents by facilitating workshops and training sessions that challenge unconscious bias and promote inclusive learning environments.	
12. Gilsenan, J., & Lee, F. (2021).	Addresses the experiences of migrant	Explores the experiences of recently	This highlights the need for culturally	Yes	Qualitative interviews with Latin American

Exploring the experiences of recently arrived Latin American migrant parents regarding their children's education. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 37(2), 221–233.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2021.1875993>

parents, with potential implications for racial equity in educational contexts.

arrived Latin American migrant parents in relation to their children's education, *highlighting the critical role of LA EPs in supporting families from marginalised or non-English speaking backgrounds.*

responsive practices within EP services to ensure that these communities feel included and supported.

The study suggests that LA EPs can act as cultural mediators, helping schools understand the specific needs of migrant families and ensuring that educational provisions are culturally responsive. This role involves advocating for inclusive practices and ensuring that language barriers or cultural differences do not hinder children's

migrant parents, using this narrative approach to capture the lived experiences of these families and how educational systems meet or fail to meet their needs.

				educational success.	
13. Guiney, D. (2018). EPs' accounts of ethically troubling incidents at a time of rapid change in their workplace [ProQuest Information & Learning]. In Dissertation Abstracts International Section C: Worldwide (Vol. 75, Issue 3–C).	This dissertation discusses ethically troubling incidents EPs face but doesn't focus directly on race or racial equity.	It examines the structural changes within educational services and ethical dilemmas during workplace transitions.	The focus is on ethical decision-making and the role of EPs in navigating changing structures and the emotional impact on practice. Emphasises the need for ethical guidelines in challenging work environments but does not directly address racial equity.	Yes, Recommendations are applicable to any EP context, including LA services, in terms of ethical responsiveness during transitions.	Qualitative study using interviews to explore EPs' experiences and ethical challenges during organizational change.
14. Hammond, N. (2013). Developing a community psychology service	Focuses on community psychology services, with no direct mention	<i>Discusses the role of LA EPs in developing community psychology services, mainly</i>	In this approach, EPs are seen as service providers and researchers, working	Yes This paper describes the development of a	Practitioner-researcher pilot project The study uses a practitioner-researcher

in one local community through a practitioner-researcher pilot study. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i> , 30(1), 50–60.	of Race or anti-racism.	<i>through practitioner-researcher models.</i>	directly with local communities to identify needs and develop solutions. This dual role allows EPs to adopt a holistic perspective, addressing not just individual psychological needs but broader social, environmental, and systemic factors affecting educational outcomes.	community psychology service within a LA. The paper is directly relevant to LA EPs who may be involved in similar community-based initiatives.	pilot study, incorporating action research principles to develop and evaluate the community psychology service. <i>Data was gathered through observations, feedback from stakeholders, and reflection on practice.</i>
15. Hardy, J., Hobbs, C., & Bham, M. (2020). Leadership for EPs: Principles and practicalities (J. Hardy, C. Hobbs, &	No explicit mention of Race, anti-racist practice, or racial equity. Focuses on leadership for EPs.	<i>Provide an in-depth examination of leadership within EPSs.</i>	They argue that EPs must develop leadership skills to influence practice and policy at organisational levels.	Yes This book discusses leadership principles for EPs, which is relevant to	This is a theoretical and practical guidebook, not based on empirical research but offering insights into leadership in

M. Bham (Eds.)).
Wiley Blackwell.

systemic change,
ensuring that
psychological services
are responsive to the
needs of children and
young people,
particularly those from
disadvantaged
backgrounds.

This includes
managing service
delivery, supporting
staff development, and
advocating for
inclusive practices
across schools.

those working in
LAs where
leadership roles are
essential.

educational
psychology.
*Not empirical
research*

16. Howarth-Lees, D.,
& Woods, K.
(2022). A
systematic
literature review
exploring the role
of the EP in
supporting youth
justice services.
Educational and

*It discusses youth
justice services but does
not explicitly focus on
Race or anti-racist
practices.*

This is an
underexplored area, but
the findings emphasise
the value of EPs in

*EP's role in supporting
youth justice services.*

Highlighting the
potential of EPs to
contribute to the
rehabilitation and
reintegration of young
offenders' behaviour
beyond punitive
responses.

The review identifies
a gap in integrating
psychological
perspectives in youth
justice work,
suggesting that EPs
can play a critical role
in the early
identification of
needs, preventative
interventions, and

Yes
The study is
relevant to LA EPs
as it explores the
role of EPs in
supporting youth
justice services,
which are often
integrated within
LAs.

Systematic literature
review, examining
existing research on
EPs' roles in youth
justice services. This
method allows for a
comprehensive
understanding of how
EPs engage with
systemic challenges in
this field.

Child Psychology, 39(2), 11–27.	contributing to a holistic understanding of the experiences of CYP.		collaborative work with multidisciplinary teams to support youth in the justice system.		Not empirical research.
17. Hoyne, N., & Cunningham, Y. (2019). Enablers and barriers to EPs' use of therapeutic interventions in an Irish context. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 35(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2018.1500353	No mention of Race or anti-racist practices; focuses on therapeutic interventions in an Irish context.	EP interventions in the Irish context identify several factors that influence the adoption of therapeutic practices. These include access to appropriate training, the organisational culture of EPSs, and the perceived role of EPs. The study discusses systemic and practical challenges that prevent	Examine the enablers and barriers to EPs' use of therapeutic interventions in Ireland, providing a context for understanding how EPs can contribute to more equitable mental health services within educational settings.	No This paper is focused on the Irish context, although it may have some indirect relevance to LA EPs interested in therapeutic interventions. It explores the use of therapeutic practices by EPs, which could be applicable across	The study uses a mixed-methods design, involving a questionnaire to gather quantitative data on EPs' use of therapeutic interventions, followed by qualitative interviews to explore enablers and barriers in more depth.

		EPs from fully engaging in therapeutic work, which could be extended to anti-racist practice.		different practices, including the UK.	
18. Jackson Taft, L., Woods, K., & Ford, A. (2020). EPS contribution to community cohesion: an appreciative inquiry. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 36(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2019.1650722	No direct focus on Race, although it touches on community cohesion, which can affect racial equity.	Explore how LA EPs contribute to community cohesion through appreciative inquiry. Their study emphasises the potential for EPs to work collaboratively with schools, families, and other stakeholders to build stronger, more inclusive communities.	Explore the contribution of EP services to community cohesion, using an appreciative inquiry approach to highlight how EPs can build positive relationships within communities and foster social inclusion, especially in racially diverse areas. This community-focused approach	Yes This research explores how EPSs contribute to community cohesion, likely involving LA EPs in their role within local authorities.	An appreciative inquiry approach to examine how EP services contribute to community cohesion, focusing on the strengths and positive contributions of EPs in LA contexts.

positions LA EPs as facilitators of positive change, advocating for practices that promote belonging and inclusion.

19. Kuria, E. K., & Kelly, C. (2023). Exploring social justice principles within an EPS. Educational Psychology in Practice. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2023.2226857	Focuses on social justice principles within educational psychology, potentially linked to racial equity but not explicitly focused on Race or ARP.	<i>Discuss how LA EPs can embed social justice principles within their practice.</i> By incorporating social justice frameworks, EPs can challenge discriminatory practices and advocate for more inclusive policies at both school and LA levels. This aligns with the broader literature on the role of EPs in	Focus explicitly on social justice principles in EP practice, advocating for EPs to embed anti-racist and equity-centred approaches in their work. The study underscores the importance of using frameworks that challenge systemic inequalities and support minoritized groups.	This paper explores how social justice principles are embedded within an EPS, likely within an LA context. It examines how EPs can work towards more equitable and socially just practices.	This study uses a qualitative approach, employing semi-structured interviews with EPs to explore their perspectives on social justice and how these principles are applied in practice.
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promoting equity and tackling issues such as racial discrimination, exclusion, and inequitable access to educational resources (Schulze *et al.*, 2017).

They argue that LA EPs should not only provide individualised support but also address systemic inequalities that affect marginalised groups, such as children from racial and ethnic minorities or those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

20. Lawrence, Z.
(2014). Black African parents' experiences of an EPS. *Educational Psychology in*

Discusses Black African parents' experiences with EP services, highlighting issues of racial equity.

Explores the experiences of Black African parents in engaging with an EP service (community).

Study reveals that Black African parents often feel marginalised by educational services, highlighting the need

Yes
The paper focuses on the experiences of Black African parents with an EPS (likely

This study uses a qualitative approach, collecting data through semi-structured interviews with Black African

Practice, 30(3),
238–254.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2014.919249>

highlighting the need
for culturally competent
practices to support
racially minoritised
families better.

for EPs to improve
their cultural
competence and
engage meaningfully
with parents from
diverse backgrounds.

operating within an
LA), providing
insights into how
ethnic minority
families perceive
these services.

parents to explore
their experiences and
perceptions of EP
services.

21. Lee, C., & Woods,
K. (2017).
Exploring the role
of the EP in
supporting schools
to meet their
statutory duties
under the new
special educational
needs legislation in
England.
*Educational
Psychology in
Practice*, 33(2),

No direct reference to
Race or racial equity.
Discusses the role of
EPs in supporting
schools with special
educational needs
legislation.

*Examine the role of EPs
in supporting schools in
meeting statutory duties
under the SEND
legislation in England.*

EP work ensures that
schools comply with
legal frameworks while
supporting students
with diverse learning
needs.

EPs are pivotal in
helping schools
navigate legal
requirements, such as
creating Individual
Education Plans
(IEPs) and conducting
assessments for
children with SEND.

Yes,
This study focuses
on the role of EPs
in local authorities
as they support
schools in meeting
statutory duties
involving LA EPs
in the context of
English educational
policy.

The study uses a
qualitative research
design. Semi-
structured interviews
were conducted with
EPs to gather insights
into their roles and
how they navigate
statutory
responsibilities under
the SEND framework.

219–231.

<https://doi.org/10.1>

080/02667363.2017

.1289077

22. Lewis, A. (2020). Using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a solution-focussed approach to organisational change in two EPSs. In J. Hardy, C. Hobbs, & M. Bham (Eds.), Leadership for EPs: Principles and practicalities. (pp. 115–133). Wiley Blackwell.	No direct reference to Race or racial equity. Discusses Appreciative Inquiry as a solution- focused approach for organisational change in EPSs.	Inquiry (AI) as a solution-focused approach to foster organisational change. AI focuses on identifying strengths within an organisation and building on these to achieve positive change. <i>EPs can use AI to support schools in improving their practices, particularly in areas like inclusion, mental health, and</i>	Explore the leadership role of EPs, emphasising how EPs can influence educational settings and policy. They highlight the importance of EPs in leading change, particularly around issues of racial equity, by guiding schools and policymakers toward more inclusive practices.	Yes, This study focuses on the use of Appreciative Inquiry to drive organizational change within two EPSs, both of which are likely to be embedded in LA contexts. EPs in leadership roles within LAs can influence policy changes that promote equity.	A case study methodology, applying Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as an intervention in two EPSs. The chapter reflects on the process and outcomes of this approach, providing practical insights into organizational change within LA EP contexts.
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		<i>behavioural interventions.</i> By focusing on what works well and amplifying those strengths, EPs help schools develop more effective, collaborative, and inclusive educational environments.		They suggest that EPs are well-placed to challenge systemic barriers within local education systems and advocate for more inclusive and racially equitable policies.	
23. Malipant, R., Cline, T., & Frederickson, N. (2013). Educational psychology practice and training: The legacy of Burt's appointment with	No mention of Race or anti-racism; focuses on EP training and its legacy.	Explored Cyril Burt's legacy in shaping EPs' practice and training. <i>This critical engagement is crucial for ensuring that LA EPs do not perpetuate</i>	They suggest that while Burt's early work contributed to the professionalisation of educational psychology, contemporary EPs must critically engage	Yes This paper provides a historical analysis of educational psychology practice and training, referencing Burt's	This is a historical review paper exploring archival material and the historical context of educational psychology practice

the London County Council?
Educational and Child Psychology, 30(3), 46–59.

past injustices but promote more equitable and culturally responsive practices.

with the historical biases embedded in psychological assessment, particularly when working with ethnically diverse populations.

appointment with the London County Council, which has implications for understanding the historical development of LA EP services.

and training in the UK.
Not empirical research

24. Maxwell, T. (2014). Review of Reflective practice and professional development. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 30(1), 107–109.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2013.854986>

No direct reference to Race or racial equity. Focuses on reflective practice and professional development.

Explores professional development and reflection within a rapidly changing educational landscape without emphasis on racial or societal structures.

Highlights the importance of reflective practice in professional

Suggests that reflective practice can foster equitable EP work by enhancing self-awareness and ethical decision-making but doesn't focus on racial equity. Encourages reflective practices relevant to LA EPs to ensure adaptable and ethical

No, this is a review of a book on reflective practice and professional development, not specifically addressing the LA EP context.

The paper is a book review and does not present original research.
Not empirical research

		growth, which is crucial for EPs adapting to changing societal and policy demands.	services amidst policy changes.		
25. Miller, D., Soni, A., Hobbs, C., Gibbs, S., Malagoli, C., Morgan, G., & Lauchlan, F. (2021). Black Lives Matter: Making a difference for racial justice. Educational & Child Psychology, 38(4), 5–8. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2021.38.4.5	Focuses explicitly on racial justice and the Black Lives Matter movement, directly addressing ARP.	<i>Focuses on the role of LA EPs in promoting racial justice, particularly considering the Black Lives Matter movement.</i> LA EPs are positioned as key agents in identifying and combating racial disparities within schools, working to ensure equitable	Miller argues that EPs have a responsibility to address systemic racism within education by advocating for racially just policies and practices. The article underscores the importance of using critical frameworks, such as CRT, to challenge	No The article is an editorial or position piece rather than an empirical study. It calls for action and changes within the field of educational psychology to address racial justice but does not provide original research.	Theoretical discussion rather than empirical research, focusing on how EPs can support racial justice through practice aligned with the principles of the Black Lives Matter movement. <i>Not empirical research</i>

		educational outcomes for all learners.	exclusionary practices and develop interventions that support minoritised CYP.		
26. Mngaza, S. (2021). Black feminist epistemology: An opportunity for educational psychology praxis. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 38(4), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2021.38.4.63	Focuses on Black feminist epistemology, providing a framework for racial equity and ARP in educational psychology.	<i>Introduces Black feminist epistemology as a framework for EPs to consider the lived experiences of Black children, positioning cultural identity at the centre of psychological assessment and intervention.</i> This framework is aimed at countering the effects of systemic racism in education and promoting racial equity in EP practice.	Presents a Black feminist epistemological approach, which offers a critical lens for EPs to address the intersectional oppressions faced by Black children and their families in education. This approach calls for EPs to embrace more critical and reflective practices that challenge dominant	No This paper discusses how Black feminist epistemology can inform educational psychology practices. Although it provides insights into how EPs can adopt anti-racist and feminist perspectives in their practice, it does not focus	The paper is theoretical and critical, exploring Black feminist epistemology and how it can be applied in educational psychology. It offers a critical perspective on praxis, drawing on existing literature to argue for the integration of these ideas into EP practice.

			narratives in psychology.	specifically on the LA EP context.	<i>Not empirical research</i>
27. Niven, J. (2023). Using cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) tools to understand reflecting teams as a process for professional learning. Educational & Child Psychology, 40(2), 109–127. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2023.40.2.109	No mention of Race or anti-racist practice. Focuses on cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) tools for professional learning.	Explores how cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) can be used to understand the process of reflective practice within educational psychology. <i>Reflecting teams, as a professional learning tool, allow EPs to engage with colleagues to reflect on their work, share insights, and enhance their practice.</i>	Niven emphasises the importance of EPs engaging in ongoing professional development and reflective learning to adapt to the diverse and changing needs of learners and schools	Yes, the study is relevant to LA EPs, as it focuses on professional learning within educational psychology teams, which are often part of LA services.	Qualitative study, Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) to analyse how reflecting teams are used in professional learning. This theoretical framework allows for exploring how EPs reflect on and develop their practices, which could be extended to understanding how EPs engage with issues of race and equity.

28. Roffey, S., Hobbs, C., & Kitching, A. (2018). EPs influencing policy and practice: Becoming more visible. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 35(3), 5–7. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2018.35.3.5	Mentions EPs influencing policy and practice, but without a clear anti-racist focus.	<i>Explore how LA EPs can become more visible in policy discussions, particularly around issues of inclusion and mental health.</i>	They argue that EPs must assert themselves more firmly in policy forums to ensure that psychological perspectives are represented in decision-making processes. The article suggests that LA EPs can influence educational and broader social policies that affect CYP well-being.	Yes This paper discusses how EPs can influence policy and practice, particularly in LA settings. It addresses the visibility and impact of EPs in shaping educational policies at the local level.	The paper is a discussion-based review of the role of EPs in influencing policy and practice, drawing on case examples and the authors' reflections on EP practice. <i>Not empirical research.</i>
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29. Schulze, J., Winter, L. A., Woods, K., & Tyldsley, K. (2019). An International Social Justice Agenda in School Psychology? Exploring EPs' Social Justice Interest and Practice in England. <i>Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation</i> , 29(4), 377–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2018.1531765	Discusses social justice in educational psychology, touching on equity generally.	<i>Examined the social justice agenda in school psychology. Not explicitly focused on racial equity or named anti-racist practice.</i> Explore the EP's role within a social justice agenda, highlighting the importance of EPs in promoting racial equity and social justice within schools. They identify barriers such as institutional structures and a lack of training on anti-racism.	Yes Noting that many EPs express a commitment to social justice but face challenges in implementing these principles within existing educational structures.	Yes The study focuses on LA EP services in England, discussing how they are increasingly incorporating social justice into their practice, although they often face structural challenges in doing so.	The research uses a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data and interviews with EPs to investigate their engagement with social justice principles in their practice.
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30. Sewell, A. (2016). A theoretical application of epistemological oppression to the psychological assessment of special educational needs; concerns and practical implications for anti-oppressive practice. Educational Psychology in Practice, 32(1), 1– 12. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2015.1090404	Strong focus on epistemological oppression and anti- oppressive practices in psychological assessments, particularly for ethnic minorities	Discusses epistemological oppression in psychological assessment, arguing for anti-oppressive practices in SEND assessments that consider the cultural and racial background of children. Critiques traditional approaches that marginalise non- Western epistemologies and call for EPs to adopt anti-oppressive practices.	Highlights the issue of epistemological oppression in psychological assessment, especially in the context of SEND. The analysis is relevant to EPs working with culturally diverse populations, emphasising the need for assessments that avoid perpetuating systemic biases in education.	Yes The paper is relevant to LA EPs as it discusses the assessment of SEND as a key part of EPs' role in LA.	This is a theoretical paper applying epistemological oppression concepts to the SEND assessment field. It does not involve empirical research but offers practical implications for anti-oppressive practice in educational psychology. <i>Not empirical research</i>
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31. Sewell, A., Kennett, A., & Pugh, V. (2022). Universal Design for Learning as a theory of inclusive practice for use by EPs. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 38(4), 364–378. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2022.2111677	No mention of Race, anti-racist practice, or racial equity. Focuses on Universal Design for Learning in inclusive practice.	Discussed universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a theoretical framework for inclusive practice in educational psychology. UDL emphasises flexible learning environments that accommodate the diverse needs of all students.	The authors suggest that EPs can play a key role in implementing UDL, offering guidance to schools on how to design curricula, assessments, and teaching strategies that are inclusive of all learners, including those with special educational needs.	Yes, this paper is highly relevant to the LA EP context as it discusses how EPs can apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in their practice to support inclusive education, which is often a key focus in LA settings.	This case study design involves qualitative methods to explore how Appreciative Inquiry was implemented in two EP services to facilitate positive organisational change.
32. Shaw, B., Woods, K., & Ford, A. (2021). How and why do EPSs engage with an ACE-informed	No direct focus on Race or racial equity; discusses ACE-informed approaches.	Focus on how LA EPs engage with ACE-informed approaches, which seek to address the impact of adverse childhood experiences	Provide an example of LA EP services using ACE-informed approaches to promote more equitable interventions. This my	Yes This study focuses on how EPSs, including those in LAs, engage with Adverse Childhood	A mixed-methods design, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to explore how EP services in

approach? *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 37(4), 377–395. LA EPs play a key role in helping schools adopt ACE-informed frameworks, which involve recognising the long-term effects of trauma and providing appropriate support.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2021.1961689>

on children’s development and learning.

The literature suggests that LA EPs are well-positioned to promote ACE awareness within schools, leading to more trauma-informed practices that support the well-being of vulnerable children.

analysis demonstrates how LA contexts can adopt trauma-informed practices to better support marginalized groups, especially in preventing school exclusions and supporting mental health.

Experiences (ACE)-informed approaches.

different LAs engage with ACE-informed practices. This design offers a broad overview and in-depth understanding of how ACE frameworks are integrated into EP work.

33. Thomas, G., Atkinson, C., & Allen, C. (2019). The motivational

No explicit mention of Race, anti-racist practice, or racial equity. Focuses on

Explore the use of motivational interviewing (MI) by UK EPs, emphasising

MI is a client-centred, directive method that helps individuals explore and resolve

Yes This study is directly relevant to the LA EP context

Qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to explore EPs’ use of

interviewing practice of UK EPs. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i> , 36(3), 65–76.	motivational interviewing in educational psychology.	<i>its role in facilitating behavioural change.</i> The authors suggest that EPs use MI effectively in schools and other settings to support students' self-regulation and decision-making, particularly in areas such as emotional well-being, behaviour management, and learning difficulties.	ambivalence about change.	as it explores the use of motivational interviewing by EPs in the UK, who commonly work within LA settings.	motivational interviewing. This method allows for a deep exploration of the personal experiences of EPs and their reflections on their practice.
34. Tobin, L., Udrescu-Clarke, I., Burgess, M., Apontua, G., & Stevens, C. (2023). Promoting racial equity within EPSs: Where are we now?	Focuses on promoting racial equity within EPSs, explicitly addressing racial equity.	Discuss the pressing need to promote racial equity within EPSs. They note that while efforts have been made to address racial	They discuss the current landscape of EP services regarding racial equity and argue for a more explicit commitment to anti-racist practices. They	Yes EPs are urged to engage critically with issues of race and ethnicity, ensuring that psychological	Mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative data, to explore current practices and perspectives on racial equity within EP

– Part 1. <i>DECP Debate</i>, 187, 7–12. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsdeb.2023.1.187.7 Apontua, G., Stevens, C., Tyler, A., Lane-Downey, E., Gregson, I., Cracknell, C., & Barber, M. (2023). Promoting racial equity within EPSs: Where are we now? – Part 2. <i>DECP Debate</i>, 187, 13– 21. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsdeb.2023.1.187.13	Continues discussing promoting racial equity within EPSs, explicitly focusing on racial equity.	disparities, much work remains. The authors also highlight the importance of EPs being aware of their biases and engaging in continuous professional development to improve their cultural competence.	highlight the need for EPs to address systemic racism by adopting critical frameworks and engaging in self- reflection regarding their roles within educational institutions.	assessments and interventions are culturally responsive. This includes challenging systemic racism within educational institutions and advocating for policies that promote equity.	services. They incorporate surveys and interviews with practitioners to provide a comprehensive overview of how racial equity is being addressed.
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35. Woods, K., Stothard, J., Lydon, J., & Reason, R. (2013). Developing policy and practice for dyslexia across a LA: A case study of educational psychology practice at organisational level. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 29(2), 180–196.	No focus on Race or racial equity; it examines dyslexia policy and practice.	<i>Examine the role of LA EPs in developing policy and practice for dyslexia across LA.</i> In this context, LA EPs are seen as key contributors to educational reform, ensuring that policies reflect the latest psychological research and are implemented in ways that meet the diverse needs of learners.	This case study illustrates how EPs can influence policy development at an organisational level, particularly by providing evidence- based recommendations for supporting students with specific learning difficulties.	Yes This study examines educational psychology practice in a LA, which would likely involve LA EPs.	A case study approach to illustrate how EPs can influence policy and practice across a LA, showing the potential for EPs to make a systemic impact.
36. Woods, K., Atkinson, C., Bond, C., Gibbs, S., Hill, V., Howe, J., &	No mention of Race or racial equity. Discusses practice placement	Explore the experiences and needs of trainee EPs in their practice placements.	The study highlights the importance of placements in providing hands-on	Yes This study focuses on the practice placement	The study uses a mixed-methods approach, collecting data through surveys

Morris, S. (2015). Practice placement experiences and needs of trainee EPs in England. <i>International Journal of School & Educational Psychology</i>, 3(2), 85–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2014.956955	experiences of trainee EPs (TEP).	Supportive supervision and reflective practice are essential for developing competencies, particularly in assessment, intervention, and consultation.	experience while acknowledging the challenges trainees face, such as navigating diverse educational settings and balancing theoretical knowledge with practical application	experiences of TEPs, which would typically involve LA EPs as part of their training placements.	and interviews to explore the experiences and needs of trainee EPs during their placements.
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37. Lindsay, G., Pather, S., & Strand, S. (2019). Educational psychology and anti-racist practice:	Key references are race, anti-racist practice, and racial equity in educational psychology.	The review emphasises how systemic and societal structures perpetuate racial inequalities and how	Adopting anti-racist training for EPs. Greater focus on culturally relevant	Yes The study suggests that LA EPs should become advocates for systemic	The article offers a critical review of existing literature, using qualitative analysis to assess the
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A critical review.
*Educational
 Psychology in
 Practice*, 35(4),
 385–398.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2019.1667759>

EPs are situated to
 address or ignore these
 issues.

These
 recommendations aim
 to transform EP
 services, particularly in
 LA contexts, to be more
 culturally responsive
 and proactive in
 dismantling
 institutional racism.

assessments and
 interventions.

Emphasising
 collaboration with
 racially marginalised
 communities.

The authors
 recommend that EPs
 incorporate anti-racist
 frameworks into their
 practice, advocating
 for a stronger focus on
 equity, diversity, and
 inclusion.

change within their
 local schools,
 supporting
 initiatives that
 directly address
 racial inequities.
 EPs can play a
 pivotal role in
 educational reform
 by actively
 promoting
 inclusion and
 understanding of
 diverse racial
 experiences.

gaps and current state
 of anti-racist practice
 in educational
 psychology.
 Not empirical data.

OUTSIDE UK

38. Daniels, L., &
 Alston, L. (2023).
 Epistemological
 and Ontological

No direct mention of
 Race or racial equity;
 examines
 epistemological and

Examine educational
 psychology doctoral
 students
 epistemological and

The study highlights
 the importance of
 critical reflection and
 informed reflexivity in

No.
 The paper focuses
 on educational
 psychology

The study uses a
 quantitative research
 design, employing
 surveys to assess

Beliefs of
Educational
Psychology
Doctoral
Students. *Internatio
nal Journal of
Teaching &
Learning in Higher
Education*, 35(2),
17–31.

ontological beliefs of
EP doctoral students

ontological beliefs,
which can influence
how LA EPs approach
their work.

the professional
development of EPs.

doctoral students,
which may not
relate to the LA EP
context but could
influence future EP
practice in LAs.

educational
psychology doctoral
students'
epistemological and
ontological beliefs.
Quantitative design.

These beliefs shape
their understanding of
knowledge, learning,
and the role of
psychological science
in educational settings.

For LA EPs, an
awareness of their
epistemological
positions is crucial for
reflecting on their
practice, mainly when
working with diverse
populations or dealing

		with complex ethical dilemmas.		
39. DeCuir-Gunby, J. T. (2023). Advancing the debate: The need for policy-oriented activism research in educational psychology. <i>EP</i> , 58 (4), 284–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2023.2252070	Calls for policy-oriented activism in educational psychology, addressing racial equity.	<i>Discuss the evolving practice of EPs working with minority cultural and linguistic populations in England.</i>	The study emphasises EPs' dynamic and reflective journey as they adapt their practice to understand better and meet these communities' needs.	No While the focus is on educational psychology research and activism, it does not specifically address the LA EP context. However, it could be relevant to EPs involved in policy work within LAs. This is a conceptual paper advocating for activism-oriented research in educational psychology. It does not involve empirical research. This is a conceptual paper advocating for activism-oriented research in educational psychology. It does not involve empirical research. <i>Not empirical research</i>

40. Fong, C. J., Flanigan, A. E., Hogan, E., Brady, A. C., Griffin, M. M., Gonzales, C., García, A. J., Fathi, Z., & Robinson, D. H. (2022). Individual and Institutional Productivity in Educational Psychology Journals from 2015 to 2021. Educational Psychology Review, 34(4), 2379–2403. https://doi.org/10.1	No focus on Race or racial equity; addresses journal productivity in EP.	No The study focuses on institutional and individual productivity in educational psychology rather than directly addressing societal structures or the specific role of EPs.	However, the findings can be applied to the LA EP context by reflecting on institutional contributions to knowledge creation and how EPs engage with evidence-based practices in their work. EPs should remain informed by current research trends and apply evidence-based approaches that consider equity, particularly in supporting	LA EPs can draw on institutional and individual productivity insights to reflect on their own practices and contributions to educational psychology, ensuring they remain aligned with both empirical research and equitable approaches to supporting students from diverse backgrounds.	The research adopts a quantitative bibliometric analysis to examine productivity in educational psychology journals, measuring individual and institutional contributions to scholarly output from 2015 to 2021. <i>Not empirical research.</i>
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007/s10648-022-
09704-2

marginalised
communities.

41. Graham, S. (2018). **Discusses** **Examines how school** EPs play a key role in **No.** **Quantitative approach**
Race/Ethnicity and **Race/ethnicity and** helping schools foster **While the focus is** **to examine the**
Social Adjustment **social adjustment,** inclusive **on race/ethnicity** **relationship between**
of Adolescents: **emphasising how** environments where **and social** **race/ethnicity and**
How (Not if) **school diversity matters** all students can thrive, **adjustment in** **social adjustment in**
School Diversity **for students' social** regardless of their **schools, it does not** **diverse school**
Matters. EP, 53(2), **adjustment.** racial or ethnic **specifically address** **environments. This**
64–77. **underscoring the role of** background. This **the LA EP context.** **large-scale analysis**
[https://doi.org/10.1](https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2018.1428805) **EPs in supporting** involves not only **However, the** **provides important**
080/00461520.2018 **diverse student** direct work with **findings could be** **data on how school**
.1428805 **populations.** students but also **relevant to EPs** **diversity impacts**
Schools with diverse both opportunities and advising schools on **working in diverse** **students' experiences,**
student bodies provide challenges for social strategies to promote **schools within** **which can inform EP**
cohesion. positive intergroup **LAs.** **interventions.**
relations and reduce discrimination.
*Not empirical
research*

42. Kaplan, A. (2023). A framework for approaching policy- oriented educational psychology research. <i>EP</i> , 58(4), 229–243. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2023.2253301	No explicit mention of Race or anti-racist practice; focuses on policy-oriented research in educational psychology.	<i>The role of EPs within broader policy-oriented research.</i> Advocates for an approach that connects psychological practice with policy development. This view positions EPs as crucial figures in translating research into actionable policies addressing systemic education barriers. .	Kaplan highlights the potential for EPs to influence educational policy reform, particularly in promoting equity and inclusion, by using their expertise in psychological science to advocate for evidence-based practices that consider the diverse needs of children in local communities. Proposes a framework for EPs to engage in policy-oriented research, urging the profession to align its	No While the paper focuses on policy- oriented research, it is not specifically tied to the LA EP context. However, it could apply to LA EPs involved in shaping educational policies.	Provides a conceptual framework for policy- oriented EP research, offering theoretical recommendations rather than empirical findings. Not empirical research
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			practice with advocacy for systemic change, including equity-focused policies that affect racially and culturally diverse learners.		
43. López, F. (2023). How can educational psychology inform policy? <i>EP</i> , 58(4), 278–283. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2023.2253297	No specific mention of Race, but discusses educational psychology informing policy, which could intersect with racial equity.	<i>Discusses how LA EPs can inform educational policy through research and practice.</i> LA EPs are uniquely situated to provide evidence-based insights that can shape LA policies, particularly around issues such as inclusion, mental health, and special educational needs.	The literature indicates that LA EPs have the potential to influence policy at multiple levels, from individual school practices to broader local and national educational frameworks.	Yes The paper discusses the role of educational psychology in informing policy, which is relevant to LA EPs working to influence local education policy. However, it is more broadly focused on educational	This is a theoretical and conceptual paper that discusses the role of educational psychology in policy formation. It synthesizes existing research rather than presenting new empirical findings. <i>Not empirical research</i>

				psychology as a field.	
44. Ratheram, E., & Kelly, C. (2023). An exploration of developing the practice of EPs with minority cultural and linguistic populations in England: A dynamic journey of understanding and change. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 40(3), 30–46. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2023.40.3.30	Explores EP practice with minority cultural and linguistic populations, implicitly addressing racial equity.	Explored EP practice with minority cultural and linguistic populations (community). Discussing how EPs are gradually shifting their practice toward a more culturally responsive and equitable model but also acknowledge the dynamic nature and complexity of this journey.	Suggest that EPs should work closely with minority communities to understand their needs and perspectives, engaging in continuous reflection and adaptation.	Yes Note the increasing awareness within LA EP services of the importance of cultural sensitivity and anti-racist practice.	Qualitative exploration, examining the development of EP practice with minority populations through interviews and reflective analysis.

45. Robinson, C. D. (2022). A Framework for Motivating Teacher-Student Relationships. <i>Educational Psychology Review</i> , 34(4), 2061–2094. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09706-0	Does not address Race, anti-racist practices, or racial equity, focusing on TS relationships.	Explores how EPs can motivate teacher-pupil relationships (school environment) which is crucial in creating inclusive school environments. EP's role is critical in developing systemic approaches to SEND in schools.	This framework underscores the EP's role in consultancy and intervention, promoting positive relational dynamics within schools. Suggests that the EP can motivate T-P relationships by facilitating a more supportive learning environment, particularly for vulnerable children, such as those with SEND or from minoritised groups.	No The paper does not specifically reference the LA EP context, as it is focused on general educational psychology and teacher-student relationships. However, the framework could be relevant to EPs working in LA schools.	Framework-based approach to explore the motivational dynamics in teacher-student relationships, focusing on how these relationships can support marginalised students. Not empirical research, grounded in theory.
46. Salter, P. S., Perez, M. J., Battle, J. S.,	Discusses ARP and the role of critical history	Argue for the use of critical history as a tool	By teaching and understanding	No.	Critical historical lens, using counter stories

& Crist, J. D.
(2024). Each one,
teach one: Critical
history as counter
stories, antiracist
affordances, and
cues for belonging.
American
Psychologist, 79(4),
631–644.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0001245>

and counter-stories in
fostering belonging.

for EPs to promote
anti-racist affordances.

historical narratives
that counteract racism,
EPs can create cues
for belonging and
inclusivity for
minoritised students,
helping to dismantle
systemic racism
within educational
settings.

The paper
discusses how
critical history, and
counter stories can
be used to promote
antiracist practices
in educational
settings. While it
provides useful
insights for LA
EPs, it does not
specifically focus
on the LA EP
context.

to illustrate how
understanding history
through an anti-racist
perspective can
inform current EP
practices.

47. Schachter, E. P., &
Rich, Y. (2011).
Identity Education:
A Conceptual
Framework for
Educational

No mention of Race;
focuses on identity
education as a
conceptual framework.

Provide a conceptual
framework for
understanding the role
of identity in
educational psychology
practice.

LA EPs are
encouraged to engage
in reflective practices
that consider their
own professional
identity and how it

No
While not
specifically
focused on the LA
EP context, this
paper explores

The study is
conceptual, proposing
a framework for
identity education that
can guide both
researchers and

Researchers and
Practitioners. *EP*, 4
6(4), 222–238.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2011.614509>

shapes their
interactions with
students, teachers, and
families. This
reflexive approach can
help EPs better
understand the needs
of diverse learners and
adapt their practices to
be more inclusive.

identity education,
which is relevant to
the role of EPs
working with
diverse
populations,
including those in
LAs.

practitioners in the
field of educational
psychology.
*Not empirical
research*

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>48. Schulze, J., Winter, L. A., Woods, K., & Tyldesley, K. (2017). Investigating the significance of social justice in educational psychology practice - A systematic</p> | <p>Focuses on social justice, which can be linked to racial equity and anti-racist practices in educational psychology.</p> | <p>Systematic review on <i>the significance of social justice in EP practice, emphasising how EPs must be equipped to address issues related to race, power, and privilege in educational contexts.</i></p> | <p>Investigate how EPs integrate social justice into their practice, revealing the diverse roles that EPs can play in promoting racial and social equity.</p> <p>The study underscores the need for EPs to be</p> | <p>Yes
This study explores how EPs in England engage with social justice in their practice, which is directly relevant to EPs working in LAs in the UK. It</p> | <p>Systematic Literature review- questionnaire to gather quantitative data on EPs' interest and involvement in social justice issues, followed by qualitative interviews for more in-depth exploration.</p> |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|

literature review. Educational & Child Psychology, 34(3), 57–73. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2017.34.3.57		The study stresses the importance of ensuring equity in access to psychological services for marginalised groups.	reflexive and aware of their positionality in relation to power dynamics in schools.	investigates how social justice issues are addressed within the statutory frameworks that govern EP work.	Mixed Method
49. Vargas, J.H & Saetermoe, C.L. (2024). The Antiracist Educator's Journey and the Psychology of Critical Consciousness Development: A New Roadmap. EP, 59(1), 20–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2023.2243329	Focuses on the antiracist educator's journey and the psychology of critical consciousness, explicitly addressing anti-racist practices.	Discuss the development of critical consciousness in antiracist education, relevant to the role of LA EPs in promoting racial equity. They argue that EPs must go beyond traditional psychological approaches and engage with critical consciousness to address the root causes	focus on the development of critical consciousness in educators, emphasising that EPs need to embrace anti-racist education as an ongoing journey. They provide a roadmap for how educators, including EPs, can develop a deeper awareness of systemic	No The paper discusses the development of critical consciousness in educators, including antiracist work. While it may inform LA EPs' antiracist practices, it is not specifically focused on the LA EP context.	The study provides a conceptual framework for understanding how educators can develop critical consciousness. It is not an empirical study but offers a roadmap for antiracist educational practice. <i>Not empirical research</i>

antiracist practices, it is not specifically focused on the LA EP context.

of educational inequities. This involves helping educators and students develop an awareness of social justice issues and empowering them to act against racism and discrimination within the educational system.

racism and integrate it into their practice.

50. Vostokova, J. I. (2024). Reflexive projecting resource for personal and professional development of EPs: Psychological content and conditions of

No mention of Race, anti-racist practice, or racial equity. Focuses on the professional development of EPs.

Reflexivity allows EPs to critically examine their own beliefs, values, and biases, which is essential in ensuring ethical and effective practice.

Discusses the importance of reflexive practice for the personal and professional development of EPs.

No, The paper is focused on the development of EPs, which may include those working in LAs, but it is not

Reflexive methodology to examine the development of personal and professional awareness in EPs, focusing on how reflexivity can

actualization.
Theoretical and
Experimental
Psychology, 17(2),
94–111.
<https://doi.org/10.11621/TEP-24-14>

Reflexive practice can
help EPs better
understand the socio-
cultural contexts in
which they work and
adapt their approaches
to meet the needs of
diverse learners.

specifically tied to
the LA EP context,
enhance
understanding of
racial issues and
promote anti-racist
practices.

This is a theoretical
paper discussing the
psychological
conditions for the
development of EPs.
It does not involve
empirical research.

*Not empirical
research.*

This conceptual paper
focuses on theoretical
discussions around
reflexivity and
epistemic virtue. It

51. Weinstock, M.,
Kienhues, D.,
Feucht, F. C., &
Ryan, M. (2017).
Informed

No mention of Race or
anti-racist practice;
focuses on epistemic
virtue and reflexivity in
EP.

The context of the EP
role is situated within
broader societal
structures where

The study discusses
informed reflexivity,
exploring epistemic
virtue through
conceptual and

No
The paper does not
explicitly refer to
the LA EP context
but discusses

Apontua <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Promoting racial equity within educational psychology services: Where are we now? – Part 2	Professiona l article: Practice- based reflections	To share strategies and perspective s for engaging in racial equity work	Practice-based commentary	EPs across LA services	Reflections and case illustration	Need for systemic support, supervision , and practical strategies	Team-based equity practice, support structures	Medium relevance – Practical strategies for equity. TAPUPAS : Useful, Accessible , Sound
Bateman (2023)	A Participatory Research Project Exploring Educational Psychologists’ Engagement with Whiteness, White Privilege and Developing	Professiona l doctoral thesis; Participator y Action Research (PAR)	To explore EPs’ engagemen t with Whiteness and anti- racism	Participatory Action Research with reflective practice	6 co- researchers (3 EPs, 3 TEPs) from one EPS	2 Focus groups, journaling, and thematic analysis	Engagemen t with Whiteness, discomfort, power, identity, and institutiona l constraints	White privilege, critical reflection, emotional labour	High relevance – Whiteness and reflexivity. TAPUPAS : Transparen t,

	Anti-Racist Practice								Purposive, Specific
Bei & Knowler (2022)	Disrupting unlawful exclusion from schools of minoritised children and young people racialised as Black: Using Critical Race Theory composite counter-storytelling	Peer-reviewed journal article; CRT	To challenge dominant deficit narratives using CRT and counter-storytelling	Qualitative; CRT-informed composite counter-storytelling	Composite narratives based on literature and lived experiences	Narrative construction; qualitative synthesis	Structural racism in exclusion, critique of behaviour policies, use of CRT for resistance	School exclusions, systemic racism, counter-narratives	High relevance – Theoretical and systemic insights. TAPUPAS: Transparent, Appropriate, Purposive, Useful
Chase (2020)	Exploring the view of practitioners	Professional doctoral thesis;	To explore EPs' views on adopting	Qualitative, interpretative approach	6 EPs from one LA EPS	Semi-structured interviews;	Tension between personal	Sociopolitical reflexivity,	Medium–High relevance

from a local authority educational psychology service of a sociopolitical approach within UK educational psychology	Interpretati ve qualitative	a sociopolitic al approach		thematic analysis	ethics and professiona l neutrality; sociopolitic al reflexivity	professional ethics	– Practitione r insight. TAPUPAS : Transparen t, Accessible , Specific
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Done <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Rocks and hard places: The ethical and practical dilemmas for educational psychologists working with children permanently	Peer- reviewed journal article; Critical Realist paradigm	To explore ethical and practical dilemmas faced by EPs working with excluded pupils	Qualitative,	65 EPs Principal / Deputy Principal EP 6 Senior / Specialist Senior EP 12 Main grade EP 35	In depth Semi- structured interviews; reflexive thematic analysis	Ethical conflict, limited systemic agency, complicity in exclusion	Professiona l dilemmas, structural constraints	Medium relevance – Structural issues in ethical dilemmas. TAPUPAS : Appropriat
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	excluded from school				Trainee EP (Y2/3) 12				e, Sound, Specific
Francis (2022)	How can we reduce racial discrimination in schools. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis exploring how Educational Psychologists enact change	Professional doctoral thesis; IPA	To explore how EPs understand and enact change to reduce racism	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	4 LA EPs practising in the UK schools context	Semi-structured interviews; IPA framework	Relational work, emotional labour, need for activist stance	BGMH EP experiences, identity, and trust-building	High relevance – Enactment of ARP. TAPUPAS : Transparen t, Specific, Sound
Tobin <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Promoting racial equity within educational psychology services: Where	Professional article; Reflective qualitative	To examine the current state of racial equity within EP services	Reflective commentary	EPs from multiple EPSs	Professional reflections and discussions	Barriers to equity, value of reflexivity, uneven practice	Service-wide equity practice, positionalit y	Medium relevance – Service-level reflections. TAPUPAS :

are we now? –

Part 1

Appropriat

e, Useful,

Sound

Appendix C: Interview schedule

Question	Critical Realism (CR) Perspective	Critical Race Theory (CRT) Perspective
1. When did you become an HCPC-qualified educational psychologist?	Establishes the participant's professional background and engagement with the institutional framework of educational psychology.	Highlights the trajectory of professionals and potential early experiences of institutional racism or exclusion.
2. How long have you worked in your current local authority?	Provides insight into longitudinal experiences within the LA and whether institutional changes have impacted their role.	Reveals whether racism in the LA has evolved or remained entrenched over time.
3. Do you understand the abbreviations LA and EP?	Ensures shared understanding of key terms, grounding the conversation in mutual professional language.	Uncovers if institutional language reflects assumptions or power dynamics.
4. What do you expect from being involved in this research?	Sets epistemological boundaries for the research and clarifies expectations for the research space.	Ensures the interview is research-focused, not therapeutic, and recognises the agency of participants in shaping their narrative.

Question	Critical Realism (CR) Perspective	Critical Race Theory (CRT) Perspective
5. What does a typical workday look like for you?	Provides context on how institutional structures affect the participant's daily practices and role.	Reveals how inequities manifest in daily practice and if there are racial aspects are acknowledged.
6. What does the term Racial Equity mean to you?	Allows for an individualised understanding of racial equity and the impact of structural forces.	Centres the participant's racialised experiences and understanding of institutional racism and equity.
7. What experiences have empowered you to understand and promote racial equity in your role as an LA EP?	Explores how transformative processes (both personal and structural) have empowered the participant to engage with racial equity.	Captures how experiences may empower the individual and how these experiences contribute to resistance and anti-racist work.
8. How similar or different do you think your experiences of promoting racial equity may be in comparison to your colleagues?	Understands how social structures (race, policies, professional culture) affect the participant's experiences in relation to peers.	Acknowledges how the participant's identity shapes their experience in contrast to colleagues' experiences.
9. Could you please share an experience from your practice where you promoted racial equity and received it positively in an educational setting?	Explores racial equity validation within institutional contexts and mechanisms that promote positive reception.	Highlights success stories and how resistance to racism led to positive outcomes in promoting equity.

Question	Critical Realism (CR) Perspective	Critical Race Theory (CRT) Perspective
10. Could you please share an experience from your practice where you promoted racial equity, and it was received negatively in an educational setting?	Identifies barriers and resistance within the institution that challenge efforts toward racial equity.	Reflects on opposition and the impact of institutional power in preventing anti-racist efforts.
11. What are your thoughts on the LA EP's capacity to promote racial equity in education?	Explores structural constraints within the LA that affect the capacity to promote racial equity.	Considers how institutional racism and power dynamics impact the agency of EPs in promoting racial equity.
12. Is there anything you feel would support you in your capacity to promote racial equity in education?	Looks for institutional solutions or mechanisms that could enhance the EP's ability to promote racial equity.	Explores participant needs for support or empowerment in tackling racial inequalities.
13. Is there anything you wish your peers, or the wider society could understand about your role and its contribution to promoting racial equity in education?	Unpacks how the EP's role is shaped or misunderstood within the broader societal context.	Addresses the marginalisation of professionals and how they contribute to racial equity, despite societal challenges.
14. Final question: on reflection, what aspect of this conversation have we not yet touched on today?	Allows for exploration of underexplored issues that may impact the participant's work or experiences.	Provides space for participants to reflect on unsaid aspects of their racialised experience and professional journey.

Appendix D: TREC approval

Significant Amendments

The Tavistock and Portman 
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699

<https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/>

Tassaree-Jaja Wilson

By Email

02 July 2024

Dear Tassaree-Jaja,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: *'Critical Conversations: 'This Conversation is About Race'.
A Qualitative Exploration of the Local Authority Educational Psychologists Experiences' of Promoting
Racial Equity in UK Education.'*

I am writing to inform you that your application has been reviewed by the Assessors and I can confirm that your research ethics application has not been approved at this stage. Please note that **Significant Amendments** have been requested.

Ethical approval is given subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC) and on the proviso of the amendments requested by TREC assessors are addressed.

The amendments are as follows:

Condition	Comments
1	Risk assessment should be provided.
2	The project aim(s) should be clearly stated under Question 2.
3	The supervisor has signed this form but their name should be typed into the box above it.
4	Advisory comment: The applicant states that the project is research according to the HRA tool. I find this unlikely. However, I am not sure that matters given that the project will be conducted in a local authority and subject to any approval processes there. The above conditions are relatively minor matters and should be easy to address. The project is interesting and worthwhile.

See addendum from page 2.

1

Risk Assessment

Fieldwork Risk Assessment Audit

Name: Tassaree-Jaja Wilson	School: Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust
Student number: 22002873	Supervisor / Director of Studies: Dale Bartle (research supervisor)
Thesis Title: Critical Conversations: This Conversation is About Race.' A Qualitative Exploration of the Local Authority Educational Psychologists Experiences' of Promoting Racial Equity in UK Education.	
Fieldwork location: 1.The Local Authority Building of Educational Psychologists who will volunteer to take part in research. 2.Online via Zoom.	Type of Fieldwork: Qualitative Interviews
Proposed dates or periods of Fieldwork: 1 September 2024 to 1 January 2025	
Potential hazards or risks: <i>(rate high medium or low)</i>	
1. Office Based Interview (low risk):	2. Online interview (low risk):
3. Safeguarding (low risk):	4. Health and safety risks (medium risk).
5. Travelling between interview sites (medium risk).	6.
Potential Consequences for each hazard: <i>(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</i> 1. Office Based Interview (low risk):	

Unsafe electrical equipment can lead to electrical shocks or fire. Burns and cuts can also occur from the incorrect use of office work equipment (e.g., laminators). Some electrical equipment is prohibited from offices because of the high fire risk.

Temperature- Exposure to hot or cold workplaces results in discomfort and low productivity.

Space- Insufficient space, contact with or hitting against furniture and minor injuries.

Lighting- Inadequate light levels; too bright, too dark, disability/distraction glare. This may result in eye discomfort or headaches. Cause unsafe conditions.

2. Online interview (low risk):

Using unsafe electrical equipment can lead to electrical shocks or fire. Burns and cuts can also occur from the incorrect use of office work equipment (e.g. laminators). Some electrical equipment is prohibited from offices because of the high fire risk.

May experience aches and pains due to poor posture, workstation arrangement or prolonged use. This can become persistent or occasionally disabling. Eye discomfort or headache may also be caused by poor lighting screen image, or prolonged use.

3. Safeguarding (low risk):

Although LA EPs are not considered vulnerable participants and/or the researchers, the nature of the dialogue in the interview may explore experiences of improper behaviour, abuse, or exploitation, which may result in a risk to researchers of being in a compromising situation where there might be accusations of improper conduct in practice.

Participants reflecting on work-related stress, such as lack of job control, inadequate support, role concerns, poor relationships, or change. In considering reflexivity during the interview, the participant may consider their exposure to work stressors. Temporary physical and mental health effects. Participants may develop significant mental or physical health problems.

Social: Disclosures could affect participants' standing in the community, in their families, and in their jobs.

Legal risks: activities that could result in the participant, researchers and/or University committing an offence; activities that might lead to a participant disclosing an activity to a researcher which would necessitate reporting to enforcement authorities; activities that could result in a civil claim for compensation.

4. Health and safety risks (medium risk):

Risks of harm to health and physical injury.

Failure to evacuate safely in the event of a fire. Smoke inhalation or burns.

Potential for fatalities.

Failure to summon first aid. Harm escalates due to delay in summoning first aid.

5. Travelling between interview sites (medium risk):

Injuries to researcher may be caused by slip and trip hazards such as spillages, trailing cables, uneven flooring, loose carpet - occasionally leading to serious injury.

Researcher may also fall when retrieving items stored at height, potentially resulting in serious injury.

Travel sickness

Platform edge - sheer drop to rails

Using pavement

Crossing roads

Controls in place for each hazard in order of likely risk: *(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*

1. In-office interview:

Use window blinds to minimise solar gain or heat loss during the day and night. Ventilate the space. Ensuring that a fan for cooling or heating is available.

Follow University guidance on staff directory where there are problems with thermal comfort.

The space provided is sufficient to enable free movement around the workspace and for carrying out tasks, and it complies with the legal minimum (11m³ per person).

Lighting levels are adequate for the tasks. Local lighting (e.g., lamps) is provided for close work where necessary. Window blinds are fitted and working where necessary to minimize glare.

2. Online interview:

[Use and safety of electrical equipment at work](#), including information on prohibited and dangerous electrical equipment.

[Electrical equipment: simple visual checks \(.pdf\)](#).

[Electrical safety advice for students](#).

[Portable appliance testing](#)

[Guidance on working with computers \(.pdf\)](#).

[How to manage risks from computers](#).

3. Safeguarding risks:

Department stress risk assessment carried out and reviewed annually.

University advice on [work related stress](#).

Appraisal and Performance Review meetings carried out where work plans, objectives and load is discussed.

Regular 1:1 meetings with supervisor where potential stressors can be discussed.

Encouraging participants to communicate significant problems with their supervisor/ PEP and potentially carrying out a stress risk assessment, with assistance from HR Managers.

4. Health and safety risks:

The researcher will request the health and safety protocols from the LA EP building administration to cover fire safety, health, and well-being emergencies, etc.

There are no prohibited items, such as candles (unless approved by Fire Safety), toasters, or non-EMS-issued room heaters.

The researcher will communicate incidents of Health and Safety with a supervisor as and when they arise.

5. Travel via public transport:

Personal items are kept on the person and journey pre-planned to optimise time and safest route.

Contact details are used to inform participants if travel-related changes cause changes to the agreed date and time.

Sensible behaviour as an adult commuting in public. E.g., standing still until the train has stopped, waiting on the bus in assigned areas and the doors are open, keeping behind the line painted on the platform or bus stop.

Reduced amount of talking to concentrate on surroundings

Choose appropriate and safe crossing points.

By signing this document, you are indicating that you have consulted the policy and have fully considered the risks.

Signature of Student:



Date: 04.07.2024

I agree to the assessment of risk in relation to this project.

Signature of Supervisor of Studies:



Date:

5.7.24.

Approved for Research

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699

<https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/>

Tassaree-Jaja Wilson

By Email

09 July 2024

Dear Tassaree-Jaja,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: *'Critical Conversations: 'This Conversation is About Race'.
A Qualitative Exploration of the Local Authority Educational Psychologists Experiences' of
Promoting Racial Equity in UK Education.'*

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

Please be advised that any changes to the project design including changes to methodology/data collection etc. must be referred to TREC as failure to do so. may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct.

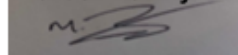
If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Franklyn



Academic Governance and Quality Officer

T: 020 938 2699

E: academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

cc. Course Lead, Supervisor, Research Lead

Appendix E: Recruitment documentation



Critical Conversations: This Conversation is About Race.

A Qualitative Exploration of the Local Authority Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Promoting Racial Equity in UK Education.

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Tassaree-Jaja Wilson, and I am a Trainee Child, Community and Educational Psychologist. This research is an aspect of my course, which supports my thesis, to attain my qualification. I will be supervised by an Educational Psychologist, Dr Dale Bartle.

This resource is to provide you with information related to your participation in this research. Please take time to thoroughly read and understand the information provided, to give informed consent for your participation.

Aim of the Research

This research aims to explore the experiences of the LA EP as it relates to promoting racial equity in UK education. There is currently limited availability of research that provides exploration /outer) of the realities of London (inner/outer) LA EPs in this area, which continues to be a vital aspect of inclusion and improving outcomes for children and their families within the LA community. This research will provide space for transparency of application in practice to further inform change within the field and practice of Educational Psychology.

The findings of this research will be used as data for my thesis, as a part of my Educational Psychology Qualification. The completed thesis will be made public via the internet and relevant spaces to further inform good practice for the industry of Educational Psychology.

Permission to Conduct Research

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Ethics Board has permitted me to conduct this research. My study will be supervised and checked to ensure that your rights as a participant are upheld. Furthermore, as a participant, your contribution to this study is respected.

Participant Requirements

I am looking to recruit qualified LA EPs who are comfortable sharing their experiences of promoting racial equity in education. As a participant, you can withdraw your contribution to the study up to 7 days after completing the interview session. You are freely permitted to

exercise your right to withdraw your participation to this point, as your contribution will be transcribed and included in the dataset.

The 1:1 interview will take place in person with the researcher in your LA EP office. A quiet room will be booked for the session to avoid disruption. Alternatively, an online Zoom session may be offered. The interview will consist of semi-structured questions and will last for approximately one hour. The session will be audio-recorded and stored on a password-encrypted device. The recording will be deleted once it has been transcribed. Any reference to your data and LA will be anonymised, and you will be provided a pseudonym, as will any names you refer to in the session.

Confidentiality

The researcher will comply with all ethical and legal practice guidelines for conducting research. All information gathered from your participation will be stored securely. Information which you may explicitly identify will be protected by the researchers. The audio from the recorded session will be deleted after transcription. Any records related to your participation may be stored for a finite time (6-10 years) and then destroyed, according to the protocol of the [Tavistock and Portman Data Protection Policy](#).

Please be aware that the researcher will take all feasible steps to anonymise your contribution to the study. However, please be aware that the researcher cannot mitigate additional factors that may result in your contribution being identified and attributed to you.

Contact Information

If you have any questions concerning this research, please contact me using the following information:

Email: twilson@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Supervising Educational Psychologist: Dale Bartle- DBartle@Tavi-Port.nhs.uk

Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee: Paru Jeram- Trust Quality Assurance Officer PJeram@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Critical Conversations: This Conversation is About Race.

**A Qualitative Exploration of the Local Authority Educational Psychologists
Experiences' of Promoting Racial Equity in UK Education.**

Participant Form

In giving my consent to participate in this research:

- I have read and understood the information sheet and enquired with the researcher about any questions I have, concerning my participation.
- I understand what has been proposed and the extent of my involvement in this research.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I will have 7 days from the date of the interview (as agreed with the researcher) to withdraw my data from the research.
- I understand that my participation and the data gathered from my contribution will remain confidential. Only researchers involved with this study will have access to the raw data.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.
- I have received a clear explanation of how the data will be stored and disseminated for this research.
- I understand that the findings from this research will contribute to the researcher's thesis.
- I understand that my data will be anonymised, with the use of pseudonyms where appropriate. However, due to the limited number of participants and researchers involved in the study, I understand it may be possible to identify me through my contribution.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participating in this study which as been fully explained to me.

Participant's Name (BLOCK LETTERS):

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.....

Participant's Signature:

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.....

Date:

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.....

Interviewer Name (BLOCK LETTERS):

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Interviewer's Signature:

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Date:

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The Tavistock and Portman 
NHS Foundation Trust

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CALLING FOR PARTICIPANTS

ARE YOU:

A HCPC QUALIFIED EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST?

CURRENTLY WORKING AS A LOCAL AUTHORITY EP?

**WILLING TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES OF RACIAL EQUITY IN
PRACTICE?**

My Name Is Tassaree-Jaja. I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist, studying at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust.

As a part of my thesis research, I would like to speak with London (inner/outer) LA EPs about their experiences of promoting racial equity in UK Education.

If you would like to participate in this study, it will require you to take part in a 1:1 in-person interview where you can share your experiences. The interview will last an hour. The session's audio will be recorded and transcribed as data for the study.

Please email to find out more!

Email: twilson@tavi-port.nhs.uk

