

EVALUATORS' VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Practicing Evaluators' Visions of Social Justice:
Definitions, Theories, Approaches, and Problem Framing**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the past and the future: to the memory of grandparents, Fred and Rosetta Matthias and Su-O Wang, who taught me how to be in the world; and to the many young people I have been privileged to work with over the years, who have continuously shown me the work I need to do and the person I must become.

Abstract

While explication of social justice evaluation approaches have proliferated over the decades, there has been little discussion of what a just society might look like. This study explored the visions evaluators have for a just society, the approaches used by social justice-minded evaluators, and the ways in which justice is problematized in discourse in the field. Data from semi-structured interviews conducted with 16 experienced evaluators and a review 114 articles published during the last 30 years in American Evaluation Association-sponsored journals were used to outline how evaluators characterize a just society and how evaluators are working to achieve this just society. Data collection focused on mentions of justice paradigms—distributive justice, procedural justice, and justice-as-recognition—and mentions of social justice evaluation approaches—culturally responsive evaluation (CRE), democratic deliberative evaluation (DDE), feminist evaluation, and Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation—in the literature and in interviews. The results of study suggest that evaluators hold complex conceptions of social justice that emphasize addressing historical harms, disruption of current unjust systems, and the creation of conditions that support authentic participation and thriving. Interviewees did not adhere to specific social justice evaluation approaches espoused in the literature; rather, they took action based on evaluation contexts, focusing on illuminating sources of injustice, reframing issues to support action, and building evaluation capacity and community power. Social justice discourse in the professional literature, which was generally disregarded as irrelevant by interviewees, most frequently mentioned culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) and the justice-as-recognition paradigm. Discussion of both justice paradigms and approaches was largely superficial

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and underdeveloped, suggesting a need for greater discussion of and theorizing about both social justice ends and the means needed to achieve those ends within the field.

Social justice discourse in evaluation continues to obscure the causes of injustice, and may not keep pace with the evolution of justice understandings over time. Further, attempts to professionalize the field may obstruct progress toward greater justice, though ultimately, the attainment of social justice may ultimately be beyond the scope of evaluation practice.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Thirty years ago, William Shadish proclaimed that “evaluation theory is who we are,” noting that theories provided a vocabulary, a knowledge base, and a set of values that together define the work and field of evaluation practice (1998). While some scholars argue that theory is not essential to practice (Christie, 2003), other suggest that theories provide guidance for evaluation practice decisions throughout the process (Miller, 2010; Rog, 2012; Shadish, 1998). Those who emphasize the importance of theory argue that it “encompasses the approaches and frameworks that describe and prescribe how we as evaluators approach our work” (Rog, 2012, p. 226). Evaluation theories are relevant in framing evaluation questions and identifying relevant methods (Greene et al., 2007; Mark et al., 1999) and in determining which stakeholders should participate and how (Fetterman, 1994; Patton, 2008). They can guide the dissemination of findings, including how findings should be shared and with whom (House & Howe, 1999; Patton, 2008).

What constitutes “theory” in evaluation has been a source of contention in the evaluation literature for some time (Donaldson & Lipsey, 2011; Rog, 2015; Shadish et al., 1991). Smith (2010) suggests that evaluation theories are unlike scientific theories in that they do not offer testable predictions; rather they are solutions to questions that underlie evaluation practice. To address confusion about theory, Donaldson and Lipsey have defined three categories of theories employed by evaluators in their work: 1) program theory, which describes how programs or interventions are intended to bring about change; 2) social science theory, which describes social phenomena that programs employ or address, and 3) evaluation theory, which describes approaches and frameworks

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evaluators use to guide their work (2011). For the purposes of this paper, theory will refer to evaluation approaches and frameworks as depicted in Donaldson and Lipsey's typology.

Evaluation theory and practice are informed by theories and concepts that derive from a variety of bodies of knowledge, including social psychology, political theory, and methodological theory, all of which can be used by evaluators as tools or heuristics "to think with" (Schwandt, 2014, p. 234). Evaluators are nascent theorists who make judgments in the moment about methods and concepts, with theories serving as strategy and tactics that help define what can be done in any given evaluation (Shadish et al., 1991). Limited conceptual knowledge of theories may ultimately limit what an evaluator knows how to do in any given situation (Schwandt, 2014). Theories contribute to the repertoire of response from which evaluators draw when they select evaluation approaches (Hansen, 2005; House, 1976). Among theories that inform evaluation practice are theories of social justice (Schwandt, 1997; Schweigert, 2007), which are themselves informed by social and political theories.

The role that social justice theories and considerations should play in evaluation practice has been a point of contention for decades, with some arguing that concern for social justice in any aspect of evaluation is akin to advocacy and threatens objectivity and data validity claims (Datta, 1999). Some have argued that evaluators should aim to describe, rather than prescribe values—such as social justice—that influence a program (Cook & Shadish, 1986). In contrast, others suggest that evaluators have moral obligations to stakeholders in certain evaluation contexts (Visse et al., 2012) and must critically examine and promote dialogue about values and assumptions embedded both in

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programs and their evaluations (Segerholm, 2002). Despite an absence of field-wide agreement about the relationships between social justice and evaluation, as well as a relative absence of writing focused explicitly on social justice concepts and theories in evaluation in recent decades, scholars continue to define and frame social justice-oriented approaches, including democratic deliberative evaluation (House & Howe, 1999), culturally responsive evaluation (Hood et al., 2014); the transformative paradigm (Mertens & Wilson, 2018), and Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation (Cram, 2016; LaFrance & Nichols, 2008).

Despite the ongoing development and refinement of social justice-oriented evaluation theories, little research has explicitly explored how evaluators employ those theories to make practice decisions. In the last two decades, empirical studies of evaluation practice have attempted to map specific evaluation decisions to evaluation theories (Christie, 2003); to connect individual evaluators' beliefs and backgrounds and their methodological choice (Azzam, 2011); and to explore the decision-making practices of evaluators in everyday settings (Kundin, 2010). Kundin's descriptive framework for evaluator decision making may serve as a useful starting point for understanding how social justice theories influence evaluation practice in that it incorporates awareness of the context of both the evaluand and the evaluation, evaluation theories, and different "logics" that evaluators have developed based on their experience and knowledge (2010). These interconnected "logics" or patterns of reasoning are driven by a number of factors, including a characterization of the problem to be solved by a particular program or policy (Fournier, 1995; Hansen, 2005).

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Analysis of how problems are defined and framed, both in programs or policies, can provide a critical framework for exploring unexamined assumptions that have been built into those programs and policies (Archibald, 2019; Nkwake, 2013). Archibald's proposal that problem definition be used to critically examine evaluation practice (2019) draws on Bacchi's "What's the Problem Represented to be" approach (WPR), which posits that "what one proposes to do about something reveals what one thinks is problematic" (Bacchi, 2012). Social justice approaches in evaluation aim to address injustice both in programs and in their evaluations. To better understand what is meant by "social justice" in evaluation, it is necessary to explore social justice evaluation theories, the connections they have to social and political theories upon which they draw, and the ways that social justice-oriented evaluation practitioners select and apply these theories.

Problem Statement

Caldwell and Bledsoe suggest that the relatively recent proliferation of social justice evaluation approaches—which are often framed in contrast to the way evaluation is usually done—is "an admission that injustice permeates the profession" (2019, p. 7). These approaches generally define and trace the roots of injustice in society that evaluation practice can perpetuate (MacDonald, 1976; Stanfield, 1999) and offer frameworks and approaches intended to mitigate injustice within the scope of the evaluation process (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). For example, scholars have proposed "pluralist-intuitionist" approaches to ensure the inclusion of diverse views and evaluation criteria (House, 1976); empowerment approaches to advance self-determination within communities (Fetterman, 1994); and Indigenous and decolonizing approaches to counter "epistemological imperialism" (Chilisa et al., 2016; LaFrance et al., 2012).

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Unfortunately, these approaches do not provide discrete definitions of what is meant by “justice” or a clear picture of how these “means” produce just “ends.” For example, a study aimed at mapping practice onto evaluation theory found that different interpretations of stakeholder involvement in service of social justice stemmed from disparate conceptions of what social justice means; some social justice theorists call for more direct participation to advance justice, while others call for less (Christie, 2003a). Additionally, the term “social justice” encompasses and is also encompassed by many such terms as “inclusion” (e.g., Madison, 1992), “equity” (e.g., Hall et al., 2012), and “diversity” (e.g., Hopson, 2001), further confusing definitions and boundaries. Finally, what is considered “just” in any particular situation is contextually defined (Miller, 1999), and recent scholarship has called into question the utility of dominant conceptions of justice as frames for thinking about social justice (Shanker, 2019).

Social justice, in addition to being a theoretical concern, is also an ethical concern (Newman & Brown, 1996; Schweigert, 2007;). Ethics help to determine what is right and what is wrong, guide professional conduct, and define ideal “good” human behavior. Theories can serve as justifications for ethical decisions (Newman & Brown, 1996). As a consequence, evaluators may use social justice theories, among others, to make the distinction between ethical and unethical practices in evaluation. Perspectives on ethics are situated in social and cultural norms (Schwandt, 2007), and practitioners with different ethical perspectives may respond to situations differently (Mabry, 2004). Further, different evaluators may have different sensitivities to ethical dilemmas, depending on their perception of the purpose of the evaluation itself (Desautels & Jacob, 2012).

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Ultimately, evaluators making decisions about what they believe is ethical and what advances social justice do so in the moment in response to context, based on their understanding of norms and theories (Schwandt, 2007), on their prioritization of values (Mabry, 2004), and on factors such as intuition, past experience, observations of colleague behavior, and professional codes (Newman & Brown, 1996). The contextual, individual nature of social justice judgments has led some to argue for clearly articulated working definitions and theories of social justice so that implications for evaluation theory and practice can be identified and understood (Sirotnik, 1990), particularly since the meanings of “lofty ideals” such as social justice “must be specifically and contextually defined” if said evaluation approaches are to “gain any practically meaningful purchase in the field,” as they presently only “offer inspiration” (Greene, 2006, p. 138).

The problem this study addresses is one of conceptual clarity. Currently, the term “social justice” refers to a number of different concepts, theories, and practices. A clearer picture of the interpretations of “social justice” in theory and practice may support practitioners in making justice claims about their work and about where and how social justice can and cannot be addressed. Given the context-based nature of concepts of justice, understanding what social justice means in evaluation practice requires an examination of how social justice is framed in professional documents, in social justice evaluation approaches, and in the understandings and interpretations of evaluation practitioners.

Why Are Social Justice Understandings in Evaluation Important?

Scholars have argued for the need to conduct further research on how evaluators operationalize evaluation theories, particularly as new understandings of evaluation contexts and methods emerge (Chelimsky, 2013; Smith, 1993, Tourmen, 2009). While the role of social justice in evaluation remains contentious as evidenced by responses to the inclusion of social justice considerations in the 2018 American Evaluation Association (AEA) Evaluator Competencies (Symonette et al., 2020), a growing number of scholars and practitioners are advocating for both the development and application of approaches to advance social justice (Caldwell & Bledsoe, 2019; House, 1990; House & Howe, 2000) and for training that inspires students to “challenge the status quo, to care about the interests, of the disadvantaged, and to uncover the weaknesses within the system that contribute to inequities within society” (Thomas & Madison, 2010, p. 571). If social justice considerations are to become a key element of evaluation practice, then the field must develop a better understanding of how evaluators interpret, present, and apply social justice theories and approaches to address those considerations.

More broadly, the American Evaluation Association’s Guiding Principles, which outline professional ethics, suggest that evaluators should “strive to contribute to the common good and advancement of an equitable and just society” (AEA, 2018). In his critique of an earlier version of the Guiding Principles, Rossi called for greater clarity and emphasis in ethical guidelines for the field of practice, noting that “what is the public good is the bone of contention among political parties, political ideologies, and even world religions” (1995, p. 57). Definitions of a just society in evaluation implicitly derive from philosophical and social psychological definitions of justice (House, 1976;

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Schweigert, 2007), and greater clarity in professional guidelines might be achieved through examination of these theories.

Finally, as the field of evaluation moves toward increasing professionalization, some are calling for scrutiny of the field's norms, which influence practitioner beliefs, values, and practices in order to determine what evaluation practice contributes to society (Schwandt, 2015, 2017). Scholars have long suggested that the use of evaluation results has the potential to influence the distribution of resources and opportunities within society, and thus evaluators bear certain moral obligations to members of society (Schweigert, 2007; Thomas & McKie, 2006; House, 1990). At the same time, evaluation is increasingly used in governance in ways that control and reinforce institutional norms and values (Chouinard & Milley, 2015; Dahler-Larsen, 2012; Vedung, 2010)—values and ideologies that are so embedded in programs and policies as to be nearly invisible, making it likely that evaluators will promote and reinforce them through their practice (Dahler-Larsen, 2012; Segerholm, 2002). Consequently, it is important to examine the values and norms practitioners hold in their minds and enact in their practice.

Research Questions

Shadish et al. argue that evaluators rarely have time to reflect on theory and instead “implicitly accept assumptions that are built into [theories of practice] about social programming, knowledge construction, valuing, and use” (1991, p. 37). The purpose of this study was to explore some of the assumptions and theories that undergird social justice-oriented evaluation practice. Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

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1. What are working definitions of social justice employed in the evaluation literature and by practicing evaluators?
2. What theories and approaches do social justice-oriented evaluators report employing in their work?
3. How do these theories, approaches, and working definitions of social justice used by social justice-oriented evaluators problematize “justice?”

Significance of the Study

This study seeks to expand knowledge of evaluation theory and practice in two main ways. The first is to explore understandings of social justice theories and social justice evaluation in practice. As noted earlier, the concept of justice is socially constructed (Miller, 1999), and the field of evaluation has within itself distinct conceptualizations of justice that are evidenced in professional discourse. While theorists and scholars addressed social justice conceptions and enactment in evaluation practice in earlier decades (e.g., Ericson, 1990; House, 1976), little scholarship in recent decades has explicitly explored social justice conceptions in evaluation practice. A search of the two AEA journals from the years 2000-2020 yielded a total of 53 instances of the term “social justice” in article titles and subject headings, 13 in the *American Journal of Evaluation* and 40 in *New Directions for Evaluation*—less than three instances a year. This preliminary scan suggested that many articles highlight methods and evaluations that were purported to advance social justice, but they did not articulate a vision or conception of social justice. Scholars within the field have claimed greater social justice as a desired outcome of evaluation work, although, as noted, there is considerable contention about this issue. If evaluators are to claim social justice as a principle that defines their work,

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then it is essential to ground those claims in the understandings that practitioners have of the term “social justice.”

Additionally, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge that explores connections between theory and practice. Scholars have long called for research on the use of evaluation theory in evaluation practice (Shadish et al., 1991; Smith, 1993; Tourmen, 2009), with some arguing that a better understanding of practice will result in more robust theory (Miller, 2010; Smith, 1993). Previous work has mapped theory to practice broadly (Christie, 2003a) and explored the extent to which theory plays a role in the everyday practice decisions of evaluators (Kundin, 2010; Tourmen, 2009). This study focuses specifically on social justice theories and how social justice beliefs play a role in evaluator practice decisions.

Study Context

In some respects, this study explored the influence of context on evaluators' social justice beliefs and actions; evaluators described the social justice ends that their intentions and actions served within the context of specific injustices that either social programs addressed or that the evaluators themselves attempted to address within the confines of a program evaluation. To put it in a different way, what evaluators believe they can do in service of social justice is shaped by the roles they play within that evaluation, who their funders and clients are, and how stakeholders articulate the concept of justice for themselves. Because context is (implicitly, if not explicitly) referenced in study findings, it is important to highlight the context of this study, as it influenced the data, the analysis, and the author's interpretation of findings.

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George Floyd's murder at the hands of Minneapolis Police officers in May, 2020 ignited worldwide protests and public discussion about structural racism and injustice in a way few previous murders of Black Americans by police officers had. In Minneapolis and the broader Twin Cities area, where the author and many of the evaluators interviewed for this study live and work, Floyd's murder revealed a breadth and depth of structural racism, discriminatory policy, and injustice that individuals, communities, and institutions situated in a largely white-populated region were unprepared to understand or address. The newness of this need for reckoning was evident in the projects shared by interviewees, who described a sudden urgency expressed by client organizations and institutions to address race and injustice in their programs without full understanding of what that work would entail.

Floyd's murder, as well as a large-scale institutional response to the lengthy period of public outrage and action in the Twin Cities, deeply affected interviewees themselves as well. For some this meant a rededication to long-held beliefs and conceptions about what social justice is and how it is achieved. For others, this meant turning away from older modes of political action to build new systems of support for communities: mutual aid work, abolition work, the selection of projects they believed would advance justice in new ways, and a parting from projects that they believed would perpetuate and exacerbate existing injustices.

Interviewees all mentioned George Floyd's murder and the subsequent investigations into city departments and trials of police officers, in addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the Trump presidency in their responses, suggesting that these incidents still very much affected their thoughts and

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actions. It is likely that had this study taken place in 2018 or 2019, it might have produced different conclusions; however, it is a product of turbulent times.

Delimitations

As noted earlier, the concept of social justice has long been associated with practice ethics in the field of evaluation. There exists a rich body of literature on ethics and morality and how these principles can and should guide evaluation practice. This study does not propose to explore ethical and moral quandaries that arise in the practice of evaluators as they attempt to promote social justice in their work, nor does it seek to pass judgment on the rightness or wrongness of evaluation approaches. Rather, this study aims to clarify what evaluators mean when they do what they say by exploring the theoretical roots of social justice approaches in related fields and by documenting and analyzing the reasoning of practitioners.

In addition, as noted earlier, social justice theories derive from many other fields, including social psychology and political philosophy. There are many conceptions of justice described in these fields and others, and this study will not explicate them. For the purposes of this paper, forms of justice will be confined to the three main categories as defined by Mitchell (2019): distributive justice, procedural justice, and recognition-based justice.

Definitions

Advocacy: Embrace and promotion of a partisan stance or cause (adapted from Greene, 1997).

Critical Race Theory (CRT): A field of study and practice that examines relationships among race, racism, and power. CRT is based the understandings

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that race is social construct rather than a biological reality, that racism is inherent in societal structures, that social systems perpetuate social inequality, and finally, that large segments of society benefit from racism and have little interest in eradicating it (adapted from Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE): Evaluation that attends to the cultural context of a program and its participants. CRE aims to center lived experiences and values of the communities under study when defining social issues and programs in an effort to contribute to social change (adapted from Hopson, 2012).

Democratic Deliberative Evaluation: Evaluation that promotes democratic principles by including stakeholders who are often marginalized or ignored, engaging stakeholders in dialogue to achieve agreed-upon understandings, and deliberation among stakeholders to ensure that appropriate interests are represented and have been addressed in evaluation (adapted from House & Howe, 2000).

Decolonizing Evaluation: Evaluation that critiques Western research methodologies that have historically framed Indigenous peoples as lesser and that contributes to efforts to emancipate colonized peoples both politically and mentally (adapted from Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018).

Discourse: The social process of making meaning through text, speech, and other forms communication; the language associated with a particular social field or practice; and a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective (adapted from Fairclough, 2003).

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Distributive justice: Fair or just allocation of rights, responsibilities, costs, and burdens. Justice resides in the structures of society and is viewed at a societal, rather than individual level (adapted from Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983).

Domination: Systemic and institutional conditions “which inhibit or prevent people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions” (Young, 2011, p. 38).

Equity: “The absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically” (World Health Organization, 2011).

Feminist evaluation: Evaluation grounded in the understanding that discrimination and inequality based on gender are systemic and structural. This approach recognizes that knowledge and values are socially constructed and that some knowledges and values are privileged over others. Feminist evaluation seeks to illuminate the injustices resulting from gender-based discrimination. (adapted from Brisolara, 2014).

Indigenous peoples: “...inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Despite their cultural differences, indigenous peoples from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as distinct peoples” (United Nations, 2017).

Justice-as-recognition: Justice that derives from the elimination of oppression against groups of individuals. Justice-as-recognition requires that individuals and

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groups challenge norms and structures that promote oppression, demonstrate respect and appreciation for all cultures and identities and work toward a society where all members may fully participate (adapted from Mitchell, 2019).

Multiculturalism: Societal attitudes that allow a variety of different cultures to coexist and policy that both protects the rights of groups to engage in culturally different practices and addresses the demands of culturally different groups (adapted from Kymlicka, 1995).

Oppression: Systemic forces that inhibit social groups' ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings.

Oppression results from a combination of structural systems and the daily actions and processes of life as individuals act upon unquestioned assumptions and cultural stereotypes (adapted from Young, 2011).

Post-colonial theory: A body of scholarship that examines the political, economic, historical, and social impacts of primarily European colonial rule. Post-colonial scholars and theorists acknowledge that colonialism is ongoing. Their studies aim to both elevate knowledge and culture from pre-colonial times and to also create representations of peoples, cultures, and places that transcend the representations created by colonizers (adapted from Go, 2016).

Procedural justice: Fairness in processes, particularly those that lead to allocation or resolution (adapted from Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

Overview of the Chapters

Chapter Two provides an overview of social justice discourse in evaluation, beginning with a brief examination of scholarly literature and professional guidelines,

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followed by a description of social justice evaluation approaches, a brief overview of social and political theory relating to social justice and a review of frameworks that have been used to understand evaluation theory use and evaluator decision making. Chapter Three describes the research design and methods used in the present study. Chapter Four presents the results of the article analysis and interviews, and Chapter Five contains an analysis of these findings. Chapter Six contains implications for practice and future research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The first chapter of this dissertation highlighted the need for greater understanding of conceptions of social justice that evaluators use in theory and practice in recognition of the idea that justice and injustice are contextually defined (Miller, 1999) and socially constructed (Harvey, 1996; Lind et al., 1998). To situate the study of different conceptions of justice, this chapter provides an overview of where and how the concept of “social justice” has emerged in the field of evaluation. The first part of this chapter briefly explores the evolution of the framing of social justice from its historical foundations through the development of professional guiding documents, to a contemporary focus on mitigating power imbalance. The second part of this chapter describes social justice evaluation theories as identified by Mertens and Wilson (2018) and briefly explores these theories’ connections to theories of justice drawn from political and social theory. As grounding for the study, the third part of this chapter highlights relevant frameworks for understanding how evaluators might employ theories in their practice and highlights the relevance of the analysis of discourse.

Overview of Historical and Ethical Framings of Social Justice

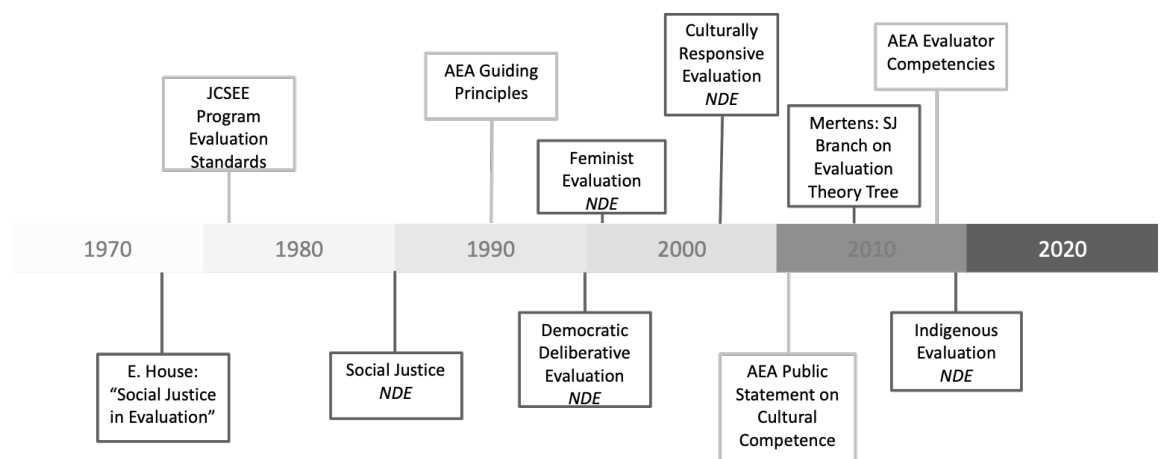
Over 30 years ago, in an introduction to a *New Directions for Evaluation (NDE)* issue dedicated to social justice in evaluation, Kenneth Sirotnik advocated for an explication of social justice in evaluation (1990). This issue of *NDE* explored social justice in educational evaluation and built on social justice scholarship produced by Ernest House (1976, 1983). In the intervening decades, discourse has shifted from an explicit discussion of “social justice” to discussion of related topics such as “social

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betterment” (Mark et al., 2000), “social change” (Greene, 2006), “values engagement” (Hall et al., 2012), “multicultural validity” (Kirkhart, 2010), and “cultural competence” (SenGupta et al., 2004). With few notable exceptions, such as the *NDE* issue dedicated to case studies of evaluation and social justice in complex sociopolitical contexts (Rosenstein & Syna, 2015), little recent research has explored conceptions of social justice in different contexts. As a consequence, much of this literature review draws on scholarship produced over the last five decades. Although Sirotnik’s thinking on social justice has been succeeded by that of other scholars and practitioners, his call for an explication of dilemmas in terms of evaluation ethics, politics, and methods (1990) provides a useful frame for examining social justice as it has been defined in American evaluation discourse. Figure 1 highlights the guiding documents and some of key professional publications described in the following sections; the figure illustrates the emergence of different theories in the field over four decades.

Figure 1

Social Justice-Related Discourse Over Four Decades



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Ethical considerations

Documents developed over intervening decades to shape the ethical and professional concerns of evaluation practice also make both implicit and explicit connections between evaluation and social justice. Among the first of such policy documents is the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) Program Evaluation Standards, originally published in 1974. The JCSEE Program Evaluation Standards outline the tenets of good evaluation and explicitly cite social justice in the section addressing propriety or “what is proper, fair, legal, right, acceptable, and just in evaluations” (Yarborough et al., 2011, p. 106). The Propriety standards direct evaluators to “commit to addressing issues of inequity and social justice in programs and contexts to the extent that they have an impact on the rights of stakeholders in the evaluation” and to “consider the role of the evaluation in addressing unfairness in the program or context and the possibility that the evaluation may contribute to unfairness if it does not do so” (p. 134). Unfairness is defined as “unjustified advantage” that often results when “the wants of individuals in more powerful groups receive greater attention than the needs of those in less-empowered groups” (p. 132). Attention to unfairness is important: “the greater benefit of all” should be the impetus for actions, rather than a focus on privileging some and neglecting others (p. 132).

The American Evaluation Association’s Guiding Principles for Evaluators, originally adopted in 1994 and recently revised, “reflect the core values of the American Evaluation Association” and outline elements of ethical relations between evaluators and stakeholders. A glossary contained within calls out the terms “common good” and

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“equity,” suggesting that shared benefit, equitable opportunities, and the mitigation of “historic disadvantage and existing structural inequalities” are all important considerations in evaluation work. In particular, Principle E: Common Good and Equity in the latest version of the Guiding Principles urges evaluators to “strive to contribute to the common good and advancement of an equitable and just society” and to be on guard for the ways in which evaluation could potentially threaten “the goals of a democratic, equitable, and just society” (AEA, 2018a). Like the JCSEE Standards, the Guiding Principles recognize that injustice and unfairness exist in American society and suggest that evaluation practice could ethically play a role in mitigating both.

The AEA Public Statement on Cultural Competence, adopted in 2011, states that cultural competence is "integral to ethical, high-quality evaluation" and central to "making a difference" in society. Cultural competence requires that evaluators strive to understand "the experience of devalued, marginalized, or subordinated" so that they do not perpetuate power, access, and resource distribution inequities (AEA, 2011). The Public Statement on Cultural Competence frames awareness of and attention to culture in evaluation as parts of an "ethical imperative" that includes a commitment to "fairness and equity" and "fair, just, and equitable treatment of all persons..." (AEA, 2011).

Finally, the AEA Program Evaluator Competencies, officially adopted in 2018, outline “a common language and set of criteria to clarify what it means to be included in the definition of evaluator” (AEA, 2018b). Within the Competencies, the first domain, Professional Practice, states that a competent evaluator “identifies how evaluation practice can promote social justice and the public good.” Like the Guiding Principles and the Program Evaluation Standards before them, the AEA Competencies suggest that

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social justice (or the absence thereof) should be acknowledged when conducting evaluations; like the prior documents, these competencies advocate for intent to “do good,” but do not suggest how awareness of injustice could translate to action. Together, these documents connect evaluation with “the greater good,” “equity,” “fairness,” and social justice, but do not specifically direct evaluators to affirmatively seek these outcomes in their work.

The Politics of Social Justice: What Is the Role of Evaluation?

Evaluation practice has long been associated with the concept of social justice. In the United States, the field of evaluation grew in conjunction with the development of large-scale social programs aimed at addressing what were identified as widespread social ills (House, 1990; Shadish et al., 1991). Evaluation of these social programs was undertaken to monitor implementation fidelity, to maintain accountability, and to aid in the identification of root causes of and solutions to social problems (Shadish et al., 1991). The programs themselves grew out of a national post-World War II sense of power and wealth, accompanied by the belief that all that was needed to address social problems were resources and the will to distribute them (House, 1990). So-called “Great Society” programs of the 1960s originated in an “ideology of liberal consensus,” which presumed that social problems could be addressed with technocratic solutions that were informed by social science and funded by America’s free enterprise system (Hodgson, 1978). In short, social programs and policies were seen as a step on the path to improving life for members of society, and evaluation played an integral role in developing those programs and policies (Mark et al., 2000).

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Historical and contemporary professional discourse about social justice in evaluation suggests that its presence and the role of social justice considerations in decision making remain contentious issues. Much of the contention rests on the role the evaluator plays in an evaluation and the evaluator's relationship with evaluation stakeholders (Datta, 1999; Skolits et al., 2009; Weiss, 1997). These roles and relationships have been characterized as falling on a spectrum between neutral scientist and program participant advocate (Datta, 1999), between independent evaluators who work to minimize stakeholder influence on their work and evaluators who work closely with stakeholders to ensure representation of their perspectives (Johnson, 2015; Mertens, 2008), and between evaluators who are objective outsiders and evaluators who collaborate closely with program staff (Weiss, 1997).

Scholars arguing that social justice considerations are secondary or even antithetical to good evaluation practice suggest that evaluation as a field developed in the interest of in generating “disinterested scientific information about policy options, possible only with an accompanying commitment to objectivity and value-neutrality” (Greene, 1997). This interest in conducting “value-free” research on social programming and policies is rooted in epistemological positivism, which, House argues, has resulted in a focus on validity and methodology in evaluation, at the expense of attention to contextual social and political issues such as justice and equity (2005). Some argue that instead of focusing on concepts such as social justice, evaluators should aim to describe, rather than prescribe values—such as those relating to social justice—that are or should influence a program or evaluation (Cook & Shadish, 1986). Evaluators who prioritize social justice themes may be viewed as bowing to special interests' values, thereby

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exacerbating political debates (Datta, 2011), potentially undermining the credibility of evaluation findings (Ericson, 1990).

In contrast, evaluators who prioritize social justice in their work point to the absence of neutrality in the field of practice and highlight the need to include the plurality of interests and perspectives represented by any given evaluation (Greene, 1997; House, 1990). Some scholars suggest that evaluation contributes to social injustice by excluding the interests and perspectives of historically marginalized individuals—often those who are most affected by changes to social programs and policies—because evaluators often represent dominant groups (Mertens et al., 1994). As a consequence, House argues that when evaluating programs evaluators must address injustice by privileging the experiences of those least advantaged (1993). Among the perspectives commonly excluded from evaluation practice are those of people of color and Indigenous peoples; given the racism that is inherent in social science methods (Scheurich & Young, 1997; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2007), some argue that evaluation practice should prioritize approaches and methods that seek to address the power asymmetries and injustices that exist in society, lest it perpetuate them (SenGupta et al., 2004; Haugen & Chouinard, 2018; Stanfield, 1999). Further, social justice approaches to evaluation that attend to and include marginalized viewpoints can strengthen data validity in that these approaches may better represent the context in which a program or policy is implemented (Kirkhart, 1995).

Methodological considerations

In recent decades evaluators invested in advancing social justice have promoted practices that attend to power dynamics in evaluation. Specifically, evaluators who wish

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to promote social justice should “call out” bias and “unmask” power inequities (Thomas et al., 2018, p. 514). Power imbalances are further exposed when exploring how dominant Eurocentric epistemologies and methodologies that underpin many social program designs and evaluations may lead to the denial of perspectives and experiences of the members of oppressed or marginalized communities, who are frequently the participants in social programs being evaluated (Hilliard, 1989; Stanfield, 1999). Biases and power inequities in evaluation can be revealed using three specific approaches: (1) evaluator self-examination or reflexivity (van Draanen, 2016); (2) careful determination of appropriate problem and context framing (Archibald, 2019); and (3) choice of methodology that will most accurately evince program experience and impact (Thomas & Madison, 2010).

First, reflective practice with the intent of improving one’s practice is highlighted within the AEA’s Program Evaluator Competencies Professional Practice domain (AEA, 2018). Although discussion of reflexivity in the evaluation literature has been limited, scholars who highlight it have done so while describing evaluation in cross-cultural contexts (e.g., van Draanen, 2016). Reflexivity requires evaluators to consider how their lived experiences affect and are affected by activities in an evaluation (Zibakhsh, 2015); engaging in reflexivity requires that the practitioner maintain a “self-critical attitude” while “questioning-taken-for-granted assumptions...” (Poland et al., 2006, p. 61) in order to bring a “unilateral self-awareness” to their work (Symonette, 2004, p. 100). Milner warns that is especially important to pay attention to one’s own social locations, beliefs, and biases when working with marginalized communities (2007). Examination of one’s own relationship to and assumptions about social programs and the communities they

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target can help evaluators identify biases they have that can contribute to injustices such as racism (Thomas et al., 2018).

A second area of power analysis that has received increased attention from social justice-oriented evaluators is that of the framing of the social “problems” that programs are intended to address, as well as the framing of evaluations intended to examine these ameliorative programs. Problem framing or definition “specifies what condition is treatable, for what populations, and under what circumstances...” and is a key element of evaluation theory and therefore a key component of program theory (Lipsey, 1993, p. 11). SenGupta et al. (2004, p. 8) suggest that social problem/program definition is a “key site for the cultural expression of values” that most often relies on “a dominant culture’s interpretation of reality that perpetuates the myth of the deficit model.” Because these values are so embedded in program and policies as to be nearly invisible, it is possible that evaluators will promote and reinforce them through their practice (Dahler-Larsen, 2012; Segerholm, 2002).

The evaluation and social science research literature has described at great length dominant cultures’ characterizations of colonized, marginalized, and otherwise oppressed communities as deficient or inferior (e.g. Hilliard, 1989; House, 1990; Smith, 2012). Evaluations designed to examine social programs run the risk of following along with assumptions embedded in these mischaracterizations, leading to calls from evaluators to develop new frameworks for understanding program contexts, relating to stakeholders, and valuing knowledge (Hall, 2020; Mertens, 2013; Thomas & McKie, 2006;). Advocates for the development of African-relational evaluation approaches (Chilisa et al., 2016), Kaupapa Maori evaluation (Cram, 2016), and Indigenous evaluation

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frameworks (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008) argue that new framings of problems and solutions can be discerned through the creation of responsive and relevant frameworks that theoretically bring greater justice to historically oppressed and marginalized communities.

Third, dominant cultures' mischaracterizations of oppressed communities contribute to concerns that social justice advocates express about methodology. Ontological and epistemological assumptions underpin social science research methodologies, and these assumptions can shape evaluation design and methods (Cresswell, 2013). The research processes and practices of knowledge production that are foundational to evaluation practice arise largely from a white, Western, male worldview (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). Smith suggests that these research processes and practices originated for the purpose of condensing and reporting knowledge about the non-Western world for Western audiences, and that throughout these processes, other societies were measured against Western notions of civilization and found lacking (2012). These processes, Smith argues, have led not only to the marginalization of other cultures and their civilizations, but also of other knowledge systems and understandings of the world (2012). This devaluation of knowledges and perspectives potentially leads to unjust program outcomes and evaluation findings, but it is also a type of injustice itself. Fricker (2007) suggests that epistemic injustice results in the exclusion of groups of people when their experiences and their stories are discredited or ignored because the stories do not fit dominant frames or ways of knowing the world.

Social Justice Theories in Evaluation, Political Theory, and Social Psychology

As long ago as 1976—45 years ago—Ernest House critiqued the conceptions of justice employed by evaluators at the time as being utilitarian in nature and, as a consequence, inadequate for promoting justice in a pluralistic society. House (1976) argued that more “pluralist-intuitionist approaches” that were considered “new” at the time would be more effective in analyzing programs that addressed complex social issues. In the intervening decades, social justice-oriented approaches aimed at addressing the impact of inequities and privilege have emerged. These approaches typically place emphasis elevating the viewpoints of marginalized groups, promoting human rights, acknowledging multiple social realities, and recognizing that knowledge is socially and historically situated (Mertens & Wilson, 2018).

It should be noted that this paper does not offer an exhaustive catalogue of every evaluation approach that could be classified as a “social justice evaluation approach,” in part because the delineation between theories is not always clear, and, as Alkin (2013) notes, “new” evaluation theories are constantly being derived from existing theories, resulting in a number of nonexclusive and overlapping theories and approaches. Culturally responsive evaluation (CRE), for example, explicitly locates its roots in indigenous and decolonizing evaluation (Hopson, 2012), and elements of participatory evaluation (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998) are evident in democratic deliberative evaluation (DDE) (House & Howe, 1999). Further, theories are often presented in abstract terms that may not provide clear guidance on how they are operationalized (Smith, 1993).

The blurring of boundaries between theories as well as their conceptual abstraction has been used to critique some evaluation approaches, such as Fetterman’s

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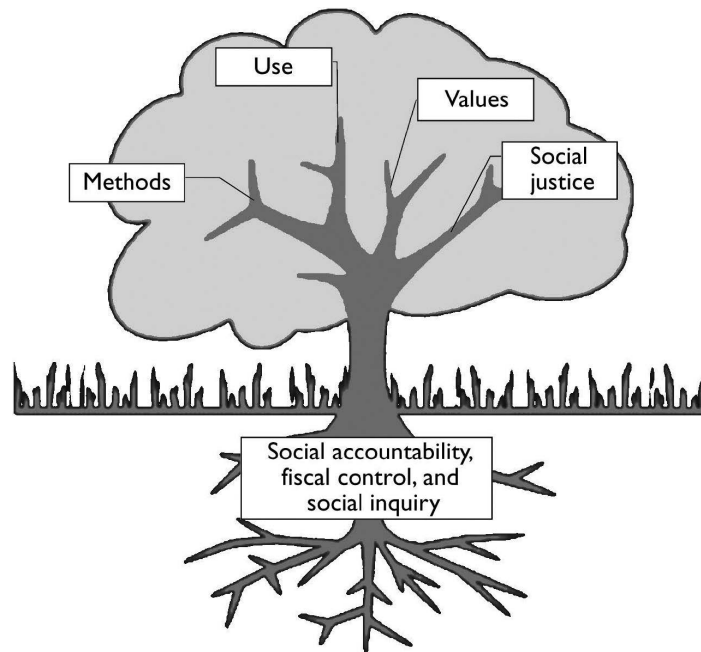
empowerment evaluation—an approach that identifies social justice in its overarching aims (Miller, 2011). Relatedly, Dillman's comparison of evaluation activities prescribed by three evaluation approaches—Practical Participatory Evaluation, Values-Engaged Evaluation, and Emergent Realist Evaluation—suggests that approaches share value assumptions, recommended activities, and desired outcomes, and that, in fact, some of the approaches studied may be subsumed within the others (2013). In the case of social justice evaluation approaches, Mertens and Wilson themselves further muddle the relationships between different approaches by encompassing the social justice theories they identify within their “transformative paradigm” (2018). Finally, evaluation approaches such as Fourth Generation Evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) have provided theoretical foundations for many social justice approaches yet are rarely written about in the American evaluation literature.

Selection of Theories for this Study

Given the proliferation of social justice-oriented theories, some of which are newly emergent and still being developed, evaluation theories described in this paper were selected from those identified on Mertens and Wilson's “social justice branch” (2018) of the evaluation theory tree first conceptualized by Alkin (2013) to classify evaluation theorists according to their emphasis on evaluation use, evaluation methods, or evaluation values. The branches of the evaluation tree can be seen in Figure 2. Mertens and Wilson argued that a social justice-specific branch—one that is distinct from the “values” branch on Alkin's original theory tree—was necessary as the theorists placed on the new branch are driven the primary principle or value of social justice (2018).

Figure 2

The Adapted Evaluation Theory Tree



Note. Mertens and Wilson adaptation of Alkin’s Evaluation Theory Tree with an added fourth “social justice” branch. Reprinted from *Program evaluation theory and practice: A comprehensive guide* (2nd ed., p. 41), by D. M. Mertens & A. T. Wilson, 2018, Guilford Publications. Copyright 2018 by Guilford Publications.

Although the idea of social justice has long been associated with evaluation practice, social justice theories of evaluation have only been articulated and classified as such relatively recently. A search of the last 20 years of *American Journal of Evaluation* and *New Directions for Program Evaluation* using the evaluation theories named by Mertens and Wilson (2018) yielded numerous citations for some theories and fewer for others (see Table 1). A scan of these articles suggests that within the majority of the articles located, the search terms are mentioned as concepts in the context of case studies, rather than in the exposition of theory. For example, “Native American” is used to describe a group of stakeholders in an evaluation, rather than as a theoretical viewpoint in Collins et al. (2014), and “human rights” is frequently identified as important

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considerations for evaluation planning, rather than presented as a fully articulated theoretical approach (Segone, 2006). Additionally, some articles suggest that theories overlap or draw from one another. For example, Gaolthobogwe et al. (2018) describe African evaluation frameworks as a subset of decolonizing evaluation; critical race theory (CRT) is frequently mentioned as a theoretical base for LatCrit (Guajardo et al., 2020) and culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) (Hopson, 2012); and feminist research principles serve as a basis for LGBTQ and disability rights approaches (Brisolara, 2014).

Table 1

Total Citations for Broad Social Justice Theory Categories Described

Evaluation Theory	<i>American Journal of Evaluation</i>	<i>New Directions for Evaluation</i>	Total Number of Citations
Indigenous / Decolonizing	68	76	144
Culturally Responsive Evaluation	33	79	112
Feminist	20	49	69
Democratic Deliberative Evaluation	10	10	20

Note. Journal citations were located searching the journal publisher websites. Book reviews were excluded from the final article counts.

Conceptual overlap and absence of clear distinctions between specifically named evaluation approaches create challenges to finding literature that clearly articulates the understandings and values that underpin many of the approaches identified by Mertens and Wilson (2018). Consequently, for the purposes of this paper, four broad evaluation approaches representing the “social justice” branch of the evaluation theory tree were chosen. As there has been little conceptual development around human rights approaches, they are excluded from the paper. Although it only has a total of 20 citations, democratic deliberative evaluation is included because it was the topic of an entire issue of *New Directions for Evaluation (NDE)* (Ryan & DeStefano, 2000) and was among the first

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theories to be identified as serving social justice ends. Likewise, texts and an issue of *NDE* (Seigart & Brisolara, 2002) are dedicated to feminist evaluation, from which LGBTQ, LatCrit, and disability rights draw their philosophical roots. Culturally responsive evaluation draws from critical race theory and has been written about frequently in recent decades. Finally, while African, Maori, and Native American approaches each have distinctive characteristics, they stem from an interest in revaluing traditional understandings and beliefs and counteracting Western colonizer tropes. Table 2 illustrates social justice evaluation approaches represented within the four broad categories described in this paper.

Table 2

Evaluation Theories Included in the Broad Categories Described

Evaluation Theory	<i>American Journal of Evaluation</i>	<i>New Directions for Evaluation</i>	Total Number of Citations
Indigenous / Decolonizing Native American Maori African	103	126	229
Culturally Responsive Evaluation Critical race theory	41	88	129
Feminist LGBTQ LatCrit Disability rights	33	67	100
Democratic Deliberative Evaluation	10	10	20

Note. Journal citations were located searching the journal publisher websites. Book reviews were excluded from the final article counts.

The four broad categories of social justice evaluation theories selected for the purposes of this paper include: Indigenous / decolonizing evaluation, culturally responsive evaluation (CRE), feminist evaluation, and democratic deliberative evaluation

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(DDE). Indigenous / decolonizing evaluation, CRE, and feminist approaches were selected based on the large number of articles published that articulate theoretical underpinnings. DDE has been included as its co-creator (Ernest House) was among the first evaluation theorists to write extensively about the role of evaluation in social justice (House, 1976). Following are summaries of the key points of each of these four evaluation theories.

Democratic Deliberative Evaluation (DDE). The democratic deliberative evaluation approach (DDE) aims to address complex social issues through evaluation while maintaining a commitment to democratic principles (Ryan, 2004). Advocates of the DDE frame program evaluation as a series of choices that need to be made and propose that these choices be made collectively (House & Howe, 2000). This collective choice making can be achieved by evaluators who “use procedures to incorporate views of insiders and outsiders, give voice to the marginal and excluded, employ reasoned criteria in extended deliberation, and engage in dialogical interactions with significant audiences and stakeholders in evaluation.” (House & Howe, 1999, p. xix). In addition, programs and policies operate in pluralistic societies where conceptions of what is in “the public interest” conflict and compete; DDE promotes power sharing among evaluators and stakeholders so that consensus about “the public interest,” and what best serves it, can be built together by involved stakeholders in an egalitarian manner (House & Howe, 1999, 2000; Ryan & Johnson, 2000).

DDE shares characteristics with other evaluation approaches that acknowledge pluralism and power imbalances, including advocacy evaluation (Greene, 1997), responsive evaluation, (Stake, 1967), and critical dialogue (Karlsson, 1997). However,

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DDE most visibly derives its stance from the principles and values of democratic evaluation (Picciotto, 2015; Kushner, 2005; MacDonald, 1976.) Democratic evaluation grew out of MacDonald's long-ago concern that educational evaluators were increasingly serving as "hired hacks" who viewed changes needed to address educational inequality as "a technical problem of product specification" (MacDonald, 1976, p. 129). This technical approach did not question the values and assumptions underlying those programs and did not account for the value pluralism of the diverse communities those programs served (MacDonald, 1976). As a consequence, understandings of the program were oversimplified, those most impacted by the program were powerless to make their perspectives heard, and the resultant auditing and monitoring of programs contributed to few changes that improved student learning (Ryan, 2004). Democratic evaluation aims to redistribute power among stakeholders so that a wider range of stakeholder values, perspectives, and understandings would be incorporated into the evaluation, thereby better serving entire communities (MacDonald, 1976; Ryan, 2004).

DDE is a "mid-range" theory in that does not detail specific procedures for conducting an evaluation, but rather describes three core elements that use of this approach entails: inclusion, dialogue, and deliberation (House & Howe, 1999). These three elements are described below.

Inclusion. A DDE must include the interests and views of all relevant stakeholders in order to develop an accurate depiction of the reality of a program (House & Howe, 1999, 2000). If relevant stakeholders cannot directly participate, the evaluator must ensure representation of those stakeholders' interests so they are not excluded from discussion (House & Howe, 1999, 2000). Additionally,

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some stakeholders may have more power relative to others and may therefore more prominently represent their interests; evaluation design should anticipate this situation and address power imbalances (House & Howe, 1999, 2000). House and Howe note that the weighing of stakeholder interests is complicated by the distinction between interests that are “needs” and interests that are “wants”; they conclude that needs and wants are not morally equivalent, and that needs should outweigh when considering interests (1999, 2000).

Dialogue. Dialogue facilitated by the evaluator amongst stakeholders is essential for sifting through perceived interests to arrive at “real” interests (House & Howe, 1999, 2000). Real interests are “created” through dialogue, rather than “discovered” (House & Howe, 1999, p. 100). The term “dialogue” can refer to many different concepts (Ryan & DeStefano, 2000), including an evaluation approach in and of itself (Schwandt, 1997). However, Ryan and DeStefano (2000) suggest that two types of dialogue may occur in a DDE: (1) critical divergent dialogue or debate, which produces “multiple meanings, ambiguity, and complexity” and is received with skepticism (p.65); and (2) convergent, inclusive, inquiry-focused dialogue, which works toward mutual understanding and the forging of consensus. Dialogue entails communication, and the evaluator may need to play the role of interpreter within a dialogue to ensure that participants are understood (Hood, 2000).

Deliberation. Deliberation is a cognitive process that entails the weighing of evidence, values, and perspectives (House & Howe, 1999, 2000). After stakeholders are included in the evaluation and have shared their views in

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dialogue, they are invited to deliberate or “reason about what is good and right, about how they can come to know what is good and right, and about how they might want to make things better” (Mathison, 2000, p. 86). Deliberation, which requires an openness to alternatives and a willingness to change one’s beliefs, stands in contrast to processes such as negotiation, which is adversarial and requires compromise, or demonstration, which draws on tradition and long-standing beliefs or procedures, rather than the development of new understandings (Mathison, 2000).

Ultimately, the goal of DDE is to use emergent evaluation designs to engage “other voices” in decision making and consensus building about what is important and what is worth knowing.

Feminist Evaluation. Feminist evaluation is rooted in feminist research, which emerged from the belief that knowledge that is based primarily in men's lived experience presents is incomplete and presents a distorted image of reality (Podems, 2010, 2014). Feminist evaluation aims to promote social justice by both attending to gender issues and the needs of women by exploring "what it means to do research" (Seigart, 2005) and by acknowledging and examining structural inequality as a phenomenon that results from gender (Brisolara, 2014). Feminist approaches do not prescribe the use of specific methods or define new methods (Harding, 1987), nor do they offer an overarching framework for practice (Podems, 2014). Rather, the feminist approach to evaluation promotes the use of a feminist lens for "apprehending the context of inquiry, one's role, and the data gathered; in selecting analytical strategies and articulating interpretations; and in crafting and acting upon findings" (Brisolara, 2014, p. 33). These foundational

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concepts of the feminist lens contribute to the principles of feminist evaluation articulated by Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002) and later revised and amended by Brisolaro (2014):

1. It is essential to recognize that knowledge is produced and shaped by social, cultural, and temporal factors; consequently, stakeholders, participants, and evaluators all operate with knowledge that is filtered through their life experiences.
2. Knowledge confers power and serves specific purposes; those who collect and interpret data have power that must be wielded responsibly.
3. Evaluation is a political activity, and evaluators, methods, and contexts all have political values and implications, as well as inherent biases.
4. Research theories, methods, practices are a product of their culture and time and have been influenced by dominant ideologies.
5. There are multiple ways of knowing, and some of ways are privileged over others.
6. Gender inequities are one type of social justice, and gender-based discrimination is inextricably linked to race, class and culture, age, sexual identity, and physical ability.
7. Gender-based discrimination structural--it is embedded in societal systems and institutions and is assumed to simply be "the way things are."
8. When feminist evaluators see injustice it is appropriate for them to take action to engage with and advocate for those impacted by injustice.

To effectively conduct evaluations using a feminist approach, evaluators must first understand their own perspectives, biases, and values. As a consequence, evaluator

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reflexivity is a key component of feminist evaluation practice (Brisolara, 2014; Podems, 2010). Evaluators who have little to no experience with communities in which they work may make ill-informed decisions about what is most effective for those communities (Madison, 1992), and an evaluator who has not scrutinized their own identities and social location in relation to those of program participants and stakeholders they may not see significant issues relating to those identities that impact both the program and the evaluation (Hood & Cassaro, 2002).

Feminist evaluation draws on a number of social research theories that have themselves been influenced by thinking and knowledge from a variety of fields. Brisolara (2014) identifies six bodies of theory while acknowledging that theorists and scholars disagree about the categorization of these schools of thought. These bodies of theory include:

Feminist empiricism is grounded in postpositivism, but emphasizes attention to androcentric biases and previously ignored or marginalized perspectives (Hundleby, 2012).

Standpoint theories suggest that outsiders—those who are oppressed—are more likely to see the hierarchies of domination than those who dominate (Collins, 1986). Those who dominate and view the world from the “center” are unable to see the “margins” (hooks, 2015).

Critical, postmodern, and poststructural theories critique positivism and its attendant assumptions of objectivity because all accounts of events are situated in a social context and therefore present incomplete telling of that account; accounts

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of events have power that is established and maintained by discourse (Gannon & Davies, 2012).

Postcolonial theories emerged from resistance the domination and oppression of the "global South" by the "global North" resulting from imperialism and work to surface knowledges, understandings, and identities that have been suppressed by colonizing forces (Go, 2016).

Black Feminist, Chicana, Indigenous, and Race-Based theories highlight the ways in which race impacts the experience of gender and critiques traditionally white feminist analysis by focusing on the ways in which race and gender interact to compound oppression (Brisolara, 2014).

Sex, Sexuality, Queer, and Lesbian theories raise awareness of the social construction of limited gender binaries and challenge heteronormative assumptions and categorizations in research practices and discourse (Johnson, 2012).

Ultimately, the goal of feminist evaluation is to continually question what dominant society considers "natural" or "innate" with a focus on gender and the daily lived experiences of women (Pillow, 2002). Using a feminist lens, evaluators can examine how systemic oppression is perpetuated in programs and evaluation work with an eye toward social change (Hood & Cassaro, 2002).

Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE). Culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) approaches to evaluation are designed and conducted in ways that center and respond to the beliefs and values that are specific to the context in which an evaluation is being conducted (Hood et al., 2015). Frierson et al. define culture as “a cumulative body

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of learned and shared behavior, values, customs, and beliefs” that shape and are shaped by a particular group of people (2010, p. 75). In practical terms, considerations of culture should impact the entire evaluation process, from preparation for evaluation to the selection of frameworks and methods, to the modes and styles of results dissemination (Frierson et al., 2010). Although several different cultures may be engaged in any particular program context, CRE practitioners should specifically attend to the culture of “those who are being served relative to the implementation of a program and its outcomes” (Hood, 2014).

Some of the origins of CRE can be found in work of evaluation theorists who have questioned the validity of historically “culture-free” evaluation approaches that use experimental designs with a disregard for context. In the late 1960s Robert Stake, who later articulated the responsive evaluation approach, described the “countenance” of educational evaluation wherein he argued that “antecedent conditions” and the “contingencies among background conditions” of students and their communities should be considered when designing and implementing evaluations of curricula (1967, p. 524). The Context Input Process Product (CIPP) model, developed later as a “rejection of the 1960s evaluation orthodoxy” (Stufflebeam, 2013, p. 250), highlighted the importance of understanding the program’s context—understanding a program’s target population and its surrounding environment (Stufflebeam, 2000). Kirkhart’s case for “multicultural validity” similarly argued that the culture in which a program is situated must be considered in all aspects of evaluation design and implementation for findings to be accurate and trustworthy (1995).

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The CRE epistemological perspective recognizes that knowledge and knowledge production are grounded in dominant culture and that research and evaluation, as they are conducted in much of the world, are based on the history and experiences of individuals of Western European descent (Sheurich & Young, 1997). Many of the social science theories and methodologies employed by evaluators grew out of periods of colonization and segregation enacted by Western European cultures (Hilliard, 1989). Historical colonization and domination by Western European cultures still impact how people with minoritized identities experience life in the United States, and these forces continue to influence how social problems and ameliorative programs are defined and viewed (Madison, 1992). The persistent perception of those who do not adhere to colonizer norms as deficient (Smith, 2012), coupled with the perceptions of monolithic cultural groups and an interest in generalization of research findings, further distorted representations and understandings of communities, their needs, and their outcomes (Stanfield, 2011). CRE seeks to actively counter deficit-driven perceptions of communities that underlie both program development and evaluation by relying on the lived experiences and values of the communities under study to define and interpret programs and phenomena (Hopson, 2012).

The practice of centering everyday experiences, knowledge, and values of communities in which a program is implemented points to other theoretical influences on CRE, including Indigenous and decolonizing frameworks and epistemologies (Hopson, 2012). In describing American Indian evaluation frameworks, scholars highlight such concepts as the centering of traditional knowledge that has been handed down from ancestors (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008) and the importance of relational accountability

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when making methodological decisions (LaFrance et al., 2012). Kaupapa Maori evaluation is grounded in similar principles, including a recognition that Indigenous people have the right to protect, disseminate, and create new knowledge based on their cultural practices (Cram et al., 2018).

CRE is also informed by key elements of critical race theory (CRT), which emphasize the need to counter dominant assumptions about marginalized communities by relaying the lived experience of members of those communities (Hopson, 2012). Specifically, CRT scholars argue that people of color experience a society and everyday life that is shaped by racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) and that this racism defines a dominant narrative that justifies the oppression of marginalized communities and distorts perceptions of the realities experienced by members of those communities (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Members of marginalized communities must be able to inject knowledge of their lived experiences into broader discourse via storytelling to “name one’s own reality,” thereby defining and preserving identity and culture, and to push oppressive narratives and structures to change (Delgado, 1989). CRE draws on CRT by encouraging evaluation designs and methods that produce findings that are meaningful to communities under study and that work to counter hegemonic narratives and definitions of marginalized communities (Hopson, 2012).

CRE is based in a constructivist approach to knowledge where humans shape meanings through interactions with one another and interpret what they see and hear actively (Abma, 2006). Consequently, is it important for evaluators practicing CRE to recognize the lens, beliefs, and values through which they may view a particular program, its participants, and the context in which an evaluation occurs. Evaluators’ “values,

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beliefs, and prejudices can and do influence a number of critical aspects of the research process” (Thomas & McKie, 2006, p. 349), and CRE practitioners should attend to their own cultural understandings and how they themselves relate to the community under study (Hood et al., 2015). Ongoing critical self-reflection allows evaluators opportunities to identify and understand their own assumptions and prejudices (Frierson et al., 2010).

Continual reflection among CRE practitioners is particularly important if evaluators are working “cross-culturally”—that is, if evaluators do not share cultural similarities with program participants (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). Cultural differences may exist between the practitioner and members of the community under study, but they likely also exist among different groups of stakeholders. Wadsworth (2001) characterizes evaluation in these settings as “dialogue across difference,” noting that the voicing of a plurality of perspectives on a program or service and its outcomes can lead to conflict and impasse. Given the presence of many cultures represented by different stakeholders in an evaluation, it is particularly essential that CRE practitioners continually work to deepen “awareness and knowledge of self-as instrument” in efforts to understand the identities, cultures, perspectives, social relations, and expressions of power that are present in a given evaluation context (Symonette, 2004).

Indigenous and Decolonizing approaches. Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation approaches (henceforth referred to as IDE) aim to emancipate formerly colonized people politically and mentally by reclaiming and centering Indigenous knowledges, belief systems, experiences, and interests (Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018; Smith, 2012). IDE produces knowledge that is relevant to community-defined needs, beliefs, and understandings (Johnston-Goodstar, 2012) and contributes to overarching

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efforts of the community to achieve self-determination and liberation (Chilisa et al., 2016; Smith, 2012). Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation practices are "of, for, by, and with us" (Kawakami et al., 2007, p. 323) and is considered by some to epitomize context-sensitive evaluation practice (LaFrance et al., 2012).

Specific IDE practices are as diverse as the communities from which they originate. However, their origins are located in shared experiences of oppression and exploitation by more powerful colonizing forces (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). Social science research methodologies and theories upon which much evaluation practice is based have long been implicated for their role in perpetuating domination and oppression of colonized Indigenous peoples by characterizing them as inferior or less human than citizens of imperial countries (Chilisa, 2005; Johnston-Goodstar, 2012; Smith, 2012). Scholars argue that these methodologies and theories were used to justify colonization of the Global South by the Global North, and that in many ways, international development activities aimed at "improving" the conditions for those living in the Global South and the evaluation work that accompanies those activities are in fact ongoing colonization efforts (Chilisa et al., 2016; Johnston-Goodstar, 2012). This indictment stems from critiques that evaluations are designed to serve the needs of program funders and donors who wish to measure the impact of their contributions (Carden & Alkin, 2012). Consequently, evaluations conducted in Indigenous communities are often framed by values and judgments of the agencies and donors located elsewhere both geographically and culturally (Carden, 2013; Hopson et al., 2012) and may not produce information that is useful or relevant for local communities (Carden, 2010; Hay, 2010).

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IDE does not dictate specific evaluation tools or practices as generalizations about methodology and data validity across communities remove authority from the people living in those communities (Hopson et al., 2012). IDE may employ similar qualitative and quantitative methods used in Western-based traditions (LaFrance et al., 2012) and may even draw practices from Western evaluation approaches such as community-based participatory research and utilization-focused evaluation (Waapalaneexkweew [Bowman] & Dodge-Francis, 2018). However, in order for these methods and approaches to be used in Indigenous communities and in a decolonizing manner, they must align with Indigenous worldviews (Hopson et al., 2012).

In articulating IDE approaches scholars have highlighted elements of Maori (Cram, 2016), Native American (LeFrance & Nichols, 2012), Hawaiian (Kawakami et al., 2007), and African (Chilisa et al., 2018) worldviews that influence evaluation practice in each of these community contexts. While each Indigenous community's worldview consists of a combination of understandings, beliefs, and practices specific to that community, some commonalities can be found, including a relational orientation to understanding the world; epistemologies that recognize knowledge arises from many sources, including cultural practices and norms; and an emphasis on collective good and sovereignty (Kovach, 2009). Relationships entail accountability, not only to one's living family, friends, and relatives, but also to ancestors, spiritual powers inherent in physical environments, and the energies of the universe (Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018; LaFrance et al., 2012; Kawakami, 2007). Relationships inform Indigenous epistemologies, which place emphasis on lived experience and the wisdom of community elders—knowledge that may be communicated through story, song, dance, or craft (Chilisa et al., 2016;

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LaFrance et al., 2012). Finally, the centrality of the collective good and community/tribal sovereignty emphasizes decisions and actions that benefit not only individuals, but also strengthens relationships and builds capacity within communities (Cram et al., 2018; Chilisa et al., 2016).

Evaluators using IDE approaches can attend to Indigenous worldviews in a number of ways. Evaluations implemented in Indigenous communities should be initiated and designed by those communities with a focus on issues and conditions the community wishes to change (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008; Kawakami et al., 2007). These evaluations incorporate knowledge and ways of knowing defined by the community (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008) that may have been ignored and devalued by colonizing forces (Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018). IDE scholars promote the use of participatory evaluation practices to more effectively engage community members in designing methods and in disseminating results so that the evaluations produce results that contribute to community goals for self-determination and sovereignty (Chilisa et al., 2016; Johnston-Goodstar, 2012).

Incorporation of Indigenous worldviews is essential to evaluation that works to refute colonial misrepresentations and produce information that benefits community goals (Chilisa et al., 2016; Kawakami et al., 2007; Kovach, 2009). However, scholars emphasize that IDE evaluation practice is more than a simple application of appropriate methods and techniques; it also encompasses how evaluators position themselves in relation to the communities in which they work (Greene, 2006; Wehipeihana et al., 2010). Kaupapa Maori evaluators have identified "community-up" conduct guidelines to assist decolonizing researchers and evaluators in examining their positions and

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relationships to Indigenous communities (Smith, 2012; Cram, 2016). These guidelines fall under an umbrella of "Being Careful" and include: 1) developing political astuteness or a nuanced understanding of how the context of a program and issue it addresses are characterized; 2) promoting cultural safety by following Indigenous principles and practices; and 3) critically analyzing one's own identities and positions in hierarchies and how they relate to communities' positions in the same hierarchies (Cram, 2016; Cram et al., 2015).

IDE entails an ongoing critique of dominant frames, methods, and social structures (Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018). The aspirational goals of IDE are the development of methodology that moves research and evaluation from a dismissive empiricism relevance (Kovach, 2009) and that highlights and acknowledges Indigenous worldviews and values and the ways that colonization continues to affect Indigenous people's current lives (Cram et al., 2018). Through their work, IDE practitioners can be "provocateurs" who push for culturally responsive programs and services that reduce disparities and center Indigenous people's goals and aspirations (Cram et al., 2018).

Conceptions of Justice

This section of the paper will locate the social justice approaches described in the previous section—democratic deliberative evaluation, feminist and other critical evaluation approaches, culturally responsive evaluation, and decolonizing and Indigenous evaluation approaches—in different political and social theories of social justice. Definitions of social justice are contested and also refer to both processes and goals (Mitchell, 2019; Bell, 2007). Mitchell highlights three specific understandings of social justice: 1) steps that move toward an ideal and just society; 2) processes that treat people

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with dignity and respect; and 3) an end-state in which all segments of society would contentedly live (2019). These three conceptions share commonalities with social justice theories articulated by contemporary theorists, including distributive (or redistributive) justice, procedural justice, and justice-as-recognition (Mitchell, 2019). As distributive (Rosenstein & Syna, 2015), procedural (Froncek & Rohman, 2019), and justice-as-recognition (Shanker, 2019) paradigms have received recent attention in evaluation literature, they will serve as the foundation for analysis of social justice theories.

Distributive justice. Distributive justice is concerned with “the morally proper distribution of social benefits and burdens among society’s members” (Young, 2011, p. 16). While political philosophers have proposed various formulations of the distributive justice paradigm that differ in details (e.g., Dworkin, 1981; Nozick, 1973), proponents of social justice in evaluation draw specifically on the depiction of distributive justice formulated by John Rawls (Rosenstein & Syna, 2015; House, 2005). As a consequence, the following description of distributive justice will draw largely on Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* (1971) and from other political theorists who expand upon or critique elements of his theory.

Rawls’ conception of a just society is one in which “all social values—liberty, opportunity, income, and wealth, and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all of these values, is to everyone’s advantage” (1971, p. 62). His principles of distributive justice, which he proposes in the abstract, as a hypothetical, are meant to “provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation” (Rawls, 1971, p. 4). Distribution of values or goods is

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governed by two principles: 1) each person has an equal right to basic rights and liberties insofar as they do not impinge upon the rights and liberties of others, and 2) social and economic inequalities are permitted only if a) all have equal opportunity to achieve them and b) inequalities ultimately benefit the least advantaged members of society. This second principle is often referred to as “the difference principle” (Rawls, 1971).

Distribution decisions are made behind a “veil of ignorance,” which blinds decision makers to their own relative position in society, thereby ensuring the impartiality of the decisions (Rawls, 1971).

Rawls intended his theory to govern the structures and institutions of society, rather than the actions of individuals (Rawls, 1958; Rawls, 1971). An individual must be considered a member of society in order to receive the goods distributed within that society (Rawls, 1971; Walzer, 1983). Rawls' scheme presumes that societal membership is defined as citizenship within a nation-state or country--entities with established institutions where members are bound together by a national identity (1971), and citizenship defines the boundaries of the “the universe of distribution,” within which social goods are allocated, dispensed, and received (Miller, 1999). However, some suggest that membership itself is a good distributed by society, and that by conferring membership and the benefits of participation in distribution to some and denying it to others, societies themselves are enacting injustice (Walzer, 1983).

What goods are considered distributable is socially defined, with some theorists arguing that it is impossible to identify a universal agreed-upon set of goods across all societies or even within a single society (Walzer, 1983). Rawls identifies distributable goods generally as “liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-

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respect..." (1971, p. 62). Some theorists treat these goods as essentially equivalent, relying on a single scheme to distribute them; others treat these goods as belonging to different classes, each with its own distribution schemes (Sabbagh, 2002). Still other question whether goods such as "self-respect" can be "distributed" by one entity to another systematically at all (Young, 2011).

Further, some theorists posit relationships between different types of goods, with possession of some types of goods enabling the possession of other types of goods. For example, the possession of political power, which Walzer (1983) characterizes as a "dominant good," allows the possessor to control the distribution of many other types of goods. Young (1981) further argues that goods such as power are fundamentally different from goods such as property or wealth in that they are created through relationships; she questions whether any scheme for distribution of such goods could be considered "just" (1981). Ultimately, the distributive paradigm considers all resources and opportunities to be "stock" to be allocated to members of a society (Young, 1981).

Rawls' principles define what he calls a "well-ordered society," one in which all members agree on a single definition of justice (Rawls, 2001, p. 8). Justice principles apply to the institutions of society rather than to individual acts and are consequently macro-level rather than micro-level principles (Rawls, 2001). Economic wealth and access to opportunities that allow individuals to build wealth are central to distributive justice, and actions taken to address injustice aim to change structures in order to redistribute wealth (Fraser, 1997; Mitchell, 2019); Decisions about redistribution are not influenced by considerations of race or gender as they are made from behind "the veil of

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ignorance” (Fraser, 1997; Young, 2011); as a consequence, no other considerations (such as socioeconomic class or sexual identity) are needed (Miller, 1999).

Procedural justice. Some have argued that the procedures used to achieve just outcomes are as important as the outcomes themselves (Leventhal, 1980). Individuals experience the greatest satisfaction when they believe they are receiving a fair distribution in relation to what they feel they deserve (Walster et al., 1973), but the procedures used to achieve outcomes play a significant role in shaping perceptions of fairness and justness of those outcomes (Miller, 1999). While distributive justice has been largely defined and described by political philosophers and theorists, procedural justice has been explored in legal and organizational contexts by legal scholars and social psychologists, as perceptions of fairness arise from social interactions among individuals, groups, and systems. (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Bies & Moag, 1986; Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

Early studies of procedural justice emerged from studies in legal settings, where neutral authorities resolved disputes (Bobcel & Gosse, 2015) or made allocation decisions (Tyler, 2015) in adversarial situations. Findings from these studies suggests that proceedings were viewed as fair by disputants when they had a sense of control over those proceedings; in legal settings this control was conferred by giving disputants opportunities to present evidence (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). This type of process control, characterized by Folger (1977) as “voice,” results in satisfaction with outcomes because disputants feel they have been given a “voice” in decisions being made. These early studies suggested that participants involved in allocation disputes believed that the exercise of control or “voice” in decisions allowed them to maximize personal gain in

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these proceedings, causing this model of procedural justice to be characterized as the “self-interest model” of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Later research in procedural justice produced the “group value model,” which focused on a more symbolic outcome of just procedures. Experimental studies suggest that if a group’s procedures are perceived as fair, individuals will derive a positive self-identity through membership in that group (Huo, 2002). Further, if decision-making procedures communicate group values and a group’s values are perceived as just, group members will derive a positive sense of self-worth, and decisions resulting from that group’s procedures will be viewed as legitimate (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015). Further, group procedures provide security for group members because they “allow them to make inferences about the nature of their future connection to a group,” thereby providing a sense of security in associating their identity with the group’s (Tyler & Blader, 2003).

Procedural justice entails a sense of process control through participation and may produce positive sense of identity, but its perception also hinges on the affective responses of those involved. Experimental studies exploring people’s conceptions of just and unjust behaviors have found that judgments of fairness are affected by whether an individual was treated, for example, with politeness and consideration, or unfriendliness and aggression (Messick, 1985; Mikula et al., 1990). Ultimately, the goal of procedural justice “is not total satisfaction of all parties, but respect and fairness” in interactions and process (Schweigert, 2007, p. 397.)

Justice as recognition. The recognition-based paradigm of justice prescribes addressing injustice experienced by members of marginalized and oppressed groups with the ultimate goal of institutionalizing “conditions necessary for the realizations of the

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good life—developing and exercising one’s capabilities and expressing one’s experience and participating in determining one’s own action and condition of action” for all people (Young, 2011, p. 37). Recognition-based theorists argue that conditions necessary for achieving a “full life” are not presently available to individuals with particular group affiliations because the dominant structures oppress and inhibit the opportunities and choices of these group members through a disproportionate exercise of power (Lovett, 2009; Taylor, 1992; Young, 2011).

While theorists offer varying conceptualizations of the recognition-based paradigm, such as enabling justice (Young, 2011), recognition (Fraser, 1999; Taylor, 1992), justice as minimizing domination (Lovett, 2009), and multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 1995), these theories frequently arise from a critique of Rawls’ formulation of distributive justice, which conceives of members of society as individual nodes within a distributive network with no relation to each other (Young, 2011). Recognition-based theorists argue instead for an analysis of relationships and social structures, which differentiate groups of people within a society and allow for the exercise of power by one group over another (Young, 2011).

Scholars suggest that group differentiation has been weaponized to justify exercise of power over and exclusion of groups of people (Mills, 1997; Said, 1978; Smith, 2012). This differentiation, termed “othering,” has resulted in the exclusion of individuals and groups deemed to be deviant or otherwise not conforming to social norms (Gallaher et al., 2009; Said, 1978). The imposition of the binary of “self” vs. “other” has led to the devaluation of non-European knowledge systems, beliefs, and identities (Smith, 2012) and led to the categorizations of groups of people as superior and inferior and of

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privileged and subordinated (Mills, 1997). While othering has been largely discussed in the context of the colonization of one country by another (Fanon, 1952; Said, 1978), differences that serve as justification for exercise of power also exist within societies (Young, 2011).

The power exercised by dominant groups over those deemed different has “the capacity to interfere, on an arbitrary basis, in certain choices that the other is in a position to make” (Bachvarova, 2014), and groups or individuals are dominated if they depend upon the social relationships with those who exercise power over them (Lovett, 2009). Young (2011) characterizes unjust exercise of power as “the five faces of oppression”: exploitation, wherein the labor of one group benefits a wholly separate group; marginalization, which occurs when groups are deprived of meaningful participation in culture and economy; powerlessness, which results when individuals have no autonomy and experience disrespect; cultural imperialism, which results when groups are defined and represented by dominant perspectives that emanate from outside the group; and violence, which people experience simply because they belong to a group. Fraser (1997) offers a slightly different analysis of dimensions of oppression, suggesting that injustice resulting from domination or oppression occurs in two planes: the socioeconomic (exploitation, economic marginalization, deprivation), and the symbolic (cultural domination, nonrecognition, and disrespect.) Regardless of the categorization, these facets of domination and oppression exist in societal and political structures and impact individuals and groups economically, socially, and psychologically (Mitchell, 2019).

Theorists propose a number of remedies for the injustices wrought by oppression that Fraser (1997) loosely classifies as either affirmative or transformative remedies.

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Affirmative remedies address recognition of cultural groups by “revaluing unjustly devalued group identities, while leaving the intact both the contents of those identities and group differentiations that underlie them” (Fraser, 1997, p. 24). By affirming the value of disparate cultural groups, society can begin to undo the damage caused by misrecognition, which can “mirror back to [group members] a confining or demeaning, or contemptible picture of themselves” (Taylor, 1992, p. 25). Membership in a cultural group provides scripts and lenses for viewing life options and offers “the safety of effortless secure belonging” (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 89); being able to live according to one’s culture allows for the living of life that has meaning and is authentic (Taylor, 1992). In order for individuals and groups to live a full life, differences and cultural groups must be tolerated, accommodated, and receive appropriate representation within existing social and economic structures so that a maldistribution of opportunities and resources can be addressed (Fraser, 1997).

Transformative remedies that address oppression and recognition aim instead to destabilize group identities and in so doing enact significant social and structural change (Fraser, 1997). Advocates for transformative remedies echo the arguments of post-colonial theorists who argue that recognizing difference can further marginalize differentiated groups (Fraser, 1997) and that the desire for greater recognition and representation within existing structures grants greater authority to those structures when their legitimacy should instead be challenged (Coulthard, 2014). Post-colonial theorists suggest that recognition of the oppressed by the oppressors is akin to the recognition of the colonized by colonizers; adoption of the recognition imposed by colonizers/oppressors serves only to reinforce domination by maintaining hierarchies

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(Coulthard, 2014; Fanon, 1952). Transformative remedies should instead focus on dismantling deep structures (Fraser, 1997) and constructing new ones (Coulthard, 2014).

Comparisons of Theories

While the evaluation and social/political theories described above do not necessarily articulate clear actions or pathways to achieve social justice, it is still useful to examine how they define justice and injustice in their formulations. In her article depicting the use of “working logics” as a basis for evaluator decision making, Fournier (1995) outlines parameters that can be used to guide the selection of different evaluation approaches. Fournier’s parameters include: 1) defining the problem to be examined, 2) defining the general phenomenon under study, 3) identifying suitable questions given the problem and phenomenon definition, and 4) identifying the types of claims that can be made using evaluation results (1995). Fournier’s framework provides a useful foundation for analyzing the “working logics” of evaluation and social/political theories of justice. Table 3 and Table 4 compare evaluation theories and social/political theories described above using an adaptation of Fournier’s framework that instead uses the parameters of 1) framing of injustice, 2) source of injustice, 3) criteria for success, and 4) vision of justice.

As can be seen in Table 3, all the social justice theories of evaluation reviewed in the previous section arise from acknowledgement that evaluation processes typically exclude the voices and perspectives of members of groups that have been marginalized politically, socially, and culturally. While DDE suggests that the source of this exclusion can be addressed through changes in evaluation procedures, the Feminist, CRE, and Decolonizing approaches encourage evaluators to both reckon with their own beliefs and biases and with the biases and power differentials inherent in the methodologies and

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motivations that serve as a foundation for the field. All approaches view authenticity as criteria of success, whether that describes participation or the relevance of evaluation findings, although Feminist, CRE, and Decolonizing approaches also explicitly and implicitly require the calling out of cultural domination. Justice in the DDE paradigm is evidenced by the achievement of consensus through dialogue, deliberation and the upholding of democratic ideals, while the other four approaches aim to elevate community-rooted knowledge and contribute to the autonomy of marginalized communities.

Table 4 highlights the key concepts of distributive, procedural, and justice-as-recognition paradigms. Injustice in the distributive paradigm is framed as unfair distributions of material goods, while procedural justice is concerned with lack of participation in decision making and recognition-based justice focuses on lack of participation in society at large. Injustice in the distributive paradigm results from structures that were designed by self-interested parties who did not prioritize equal access to opportunities to create wealth for all citizens. The source of procedural injustice is the absence of opportunities for participants in a process to contribute or share their perspectives. Injustice in the recognition-based paradigm results from power imbalances, where those who align with dominant groups have undue power over those who come from marginalized groups. Justice is achieved in the distributive paradigm when redistributive actions result in the greatest benefit for the least advantaged. Procedural justice results when participants feel they were able to exercise a degree of control in the procedure. Within the recognition paradigm, justice is achieved when marginalized groups are represented in governing structures and members of those

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groups are free to live according to their cultural dictates without stigmatization or interference from others.

Table 3*Mapping Social Justice Evaluation Approaches to Fournier's Framework*

	Framing of Injustice	Source of Injustice	Criteria for Success	Vision of Justice
Democratic Deliberative Evaluation (DDE)	Issues and concerns of evaluation stakeholders, particularly those from marginalized groups are obscured by the concerns of those who have the power and position to participate in evaluations.	Key evaluation stakeholder viewpoints are excluded from evaluation planning and activities because they are not invited to participate and contribute.	Are power differentials addressed so that all stakeholders may participate authentically? Have "real" interests been determined through dialogue?	Consensus about interests and goals achieved; conclusions reached through collective discussion and agreement. Democratic ideals upheld in evaluation processes.
Feminist Evaluation	Exclusion of women's perspectives from evaluation processes. Lack of attention to the ways in which systems and structures oppress some based on their gender identities.	Methodology developed for and by white, Western/Northern male perspectives devalue and exclude non-dominant ways of knowing and the life experiences of marginalized groups.	Does the evaluator acknowledge their own identity and understand how their perspectives impact the evaluation? Is analysis being conducted with an understanding that oppression results from gender (and other) identities?	Ways in which gender-based oppression and operate in a program are illuminated. Lived experiences and the knowledges of people with marginalized identities are centered and serve as the basis for evaluation.
Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE)	Use of dominant frames and norms in shaping evaluation framing, processes, findings interpretation; relevant knowledge and methodology may be ignored; evaluation findings may be inaccurate or irrelevant	The history, cultural values, knowledges of non-dominant groups have been historically devalued and therefore play little to no role in shaping evaluation processes. Non-dominant groups may be framed as "deficient" as a result.	Are epistemology, methodology, findings, and understandings relevant, accurate, and grounded in evaluation's cultural context? Is the evaluation credible in the community in which it is being conducted?	Culture, values, knowledge, and beliefs shape an evaluation's epistemology and methodology. The evaluation produces credible, relevant information for the community that reflects community realities and values.

Table 3

(continued).

<p>Decolonizing & Indigenous Evaluation</p>	<p>Use of colonizer frames of reference when defining issues, programs, desired outcomes, and evaluation processes in communities of people who have been historically colonized and dominated. Traditional and Indigenous ways of knowing and interacting with the world are excluded from evaluation processes.</p>	<p>Indigenous history, cultural values, and knowledges are devalued and therefore do not shape epistemology and methodology. Norms and standards of colonizer culture are applied to indigenous communities resulting in deficit-framing of those communities.</p>	<p>Are relationships recognized and upheld? Is evaluation grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of relating to each other and the world? Does the evaluation provide information relevant and accessible to the community?</p>	<p>Community self-determination in the evaluation process. Evaluation done by/with communities rather than to or for communities. Evaluation produces credible, relevant information that helps a community move toward collective goals such as sovereignty and liberation.</p>
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Table 4*Mapping Social Justice Theories to Fournier's Framework*

	Framing of Injustice	Cause of Injustice	Criteria for success	Vision of Justice
Distributive justice	Members of a society do not receive equal distributions of material and immaterial goods. Burdens and benefits of societal membership of unfairly distributed.	Societal structures were designed by self-interested individuals. Consequently, they have not ensured basic rights and liberties and do not allow for equal distributions of material and immaterial goods.	Do all members of a society share the same conception of justice? Are material wealth and opportunities redistributed to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged?	Institutions and their distribution processes have been created with impartiality and are universally agreed upon. Members of society have equal access to goods, opportunities, rights, and liberties.
Procedural justice	Participants in a decision-making process feel they are treated unfairly; consequently, participants perceive the outcomes of the process as unjust.	Decision-making processes do not permit participants to participate or contribute. Those with power to make decisions do not treat affected parties with dignity and respect.	Did participants have a "have voice" in the process? Were they given opportunities to contribute information to the process? Were participants treated with dignity and respect during the process?	Participants feel they were able to take an active part in the process of decision making; participants feel some degree of control over the proceedings and feel respected and heard.
Justice-as-recognition	Groups of people are oppressed because society labels them as "different" or "other"; members of these groups are unable to live "the good life" because they lack autonomy.	Groups adhering to dominant societal norms are able to exercise power over those perceived as "different." Systems and institutions are designed to permit domination and oppression.	Can individuals live according to the values and beliefs of their cultural group? Do people have autonomy over their life choices? Are the interests of different groups represented in societal structures?	No groups of people are dominated or oppressed by other groups. All people are able to access what they need to live a full life and achieve what they wish.

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The social justice evaluation theories highlighted in the preceding section generally depict injustice as exclusion of marginalized voices, perspectives, knowledges, and values. While DDE does not specify the cause of marginalization, the other three theories attribute it to membership in groups outside dominant society. Interestingly, the remedies for injustice in each of these evaluation approaches entails changes to evaluation procedures that would engage non-dominant perspectives and values to a greater degree. Thus, while these social justice evaluation theories characterize injustice in a way that aligns with justice-as-recognition, the routes they describe to justice align with the concepts of procedural justice.

Frameworks for understanding theory and practice

As noted in Chapter One of this paper, scholars who study evaluation practice have employed a number of approaches to describe how and why evaluators make the decisions they do, as well as where and when theory is employed by evaluators in their work. This final section of Chapter Two will provide a brief overview of frameworks used previously in research on evaluation theory and practice and will introduce Carol Bacchi's What's the Problem Represented to Be (WPR) as a framework for illuminating how evaluators understand and use social justice theories in their work.

Earlier research has examined relationships between evaluation practice and theory to better understand both theory use and evaluator decision making. Some have attempted to map specific evaluation practices to particular theories (Christie, 2003a). Others have highlighted relationships among theory, experience, and practice decisions (Tourmen, 2009) and among theory use, evaluation context, and social identity (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). In general,xc these studies suggest that evaluators develop their own

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conceptions of theory that are influenced by their experiences, their identities, and often in response to evaluation contexts.

A framework developed by Kunding (2010) incorporates multiple influences on evaluator decision making into an overarching framework that includes practical reasoning, situation awareness, theories, and reflection on action. Within the practical reasoning branch of her framework, Kunding explores different “logics” that drive how evaluation practitioners respond to contextual factors and select evaluation activities (2010). Among the “logics” highlighted in the framework is Fournier’s “working logic” framework (1995), used in the previous section to compare theories.

Fournier suggests that programs (termed “phenomena” in the framework) are defined within social contexts and that these definitions have attendant values that influence the types of evaluation approaches and questions that are employed (1995). Program development is driven by socially-constructed understandings of “social problems,” and these understandings frequently stem from dominant culture’s inaccurate interpretation of causes and solutions (SenGupta et al., 2004). Additionally, Kunding (2010) draws on Hansen’s framework of practice logics, which suggests that the design of a program evaluation could stem from how the social problem that program is meant to address or ameliorate is understood (2005).

Developing a clear understanding of the “problem” that a program is intended to ameliorate is a key step in evaluation the development process (Shadish et al., 1991), and Archibald suggests that analysis of the ways in which problems are defined within evaluation may help to surface erroneous assumptions and promote better evaluation practice (2019). Specifically, Archibald (2019) proposes the use of Carol Bacchi’s (2009,

2012) “What’s the Problem Represented to Be?” approach for evaluative thinking and critique of evaluation processes. Bacchi’s WPR approach may therefore be useful in examining how justice and injustice are framed in evaluation discourse.

The WPR framework "starts from the premise that what one proposes to do about something reveals what one thinks is problematic (needs to change)" (Bacchi, 2012, p. 21). Bacchi argues that too often policymakers take a problem-solving approach to policy, presuming that the ‘problems’ are “fixed and uncontroversial starting points for policy development,” when in fact the parameters and features are context-dependent, socially defined, and, ultimately, value- and assumption-laden interpretations of a particular situation (2012, p. 23). She further argues that policies “give shape” to problems, as opposed to addressing them (Bacchi, 2009, p. x). The WPR framework is a tool for critically analyzing social “problems” by scrutinizing how the problems are defined by the 'solutions' presented in policies.

The role of language and discourse in prescribing practice

Bacchi’s theory draws on constructionist and poststructuralist epistemology, as well as Foucauldian discourse analysis (Archibald, 2019; Bacchi, 2009). Bacchi suggests that the WPR approach is constructionist in that it is grounded in the perspective that social and political forces shape what is known and considered knowledge and that therefore governments create ‘problems’ by creating policy (2009). The poststructuralist perspective focuses on how knowledge is produced through language; it arises from the understanding that all knowledge production is political and that knowledge is produced to maintain political power (Gallaher et al., 2009). Similarly, WPR draws on the Foucauldian concept of discourse, which proposes that socially produced knowledge that

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defines the boundaries of what is possible to write, speak, or think about a topic (Foucault, 2019).

Fairclough (2015) suggests that discourse includes social practice (what people do) and societal structures constitute one another and reinforce one another. In other words, what people think, say, and do creates reality and the social relationships and institutions that populate it. The idea that thought, language, and action constrain reality and possibility has been raised in the field of evaluation and social policy. House (1983) discusses the nature of metaphorical thinking in evaluation, suggesting that the metaphor used to describe a program may also (intentionally or unintentionally) guide the evaluation of that program. For example, he proposes that if the “problem” is framed resulting from “fragmented” services, then a recommendation might to be “coordinate” those services; were those same services described as “autonomous,” other recommendations might result (House, 1983, p. 8).

Words and concepts can shape evaluation practice, but evaluation itself can in turn shape words, concepts, and reality. Dahler-Larsen characterizes the ways in which evaluation affects values, orientations, and practices toward a certain version of reality as the “constitutive effects” of evaluation (2012, p. 199). Dahler-Larsen suggests that evaluation can “reconfigure fundamental social ideas.” Examples include the impact of standardized testing on public education (“teaching to the test,”) the effects of consumer satisfaction rankings on the identity of students in higher education (consumer vs. learner), and the ways in which assigning timelines to “normal” child development contributes to the idea of the “underachieving” child (2012). In these ways, discourse (comprised of words and actions) can shape and be shaped by evaluation practice.

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The preceding overview of social/political theories evaluation theories illustrates the ways in which theories frame the problem of injustice both explicitly through the naming of specific injustices and implicitly through the identification of "solutions"—decision-making processes and the application of specific evaluation practices intended to address these injustices. However, the theoretical literature focused on social justice evaluation approaches is but one facet of professional discourse on social justice; articles depicting case studies, as well as the decisions made by practitioners in their daily work also comprise social justice discourse. The WPR approach of policy analysis is useful for examining this broader discourse to illuminate the working definitions of "social justice"—and the assumptions that underlie these definitions—in the field of evaluation.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this exploratory study was to document how evaluators committed to social justice in evaluation conceptualize social justice. Specifically, this study addressed the following overarching question: How do practicing evaluators understand social justice, and how do they operationalize their understandings in their practice? The study addressed three sub-questions within the overarching question:

- 1) What are the working definitions of social justice employed in the evaluation literature and by practicing evaluators?
- 2) What theories and approaches do social justice-oriented evaluators report using in their work?
- 3) How do the theories, approaches, and working definitions of social justice used by social justice-oriented evaluators problematize justice?

Research Design

Qualitative researchers aim to understand how people make sense of the world and their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Knowledge gathered through qualitative research approaches can illuminate meanings, elucidate how systems work, clarify context, and create opportunities for comparison that allow for the identification of patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). Because the intent of this study was to develop an understanding of how the concept of social justice is interpreted and operationalized in evaluation practice, it aligns with Denzin and Lincoln's definition of qualitative research as "attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (2000, p. 3).

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This study focused on discourse about social justice in evaluation. Discourse refers not only to language and printed text, but also to the social practices around text production, interpretation, and dissemination (Fairclough, 2015). Theorists describe the concept of discourse variously as distinctive ways of speaking, writing, acting, and thinking in order to enact specific identities (Gee, 2014, p. 183); as a practice that represents and signifies the world and constitutes and constructs the world in meaning (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64); and as a tool “to claim, explain, and maintain, or constrain viewpoints and actions, but also to define and understand what is happening in their worlds” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85). Although these definitions differ, they all emphasize the socially-produced nature of discourse that shapes and is shaped by thinking, speaking, and writing.

Because it was exploratory, this study did not neatly fall within the boundaries of a specific methodological approach, but rather drew on elements of two different approaches: ethnography, and grounded theory. Ethnographers use interviews to elicit both the explicit and tacit knowledge that comprises culture, focusing on the language used to communicate and create a specific cultural reality (Spradley, 2016). Grounded theorists explore actions and processes, the meanings participants attribute to these actions and processes, and the language participants use to describe these actions or processes (Charmaz, 2012). Both approaches make use of lengthy interviews, iterative coding of data, and the development of themes that describe and explain concepts and understandings within the context of the group or culture being studied. This study explored the concepts and meanings that evaluators attach to social justice in their work by examining the language that they use.

Theoretical Framework

As noted in Chapter Two, Bacchi's "What's the Problem Represented to Be" (WPR) policy analysis framework guided this study. WPR focuses on the language used to frame social issues as "problems" within social policies and interventions; this problem framing is then used to explore both the assumptions that underlie the framing and the consequences of defining social issues in a particular way (Bacchi, 2009). Although the present study did not examine policy, it did aim to explore the language used to frame social injustice within evaluation discourse; the ways in which injustice was framed were then used to explore the assumptions and concepts embedded within those framings. The relevance of the WPR framework to this study lay in its emphasis on how conceptions of issues are formed through discourse.

In situating her framework, Bacchi suggests that every policy constitutes the problematization of a social phenomenon because policies are presumed to "fix" problems; consequently, analysis of any intervention (policy, program, educational campaign, etc.) will "reveal how the issue is being thought about" by those responsible for developing and implementing those interventions (2009, p. 3). Drawing on Freire and Foucault, Bacchi presents how her framework can be used to "problematize (interrogate) the problematization" of social phenomenon (2009, p. 31). Analysis of power relations is built into the WPR framework as it "presumes that some problem representations benefit the members of some groups at the expense of others" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 44). Bacchi argues that by challenging how particular problems are represented, we can begin to identify and mitigate harms caused by the way a particular problem or issue is framed. The WPR framework, adapted from Bacchi (2009, p. xii) is presented in Table 5

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alongside the questions guiding this study

Table 5

Mapping Bacchi's Policy Analysis Questions to the Research Questions

Research Sub-Questions	WPR Policy Analysis Questions
What are the working definitions of social justice used in the evaluation literature and by practicing evaluators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the problem (e.g., 'problem gamblers,' drug use, terrorism, etc.) represented to be in a specific evaluation?• What is left unproblematic in this representation of the problem? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently?
What theories and approaches do social justice-oriented evaluators report employing in their work?	How/where are dominant problem representations produced, disseminated, and defended? How could they be contested/disrupted?
How do the theories, approaches, and working definitions of social justice used by social justice-oriented evaluators problematize injustice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?• What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?• How has this representation of the problem come about?

Data Collection

Two data collection components comprised the exploration of evaluation discourse around social justice: 1) a review of a sample of articles published in the two journals sponsored by the American Evaluation Association (AEA), i.e., the *American Journal of Evaluation* and *New Directions for Evaluation*; and 2) interviews with practicing evaluators who purport to use social justice evaluation approaches or to work toward social justice ends in their practice. Rationale and methods for each component are detailed below.

Article Review. While there are more than a dozen evaluation-focused professional journals published internationally, analysis was confined to the two AEA-sponsored journals for two reasons. First, AEA is the largest voluntary organization of professional evaluation (VOPE) in the United States and in the world (Rugh & Segone, 2013). Statements relating to social justice found in AEA's professional ethical statements provided the impetus for this study, and its Guiding Principles for Evaluators can be found inside the cover of every issue of the *American Journal of Evaluation*. While AEA has no power to enforce its ethical guidelines, its size and prominence within the evaluation field in the United States and its influence globally suggest that it may play a significant role in shaping social justice discourse among US-based practitioners.

Second, context shapes how evaluators design and implement evaluations (Rog, 2012). Scholars have highlighted the unique ways in which national contexts have affected evaluation practice, including an explication of the partisan and political role of evaluation in Canada (Chouinard & Milley, 2015); a description of the impacts new public management (NPM) has had on evaluation processes in Sweden (Segerholm, 2002); and description of the different purposes served by evaluation over the decades in North Atlantic countries (Vedung, 2010). Jacob et al. (2015) note that some unique aspects of evaluation in the United States context can be located in evaluation discourse—namely that a variety of explicit specific evaluation approaches are discussed in contrast to many other countries, where one or two approaches or theories dominate. The United States has a documentable evaluation context that makes its practice and discourse distinct from that of other countries, and the focus on the two evaluation journals published in the United States helps to delimit the boundaries of this study.

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To identify articles for inclusion in the study a systematic search of articles published by the American Evaluation Association (AEA) in its two sponsored journals—the *American Journal of Evaluation (AJE)* (formerly *Evaluation Practice*) and *New Directions for Evaluation (NDE)*—was conducted using the search term “social justice” anywhere in the article. Searches were conducted using the journal publishers’ websites—Sage Journals for *AJE* and Wiley Online Library for *NDE*—and included all articles available online: September 2021 (*AJE*: volume 2, issue 1, 1981 – volume 42, issue 3, 2021; *NDE*: volume 1, 1978-issue 171, Fall 2021). Articles from *Evaluation Practice* and *Evaluation News*, former incarnations of *AJE*, were also included in the search.

Duplicate citations were removed, as were editors’ notes, appendices, indexes, listings, book reviews, and in memoriam tributes due to their generally superficial treatment of social justice. Article PDFs were then text-searched for terms relating to social justice paradigms and for mentions of the use of social justice evaluation methods highlighted by Mertens and Wilson (2018). Articles ultimately included in the analysis met the following inclusion criteria:

- 1) The words “social justice” appeared in the main text of the article
- 2) The article referenced a particular paradigm of social justice
- 3) The article mentioned any social justice evaluation approach identified by Mertens and Wilson (2018)

The search criteria for justice paradigms and remedies are detailed below and summarized in Table 6. The results of the inclusion screening process can be seen in

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Figure 3. Data collected from articles were entered into a Google form, which was then output to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis.

Justice paradigms: Each article pdf was searched for specific text items that related to a specific paradigm of justice. To identify distributive and procedural justice paradigms, the following terms were searched: rawls*, distribut*, redistribut*, and procedur*. Text around the appearances of these words was scanned to confirm that they were used in relation to the distributive conception of justice, i.e., that they discussed distribution and redistribution of opportunities and resources or that they cited John Rawls' theory of distributive justice explicitly. To identify the recognition paradigm, the terms oppress* and dominat* were searched and the text surrounding these appearances scanned to confirm their use in relation to evaluation practices. While oppression and domination are not exclusively tied to the recognition paradigm, they are key elements of Young's conception of social justice (2011).

Social justice evaluation approaches: Mertens and Wilson's social justice branch of the evaluation theory tree (2018) identifies specific evaluation theories that evaluators can use to advance social justice. Text searches were conducted for these specific evaluation theories: democratic deliberative evaluation (DDE), culturally responsive evaluation (CRE), feminist evaluation, critical evaluation, participatory evaluation, Indigenous evaluation, and decolonizing evaluation. Evaluators do not always explicitly name evaluation approaches, and, as noted in Chapter 2, social justice evaluation theories are not constituted by mutually exclusive sets of concepts and evaluation activities. However, in general the theories identified by Mertens and Wilson describe evaluation theories and approaches that are inclusive of marginalized and disenfranchised voices and

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that encourage evaluator reflection and reflexivity. To ensure capture of all relevant articles, the following terms were also searched in the text: marginali*, disadvantag*, inclus*, voice, dialog*, reflexiv*, and reflectiv*; these key concepts frequently appeared across all social justice approaches considered in this study (for a summary, see Table 3 in Chapter 2) and were used by authors to describe social justice-related practices even when specific social justice approaches were not identified in article text. Text surrounding incidences of these words was scanned to confirm that they related to an evaluation approach or evaluator action, and the ways in which justice paradigms were described were also noted.

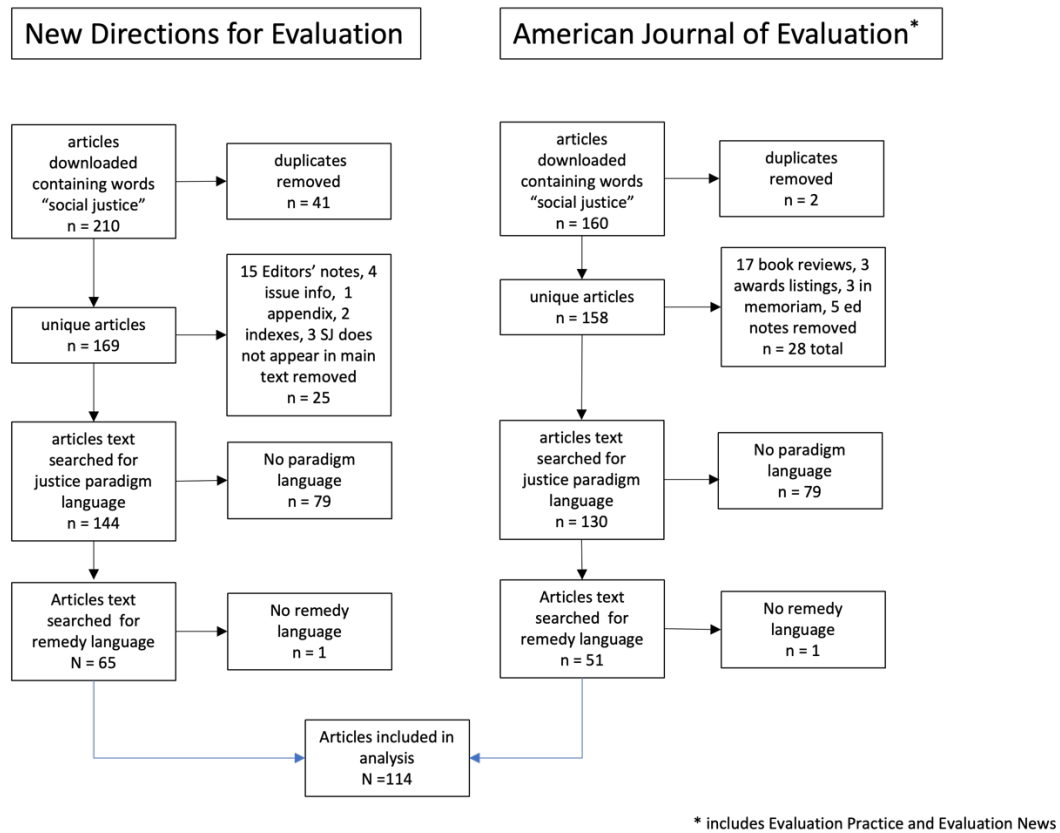
Table 6

Social Justice Paradigms and Relevant Search Terms

Concept	Terms Searched	Source
Distributive justice paradigm	distribu* redistribu* rawls* alloc*	Rawls' <i>Theory of Justice</i>
Procedural justice paradigm	procedur*	Rawls' <i>Theory of Justice</i>
Recognition as justice	oppress* domina*	I. M. Young's <i>Justice as Recognition</i>
Social justice evaluation theories	Democratic deliberative (DDE) Culturally responsive (CRE) Feminist evaluation Indigenous evaluation Decolonizing evaluation Critical evaluation Participatory evaluation	Mertens & Wilson (2018)
Concepts associated with SJ evaluation theories	Inclus* Voice Dialogue Reflexiv* Reflectiv*	Mertens & Wilson (2018)

Figure 3

Results of the Article Screening Process



Of the 360 articles initially retrieved in the search, 114 articles met inclusion criteria. The majority of the articles were conceptual in nature; 23 of the included articles were empirical studies.

Interviews. Interviews elicit discourse (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85), and conceptual interviews can be used to "explore the meaning and conceptual dimensions" of terms used in discourse and understand how these terms form a network of related concepts (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, pp. 176-177). Conceptual interviews can also uncover assumptions about what is considered normal or appropriate (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Gee, 2015). Elements of the critical decision method (CDM) were incorporated in

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interview questions that related to the evaluation reports shared by interviewees. CDM interviews are retrospective and probe elements of an incident such as cues that alert the interviewee to a situation, the knowledge the interviewee drew upon to act in a situation, and the goals the interviewee had in taking that action (Klein et al., 1989). Cues that indicate a need for a social justice evaluation approach, knowledge and theories evaluators use to address that injustice, and social justice goals an evaluator hopes to achieve through the application of particular evaluation approaches can all reveal how evaluators conceptualize social justice.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 practicing evaluators who had worked in the evaluation field for more than five years and who self-identified as working for or toward social justice ends. Interview questions can be found in Appendix A. Interviewees were asked to share a copy of an evaluation report that provided an example of their social justice-oriented work. The evaluation reports provided a concrete example of practice that interviewees could draw upon to explain their thought processes and decisions and served as a basis for probing understandings and conceptions of injustice, social justice, and the evaluator's rationale for the application of specific theories and methods in the context of that evaluation.

Interviewees were selected using a purposeful sampling design; most interviewees were all either colleagues or acquaintances of colleagues. A purposeful sampling approach allows for the selection of "information rich" cases for study "from which one can learn a great deal" about the topics of phenomena of interest (Patton, 2015, p. 53)—in this case, the application of social justice-oriented thinking and evaluation practice. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, with identifying details removed. Interviewees

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were invited to choose a pseudonym to be used in reporting; two interviewees asked that their real names to be used. Interview questions addressed interviewees' perspectives on social justice and on their practices; demographic data regarding age, race/ethnicity, and educational background were not collected as evaluator positionality was not a focus of this study. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix A, and the information and consent form for interviewees can be found in Appendix B.

Analysis

Data collected from included articles and interview transcripts was qualitatively coded using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis “involves searching *across* a data set...to find repeated patterns of meaning” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86, emphasis in original). It entails an iterative coding process that aims to identify both manifest (explicit) and latent (implicit) meanings within a text (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Boyatkis, 1998). Codes are ultimately gathered into themes, which “[capture] something important about the data in relation to the research question, and [represent] some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Coding and theme development in this study focused on the ways evaluators locate, identify, and characterize the injustice they encounter in their daily work and in the field of evaluation.

Boyatkis (1989) and Braun and Clarke (2006) identify five primary steps in thematic analysis, summarized below:

- 1) Reading and re-reading the data and noting initial ideas
- 2) Generating initial codes that capture interesting features of the data
- 3) Collecting codes into potential themes, and locating the data that aligns with those themes and creating thematic maps to identify how codes are related

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4) Reviewing themes to determine if they work across the entire dataset

5) Refining the themes and determining what story the themes together tell

During the coding process, analytic memos were also generated. Memo writing promotes reflection upon and analysis of codes throughout the research process (Charmaz, 2014).

This reflection was useful in shaping or changing ongoing analysis.

Brinkmann and Kvale suggest that qualitative analysis is bricolage, requiring movement between analytic techniques and concepts (2015, p. 267). Data analysis of transcripts and articles may shifted to draw upon descriptive and domain and taxonomic coding. Descriptive coding identifies and summarizes the basic topics within a text; domain and taxonomic coding explores the implicit meanings within those topics and helps to identify relationships between concepts (Saldana, 2013).

Researcher Background and Positionality

My interest in the topic of social justice discourse in evaluation originates not from an interest in more precise language, but from a deeply personal understanding that concepts such as “fairness” and “justice” have fundamentally different meanings in different contexts. I am a biracial and bilingual woman who grew up in predominantly white communities in the Midwestern United States and frequently had to translate conversations for my Chinese grandmother and, on occasion, social situations for my Chinese mother. As an adult I have come to realize that the ways that people have very different conceptions of community, responsibility, and obligation that are in conflict with one another, sometimes externally in society, but, more often, internally. These different conceptions represent a multiplicity of realities, and I acknowledge these multiple realities in my daily life and in my research.

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Although the United States is racial and ethnically diverse, its systems are built upon traditional (white) American conceptions of community, responsibility, fairness, and justice. As an employee of various nonprofits, then as a public librarian, and now as an evaluator, I have been obliged to reinforce these conceptions to various degrees and in various ways. I question the assumed universality of concepts such as “social justice,” particularly as I have been employed by organizations and institutions that have purported to advance it. Realist evaluators seek to identify what works, under what circumstances, and for whom (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). My study asks: “What does social justice look like? Who experiences it, and under what circumstances?” My interest in this topic also comes from an understanding that privileged, dominant groups in American society continue to oppress the marginalized and groups deemed to be “different.” I am concerned that programs and policies intended to “help” or “uplift” marginalized and oppressed groups may in fact reinforce their marginalization and oppression through an imposition of dominant visions of social justice.

Finally, in recent years, local and national events have caused me to question the utility of liberal conceptions of social justice (e.g., those advanced by John Rawls) that, from my perspective, call for a rearrangement or reform of systems I judge to be irredeemable. Evaluators’ work is irrevocably enmeshed with many of these systems, and so I have also come to question what, if any, contributions we can make to the advancement of social justice, if we continue to be hemmed in by these the definitions and approaches that are contained within existing systems.

Limitations

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This study addresses a topic that has received little attention in field; consequently this study has a broad, rather than in-depth focus. This broad focus results in some limitations. Several limitations relate to the review of journal articles, and one of these limitations arises from the selection criteria. Selection criteria were broadly defined in order to ensure capture of as many relevant articles as possible; for example, the recognition paradigm is not easily distilled into search terms, and so the words “domination” and “oppression” (key concepts in this paradigm) were used to represent the paradigm. Domination and oppression are used frequently, and one consequence is over 100 articles were included in the sample. In-depth analysis of every included article was beyond the scope of this study, and so the resulting analysis provides a starting point for further study.

Inclusion criteria resulted in some cases in the exclusion of relevant articles. For example, a recent empirical article examining procedural justice in-depth (Froncek & Rohman, 2019) was excluded because it did not contain the term “social justice.” Relatedly, articles that did not name social justice evaluation approaches were also excluded, despite their conceptual contributions to social justice thinking in evaluation (e.g., House’s 1990 article entitled *Methodology and Justice*).

Finally, it is unlikely that interviewee comments are representative of the broader field of social justice-oriented evaluators. Interviewees were identified via the author’s professional networks, and the majority reside and work in Minnesota. While this qualitative exploratory study did not intend to cultivate a representative sample, the comments from interviewees included in the results may contain a particularly narrow set of viewpoints. Future research with additional evaluators may lead to additional claims.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter details the findings from both the high level review of articles identified for inclusion in the study and a summary of the themes derived from analysis of interview transcripts.

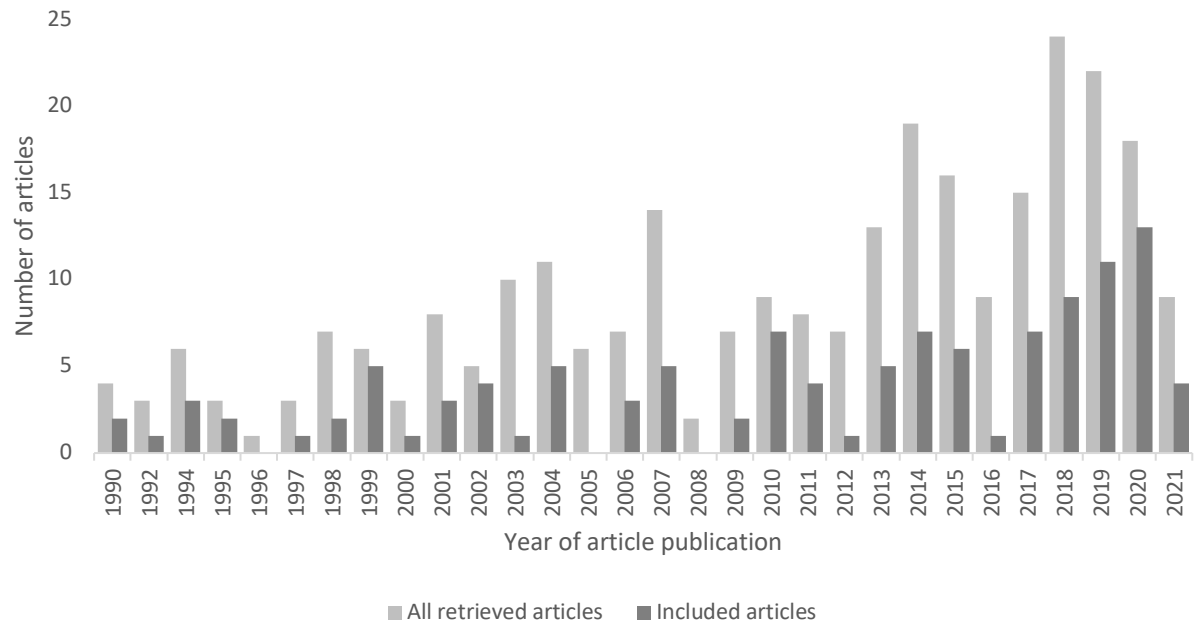
Article review

Of the 275 articles identified through the initial search, 115 met the inclusion criteria of (1) using the words “social justice” in the main body of article text; (2) mentioning at least one social justice evaluation approach (or used language that relates to social justice evaluation approaches); and (3) using the language of least one justice paradigm. Figure 4 illustrates the total number of articles retrieved from the initial database search, along with the number of articles included in the analysis by year of publication. What follows is a summary of trends and patterns that emerged from analysis of the included articles.

The number of articles published mentioning social justice approaches and justice paradigms increased over time; this increase can be seen in both the original collection of retrieved articles and in the sample of articles selected for inclusion in the analysis (see Figure 4). In recent years, the number of social justice-related articles published increased; however, many of these articles lacked either substantive discussions of justice paradigms or of social justice evaluation approaches, suggesting that social justice is frequently mentioned but rarely fully explained. The remainder of the analysis focuses on the articles that met the inclusion criteria.

Figure 4

Total Number of Articles Included and Retrieved By Year



Social Justice Evaluation Approaches

Many of the articles mentioned multiple social justice evaluation approaches and justice paradigms. Table 7 summarizes the total number of articles mentioning each social justice evaluation approach. (See Appendix C for a table identifying all the social justice approaches mentioned in each included article.) Culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) was the most frequently mentioned social justice evaluation approach, with democratic deliberative evaluation (DDE), Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation, and social justice-related concepts mentioned being second most frequently, and feminist evaluation mentioned least frequently.

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Table 7

Number of Mentions of Social Justice Approaches in Included Articles

Social justice evaluation approach	Number of articles
Culturally responsive evaluation (CRE)	45
Democratic deliberative evaluation (DDE)	35
Indigenous & Decolonizing evaluation	34
Social justice-related concepts	32
Feminist evaluation	24

Note: A complete list of social justice-related concepts can be found in Table 6

Though culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) was the most frequently mentioned social justice approach, the vast majority of included articles mentioning CRE in a passing fashion. Exceptions include Acree and Chouinard (2019), who explore how CRE is used promote social justice; Brewington and Hall (2018) and Brown and DiLallo (2020), who present case studies of CRE in action; and Waapalaneexkweew (Bowman-Farrell) (2018), who articulates a framework for culturally responsive indigenous evaluation (CRIE). Authors mentioning CRE as a social justice approach characterize it as a collection of methods aimed at representing and including world views, knowledges, and voices within the context of an evaluation.

Democratic deliberative evaluation (DDE) was the second most mentioned social justice evaluation approach. Similar to CRE, DDE was most often named in the contexts of lists of evaluation approaches that align with or promote the ideals of a more just society. A few of the articles mentioning DDE critique its utility in promoting social justice. For example, Hood (2000) highlights the potential irrelevancy of DDE in Black communities, given their negative experiences with American democracy. House, who along with Kenneth Howe first articulated the DDE framework, notes that the approach is

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inadequate for addressing evaluations that examine severe inequality (2019). Finally, Vo and Archibald (2018) note that values characterized as “democratic” originate from a Western viewpoint, and their imposition, rather than something more local or indigenous, may be an act of imperialism that is at odds with social justice intentions.

Articles mentioning feminist, Indigenous, and decolonizing approaches were nearly evenly split between articles that mentioned these approaches in passing and those that explained or developed underlying theories. Articles mentioning Indigenous evaluation in particular described in detail the tenets of frameworks relevant to specific ethnic and cultural communities and the ways in which use of these frameworks advanced justice for those groups and communities (Cavino, 2013; Gaotlhobogwe et al., 2018; Hepi et al., 2021; Waapalaneexkweew, 2018).

As noted in Chapter Three, social justice-related concepts were searched alongside social justice evaluation approaches. Table 8 summarizes the frequency with which these concepts appeared in articles included in the analysis. The term “power” appeared in nearly all of the articles, suggesting some association between issues of power and issues of justice. The terms “marginalized” and “voice” also appeared frequently, an unsurprising result given the association of these terms with social justice evaluation approaches and social justice aims.

Table 8

Number of Social Justice Related Concepts in Included Articles

Social justice-related concepts	Number of articles
Power	103
Marginalized	78
Voice	66
Reflective / Reflexive	61
Inclusion	59
Dialogue	39

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Justice paradigms. The recognition paradigm, signified by the presence of the words “oppression” and/or “domination” (and variations thereof) was the most frequently identified paradigm across the 115 articles included in the analysis, followed by distributive justice and procedural justice. A small number of articles specifically mentioned Rawls’ theory within the text of the article. While Rawls is associated with theories concerning distributive justice, some articles included in the analysis cited Rawls in the context of procedural justice; consequently, Rawls is presented here as a separate paradigm category. Table 9 summarizes the total number of articles mentioning each justice paradigm. (See Appendix D for a table identifying all the justice paradigms mentioned in each included article.)

Table 9

Number of Mentions of Justice Paradigms in Included Articles

Justice paradigm	Number of articles
Recognition	93
Distributive	47
Rawls	15
Procedural	9

Words indicating justice paradigms were largely used in passing reference to general concepts. For example, domination appeared as “dominant Eurocentric hierarchies” (Vo & Archibald, 2018), “dominant ways of thinking” (e.g., Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010), and “dominant culture” (SenGupta et al., 2004). Oppression was frequently used in relation to elements of society, such as “oppressive power structures” (Bheda, 2011; Brewington & Hall).

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In contrast, the word “distribution” (sometimes appearing as “allocation”) was often used specifically to outline the tenets of social justice. For example, Bledsoe (2014, p. 78) explains that “...social justice focused evaluations address issues such as distribution of power, human rights, and discrimination.” Collins et al. (2014, p. 24) similarly note that evaluators consider social justice in their practice by “assessing whether institutions of society are arranged to produce appropriate, fair, and moral distributions of benefits and burdens among its members and groups.” Some authors go further to consider societal distribution directly in their evaluations; Desilvilya Syna et al. (2015) draw on John Rawls’ conception of distributive justice directly to suggest that “... we examine the potential contribution of evaluation to coping with inequalities and power imbalances in society, thereby fostering equal access to opportunities in the job market” (p. 47).

Rawls’ conception of justice as fairness appeared with some frequency in articles explicitly discussing distributive justice, with a small number of authors engaging in detailed explanations of his theory (House, 2001; Morris, 2014). Rawls’ conception of justice appeared in a few of the articles focusing on procedural justice. Only a handful of authors discussed procedural justice; however, those who did do so in some detail, particularly Morris (2014) and Sheldon and Wolfe (2014).

Words indicating the recognition paradigm appeared most frequently across nearly all articles mentioning social justice evaluation approaches, with distributive justice appearing second most frequently, and mentions of John Rawls and procedural justice appearing least frequently (see Table 10). House has written extensively about distributive justice (1976, 1983, 1990) so it is unsurprising that democratic deliberative

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evaluation (DDE), an approach he helped to formulate, appeared most frequently with distributive justice. It is also notable that distributive justice, Rawls' conception, and procedural justice—all theories rooted in Western European thought—appeared the least in articles discussing Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation. Overall, however, there did not appear to be a connection between social justice evaluation approach and justice paradigm; based on these findings, it was not possible to conclude that any particular evaluation approach promotes or addresses any particular conception of justice.

Table 10

Distribution of Social Justice Paradigms Across Social Justice Approaches

Approach	Recognition	Distributive	Rawls	Procedural
CRE	41	24	3	2
DDE	28	35	7	2
Indigenous & Decolonizing	32	13	0	0
Social justice-related concepts	22	13	4	3
Feminist	24	10	1	0

Interviews with Practicing Evaluators

The next section presents themes emerging from an analysis of transcripts of interviews conducted with 16 practicing evaluators who live in the United States. The themes are organized around the research questions, which are located within the adapted “What’s the Problem Represented to Be” framework.

Interview Sample. Each of the 16 evaluators interviewed for this study had practiced evaluation for at least 5 years, and each identified themselves as working in service of social justice goals. While interviewees were not asked directly about their racial/ethnic identity, age, gender identity, or educational background, much of this information emerged in the course of conversations. Interviewees identified as Asian (3),

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Black (1), Indigenous (2), Latinx (1), Southeast Asian (1), and white (8). Two interviewees identified as men, with the remainder identifying as women. All interviewees held graduate in fields including public health, community psychology, youth development, sociology, social work, public administration, and psychology; in addition, three interviewees held either advanced degrees or have specific training in evaluation studies. The majority of interviewees worked in fields outside of evaluation initially, becoming focused on evaluation work gradually over a period of years as their job duties shifted or they elected to change careers.

Interviewees who identified themselves as people of color or Indigenous spoke about their social justice orientations in their work as obligations to the communities to which they belonged. For example, Glenn explained:

...my life is not just about myself and what I can get, but that I also exist to do more for my community...it's not enough that I'm doing well, like, I have a responsibility to also make sure that my family, my community, folks of color, people who are marginalized and oppressed in this society also have ways to be successful, to thrive as well...

Flex also highlighted her community orientation, commenting that if programs “are based on individual self-actualization, it won't be meaningful, it won't be meaningful unless we feel like we are giving back to our community;” she additionally noted that the social justice work is “not just doing this for you now, and for the effects now. We're thinking generations ahead.” Finally, Syd described bringing a community orientation explicitly to bear in her work with evaluation clients, noting that she is “moving away from...assumed structure of colonization, or power, or race, to this sense of collective self...if your self is

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your family unit, how do the various members of the family define each other and their collective self?...How do you expand that sense of self?"

Characteristics of a Just Society

Interviewees were asked to define social justice in whatever context they chose. In response to this question, most interviewees identified components of a just society, as well as actions to be taken at individual, community, and systemic levels. Interviewees frequently mentioned marginalization resulting from racism, although several interviewees emphasized that social injustice did not manifest solely in racism; marginalization also occurred as a result from other attributes such as gender identity or sexual orientation, with many interviewees commenting on the situation of white, upper middle class, cisgendered heteronormativity as that from which the marginalized deviated. Many interviewees also used the terms "fairness" and "equity" and described "redistribution" and "reallocation" of power, resources, and opportunity. Following are four common concepts and themes that emerged across interviews.

Addressing historical injustice. Several interviewees mentioned that present-day injustices were rooted in historical injustices and that social justice work required, as Alan described, "attention to both the present and the past" with "some aspect of reconciliation and repair." While interviewees did not describe the specific actions needed to attend to past injustices, many did emphasize the need for "accounting for past injustices, whether that be through reparation or a group reflection or societal reckoning" (Cory). Several interviewees suggested that the need for accountability lies largely within institutions and has both destructive and constructive elements. For example, Sabina commented on the necessity of "dismantling systems that have disproportionately

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benefited some and kept others down,” while Flex emphasized the need for “healing” and rebuilding” across many communities in the present day. In describing an evaluation project, Ted noted that current systems of accountability in the United States primarily involve the criminal justice system and focus on individual actions in the present without situating those actions in a broader historical context:

... [W]e need to stop harm from happening in our communities, and stop each other from harm, and ask the question, not, just like, what’s wrong with *you*, but like, what happened to you? And what’s in your life [that] might be repaired such that this is not a thing you want to do anymore? So for me it’s about radical systems of accountability and repair.

Some interviewees situated the need for reconciliation and repair against a backdrop of the specific harms caused by Western European domination of both land and knowledge, the effects of which “manifest in systems and systemic structures such as institutional racism” (Elena). Elena offered the example of “disproportional representation of [Indigenous] children in child welfare, in the criminal justice system, [and] in special education” as an ongoing impact of colonization and suggested that a just society could not be achieved until efforts were made to “counteract the effects of colonization.” Syd suggested that in order to counteract these effects, evaluators needed to understand how the knowledge that they provide to inform program and policy decisions derives from practices shaped by discrimination and oppression born of colonization, including “how knowledge is transferred from person to person and community to community and what the process of that transfer does to reshape the knowledge.”

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Creating conditions for authentic participation and thriving. In their responses, multiple interviewees characterized a just society as one in which members of all communities are able to participate in society and live as they choose, frequently using the words “abundant” and “thriving.” In a just society, there is no single situation that can be described as “the good life”; rather, as Inspin explained “[A]ll [people] can find their own path to flourishing.” Key to the good life is the ability to participate in society in the ways one chooses; Veronica described this as “everybody [is] able to engage in a way that they want to engage, the way that is best suited for them.” Glenn similarly described conditions where “people are able to bring and be their full authentic self and contribute their knowledge and their expertise in ways that are accepted and celebrated.”

Several interviewees suggested that societal support of self-defined flourishing and participation requires individual and community acceptance of different life experiences. On the individual level, this process might begin, as Cory described, with “listening with humility and curiosity to the experiences not of myself” to others in the community. Similarly, Nina highlighted a key evaluation finding that provided a foundation for a just society: “[I]t came down to neighbors accepting neighbors and appreciating neighbors.” Acceptance and appreciation of fellow community members require individual commitments. As Glenn explained, “[P]eople feel like, yeah, they can be holistic in their participation... people also take the responsibility themselves to learn and do the work they need to do to create that.” Other interviewees noted that individuals and community must move beyond acceptance, with Elena suggesting that “the strengths of the marginalized are affirmed,” and Cory, stressing the importance of “...

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preferencing. It's the making central of experiences that tend to be outside the norm—when I say norm, it tends to be white, heteronormative, middle or upper middle class.”

Institutional support for self-determination. While many interviewees described the importance of individual and community-level commitments to making society more just, many also described institutional commitments to creating conditions for justice, such as “laws and regulations in place to facilitate rather than obstruct [individuals living their lives to the fullest]” (Nina). Specifically, interviewees suggested that institutions and systems be committed to providing both access to resources and opportunities and building the capacity for individuals and groups to access those resources. Rebecca commented that this would entail “looking at the systems that are put in place that get in the way of people having the opportunities to live a self-actualized life,” while Beki described institutions that provided “authentic access to resources,” made available to individuals on their own terms. In describing his frustration with the current lack of institutional support for individuals to choose their own paths, Ted commented, “Every person has one shot that we have in this life. Why would we not organize around, like all of our power and all of our resources to help each person maximize that life?” Several interviewees noted that provision of “fair” access to opportunities was an important aspect of systemic support, but was by itself insufficient; in addition, laws and regulations need to exist that facilitate access for people with different capabilities. Nina explained:

We have access to voting so we can all vote, right? But if we don't speak the language, there needs to be something, some sense of support for me to be able to then understand who and what I'm voting for...so that's supporting capacity.

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Inspin emphasized the importance of codified, systemic support, suggesting that the work of social justice was “to construct a society that is predicated upon the nobility of law.”

Disrupting and dismantling. For some interviewees, access to full, authentic life and participation in society could be achieved through pathways and resources defined by existing systems. Others used words such as “disruption” and “dismantle,” suggesting that justice could only be achieved by drastically changing existing structures. As Martha noted: “Social justice should never be defined by the constraints of the society that you live in.” Mona felt that to build a new, more just society, there must first be “disruption and redistribution of power.” This disruption could entail, as Flex suggested, “completely liberating oneself from the role they’ve been put into by society.” Martha suggested that the upending of existing systems could result in a society where “the one who has been oppressed is able to say to the oppressor, ‘Stop—this is on my terms.’”

Summary. When asked to define social justice, interviewees offered descriptions of the characteristics of a just society. While many interviewees mentioned equity and fairness in passing, their responses primarily highlighted the conditions and actions needed to create a more just society. These conditions and actions reportedly exist within interactions with others at the individual level and also require commitments and, at times, disruptions, at the institutional and societal levels.

Action in Service of Social Justice

Interviewees were asked to describe the actions they took to address social justice within the context of an evaluation project. Few interviewees directly named specific evaluation approaches or activities they used, particularly as the specific political, social, and historical contexts of the evaluations largely shaped their choice of approach and

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method. Rather, interviewees described the intent behind their use of specific strategies in their evaluations. These intentions largely concerned effecting community, organizational, or governmental change that would ultimately change how these institutions serve program participants. The four themes presented below describe these actions organized by the intended outcomes.

Making the invisible visible. Many interviewees characterized their social justice actions as revealing for program staff and funders aspects of the programs that are seen and unseen. As Inspin described her work: “I try to help people see themselves as clearly as possible.” Some of this revelation occurred in the parsing of data. Beki described working with an agency to disaggregate race survey data into specific ethnic groups, revealing disparities and heterogeneities within populations formerly viewed as monoliths, noting that despite a single Asian category on state forms, “[W]e have 44 frickin’ Asian groups in the state” and that the lack of recognition of disparate Asian experiences acted as a barrier to resource access.

Elena described working with clients to probe unspoken assumptions and beliefs staff held about their clientele, using these exercises to “point out in a non-judgmental way the biases staff had against their [Indigenous] families.” Several interviewees also used their evaluation findings to connect programmatic barriers with larger scale discriminatory structures, with the goal of “shin[ing] a light onto infrastructure” (Mona) to provide context for existing structures and proposed changes. Mona noted, as did several others, that evaluators are often asked to focus closely on a specific program or aspect of policy when in fact “when you’re trying to find the source of the oppression or

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injustice...we have to look at the whole picture.” In a similar vein, Inspin commented that “we put the pieces together and then see what emerges.”

While many of the interviewees described making invisible barriers and challenges visible, others described the revelation of new perspectives, visions, and plans for action as part of their work. Syd described using very open-ended inquiry to “allow space” to bring up additional issues that may have not been explicit in the original evaluation questions, but that were present. In some cases, program staff see only one element of their participants’ lives, and the work of the evaluation could, as Ted described, use data to “provide a window” into the context that affects participation and success in a program. Acknowledging and understanding otherwise hidden or invisible issues can support programs and planning for the future; as Syd explained, “[H]aving that new narrative helps them to move into what’s possible...or figure out their next stage.”

Reframing the issue to support action. Related to the concept of illumination and visibility is the idea of reframing issues. Many evaluators described their actions within the context of reframing both issues that clients are working to address in their programs and policies and reframing the solutions those programs and policies offer. In some cases, reframing requires “changing the mindset of the funder to really challenge what evidence means” because, as Nina explained, “[W]e’re beholden to the funder.” In other cases, reframing entails a strategic use of language. In one example, Alan explained that clients with whom he worked “didn’t want to call it anti-racism work...they want to think more broadly about LGBTQ issues, disability issues, poverty issues...,” resulting in a characterization of the project as “welcoming” and diversity-focused. Relatedly, Sabina explained that “while we can’t do tobacco work without referencing CDC best

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practices..., [we] try to minimize it” when working with clients who have negative feelings about “big government.” Using language that resonates with clients is necessary if evaluators are focused on a bigger goal of action in service of equity; as Sabina stated, “If it’s not palatable, I mean, it’s not going to go anywhere.” For Elena, strategic use of language entails using Indigenous language and concepts rather than English in reporting to “intentionally [privilege] the Indigenous worldview.”

In other evaluation projects, reframing entails changing how stakeholders perceive program participants and communities. In some cases, this involves addressing stereotypes and how their perpetuation affects service provision. For example, Elena described working with clients to “reframe for everyone at the table, how do we look at our [clients]? How do we talk about them when we’re in a group together, whether or not they’re there?” Relationships built on beliefs and assumptions emerged in several interviews. For example, Syd also characterized her work as “reframing your own sense of who you are, as an organization, as a community, as a whatever,” in order to better understand relationships, causes, and effects of actions and inaction in a community.

Changing perceptions of physical and social contexts were also an object of some interviewees’ work. Veronica described working with a group to refocus their approach to outreach by recognizing the inaccuracy of a common narrative:

... [T]hey thought the neighborhood [responses] would be like, “It’s really not safe. I don’t feel comfortable here.” But a majority of people said, “Oh no, I feel comfortable in my neighborhood”...so we talked a little bit about stereotypes and [about] just believing the things people say about your neighborhood.

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Inaccurate or incomplete perceptions of stakeholders and program use can ripple outwards to shape entire systems. Rebecca described the importance of reframing use of resources within a system:

What we heard from participants was that the food shelf was an important part of all the places that they get their food.... It's just part of our food system, rather than something people saw as actively needing to get off of... There are some policy implications in terms of how we think about food shelves or how we support them.

Building evaluation capacity in clients and in communities. Multiple interviewees described social justice-promoting actions that consisted of building the capacity of stakeholders to access and use evaluation. For some interviewees, capacity building meant making the evaluation processes more transparent by using plain or accessible language. In working with both clients and participants, Quinn Michael explained that “[W]e were trying to not use words, like codes, and obscure, vague jargon...we wanted to maintain transparency”; the goal, she was explained, was to help everyone understand what was happening, what was being said, and how the team arrived at conclusions. In some cases, for example, Flex explained, “using their words instead of evaluation language” makes the findings more useful to clients. In other cases, using plain language allowed organizational staff to not only work confidently with both evaluators and with program participants, but also to understand how they were already doing evaluative work:

What we wanted first was make sure they understand what [evaluation] is, not just understanding the terms so they can speak to the external evaluator, but also

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understanding in the terms that they may speak to their participants...really to demystify the power of evaluation. Show them that you do evaluation every single day you work. (Martha)

For Martha, translating evaluation processes into contextually relevant and comprehensible terms was essential so that “people don’t feel free afraid; they don’t feel like ‘I don’t know.’”

In addition to using transparent language, interviewees described doing more traditional capacity building work with institutions and within communities. For some interviewees, building capacity meant better outcomes for underserved communities. For example, Beki described developing a sustainability plan with a client for working with different ethnic communities, stating that “[the client] can’t keep coming to the outside for your reach on marginalized audiences...you have to develop a long-term plan of walking with people; you can’t keep coming in just to extract.” For other interviewees, facilitating the development of evaluative skills would help stakeholders to effect long-term change; in describing her ECB work with a group of youth, Veronica explained that “being able to figure out how to phrase your own questions, then collect your own data and explore it” was something useful beyond the scope of the immediate project:

They recognize an issue; they’re able to take action. Being able to marshal collective voice in order to change something, even if it’s small, can be personally rewarding, and it can just help change the structures around you.

Evaluation capacity building within communities can also be a protective measure, shielding communities from misunderstandings perpetuated by those outside the

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community and by conserving limited time, money, and energy. For example, Flex explained that:

... [Y]ou need to have somebody, not just on the team, but in charge that really is linked with that community's deepest social justice issues, to be able to not waste their time to try to teach you [about those issues].

When evaluators lacking deep contextual knowledge of communities work in those communities, Martha noted that “you spend more money educating the evaluator about what is in this field...and they adapt their material without really understanding who the people they are working with [are],” which could ultimately result in damage to the programs and resources that organizations work to provide for their communities.

Navigating and building power within communities. Many interviewees articulated a keen awareness of power while describing their evaluations—both the power contained within systems and held by some stakeholders and the power emanating from their own privileged positions. Although many interviewees noted that they lacked power to directly make changes for program participants in unjust situations, some described navigating and using their own positional power in the service of more just ends, particularly when the individuals with whom evaluators worked with directly had less power within a system. Mona explained:

... [T]hat's another level that evaluators have power—we're like “validated”... [I]f program staff say something and it gets shot down or undermined, that's where I could come in and be like, “Well, according to our data, this is what is true.”

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Similarly, Glenn explained that although her power was limited within her department and in her organization, she were nevertheless able to “use that power to be able to speak on behalf of the work that we all wanted to do.” Positionality also allows some evaluators to change systems that affect stakeholders at a higher level, even if that change is gradual and incremental. In describing his evaluation practice, Alan noted he used what might be called social justice evaluation methods, but that he felt that:

... [T]he more powerful thing is being able to sort of shape the agenda of my whole center to sort of make sure that we are addressing inequity, and in terms of who we are choosing to serve...

The evaluators who described exercising positional power noted that their ability to build and maintain relationships with those above them in the hierarchy and those with whom they directly worked and advocated for was essential to being able to use that power. Sabina believed that her ability to “kind of be behind the curtain and try to guide” her clients arose entirely from the long-standing relationship she has established and maintained with them. Similarly, Glenn noted that the relationships between departments in her organization were tense, and that in “navigating a lot of power” to support the work of both departments, she had to maintain relationships between them or at least “try not to cause relationships to get worse.” In order to help support the work of those who might be lower in the organizational hierarchy, some evaluators also commented on “building trusting relationships” with program staff and participants (Mona and Cory) so that they could then accurately advocate for the needs of those doing social justice work directly.

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In addition to navigating power hierarchies on behalf of the work of others, evaluators described working to raise awareness of power that exists within individuals and communities and to build on it. In some cases, this power manifested as transference of narrative control. For example, Ted described a project that focused on informing young participants that “you have power. What you say goes. When we ask you a question, you have every right in the world not to answer it. You can stop this at any time.” Similarly, Mona explained that, with many projects, “I try to include multiple avenues of reviewing data back with the main participants” in order to promote participant “control of the narrative” about the program.

Empowerment efforts also took the form of collaborative knowledge creation and meaning making. Syd explained that she has “always tried to include people in the analysis and framing of messages” because the issue is not lack of representation of communities in the data, but rather “lack of representation and understanding in meaning making, which pushes us into the narrative of othering rather than into the narrative of belonging,” something that further disempowers those communities. Similarly, Ted emphasized that the project he described “created a different kind of relationship with the process of knowledge creation” and that the project is “about keeping the knowledge of about what the system is and how it impacts people... among the people who’ve been impacted by it,” with the understanding that knowledge of a system can be leveraged into some control over what happens within that system.

Summary. In describing their actions aimed at promoting social justice, interviewees described strategies and intentions, rather than specific evaluation methods or approaches. These strategies largely focused on shifting program funder and staff

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perspectives, as well as on building evaluation capacity within communities that are typically the target of programmatic intervention. Much of the work interviewees described required relationship building with clients and communities and navigation of existing power structures.

The Role of AEA Guiding Documents and Publications

The American Evaluation Association's Evaluator Competencies (2018b), Guiding Principles (2018a), and Statement on Cultural Competence (2011) all mention social justice to some degree, and AEA's sponsored journals (*American Journal of Evaluation* and *New Directions for Evaluation*) regularly publish articles discussing social justice. Interviewees were asked about their awareness of social justice discourse in these two contexts, as well as the degree to which this discourse influences or affects their practice. Many of the interviewees admitted to limited awareness and application of social justice conceptions in AEA's publications and foundational documents, citing perceived irrelevance of the descriptions and discussion of justice in these discourses to their daily practice. Most interviewees did, however, have perspectives on their existence and purpose. Following are the four high level themes that emerged from interviewees' responses.

Legitimization and control. Although few interviewees cited specific use of or interaction with AEA's foundational documents and publications, several expressed the belief that the discourse elevated by those documents helped to legitimize concepts and practices with the negative intent of controlling access to evaluation practice. Alan, for example, explained:

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...so much of those journals is about institutionalizing, making evaluation a professional discipline, and keeping its legitimacy as a discipline. And so when I look at some of the articles, I feel like, well, that's what that's doing? It's not really about communicating with someone like me... A lot of the AEA stuff I tend to think is directed at faculty who teach evaluation studies...

Glenn shared similar sentiments about the institutionalization of evaluation practice, although her focus was on the language and tenor of AEA publications and how they are accessible only to evaluators who entered the field via an academic path:

I think, sometimes, written things can also be used as a way to keep people in line...Who was the person that this thing is written for? Is it actually written for an evaluator who comes from this kind of background, who did this kind of path to get to evaluation, and cares about this and that? And so then you're legitimizing certain kinds of people who can be evaluators and certain kinds of people who can't...

Some interviewees described the legitimization of the evaluation field of practice as detrimental to building evaluation capacity within community-serving organizations. In describing her work with an organization that serves immigrant communities, Martha noted that institutionalization of evaluation made it inaccessible to those who might otherwise do the work because they lack academic credentials:

Ten, twenty years ago, you only needed to care about the issue to be involved. Now you need to be a social worker, psychologist, you name it—you need to go to college, otherwise you are not part of the [evaluation].

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Martha suggested that by receiving training and an academic credential, “you become part of another institution and then the institution became about power and control...so you limit yourself, you restrain [yourself]... you police yourself.” Martha felt that the academic research rhetoric promoted by AEA made it difficult for program staff to realize that they were in reality collecting evaluative data in their daily work and that, as a consequence, organizations are expending limited resources on hiring external consultants to conduct evaluation work.

Relatedly, Syd described the costs of the enshrining research in AEA discourse in field legitimization efforts:

I think an effort to validate that evaluation was a worthwhile field and profession really pushed how it was connected to research, at the expense of people who knew the limits of research... It just felt like another way to specifically marginalize me, a woman of color, who could see that there was a bigger story, but couldn't fit that into a box... because it needed to be a specific box in order for it to be recognized...

Both Martha and Syd believed that the persistent emphasis on concepts derived from social science research rooted in Western / Northern European thinking inhibited their ability to both work with and communicate about evaluation with their client communities, as well as to accurately capture and represent the experiences of those communities within the context of an evaluation.

Oversimplification of perspectives and concepts. Some interviewees specifically discussed the limiting effects of AEA discourse used in foundational documents (*Guiding Principles*, *Evaluator Competencies*, and the *Statement on Cultural*

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Competence). Specifically, interviewees expressed concerns that the reification of certain ways of thinking within these documents created the illusion of an attainable endpoint while also over-simplifying causes of and remedies for injustice. Many of these interviewees felt that working toward justice was a long-term process that encompasses all institutions in society, rather than a fixed goal to be achieved through a single program. For example, in describing her frustration with the AEA Statement on Cultural Competence, Sabina explained:

...the term and concept and everything around cultural competence makes me angry. [Cultural competence is] not a thing you can “get” to. It takes up all the importance of it and softens the issues. It doesn’t talk about [the] systemic nature of inequities at all.

Quinn Michael also noted that AEA discourse frequently glossed over the complexities of injustice and that this shallow treatment meant that the root causes of injustice would never be acknowledged in evaluation practice:

... [S]ometimes, you know, [a scholar] will say stuff that you know is true. But I feel like it never does justice to the magnitude of inequity or oppression, or it’s always sort of veiled and vague, and it just doesn’t resonate with me at a deep level.

Glenn suggested that authors of foundational documents held incomplete understandings the systemic nature of injustice and that this caused them to believe that they had accomplished a mission simply by creating these documents.

... [S]ometimes when I see people writing competencies around [justice and equity], I think it’s more for them than it is actually about changing practice and

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changing the field. It's for them to feel good about themselves and say, "Oh, look at us. We wrote this thing. We're—check! Now we have achieved equity because we wrote it."

Other interviewees focused on the perceived fixed and immovable nature of AEA's foundational documents and how they might limit further development of evaluation practice. Veronica felt that rather than serving as a guide for reflection and continuous improvement, guiding documents were instead used as checklists: "... [T]he important thing is not to have a checklist; the important thing is to talk through what the things on the checklist might be wrestled with." Rebecca commented similarly that it was not AEA foundational documents that continually informed and reshaped her social justice perspectives, but rather "the ongoing dialogue [around justice] is probably the most important and enriching to me in terms of how I think about things." Mona also acknowledged the importance of maintaining space for evolving and shifting perspectives on justice, expressing her own "hesitancy" in engaging with AEA's publications because "I'm gonna argue with myself in the future, which is inherent...as humans trying to be better and continually improve..." Martha expressed skepticism about the stagnation of practice resulting from the enshrinement of particular discourse in foundational documents despite their regular review and revision, suggesting that once created, official institutional discourse is intentionally difficult to change:

They [won't] allow anybody to make change [in foundational documents] because then [AEA] becomes irrelevant. They become exclusive and irrelevant. If you want to be a dinosaur, be my guest.

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AEA discourse defines the field and holds the line. While some interviewees critiqued the legitimizing role played by AEA foundational documents and publications, some saw potential benefits of this legitimization. For example, both Cory and Sabina suggested that they called upon AEA's guidance relating to equity and culture to support their work, in part because AEA is recognized as a professional organization. Cory explained that AEA documents such as the Statement on Cultural Competence could be helpful:

It's [helpful] for me to build my case, especially recently within grant writing, like, here's where the field is headed...AEA can still hold that line so that evaluators can gain strength from that... If [AEA guidance were] not there, then you're just sort of one person shouting, "Hey, I don't think that's the way we should do things."

While Sabina criticized the content of AEA guidelines such as the Statement on Cultural Competence, she noted that such documents are useful in her public health-related work, since, for example, "the CDC follows guidance from AEA."

Other evaluators commented more generally on the fact that because AEA produced discourse, it was helping to define evaluation as a field of practice, thereby legitimizing the work that evaluators did. Beki explained, "I'm really glad that they're there. You know, one of the hallmarks of a profession is that they have a professional organization and a publishing unit." Flex similarly suggested that, even though she disliked AEA discourse on ethics and equity issues, she felt she could use it to support her work:

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... [T]he main thing that I gained from the academy and AEA is the language. So, the language to describe what I'm doing in a professional manner and to help organizations that are doing that work already.

Elena, who came to evaluation from a different field, noted that in her former field, evaluation was "always an afterthought." She felt it was important that using evaluation language as represented and supported by AEA could elevate "evaluation as a discipline, which is really important," especially when working with her former colleagues.

Focused on values and outcomes, not practice. For some interviewees, AEA discourse was completely incidental to their daily practice. These interviewees acknowledged the existence of guiding documents and publications and the various values relating to justice, equity, and cultural competence expressed therein, but chose instead to be guided by the values of their organizations and their communities, finding these more meaningful and useful in guiding their practice. For example, Inspin explained:

I care that every organization I'm in recognizes the impact of systemic oppression and racism and works to do something about it, but I'm not looking for guidance from AEA on that. And I'm not looking to guide AEA on that because it's a freaking club and I'm out here working in community with real people.

Inspin suggested that AEA was focused on evaluators and evaluation, rather than on advancing larger scale community justice goals, and this was evidenced in their foundational documents and publications. Similarly, Beki explained that, in her organization, "evaluation is a means to an end, not an end in itself"; her organization has its own work and its own justice and equity goals, and her colleagues continue to discuss

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and develop them, rather than engage with AEA's doctrine. Veronica similarly suggested that her organization also set and focused on its own goals and outcomes:

. . . [We are guided by] what are the things we really want to lift in our department? So we've created our own norms for work... Is it nice those [AEA guidelines] exist? Yes. Have I seen them before? Yes... like I might read them and then be like, yeah, those are great, I'll keep doing that.

Ted similarly explained that AEA stances on social justice "... [don't] filter through. We have our values at [our organization] and I'm sure that in many ways they align with AEA...but we have kind of chosen ours. We're grounded in our own principles and values." Ted elaborated on his organization's reasons for relying on its own values, suggesting that in some ways, AEA's guidance set a low bar that he felt his practice should exceed:

... [W]e're trying to differentiate ourselves from AEA...so I don't want to be in the place where I've totally aligned with their normative discourse... I don't trust normative discourse.

Summary. While interviewees offered varied opinions on the utility and relevance of AEA discourse to their social justice-oriented work, many felt that AEA guiding documents might put limits on their work and that AEA publications were inaccessible to practitioners. Interviewees attributed this limitation and inaccessibility to an interest AEA has in defining preserving boundaries on the field of evaluation practice. These boundaries are useful to some practitioners who use them to bolster their work, although others found these boundaries to be exclusionary and unproductive.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Rossi et al. state that “[s]ocial problems are not themselves objective phenomena. Rather, they are social constructions involving assertions that certain conditions constitute problems that require public attention and ameliorative programs” (2004, p. 107). This study has approached social justice as a “problem” with the intent of illuminating the conceptions, actions, and approaches used in the field of evaluation that construct it. Using Bacchi’s WPR conceptual framework (2009) for analyzing how social issues are problematized through discourse, this study has explored the discourse—both words and action—that evaluators use in professional literature and in practice to characterize social justice. The first two research questions in the study examined the concepts and language evaluators use to describe social justice and the approaches the field proposed and enacts to promote social justice. The final research question explored how social justice is problematized or characterized by interweaving the definitions, theories, and actions surfaced during the data collection process.

RQ 1: What are the working definitions of social justice that evaluators employ in their practice?

This study explored social justice definitions in AEA-sponsored journals and in the descriptions offered by interviewees. To address this line of inquiry in the professional literature, articles mentioning at least one paradigm of justice (distributive, procedural, or recognition) were identified through text searches, and the presence and use of these paradigm-related words explored. The recognition paradigm, signified by the presence of the words “domination” and “oppression” in articles for the purposes of this study, appeared in nearly all of the articles included in the analysis. While the recognition

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paradigm as formulated by Iris Marion Young and Nancy Fraser (among others) describes an environment where societal-level forces of domination and oppression are absent and all people have the autonomy to live as they choose (Fraser, 1997; Young, 2011), in the context of the journal articles these signifying words were primarily used to refer to types of thinking that pervade programs, policies, and evaluation practice (e.g., “dominant Western thinking”) and to describe groups and communities whose perspectives are not represented in decision-making processes—groups that were frequently also described as “marginalized,” “disadvantaged,” or “underrepresented,” and who were often also the participants or recipients of a program or policy. The terms “domination” and “oppression” were used as labels and descriptors.

In contrast, distributive justice, specifically the formulation put forward by John Rawls, has been intertwined with the concept of social justice in evaluation for over four decades, with evaluation theorist Ernest House invoking Rawls early on while arguing for a shift from a grounding of educational evaluation practice in utilitarianism (maximizing average benefit) to a focus on benefits for those marginalized in society (1976, 1980, 1990). Although distribution was largely mentioned only in passing in most articles, distributive justice continued to serve as an orientation point for many discussions of social justice in the evaluation literature as evidenced by the appearance of the terms “distribute” and “allocate” in 40% of the articles included in the analysis and mentions of John Rawls’ theory in 10% of the articles. Articles mentioning distributive justice typically depicted contemporary society as one pervaded by unequal, unfair, and unequitable distribution of resources, access, and power. Ameliorative programs aim to address these distributions, and evaluators can perceive their own role as that of shifting

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these social goods from haves to have-nots by “direct[ing] evaluative efforts” to that end (Garibay & Teasdale, 2019, p. 97) and by “identifying techniques and strategies with a focus on the redistribution of unequal power dynamics” (Haugen & Chouinard, 2018, p. 2). While distributive justice appears much less frequently in the literature, it is often articulated more clearly.

Procedural justice focuses on participants’ perceived sense of justice during proceedings, regardless of the outcome, and has received scant attention in the evaluation literature. Procedural justice appeared least frequently in the articles included in the analysis, and in each case this paradigm was mentioned in passing and with little explication. Passing references to procedural justice related it to the importance of participatory evaluation, with some authors additionally describing procedural justice as deriving from Rawls’ theory of distributive justice (Greene, 2013; Johnson & Stefurak, 2013). One article discussing procedural justice at length (Froncek & Rohman, 2019) was retrieved in the initial search, but was ultimately excluded from the analysis because of an absence of the term “social justice.” Froncek and Rohman’s study findings suggest that that even though participatory evaluation can produce positive affect in stakeholders invited to participate during the evaluation, in many cases this participation only reinforces perceptions of power differences when outcomes favor or suit more powerful stakeholders. Perceptions of just treatment during evaluation processes do not necessarily equate with perceptions of just outcomes. Froncek and Rohman (2019) suggest that dissatisfaction with outcomes may lead to reduced evaluation use, which may ultimately lead to fewer just outcomes overall and less willingness among stakeholders to participate and contribute to future evaluations.

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When asked to define social justice during interviews, most practitioners responded by characterizing elements of a just society without directly discussing any justice paradigms. These elements included: (1) addressing historical injustice by holding those responsible for past and contemporary harms accountable and by bringing to light how discriminatory thinking continues to shape systems; (2) changing conditions such that all people can participate in systems and structures on their own terms; (3) reshaping institutions such that people's autonomy and humanity are recognized and embraced; and (4) disrupting and breaking down unjust systems that maintain existing structures of power. Taken together, these characterizations depict social justice as both a process (holding actors accountable, changing conditions, reshaping institutions, disruption) and a product (a state of society where people's autonomy is recognized and people's choices are respected). These characterizations also contain elements of distributive justice (redistributing power to control one's own life) and recognition (the ability to direct one's own path tied with freedom from oppression).

Despite the frequent use of words indicating the recognition paradigm, it is not possible to decisively state that the concept of justice-as-recognition pervaded or underpinned social justice thinking in these data. Use of recognition language acknowledges power differentials between different groups in society, and it is often the case that social programs are intended to address the results of these differentials. Evaluators are frequently hired to determine the effectiveness of these programs in addressing the results of power differentials, and comments from interviewees suggested that evaluators were clear-eyed about the sources and products of these differentials.

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However, distributive justice was still the most clearly articulated and, presumably, understood basis for social justice thinking in evaluation practice.

RQ2: What theories and approaches do social justice-oriented evaluators report employing in their work?

Descriptions of the theories and approaches used by evaluators to advance social justice in practice were sought in journal articles and evaluator interviews. Articles mentioning specific social justice approaches as delineated by Mertens and Wilson (2018) were included in the analysis. While included articles typically mentioned multiple social justice approaches, few articles explored the theoretical groundings of these approaches or presented cases depicting these approaches in action, with most articles including these approaches in lists of potential avenues for action. In contrast, nearly all interviewees spoke at length about the intended and expected outcomes of their social justice approaches without naming any specific approaches.

Culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) was the most frequently cited social justice approach in the journal articles included in this analysis. In framing CRE, theorists have located its roots in other evaluation theories, including the two other social justice approaches explored in this study: feminist evaluation, and Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation. These shared roots include the perspective that evaluation practice originates from social science methods originating from Northern/Western thought and that evaluation practice is shaped and, in fact dominated, by this thought. While CRE is mentioned frequently and was represented by more empirical articles in the sample than all other social justice approaches, there has been little research to examine how the approach is used to promote social justice thought. Acree and Chouinard (2019) are the

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exception, with a systematic review that explores how CRE affects social justice through the traditional routes of evaluation use and evaluation influence. Findings from their review suggest that among CRE practitioners, social justice is an aspiration and an intent, rather than an outcome. The action, in the case of CRE, is a shift in framing and methods to increase relevance of the evaluation to the group under study (i.e., the program participants).

Democratic deliberative evaluation (DDE) was the second most frequently cited social justice evaluation approach. Like CRE, DDE appeared in lists of social justice evaluation approaches. Articles that discussed DDE beyond simple inclusion in a list described the elements of the theory; there were no empirical articles describing an application of the DDE approach in the study sample. DDE, similar to the other social justice approaches considered in this study, calls for the inclusion or representation of marginalized viewpoints. In contrast to CRE, Indigenous and decolonizing, and feminist approaches, which call for an illumination or elevation of marginalized perspectives, DDE emphasizes dialogue, deliberation, and consensus-building about the important issues addressed by the evaluation. Articles about DDE stressed the reinforcement of democratic ideals with application of this approach, rather than a validation of suppressed perspectives and viewpoints, as well as an emphasis on process, rather than outcomes. One issue may stem from the idea that DDE may appear to be a positive approach for many, but perhaps not for community members who have had negative experiences with “democracy” (e.g., Black Americans, Native Americans).

Articles mentioning Indigenous and decolonizing evaluation (IDE) called for thinking and action that was outside what is prescribed by Western/Northern thought.

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The majority of IDE articles developed frameworks that incorporated local and Indigenous ways of thinking, knowing, and understanding; these frameworks were presented as a contrast to existing evaluation frameworks. The actions proposed by these frameworks typically lead to the building of new institutions and liberation from existing structures, rather than changing existing structures or developing new consensus. The actions proposed included a re-assertion and re-valuing of hitherto suppressed Indigenous ways of understanding and knowing and the use of evaluators' positionality to instead elevate and validate them.

Social justice-related concepts (see Chapter Four, Table 8) appeared frequently across many of the articles included in the analysis. As noted in Chapter Three, these concepts (power, marginalized, voice, reflective/reflexive, inclusion, and dialogue) were chosen because they often appeared concurrently with descriptions of social justice evaluation approaches and in discussions of social justice-focused evaluations. While the concepts were included in the literature search for the purposes of completeness, it is questionable whether, for example, an evaluator's reflexivity or the promotion of dialogue amongst evaluation stakeholders leads to the advancement of social justice. Evaluators can be cognizant of power dynamics, though whether these dynamics can be shifted outside the context of evaluation activities is uncertain. Similarly, marginalization is a product of systematic institutional action, and it is unclear how evaluation can address this action in broader systems. Dialogue and inclusion of voice may be important for raising awareness of issues, but this awareness may not translate to action in service of justice. Use of these concepts by authors in articles suggests awareness of the sources of injustice, but it does not necessarily indicate action that can advance justice.

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Despite all the attention in the literature to various approaches, not one evaluator who was interviewed identified any of them by name. Instead, evaluators described their actions as they related to two separate stakeholder groups: the evaluation funders or commissioners, and the program participants. With respect to evaluation funders and commissioners, interviewees worked to illuminate hidden issues and reframe existing issues with the goal of supporting or spurring funder action toward program activities and outcomes that would result in greater justice for program participants.

When discussing action directed at program participants, whom interviewees implied were largely members of marginalized or oppressed communities, evaluators described taking action to shift power imbalances. In some cases evaluators worked to build evaluation capacity within marginalized communities, in essence helping these communities to “seize the means of production” with respect to how their communities and issues were described. The intent behind these actions was to level the playing field between program participants (and program staff, in the case of community-based organizations) and program funders. In other cases, evaluators used their own position and power to validate the work of community members and program participants and situate them in a position of greater power.

The line of inquiry focused on social justice action among evaluators and the application of social justice evaluation approaches was inspired in part by a series of articles in a 2003 *NDE* volume exploring relationships between evaluation practice and theory. In this volume Christie (2003a) presents findings from a study that attempts to map evaluators' practices directly to theories; she concludes that the approaches used by evaluators in their daily work do not cleanly align with evaluation approaches put forth

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by evaluation theorists. Christie proposes that rather than drawing directly from evaluation approaches as presented by established theorists, practitioners draw from “folk” or “implicit” theories (2003b). These theories are developed through experience and are shaped by the complex and multilayered contexts within which most evaluations take place (King, 2003). The results of the present study reinforce this supposition; while the social justice approaches appear in the literature, most are presented conceptually or merely mentioned in passing, with few empirical studies illustrating how practitioners have explicitly applied these approaches. Similarly, practitioners interviewed for the study described actions that did not strictly align with particular social justice approaches or theories, suggesting that they may too be relying theories of their own devising and responding to particular evaluation contexts rather than adhering to prescribed theories and approaches.

RQ3: How do theories, approaches, and working definitions of social justice used by social justice-oriented evaluators problematize justice?

Taken together, the characterizations, approaches, and actions contribute to a complex conceptualization of social justice in the field of evaluation. While political philosophers and theorists have delineated key elements of a just society (i.e., the three justice paradigms described in Chapter Two) and evaluation theorists have proposed approaches that evaluators could use to promote justice (i.e., Mertens and Wilson’s social justice evaluation approaches), those who practice evaluation and contribute to professional literature do not appear to hew strictly either to political philosophy or evaluation theory when describing and working for social justice. Following are four themes that underpin how social justice is constructed in evaluation practice.

1) Justice is divided between “haves” and justice “have-nots.”

Bacchi (2009) argues that problems are composed of underlying concepts; some of these concepts appear as binaries or dichotomies. A prominent binary that emerges from the results of this study is that of the justice “haves” and the justice “have-nots.” The privileged “haves”—program funders and members of society who do not need services provided by social programs—and the “have nots”—those who receive services or benefit from ameliorative programs. This binary is made visible in the ways in which social justice evaluation approaches promote the need for “inclusion” of “marginalized” voices and stakeholders who are less powerful, the frequent descriptions of participants as members of “oppressed” groups, and the frequent depiction of traditional evaluation methods and approaches as originating in “dominant” perspectives. Interviewees also discussed this binary, describing their work to shift perspectives of us/givers and them/recipients. Further, social justice evaluation approaches exhort evaluators to be reflexive in their practice and reflect on their own privilege, suggesting that as members of the privileged group, evaluators have a role to play in the redistribution of power and resources.

2) Injustice is hidden.

Scholars from numerous disciplines have written about the invisible nature of injustice, from the embedded nature of racism in societal structures (Delgado, 2012), to the ways in which those who are governed are forced into the spotlight while those who wield power and control remain hidden (Foucault, 2019; Fairclough, 2015). In the realm of social programming and evaluation, SenGupta et al. (2004) argue that societal values and cultural beliefs implicitly drive program and policy design; these values result in

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unjust characterizations of social issues and treatment of communities, yet the implicitness of the assumptions and values remains unquestioned and therefore hidden.

In many ways, the professional evaluation literature perpetuates the work of concealing injustice. Nearly all journal articles included in the analysis used the words “oppression” or “domination”; however, use of this language is with objects and not subjects. Communities and groups are “oppressed” or “marginalized” without identification of oppressors or the source of marginalization. Evaluators are positioned as actors who have the capacity or latitude to reveal these hidden injustices, as evidenced by interviewees who described their work as “making the invisible visible,” “provid[ing] a window” into program workings, and “shin[ing] a light” on hidden structures.

3) What is considered “just” evolves over time.

Harvey (1996) argues that because the concept of justice is socially constituted and contextual, the boundaries of what is considered just can vary depending on the time, place, and the parties involved. The idea of justice may remain constant, but what justice looks like can vary from place to place and from timeframe to timeframe. This variation is visible in the field of evaluation, as different social justice evaluation approaches have been articulated in the literature over the last 40 years, from early critiques of the utilitarian grounding of most evaluation practice (House, 1976) to calls for evaluation frameworks based in Indigenous ways of knowing (e.g., Gaothlobogwe et al., 2018). For interviewees this evolution involved identifying and addressing historical injustice, but it also required continual reflection and praxis. The shifting nature of what is considered justice made it difficult for articulate a cohesive definition of social justice in this study,

but it also creates challenges for organizations such as AEA to provide guidance and develop standards that remain relevant over time.

4) Professionalization of the field may not advance social justice.

Professionalization of the field of evaluation has been debated for decades, with unresolved points of contention have focusing on the benefits and negative consequences of pursuing formal processes for credentialing, licensing, or otherwise certifying evaluators in the name of professionalization of the field (Worthen, 1994; Altschuld, 1999; Jacob & Boisvert, 2010). One criticism of professionalization is that it will both homogenize evaluation practice and prevent individuals who lack credentialing from practicing (Jacob & Boisvert, 2010). When asked about the utility and relevance of social justice discourse as it exists in AEA-sponsored journals and AEA guiding documents, interviewees focused on these criticisms, describing formalization of stances, perspectives, and evaluation approaches as damaging to larger social justice efforts. Specifically, interviewees suggested that discourse emanating from AEA documents and publications served a gatekeeping function that prevented marginalized communities from building their own evaluation capacity and by prescribing and validating only certain evaluation activities. Interviewees also suggested that AEA focused on developing the field of evaluation, whereas practitioners focused on the communities with which they worked; interviewees believed that their community focus gave them a better understanding of social justice issues in the broader environment.

5) Attainment of social justice lies beyond the scope of evaluation practice.

Rawls' conceptualization of distributive justice applies to societal institutions (1971), while the procedural paradigm articulates a form of justice that can govern

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actions more at the interpersonal level; however, these procedurally just interactions may not necessarily result in just outcomes (Lind & Tyler, 1988). As noted in Chapter Two, many of the social justice evaluation approaches by theorists address evaluation methods and procedures; adherents to these approaches are urged to consider their own thinking and experiences, to design studies, data collection procedures, and methods for dissemination in ways that are congruent with stakeholder understandings. Social justice evaluation approaches, when applied, may result in more just conditions with evaluations and more just outcomes for program participants, but it is unclear whether they can effect change at the societal level. Some evaluators interviewed for this study expressed skepticism that their efforts to change conditions within their evaluations in terms of what counts as data, who is heard, and who is involved in decision-making processes would change anything outside the boundaries of the evaluation itself. Evaluation practice occurs within a complex marketplace where evaluation purchasers are driven by a wide variety of motivations and where evaluation practitioners may need to prioritize client relations over social justice (Lemire et al., 2018). Evaluators interested in effecting social change are still constrained by the authority of evaluation commissioners and their goals (Sturges, 2014). It is important to recognize that while evaluators may generate evidence that supports the need for change, they cannot enact the change themselves.

Summary

This chapter presented a discussion of the study findings focusing on the three research questions identified in Chapter One.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The present study exploring social justice conceptions in evaluation was guided by three research questions. The first question explored the definitions and characterizations of social justice found in the professional evaluation literature and in the conceptions used by social justice-focused evaluators in their practice. This portion of the study used three paradigms of justice—distributive justice, procedural justice, and justice as recognition—as a foundation for analysis. Elements of each of these paradigms were found in journal articles included in the analysis, although use of language associated with these paradigms was, with few exceptions, largely incidental. Evaluators interviewed for the study offered their own characterizations of the elements of a just society without drawing on the three justice paradigms explicitly.

The second research question explored the theories and approaches used by social justice-oriented evaluators. While social justice evaluation approaches as defined by Mertens and Wilson (2018) appeared frequently in the evaluation literature, few articles engaged in meaningful way with these approaches and fewer still provided case examples of these approaches in use or connected approaches with just outcomes. When discussing their approaches and methods used, evaluators interviewed for this study did not name any of the social justice evaluation approaches delineated by Mertens and Wilson. Rather, interviewees described their evaluation actions broadly in terms of desired just outcomes.

The final research question examined how discourse around social justice—the theories, language, and practices used by evaluators—was used to construct social justice. Evaluation discourse has created a binary of those who experience justice and are in a position to distribute it to others and those who receive justice through participation in

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programs. Both practitioners and the literature suggested that injustice continues to be hidden and that what is considered just or unjust continues to evolve. Finally, study findings raised a question regarding whether the attainment of social justice is even within the purview of evaluation practice.

Implications for evaluation practice

The results of this exploratory study provided a broad overview of the different conceptions of social justice mobilized by evaluators in their practice. The picture of a just society painted by these findings is unclear; while philosophical theories of justice and social justice evaluation approaches are mentioned in the professional literature, few authors have explored how these theories are applied in evaluation practice or what a just society might look like. These findings have implications for evaluation practice.

Shadish et al. (1991), Schwandt (2014), Hansen (2005), and Christie (2003a) among others have highlighted the important role theory plays in shaping practice, noting that theories provide tools, heuristics, strategies, and tactics used by evaluators in their practice. Theories used by evaluators originate in many disciplines, from critical legal studies, to social psychology, to political philosophy; theories from other disciplines also form the foundation for evaluation approaches (e.g., culturally responsive evaluation draws from critical race theory, Black feminist thought, and Indigenous evaluation). While some scholars have discussed the theoretical implications of the use of particular evaluation approaches, much of the discourse around these approaches is limited, with few authors exploring the intended outcomes and assumptions embedded in these theories. While it is unreasonable to expect theoretical expertise in a discipline that draws from and interacts with so many other disciplines, there still is a need for dialogue within

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the field about these theories, the values that undergird them, and what their application produces.

Theories and practice together form discourse, which defines boundaries for what can be conceived of and done, and vice versa (Fairclough, 2003), and the lack of meaningful dialogue about theory and action can impoverish practice. If evaluators cannot articulate or interrogate the assumptions, values, beliefs, and theories that drive action, then practitioners may work without intention or without understanding the outcomes of their work. Much effort has been committed to unpacking the value laden nature of research methodology and its damaging effects (e.g., Smith, 2012). Similar efforts need to be undertaken to unpack both the assumptions underlying both social justice evaluation approaches and the conceptions of justice that those approaches aim to realize. Dahler-Larsen (2012, p. 14) suggests that evaluations are “liminal” because they create space and opportunities to think and interpret things differently. If evaluators’ thinking about social justice theory and action is underdeveloped, the field may not be able to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to advance justice.

Developing further understanding of theories of social justice and of how social evaluation approaches promote justice will help to solidify disciplinary boundaries as the field of evaluation moves toward professionalization. Increasing discussion of what is meant by “social justice” and how to achieve it will be beneficial for the field as it moves toward professionalization. However, professionalization of the field is a double-edged sword—it legitimizes that work of practitioners, but it can also work to gatekeep who can participate, as evidenced by the responses of evaluators who participated in the present study. Many interviewees expressed beliefs that professionalization results in

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enshrinement of practices and values; they suggested that this codification process limits participation in practice by those who are not accredited and that it also prevents the field from adapting to rapidly changing understandings of how justice appears and works in the world. AEA's guiding documents are living documents in that they are revisited and revised regularly, and AEA offers multiple venues for discussion (e.g., the EVALTALK discussion board, aea365 blog posts, and AEA-sponsored journals). Those who feel that current discourse is irrelevant or damaging to the cause of social justice must participate if they wish it to change.

Implications for research

Scholars continue to argue that for research on evaluation theory and practice (King, 2003; Mark, 2008; Touramen, 2009). While some research does exist on evaluator decision-making processes (Kundin, 2008), on connections between theory and practice (Christie, 2003a), and on connections between evaluation approaches and outcomes (Acree & Chouinard, 2019), there is still much to establish before definitive statements can be made in the field about specific outcomes resulting from the use of specific evaluation activities and approaches. The present study explored theory and action around social justice in the field of evaluation broadly. Future studies could examine specific applications of social justice understandings and approaches and their intended and actual outcomes. For example, case studies of evaluators that map the course of their social justice conceptions directly to their actions, as well as case studies examining the application of specific social justice evaluation approaches mapped to evaluation outcomes would strengthen understandings of the connections between theory and practice. When conducting evaluations, evaluators may develop theories of change that

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highlight expected outcomes and theories of action that illustrate how program activities enact the theory of change. It would be helpful to develop theories of change and theories of action for how social justice definitions and evaluation approaches promote justice. This could be done by interrogating assumptions and potentially highlighting skills that evaluators need to develop.

Additionally, further research is needed into the social justice discourse in professional literature and guiding documents. This study relied on a scan of a large sample of materials; a deeper analysis of a smaller sample of documents may shed more light on the assumptions, values, and beliefs about justice that underlie the approaches and practices used by evaluators. Similarly, the present study focused on American conceptions of justice, yet many evaluators work in international contexts. Justice may be conceived of differently in non-American contexts, and understanding what justice looks like in these different contexts could benefit evaluation practice in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

Where do social justice-minded evaluators go from here?

Taken together, the results of this study can serve as both encouragement and discouragement for evaluators who wish to use their practice and profession as a tool for advancing social justice. Many of the evaluators who participated in this study struggled to articulate clear definitions of social justice; this suggests that these evaluators understand that injustice is complex, multi-faceted and deeply rooted in American society, and that there are rarely clear, singular solutions for any injustice. Similarly, many of these evaluators are, as Teddy Roosevelt is credited with saying, “do[ing] what

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you can, with what you have, where you are,” actively addressing power, inequality, racism, and discrimination in the context of their work.

Discouragement stems from the reality of the context of evaluators' work: evaluators are frequently hired to answer questions posed by evaluation commissioners—those who have control over power, money, and policy. While evaluators can conduct evaluations that authentically engage those who have been oppressed and marginalized, engage in meticulous data collection that represents multiple “truths,” and make recommendations that center the concerns and aspirations of communities most affected by structural inequality, if these contributions do not convince those who have the power to make changes in policies and institutions, then in what way is justice advanced? Should evaluators make efforts to advance social justice, given the limited locus of impact of their actions?

The results of this study do not offer clear answers to these questions; however, I have chosen to draw some conclusions. Evaluation practice by itself may not be panacea for the ills of injustice but can rather be seen as one tool among many for building a more just society. Evaluators can play a key educational role in their practice by illuminating evidence that they then use to cultivate dialectical thinking and greater understanding of the ways in which injustice manifests in programs and policies. Many of the interviewees who participated in this study are already doing the work of nudging their clients— institutions and organizations who do hold power to make change—gradually along a path to change. This form of work may be less confrontational and more dialogical, which is necessary; confrontation can be alienating, but dialogue can bring people together. Dialogue may not result in complete agreement, but it can allow disparate

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groups to identify small points of consensus that can then serve as sites to push for change.

Longtime community activists such as Grace Lee Boggs have argued that the awareness of the constantly changing state of the world and the alterations in tactics in response to this change must be cultivated in community with others, that people can only fully develop through involvement in community, and that all people in a community have the potential to contribute to and lead change (2012). By working in community, for the benefit of community, evaluators can begin to break down the dichotomy of “haves” and “have nots” that continues to stand in the way of movement toward greater social justice. Work must be done with, rather than for, others.

As highlighted in this study, evaluators have limited direct impact with their work. The changes they effect may be small, but that does not mean the work they do isn't worth doing. As Margaret Wheatley notes:

...changes in small places also affect the global system, not through incrementalism, but because every small system participates in an unbroken wholeness. Activities in one part of the whole create effects that appear in distant places. Because of these unseen connections there is potential value in working anywhere in the system. We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness (1999, p. 44-45).

Finally, while evaluation is a simply job for some and a calling for others, it is not the only venue for social justice action. There exists a world of opportunities for contributing to social justice work in small and large ways outside the field of evaluation. All evaluators belong to broader communities, and those communities hold potential for

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change work. Individual activism is always an option, though abolitionist scholar and organizer Mariame Kaba asks, “how much hubris must we have to think that we, as individuals, will have answers for generations’ worth of harm built by millions and millions of people?” (2021, p. 181). Like Grace Lee Boggs, Kaba urges collective action, suggesting that only by being in intentional relationship with others it is possible to both reimagine the world and those relationships. Participation in hyperlocal mutual aid efforts, no matter how small they are, can change how relationships and injustice are perceived, and can open another “front” of change in society. Evaluators who care deeply about social justice can and should engage in social justice work outside of evaluation practice if they wish to see real change in the world.

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Appendix A

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to share this evaluation report with me and to talk with me. Did you have an opportunity to review the information sheet? Do you have any questions about this project before we get started?

I would like to record this interview so I can capture everything you say. Do I have your permission to do so?

Main Question

Introduction/Warm-Up

Probes

- How did you get into evaluation?
- Please give me a brief overview of this project—the background, how you got involved, etc.
- What made you choose this report to share with me?
- In your opinion, what does it illustrate about social justice?

What social justice issues did the evaluator identify in the evaluation?

- Tell me a little about the social justice issues (or injustice) you saw in this particular evaluation:
 - Was it in the program itself (e.g., how it was framed, delivered, etc.)?
 - Was in something about the organization or agency (program provider)?
 - Did it have to do with the funder?
 - Was it something else?
- How did you take notice of this issue? What brought it to your attention?
 - Did the client bring up social justice?
- What do you know about this issue outside of this particular setting (such as history, policies and programs, social attitudes, etc.)?

How did the evaluator address this social justice issue?

- What approach did you take to address this issue?
 - Did you have to address it explicitly with your clients?
 - What specific methods/activities did you use?
- How did you come to choose the particular methods/approaches/ strategies you used?
- What outcomes did you anticipate from your decision/what were your goals in addressing the issue(s)? (AKA what did you think would happen as a result?)

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Does the evaluator perceive evaluation as a site for social justice work?

- When you started working on this project, how did you identify places where you thought you could leverage your power/skills/position to advance social justice?
- How much “space” do you have do social justice work in your practice?
- To what extent do you feel that your work has the potential to impact social justice?
 - At what scale?

What are the evaluator’s social justice definitions or understandings?

- How do you define social justice?
- Can you tell me about how you came to this definition?
 - Are there particular experiences that influenced your definition?
- In what ways, if any, do AEA’s stances on social justice affect your thinking about social justice?
 - How about your practice?
- In what ways has professional literature affected your thinking about social justice? How about your practice?
 - Are there specific readings that come to mind?

Wrap-Up

- Is there anything about social justice in evaluation that you’d like to tell me?

Appendix B

INFORMATION SHEET / CONSENT FORM
Practicing Evaluators' Understandings of Social Justice

You are invited to be in a research study of how practicing evaluators understand and operationalize social justice. You were selected as a possible participant because you have 1) worked in the field of evaluation for more than five years and 2) reportedly employ a social justice lens in your evaluation practice. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by Cynthia Matthias, PhD student, Department of Organizational Leadership and Policy Development (OLPD). Jean King, professor emerita, OLPD, is the primary adviser.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I ask you to do the following things:

- Share an evaluation report with me that exemplifies how you operationalize social justice understandings in your work.
- Participate in a 60-90 minute interview with me. The interview will focus on the evaluation report you shared. You will be asked questions about the decision-making process you used during the evaluation and about your understandings and definitions of social justice concepts. The interview will be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym, and this pseudonym will be attached to your interview recording, transcript, and the evaluation report you share. I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you or the client(s) named in the evaluation report. Research records will be stored securely, and only I will have access to the records. Any direct quotations shared in reports or publications about this study will not be attributed to you or your client(s).

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not need to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Cynthia Matthias. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her: Cynthia Matthias (matth435@umn.edu).

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This research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, please call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 (Toll Free: 1-888-224-8636) or go to z.umn.edu/participants. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the researcher
- You cannot reach the researcher
- You want to talk to someone besides the researcher
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant
- You want to get information or provide input about this research

Participant printed name

Participant signature

Date

Please keep a copy of this information your records.

Appendix C

Table 11

Social Justice Evaluation Approaches Mentioned in Included Articles

Citation	CRE	DDE	Feminist	Indigenous and Decolonizing	Language Only
<i>Articles mentioning 4 approaches</i>					
Hopson (2014)	X	X	X	X	
Mertens & Hopson (2006)	X	X	X	X	
Archibald (2019)	X	X	X	X	
<i>Articles mentioning 3 approaches</i>					
Archibald et al. (2018)		X	X	X	
Brewington & Hall (2018)	X	X		X	
Samuels & Ryan (2011)	X	X		X	
Waapalaneekweew (2018)	X	X		X	
Brown & DiLallo (2020)	X		X	X	
<i>Articles mentioning 2 approaches</i>					
Cavino (2013)	X			X	
Chilisa & Mertens (2021)	X			X	
Gaotlhobogwe et al. (2018)	X			X	
Ghanbarpour et al. (2020)	X			X	
Hall (2020b)		X		X	
Bledsoe (2014)	X	X			
Chouinard & Cousins (2009)	X			X	
Cook (2014)	X	X			
Datta (2011)		X		X	
Dean-Coffey (2018)	X		X	X	
Desivilya Syna et al. (2015)		X	X		
Gates (2017)	X	X			
Hepi et al. (2021)	X			X	
Madison (2007)	X	X			
Mertens (2013)	X			X	
Patton (2017)		X	X		
Ryan et al. (1998)		X	X		
SenGupta et al. (2004)	X	X			
Thomas & Madison (2010)	X	X			

EVALUATORS' VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Table 11

(continued).

Acree & Chouinard (2019)	X			
Caldwell & Bledsoe (2019)	X			X
Cousins & Whitmore (1998)		X		
Fetterman (2017)		X		
Freeman & Vasconcelos (2010)		X		
Ginsberg (2021)	X			
Gong & Wright (2007)		X		
Guajardo et al. (2020)	X		X	
Hall (2019)	X		X	
Haugen & Chouinard (2018)	X			
Hood (2004)	X	X		
Hopson (2001)	X			X
House (2014)		X		
House (2017)	X	X		
House (2019)	X	X		
Kirkhart (2010)	X			X
<i>Articles mentioning I approach</i>				
Abma et al. (2016)				
Alkin & Christie (2019)		X		
Beaudry (1992)				X
Bheda (2011)			X	
Bitar (2015)				X
Clark (2019)				X
Collins et al. (2014)	X			
Daigneault & Jacob (2009)				
Davis (1999)				X
Dhaliwal et al. (2020)				
Ericson (1990)				X
Fierro (2019)	X			
Gadotti (2017)				
Garibay & Teasdale (2019)	X			
Greene (2013)				X
Guimaraes (2017)				X
Hall (2020a)				X

EVALUATORS' VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Table 11

(continued).

Hall et al. (2012)		X		
Hood & Cassaro (2002)			X	
Hopson (1999)				
House (1999)				X
House (2001)		X		
Johnson & Stefurak (2013)				X
Julnes (2019)			X	
Julnes & Rog (2007)				X
Kerr (2006)			X	
King (2016)				X
Kirkhart (1995)			X	
Kirkhart (2011)			X	
Lapidot-Lefler et al. (2015)				
Lincoln (1994)			X	
London et al. (2003)				X
Mabry (1999)				X
Mabry (2010)				
McBride et al. (2020)				X
Mertens (1995)			X	
Mertens (1999)			X	
Mertens & Hesse-Biber (2013)			X	
Mertens et al. (1994)			X	
Meyer et al. (2021)	X			
Miller (2014)		X		
Morris (2014)		X		
Moss & Crewe (2020)	X			
Neubauer & Hall (2020)				
Noblit & Jay (2010)	X			
Parker (2004)			X	
Patton (1997)			X	
Patton (2002)			X	
Patton (2018b)		X		
Patton (2020)	X			
Rallis & Rossman (2000)		X		
Reid et al (2020)	X			
Sheldon & Wolfe (2015)				X
Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002)			X	

EVALUATORS' VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Table 11

(continued).

Sirotnik & Oakes (1990)				
Smith (1994)				X
Stanfield (1999)				X
Symonette (2004)	X			
Symonette et al. (2020)	X		X	
Thiele et al. (2007)				
Thomas (2004)	X			
Thomas et al. (2018)	X			
Truman (2002)			X	
van Draanen (2017)				
Vo & Archibald (2018)		X		X
Weiss (1998)				X
Woelders & Abma (2015)	X			
Wolfe & Price (2019)				
Worthen (2001)				
Zeller-Berkman (2010)		X		
Zoabi & Awad (2015)	X			

Appendix D

Table 12

Social Justice Paradigms Mentioned in Included Articles

Citation	Recognition	Distributive	Rawls	Procedural
<i>Articles mentioning 3 paradigms</i>				
Desivilya Syna et al. (2015)	X	X	X	
Julnes (2019)	X	X	X	
Mabry (1999)	X	X	X	
Zoabi & Awad (2015)	X	X	X	
<i>Articles mentioning 2 paradigms</i>				
Abma et al. (2016)	X			
Acree & Chouinard (2019)	X			
Alkin & Christie (2019)			X	
Archibald (2019)	X	X		
Archibald et al. (2018)	X			
Beaudry (1992)	X			
Bheda (2011)	X			
Bitar (2015)			X	
Bledsoe (2014)		X	X	
Brewington & Hall (2018)	X	X		
Brown & DiLallo (2020)	X	X		
Cavino (2013)	X	X		
Chouinard & Cousins (2009)	X	X		
Cook (2014)	X	X		
Cousins & Whitmore (1998)	X	X		
Davis (1999)	X	X		
Dean-Coffey (2018)	X	X		
Ericson (1990)		X	X	
Fierro (2019)	X	X		
Garibay & Teasdale (2019)	X	X		
Gates (2017)	X		X	
Ginsberg (2021)	X			X
Greene (2013)			X	X
Hall et al. (2012)	X		X	
Haugen & Chouinard (2018)	X	X		
Hood (2004)	X	X		
Hopson (2014)	X	X		
House (2019)		X	X	
Johnson & Stefurak (2013)			X	X

EVALUATORS' VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Table 12

(continued).

Julnes & Rog (2007)		X	X
Kirkhart (2010)	X	X	
Lincoln (1994)	X	X	
Mabry (2010)	X	X	
Madison (2007)	X	X	
Mertens (1995)	X	X	
Mertens & Hopson (2006)	X	X	
Miller (2014)	X	X	
Morris (2014)	X	X	
Parker (2004)	X	X	
Patton (2017)	X	X	
Smith (1994)	X	X	
Stanfield (1999)	X	X	
Symonette et al. (2020)	X	X	
Thomas (2004)	X	X	
Thomas & Madison (2010)		X	X
Thomas et al. (2018)	X	X	
van Draanen (2017)	X	X	
<i>Articles mentioning 1 paradigm</i>			
Caldwell & Bledsoe (2019)	X		
Chilisa & Mertens (2021)	X		
Clark (2019)			X
Collins et al. (2014)		X	
Daigneault & Jacob (2009)	X		
Datta (2011)	X		
Dhaliwal et al. (2020)	X		
Fetterman (2017)	X		
Freeman & Vasconcelos (2010)	X		
Gadotti (2017)	X		
Gaotlhobogwe et al. (2018)	X		
Ghanbarpour et al. (2020)	X		
Gong & Wright (2007)	X		
Guajardo et al. (2020)	X		
Guimaraes (2017)	X		
Hall (2019)	X		
Hall (2020a)		X	

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Table 12

(continued).

Hall (2020b)	X	
Hepi et al. (2021)	X	
Hood & Cassaro (2002)	X	
Hopson (1999)	X	
Hopson (2001)	X	
House (1999)	X	
House (2001)		X
House (2014)		X
House (2017)	X	
Kerr (2006)	X	
King (2016)		X
Kirkhart (1995)	X	
Kirkhart (2011)	X	
Lapidot-Lefler et al. (2015)		X
London et al. (2003)	X	
McBride et al. (2020)	X	
Mertens (1999)	X	
Mertens (2013)	X	
Mertens & Hesse-Biber (2013)	X	
Mertens et al. (1994)	X	
Meyer et al. (2021)	X	
Moss & Crewe (2020)	X	
Neubauer & Hall (2020)	X	
Noblit & Jay (2010)	X	
Patton (1997)	X	
Patton (2002)	X	
Patton (2018b)	X	
Patton (2020)	X	
Rallis & Rossman (2000)		X
Reid et al (2020)	X	
Ryan et al. (1998)	X	
Samuels & Ryan (2011)		X
SenGupta et al. (2004)	X	
Sheldon & Wolfe (2015)	X	
Sielbeck-Bowen et al. (2002)	X	
Sirotnik & Oakes (1990)	X	
Symonette (2004)		X

EVALUATORS' VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Table 12

(continued).

Thiele et al. (2007)		X
Truman (2002)	X	
Vo & Archibald (2018)	X	
Waapalaneexkweew (2018)	X	
Weiss (1998)		X
Woelders & Abma (2015)	X	
Wolfe & Price (2019)	X	
Worthen (2001)	X	
Zeller-Berkman (2010)	X	
