

EMPIRICALLY DEFINING SOCIAL JUSTICE  
THROUGH Q SORT METHODOLOGY

By

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Abstract: Social justice, as a term, has existed since the mid-1800s. Although the idea of creating more opportunities for disadvantaged social groups has existed much longer. Social justice has been called the “fifth force” in counseling psychology and plays an increasingly prominent role in professional organizations of the field. Hundreds of articles and books espouse the importance of social justice and define how practitioners may begin to work towards a more socially just world. This information is imperative for those who desire to advocate for their clients beyond the therapy room. However, in the excitement that poured forth at the chance to foster more systemic change, the definition of social justice was left to speculation rather than operationally defined. This study adds an empirical grounding to the term social justice through a Q sort (a mixed methods ranking tool) distributed to experts and scholars in social justice across psychology, social work, public health and theology (N=19). Participants were diverse in location, vocation, and demographics. Two factors emerged demonstrating different schools of thought on the definition of social justice. Participants in both factors valued action to reduce marginalization/oppression, however, participants in Factor A ranked items around equitable resources and access higher, whereas those in Factor B ranked items relating to using data to show the need for and aid in change as more important. Themes ranked to be most like the definition of social justice included: action to decrease marginalization/oppression now and in the future, access to resources and rights, and equitable distribution. Themes ranked to be least like the definition of social justice included: using top down power to bring change, religious motivation, and obligation. By co-creating this definition with prominent scholars in the area, social justice can gain the credibility it needs to continue as a driving force in the field of counseling psychology and beyond. Implications for research and practice, limitations, and future research possibilities are discussed.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Social justice has been called the “fifth force” in counseling psychology (Chang & Gnika, 2010; Lee, 2012; Ratts, 2009; Ratts, D’Andrea, & Arrendondo, 2004). Justice is one of the five general principles in the American Psychology Association’s (APA) (2010) “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct”. The American Counseling Association commissioned advocacy competencies to help guide practitioners (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002). The popularity of social justice has not been gained without reason. A basic tenet of social justice is promoting privileges for groups previously with less privilege. These efforts are built on the shoulders of multiculturalism and require an understanding of a community before partnering with them to create wide scale change (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009; Ratts, Toporek, & Lewis, 2010). Social justice is not merely for the minority of people, but rather all people, as most people belong to at least one marginalized group: women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, those with different abilities, oppressed religious groups, those involuntary without work, and others (Crethar & Winterowd, 2012; Vera & Speight, 2003). Even those who do not belong to one of these groups ultimately benefit from a society with greater prosperity (Rawls, 1971). Those interested in advancing social justice face many obstacles with one of the most prominent issues being the numerous definitions of social

justice with little evidence of consensus on the operationalization of the concept. This point is the first one commonly attacked or manipulated by opponents of the social justice movement and it must be addressed to create a solid foundation on which research may be built (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002).

How does one go about defining such an abstract idea in a way that it can withstand even the scrutiny of the experts on social justice? One possibility is to give it to the experts and allow them to co-create it. This study put the pieces of the social justice puzzle in the hands of experts and invited them to participate in construct development through Q sort methodology. This process allowed an individualized response and opportunity for feedback, not common in many quantitative methods. The results were analyzed to find statistically grounded definitions of social justice, which were combined to create a more complete research-based definition. This definition was further expanded through the nuanced themes discovered in participants' qualitative responses. With a theoretically-based and empirically-crafted definition, counseling psychology and related fields will have a foundation upon which they can build interventions to lift those whom society has long ignored.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Impact of Justice and Injustice on Society**

The perception of justice affects many parts of society. Kazemi and Törnblom (2008) provided an overview of such effects including rates of employee theft; work-place retaliation; work satisfaction and commitment; arson; violence; disloyalty; gossip; and destruction of property. Hatfield and Rapson (2012) stated if an individual does not feel “the system” is just, they will begin to undermine the relationship in order to make it more just for them. There are several types of reactions to acts of injustice (Adams, 1965). One example includes a more advantaged group might devalue contributions of less advantaged groups in order to make the situation seem more just to them. These reactions can become patterns for entire cultures, thus creating systems of inequality without merit.

Many systems currently in place can affect one’s well-being, growth and ability to reach his or her true potential including: educational and organizational systems; political, economic and social structures; and discrimination based on race, gender, social class, sexual/affective orientation, or other personal traits (Arthur & Collins, 2014; Ratts, 2009; Lewis, 2011). Those in power or with relative power within these systems can perpetuate injustice consciously and unconsciously through intolerance, prejudiced beliefs, lack of multicultural awareness, or a desire to maintain the status quo (Chung & Bemack, 2012). Oppression is a more than force against an

individual or group; it involves ideological and institutional control as well as a system of continued domination of the dominant group (Hardiman & Jackson, 1982).

Ratts (2009) explained that oppression can be seen on individual, social, and cultural levels. He further clarified that individual oppression stems from interactions of individuals and their personal value and belief systems. Social or cultural oppression occurs through expressions of the dominant culture's norms and values, both written and unwritten. These and other forms of oppression have been empirically shown to negatively impact human development. A few examples include: psychological development of minority children (Callahan, Brighton, & Hertberg Davis, 2007; Clark & Clark, 1939; Kozel, 2005); levels depression and academic performance for youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, 2011); the unequal employment of women in science, technology, engineering, and math fields (Wang & Degol, 2013); and gender gaps in pay and positions (Cha & Weeden, 2014). Blustein (2006) summarized discussions of oppression by stating, "life is not fair" (p.x). His tone is not one of flippancy or resignation, but of recognition and reverence for a sad truth that needs to be addressed.

If individuals in counseling and related helping fields are able to research these injustices and provide data, institutions and systems may find it harder to ignore claims of injustice and may even make changes to rectify the injustice. Even if attempts to advocate only work one percent of the time, interventions like policy change has the potential to reach exponentially more individuals than individual psychotherapy by itself due to its far reaching nature. This chapter is meant to provide a philosophical and practical base of knowledge in order to set the stage for an attempt to define social justice. A definition will provide an empirical base from which individuals in helping fields can securely operate in their attempts to eradicate oppression.

## **Philosophical Roots of Social Justice**

Zajda, Majhanovich and, Rust (2006) provided an excellent account of justice and social justice through the ages. They stated Plato (427-347 BC) was one of the first great thinkers to value justice, followed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who was influenced by Aristotle. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) stated that acts of justice were things that should be made into universal law. The term “social justice” was first used by Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio, a Sicilian priest in 1840 and the idea was held most highly by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). The term was used throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to force ruling classes to consider the conditions of peasants (Zajda et al., 2006). Because there is no agreed upon definition of social justice, it is impossible to discuss it with much authority at this time. While there are no singular definitions for social justice or justice, there exist several well-discussed components of justice that may provide a base for beginning to define social justice.

### **Types of Justice**

Historically, justice has been broken down into three major parts: distributive (which is sometimes considered to contain retributive justice), procedural, and interactional (Coates, 2007; Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). The first type of justice, *distributive justice*, was based off an equity theory framework (Adams 1965 as cited in Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). Deutsch (1975) enlarged the theory to include principles of equity (proportional rewards for contributions), equality (receiving the same rewards regardless of differences), and need (reward proportional to the necessity). Distributive justice is seen throughout counseling psychology literature (Crethar et al., 2008; Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002; Prilleltensky, 1997; Vera and Speight, 2003).

*Retributive justice* is thought to be the negative side of the principles of distributive justice in society - rule violation and the setting of sanctions and retributions (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). This type of justice is tricky because as society changes, so does the evaluation

of what is right and wrong (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). *Procedural justice* focuses on the process used to make decisions and its perceived fairness (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). This concept was well researched by Thibaut and Walker (1975) who found several key markers of procedural justice: third party decision makers are critical influences to the perception of procedural fairness; process control (opportunity to present relevant facts); and decision control (disputants' influence over outcomes). Interactional justice was first described by Bies and Moag (1986) as the fairness perceived in interpersonal interactions during decision making procedures. The criteria for this principle are truthfulness, justification, politeness, dignity and respect, feedback, and adequate explanation of decisions. These criteria are very closely related to multicultural competency literature that states counselors should be aware of their biases and treat people with respect regardless of their personal background (Lewis, 2010).

### **Modern Philosophical Musings**

Blending the philosophical nature of justice and the action-oriented nature of social justice has not been an easy or natural task. Coates (2007) stated each of the three main types of justice (distributive, interactional, and procedural) are thought to be subsumed under social justice. He argued the central issue of social justice can be reduced to tension between “rights and duties of the state and other social institutions and the rights and duties of individuals and groups” (p. 579) and basic universal principles need to be established to lead our understanding of justice. Although these philosophical musing are interesting, they do not put the field any closer to theory. Toporek and colleagues (2005) stated this movement towards theory is imperative to the work as it helps to name risk and protective factors as well as create tools which can be used to measure and evaluate programs and initiatives.

Discussions of a social justice paradigm and pedagogy have become more common in recent years, although the literature is still sparse. Ratts (2009) argued that naming social justice as a paradigm is important because of how paradigms guide our understanding of the world and our foundations for practice. Prilleltensky (1997) attempted to create a paradigm of social justice

based on emancipatory communitarianism, which is based on the following value domains: caring and compassion; self-determination; human diversity; among others. Lewis (2011) created a social justice paradigm that stressed: recognizing the dignity of all human beings; community involvement; and rights of individuals to decide their own goals and move towards them. Chung and Bemack (2012) created the Multi-Phase Model of Psychotherapy, Counseling Human Rights and Social Justice (MPM), which was meant to be a synthesis of earlier models and defines how mental health professionals can work towards social justice and human rights. This model includes examples of required specific counseling and social justice skills/techniques, cultural awareness/acceptance, and social justice/human rights (political awareness). Coates' (2007) framework for social justice pedagogy rests on established ideals to which emerging systems can be compared, contextual understanding of the experiences of fairness of different groups and continual assessment of systems and policies in place.

### **Development of Social Justice in Helping Fields**

#### **Social Work**

Social justice has long been a core value to social workers (Maschi & Killian, 2011). The global definition of the social work profession states, "Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work" (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014, p.1). Engagement in social justice activities is explicitly called for in social workers Code of Ethics (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

#### **Public Health/Health Promotion**

Public Health and health promotion are the intersection of clinical practice and prevention science to address multifaceted issues with several causes requiring a wide-ranging perspective (Norman, 2009). In Beauchamp's (1976) seminal article, "Public Health as Social Justice", he calls to those in public health to move towards social justice in all areas of public and private sectors and "reveal through the process of confrontation and challenge the structured and

collective nature of the problems of death and disability and the urgency for more adequate structures to protect all human life” (p.11).

### **Theology**

Theology draws some of its social justice focus from the work of Paulo Freire, liberation theology, and Martín-Baró (Conde-Frazier, 2006; Opatow, 2001). Liberation theology is an interpretation of Christianity and society through the struggles and suffering of the poor (Boff & Boff, 1987). Scholars in theology have been urged to move away from searches for truth and instead to interact with those less fortunate so that all parties may learn from each other and all can work toward a democracy where more people can be heard (West, 1989). Conde-Frazier (2006) stresses the importance of participatory action research (PAR) as a socially just tool to bring parties together so they may educate one another and come to peaceful resolutions. She states theologians must stand beside community members through this process to create meaningful change. She goes on to state a relationship with the community is important as “unconnected” research can contribute to oppressive policies.

### **Community Psychology**

The construct of social justice is beginning to reach into many areas of psychology. Some subfields, such as Community Psychology, moved into social action back in the sixties with a focus on prevention rather than treatment and energized by the call for civil rights (Prilleltensky, 2001; Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). Fondacaro and Weinberg (2002) help give light to how social justice crept into their field, and many others, quietly hidden in the inner workings of their early initiatives. They claimed social justice evolved alongside their passion for prevention. More recently, counseling professionals have developed the *Community Counseling Model* that uses focused and broad-based strategies to facilitate human and community development through a base of multicultural competence and social justice orientation (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D’Andrea, 2011).

### **Critical Psychology**

Prilleltensky and Nelson (2013) stated the ontological basis of critical psychology is a series of power struggles between individuals and political systems that result in oppression, resistance, and liberation. They go on to state the epistemological focus is on using “quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the human and social experience of domination and resistance” and promoting action (p.143). Critical Psychology is unique in the field’s endorsement of specific values (e.g. autonomy, freedom, compassion, participation, collaboration), rather than claiming to be value free (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2013). While those in Critical Psychology have made great efforts in social initiatives, some think their open claim to be partisan, actually creates epistemological problems in their writings (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002).

### **Vocational Psychology**

The field of Vocational Psychology at its inception was intertwined with the social justice efforts of Frank Parsons who worked to find safe work for young boys in Boston in the early 1900s (Fouad, 2006). Fassinger and Gallor (2006) stated the structure of the economy in relationship to occupations is flawed at its core and maintains a system of patriarchy and inequality. They also stated that we must develop all new “tools” to rebuild this house which includes advocacy and policy change. Scholars in Vocational Psychology have made attempts to create a framework to approach clients in a more empowering way backed by theory (Blustein, et al., 2005). Blustein and colleagues (2005) argued that work life satisfaction rests within a socioeconomic hierarchy and it is necessary to view issues of access from a socio-cultural-political frame rather than just an empirical one due to our inherent world beliefs.

## **Social Psychology**

Modern ideas of social justice in Social Psychology stemmed from writings on distributive justice and relative deprivation (Kazemi and Törnblom, 2008). This theory tends to focus on individuals at a similar social level and beliefs of what people morally deserve (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). Relative deprivation states the sensations of satisfaction and dissatisfaction stem from comparisons of outcomes and an external standard, which is subjective in nature that is unaffected by objective evaluations (Crosby, 1976). Because of the subjective nature of these social comparisons, social psychology states that even the term justice cannot be objectively defined (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). Without a definition for justice, social justice must remain ambiguous as well.

## **Counseling Psychology**

Social justice is not a new term or practice in Counseling Psychology. An upswing of literature calling for social justice and social advocacy in the 1970s corresponded with many social movements occurring in the United States of America at that time (e.g., Black power, war, environmentalism, women's rights, etc.). However, social action conversations of the 70s gave way to discussions of multiculturalism in the 1980s (Steele & Bischof, 2010). The evolution from multicultural and feminist theory to an explicit focus on social justice was a slow one, spanning two decades (Steele & Bischof, 2010). Social justice reemerged as an important concept in recent years as multicultural and feminist theories gained significance within the counseling field (Goodman et al., 2004; Vera & Speight, 2003). Feminist and multicultural viewpoints guided research in mental health fields showing how society affects minorities' mental health status; coping skills used by these groups are seen by society as pathologies; and the therapists role is to help the client address societal oppressions (Goodman et al., 2004). Brubaker and colleagues (2010) argued the main aspect that separates social justice from multiculturalism is the continued focus on community engagement.

**Multicultural competencies.** As multicultural and feminist theories have developed, new competency areas have arisen. The multicultural competencies are counselors' attitudes/beliefs, knowledge and skills used when working with clients from variety of racial and cultural groups (Sue et al., 1992; Sue et al., 1998). The multicultural competencies were born out of a position paper from the Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) of the APA and eventually expanded to 33 competencies (Chung & Bemack, 2012; Sue et al., 1998). These competencies were not endorsed by the APA until 2002 and the ACA followed in 2003. Although these competencies in Counseling Psychology have acknowledged societal pressures, most of the work has been focused on the micro- or individual level (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). This meant although counselors were now more aware of the environmental stressors that affect their clients, they still needed guidance on how to help advocate for their clients.

**Advocacy competencies.** The explicit outline and expansion of multicultural competencies paved the way for the creation of the advocacy competencies (Ratts et al., 2010). The advocacy competencies were developed by Lewis, Arnold, House and Toporek (2002) and were endorsed by the ACA Governing Council in 2003 and published a few years later (Toporek, Lewis & Crethar, 2009). The APA to date has not officially endorsed the advocacy competencies. The advocacy competencies are skills and behaviors deemed necessary to be an effective advocacy against social injustices at micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. It is implied within the competencies trainees and professionals are already aware that social justice and social injustice exist and that social equity is an important value. These assumptions do not provide an empirical or theoretical base from which counselors might be better able to navigate through grey areas. By making the examples more explicit, counselors may better able to understand what social justice looks like. However, without guiding principles of a definition, it is difficult to establish other social justice initiatives.

**Call to action.** Social justice has been described as the next step of feminist and multicultural theories; an attempt to focus and expand the work to meso (community) and macro (policy) interventions in counseling (Kiselica, 2004; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Toporek, Lewis & Crethar, 2009; Vera & Speight, 2003; Watts, 2004). Indeed, Vera and Speight (2003) stated, "...a social justice-informed psychologist seeks to transform the world, not just understand the world" (p. 261). Watts (2004) detailed how to "scale up" specific proven individual interventions such as building self-efficacy to build collective efficacy and focusing on social liberation rather than self-actualization. This attempt to apply well-known ideas to large communities was a stride forward in making social justice a concrete concept, rather than an ideal. Ratts (2009) suggested a shift in the how services are rendered to clients, focusing on changing the environment rather than the client if the environment is the origin of the issue. This reimagining of services takes the blame off of clients and places it on the systems to which it belongs.

**Definitions of social justice.** The latest wave of social justice literature has been offering definitions of social justice since the late 1990s (e.g. Bell, 1997; Lee & Walz, 1998; Reisch, 2002; Goodman et al., 2004; Crethar, Torres Rivera & Nash, 2008; Crethar & Nolan, 2009; Fouad et al., 2004). Several modern definitions of social justice are drawn from the writings of John Rawls (1971) who leaned heavily on writings of Bentham, Mill, Kant, and Locke. Jun's (2010) book, *Social Justice, Multicultural Counseling and Practice* has less than one page of text that explicitly focuses on social justice and seems to make a quick attempt at a broad amorphous definition without any further explanation. Other texts have attempted to pull definitions of social justice from justice and injustice (Chung & Bemack, 2012). Manis and colleagues (2009) stated that while there are many definitions of social justice, they all have a core of desire to relieve inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. As shown in Table 1, equitable distribution of goods and resources is the most prominent theme, but certainly not the only theme.

Table 1.

*Themes in Prominent Definitions of Social Justice*

Theme	Source
Moral obligations	Ellis and Carlson, 2009; Thomas Aquinas in Zajda, Majhanovich & Rust, 2006
Personal beliefs	Blustein, Elman, & Gerstein, 2001; Lewis et al., 2003; Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olsen, 2012
Political involvement	Caldwell, 2008; Dean, 2009; Lewis et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2009
Ability to identify issues of social justice	Crethar, Torres Rivera & Nash, 2008; Lewis et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2009; Prilleltensky, 2001
Taking action to promote social justice	Blustein et al., 2001; Caldwell, 2008; Crethar et al., 2008; Fouad et al., 2004; Goodman et al., 2004; Lewis et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2009
An individual's level of participation society	Bell, 1997; Crethar et al., 2008; Goodman, 2001; in Habermas, 1979; Smith, 2003; Toporek & Williams, 2006
The balance and distribution of goods, services and obligations	Braveman & Gruskin, 2003; Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi & Bryant, 2007; Chung & Bemak, 2012; Fouad, et al., 2006; Prilleltensky, 2001; Rawls, 1971; Reisch, 2002
Individual's influence on their environment	Blustein et al., 2001; Crethar and Nolan, 2009; Crethar et al., 2008; Fouad et al., 2004; Prilleltensky, 2001; Rawls, 1971; Toporek & Williams, 2006

Various articles have been published expressing frustration at the lack of an agreed upon definition (Arfken & Yen, 2014; Hunsaker, 2011; Novak, 2000). Others have stated there simply is not a single definition due to the contextual nature of the term (Louis et al., 2014; Coates, 2007; Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). An entire issue of the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* was dedicated to “interrogating and clarifying the philosophical and theoretical issues that lie at the intersection of psychology and social justice” (p.1) and yet the editors of the issue conclude that even this effort was unsuccessful in defining social justice (Arfken & Yen, 2014).

## **Issues in Defining Social Justice**

Prilleltensky (1997) advocated for counselors to become more direct with their definitions of what is “good” and how the vision can move to action. Perhaps the largest problem with defining social justice is that it went undone for so long. One of the criticisms of social justice is many of the texts discussing it have not defined the term, as if everyone should be familiar with what it entails (Hayek as cited in Novak, 2000). Perhaps early ambiguity contributed to lack of clarity in present day. Perhaps the complex nature of social justice has contributed to the elusiveness of the term. A basic but significant issue in the literature on social justice is the lack of resolution around central concepts and frameworks (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). In theoretical discussions, there is a discrepancy between describing social justice as a virtue (can only be applied to individuals) or as a regulative principle of order (can be applied to societies) (Zajda et al., 2006). As daunting as the task seems, some consensus on the definition of social justice should be sought out.

## **Current Study**

The logical follow-up question remains; how might a consensus be reached? A delicate process is in order; social justice is a topic of the people and thus the people should have input on its definition. Qualitative methods help describe and define phenomenon, however their external validity is often called into question (Glesne, 2011). Quantitative methods require a solid research base and an operationalized definition (which we do not have) but are able to give statistics that show the significance of the findings (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011).

This study utilized the positives of both schools of methodology. Q sort methodology was selected for this purpose due to its qualiquantilogical nature – the ability to combine qualitative and quantitative methods in an exploratory way (Stenner & Stainton Rogers, 2004). Q sorts examine correlations between persons (Watts & Stenner, 2005). By examining a sample of experts who create definitions for social justice in the literature, commonalities in participants’ choices will emerge, creating a map of ideas ranked by importance. These findings are meant

to bring a “sense of coherence” to the definition of social justice (Stenner, Watts, & Worrell, 2008). The concourse of potential sections of the definition of social justice includes theory as well as practical definitions written and discussed by academics and practitioners over the years. Q methodology does not allow for traditional hypotheses as further discussed in the methodology section; instead it requires the hypothesis be the stem for the Q set items (Stenner et al., 2008; Watts & Stenner, 2005). For this study, the research question is: What is the definition of the term ‘social justice’ within helping fields?

There will always be individual differences in one’s definition of social justice, just as there are individual differences for one’s definition of counselor. This study is not meant to permanently and definitively answer the question “What is social justice?” This study means to add a research-based definition to the conversation to give more merit to those who perform the work.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Overview of Q Methodology**

The Q sort method was chosen as a way to answer this research question for several reasons. Q methodology is considered to be an interactive medium where individual opinions can be expressed (Stephenson, 1953). Watts and Stenner (2005) state that one of the most common uses of the Q sort is to examine “highly complex and socially contested concepts” from the viewpoint of involved individuals. They also state results provide favored views or combination preferred of the group of participants. Stenner, Watts and Worrell (2008) recommend Q methodology specifically for theoretical questions on how things are. The definition of social justice in the context of psychology was created over time by several individuals who were/are interested in the topic. Thus, the social nature of the topic as well as the group involved provide excellent conditions to perform a Q sort.

Q sort is a hybrid of different research methods. It examines an individual’s opinions and process in an in-depth way, then it converts the group’s responses into data that can be analyzed by standard statistical means. Because of this duality, it has been referred to as qualiquantological in nature (Stenner & Stainton Rogers, 2004). This type of mixed method design creates flexibility that allows a more precise and complete image of the given phenomena to emerge from the data (Ponterotto, Mathew & Raughley, 2013). Participants are not only encouraged to create a personalized idea of social justice, but also to give feedback on their thought and emotional processes on the project. Other advantages to this type of design include: compensation for

limitations imposed by one design; more sensitivity to multicultural issues; encouraging important dialogue between participants and researchers as well as stimulating all parties' multicultural growth; advancing the field's commitment to socially just research by creating multiple viewpoints (Ponterotto, et al., 2013).

### **Creation of the Q Set or “Concourse”**

The Q set stems from the hypothesis or research question. Another name for the Q set is the concourse (Stephenson, 1978). Q sort methodology does not allow for traditional hypotheses, and instead questions are investigated in a broader qualitative way of asking about an individual's understanding of an issue (Stenner et al., 2008). Watts and Stenner (2005) state it is imperative to choose a research question prior to the creation of the Q set as all items must be response to the question. Thus, the research question of this study is as follows: What is the definition of the term “social justice” for individuals in helping fields?

With that stated, the Q set should consist of items that are “broadly representative”, theoretically based, and give the reader an understanding of the central themes in possible defining factors in social justice (Stenner et al., 2008). Literature on social justice was reviewed in order to provide a theoretical basis for the concourse. This involved taking pieces of definitions of social justice published in academic journals (Reisch, 2002; Goodman et al., 2004; Bell, 1997; Smith, 2003; Braveman & Gruskin, 2003; Rand, 2006; Fouad, et al., 2006; Lee & Walz, 1998; Rawls, 1971; Caldwell, 2008; Lee, 2007; Zajda, Majhanovich & Rust, 2006; Novak, 2000; Habermas, 1979; Jackson, 2005; Constantine et al., 2007 Prilleltensky, 2001; Toporek & Williams, 2006; Crethar, Torres Rivera & Nash, 2008; Goodman, 2001; Crethar & Nolan, 2009; Ellis and Carlson, 2009; Gostin and Powers, 2006; Griffiths, 1998), examples from the Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002), and several social justice and social advocacy scales (Dean, 2009; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011; Miller et al., 2009; Nilsson et al., 2011; Ratts & Ford, 2010; Ritchhart, 2002; Torres-Harding et al., 2012; Whitfield-Williams, 2013).

Originally 99 items were created. These items were reviewed by several experts, who gave feedback on the items and had an opportunity to suggest deletions or additional items. In the first wave, reviewers (one faculty member and two graduate students, including this writer, from a mid-western university) were told to review items for repetitiveness and clarity. Several items were edited for clarity and 53 items were removed, leaving 46 items. This shorter list was sent to three more faculty members from two universities (one mid-western, one southern). They each received a randomized version of the list as well as an appendix of deleted items and were instructed to look for and comment on: item/stem consistency; item clarity; item repetitiveness; and whether there is full theoretical coverage or not. After reviewing their comments, items were edited for clarity and four items were added.

The participant pool was increased to include helping fields of social work, theology and public health. This author included more items representing definitions of social justice as found in literature in these areas, increasing the list to 65 items. This list was sent to experts in the fields of social work, public health, and theology. The experts in public health and theology work at a south central university but received their latest training on the West coast and East coast, respectively. The expert in social work received her education and currently works in the Midwest. After receiving and clarifying feedback from these individuals, items were again reviewed for clarity. Unclear and repetitive items were removed. Because the review of items was done in several stages, reviewer feedback was compared together. Some items that remained after the first round were removed after observing similar feedback from a different reviewer in the later feedback. The final list contained 47 items and can be found in Appendix D.

The Q sort fit the 47 items with nine columns ranging from “least like the definition of social justice” “most like the definition of social justice” in a quasi-normal distribution pattern. This is in line with Moses (2012) who stated this was helpful to participants who were hesitant to place items in the far left columns labeled “most disagree” due to their partial agreement with the items. In order to help control for this phenomenon, participants were explicitly instructed to

place more neutral items in the center columns (Moses, 2012). The use of a quasi-normal or bell like distribution shape has been questioned in the literature for the possibility of pushing still relevant items to the center and decreasing variability (Serfass & Sherman, 2013). Brown (1980) stated that multiple statistical analyses the shape of the distribution does not contribute to the factors that emerge. Watts and Stenner (2005) upheld this idea in their article that addresses several concerns around Q methodology. Block (1978) recommended rectangular distributions (all equal columns) for more discriminations, but he does concede some statistical issues with the distribution. Block (1978) went on to state that when subjects are allowed to sort items into as many columns as they like, a unimodal (bell-shaped) distribution naturally emerges and this form has fewer statistical issues than the rectangular distribution. At this time there are no studies to support the use of one over the other (Serfass & Sherman, 2013). Proponents for the bell-like distribution state the shape requires intentional thought and decisions from participants (Webler et al., 2009; Thomas & Watson, 2002). Thus, unimodal distribution was used in this study.

### **Participant Recruitment**

Stenner and colleagues (2008) stated that sampling in Q methodology should be focused more on range of viewpoints and relevant populations rather than on generalizability or large size. Webler et al. (2009) suggested that sampling for Q sorts are to be purposeful and include those who have stimulating and respected viewpoints on the topic. Similar to Pittman, Kerpelman, Lamke, and Sollie (2009) participants for this study were selected on the basis of their expertise, in this case, their knowledge or study of social justice. This is defined by the publication of a(n) article(s) or books on the topic of social justice or a significant reputation in circles of social justice advocates (these two criteria were generally synonymous). Contacted participants who met these criteria were also able to recommend other professionals, developing professionals, or advanced students whom they believed also met the qualifications for participation.

The literature varies on the appropriate number of participants. Some text suggests that data collection should stop when viewpoints begin to be repeated and new participants do not add

more information (data saturation), which may mean a small number of participants are needed (McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Baker, Wildman, Mason, & Donaldson, 2014; Pittman, et al., 2009). Stenner and colleagues (2008) suggested 40-80. Campbell (1995) suggested half the Q set minus one. Webler et al. (2009) suggested there be one participant per every three Q set questions. This puts the appropriate range between 15 and 40. Large numbers of participants are contraindicated as they may mask nuances and complexities in the data (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

Participants were be recruited individually through personal contact (in person, by phone, or by email) to gauge interest in participating. Those who chose to participate were sent a package of materials including:

- A large sheet of paper with the Q sort pyramid printed on it
- Demographic questionnaire (Appendix B)
- Instructions on how to complete the Q sort (Appendix C)
- A set of adhesive notes with Q set items printed on them (list of items is in Appendix D)
- Follow up questionnaire (Appendix E)
- Informed Consent (Appendix F)
- Return postage for the package

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Although this procedure has more historically been carried out face to face, due to geographical restrictions, it was necessary to collect data remotely. A remote approach to data collection in Q methodology is not novel, as previous studies have been conducted over the phone (Moses, 2012). Materials were created to allow the process to be conducted at the participant's convenience. These materials were included: answers to common questions; instructions on the process of placing items in the Q sort; and contact information for the researcher so she could be contacted via phone, video call, or email during the process (Appendix C). The concourse was randomized in each packet in order to help protect against possible issues with item order and variance as discussed in Serfass and Sherman (2013).

Participants were also given a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) and a follow up questionnaire (Appendix E) that covers areas stated as necessary in Watts and Stenner (2005):

how the participant interpreted items placed at extremes; the implications of those items in the participants overall conceptualization of the topic; if there are additional items they would have used (and why they are important); and any further comments on any part of the process including anything that might have been confusing.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### **Description of the Sample**

The population for this study consisted of professionals and students with a demonstrated interest and/or expertise in social justice in the fields of psychology, social work, public health, and theology. The sample was diverse in many ways as can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 2. Attempts were made to recruit individuals from each of these fields, however participants from the field of psychology responded and consented at much higher rates than the other fields, as seen in Table 3. Over 60 individuals were invited to participate and 35 packets were distributed to individuals who agreed to participate in the study. Of these packets, 21 were returned with completed materials. Two participants were thrown out because of incorrectly completed materials.



Figure 1. Map of Participant Locations

Table 2.

*Participant Demographics*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Age		
23	1	5.3
25	4	21.1
26	1	5.3
27	1	5.3
28	1	5.3
31	1	5.3
32	1	5.3
33	1	5.3
34	1	5.3
38	1	5.3
43	1	5.3
45	1	5.3
48	1	5.3
50	1	5.3
53	1	5.3
67	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	19	100
Gender		
Female	10	52.6
Male	8	42.1

Transgender	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	19	100
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian or White	13	68.8
African American or Black	1	5.3
Asian American or Pacific Islander	1	5.3
Hispanic or Latino/a	3	15.3
Native American or American Indian	0	0
Biracial	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	19	100
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	8	42.1
Homosexual	2	10.5
Asexual	0	0
Bisexual	6	31.6
Queer	4	21.1
Questioning	0	0
Two Spirit	0	0
Pansexual	1	5.3
Prefer not to label	0	0
Other	0	0
<i>Total</i>	19	100
Religious Orientation		
Christian	8	42.1
Agnostic	3	15.8
Atheist	3	15.8
Buddhist	1	5.3
None	2	10.5
Other		
Orthodox Christian	1	5.3
Unitarian Universalist	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	19	100
Political Ideology		
Very Conservative	0	0
Conservative	0	0
Slightly Conservative	1	5.3
No interest in any political stance	0	0
Slightly Liberal	2	10.5
Liberal	9	47.4
Very Liberal	7	36.8
<i>Total</i>	19	100

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Table 3.

*Participant Education/Work Demographics*

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Highest degree obtain/in process of obtaining</b>		
Master's	5	26.3
Doctoral	14	73.7
<i>Total</i>	19	100
<b>Student</b>		
Yes	6	31.6
No	13	68.4
<i>Total</i>	19	100
<b>Type of program last attended/currently attending</b>		
Psychology		
Counseling	7	36.8
Clinical	0	0
Counselor Educator	4	21.1
Mental Health Counseling	2	10.5
Community & Cultural	1	5.3
Social	1	5.3
Social Work	2	10.5
Public Health Doctorate	1	5.3
Theology Doctorate	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	19	100
<b>Work Status</b>		
Working in a helping field	12	63.2
Working, but not in a helping field	2	10.5
Not currently working	0	0
A student in a helping field	5	26.3
<i>Total</i>	19	100
<b>Work Setting</b>		
Academia (professors and students)	11	57.9
Community/Non-profit agency	6	31.6
Other		
Public hospital	1	5.3
Public K-12 school	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	19	100
<b>Licensed practitioner</b>		
Yes	6	31.6
No	13	68.4
<i>Total</i>	19	100
<b>License Type</b>		
Psychologist (Ph.D.)	2	10.5
Licensed Professional Counselor OR	3	15.8
Licensed Mental Health Counselor		
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	1	5.3
<i>Total</i>	6	100

Participant's ages ranged from 23 to 67, with a mean of 35.68 and a standard deviation of 12.189. The majority of participants identified as female (n=10, 52.6%), eight identified as male (42.1%) and one identified as transgender (5.3%). The majority of participants identified as Caucasian (n=14, 73.7%), three identified as Hispanic or Latino/a (15.8%), two identified as Asian American or Pacific Islander (10.5%), and one identified as African American (5.3%). The majority of participants had obtained or were in the process of obtaining a doctoral degree (n=14, 73.7%), and five had obtained or were in the process of obtaining a master's degree (26.3%). The majority of participants were in an academic setting as either professors or students (n=11, 57.9%), six were in community or non-profit settings (31.6%), one worked in a public hospital (5.3%), and one worked in a K-12 school (5.3%). The majority of participants were not licensed practitioners (n=13, 68.4%), and six were licensed (31.6%). Just over 30% of the sample were currently students (n=6, 31.6%), 13 were professionals (68.4%).

Nearly half of participants rated their political ideology as "Liberal" (N=9, 47.4%), seven selected "Very Liberal" (36.8%), two selected "Slightly Liberal" (10.5%), and one selected "Slightly Conservative" (5.3%). Nearly half of participants identified as heterosexual (n=8, 42.1%), two identified as homosexual (10.5%), six identified as bisexual (31.6%), four identified as queer (21.1%), and one identified as pansexual (5.3%). Nearly half of participants identified as Christian (n=8, 42.1%), three identified as Agnostic (15.8%), three identified as Atheist (15.8%), two identified as having no religious orientation (10.5%), one identified as Buddhist (5.3%), and two identified as other (Orthodox Christian and Unitarian Universalist) (10.5%). Participants reported a minimum of 10 minutes and a maximum of 75 minutes to complete the sort (M=42.37, SD=17.667).

### **Quantitative Analyses**

Q method factor analyses are similar to traditional factor analyses in that factors are created. However, in traditional factor analysis, one is examining similarities in item clusters and in Q-method factor analysis one is examining similarities in participant response clusters. Q sort

analysis comes in four main steps (a) factor extraction and rotation (b) determining factor scores (c) recreating factor arrays (d) qualitative analysis of results. There exists a free software developed by Schmolck (2002) called PQMethod 2.11, which greatly aids in the statistical analysis of the data. This program was used for this data set.

It was hypothesized the data may be reduced to only include participants from the field of psychology because there were so few participants from the other fields of social work, theology, and public health (n=4). The analyses were run for all 19 participants and then for the 15 individuals from psychology. Factor B array was identical for both data sets and Factor A only differed by two within the poles (items 28 & 18). The reduced data set only contained two significant factors, whereas the full data set contained three potential factors (Eigenvalues over 1). However as explained in the next section, the third factor was eventually discarded due to its confounding nature. Qualitative responses from the four individuals outside of psychology seem to follow the same themes discussed among participants from psychology. Thus, the full data set of 19 participants was used in the final analysis. It is believed this data set also illustrated interesting implications as discussed in the Conclusion section of this paper.

### **Factor Extraction and Rotation**

A correlation matrix was run to identify correlations between individual sorts as a means to extract factors (Brown, 1993). Centroid method of factor extraction was chosen, as factor rotation method matters little in Q sorts (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Centroid method is also preferred because it provides infinite number of rotated solutions preserving interpretation of the data (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Seven factors were extracted as rarely more than seven distinct factors emerge from Q sort data (Moses, 2012). Significant factors were deemed so if they had eigenvalues above one and came before the “elbow” in the scree plot. Three potential factors emerged from the data. However, after qualitative analysis, it was determined the third factor was

similar enough from the other two factors to warrant its exclusion. The third factor seemed to be a blend of opinions represented in factors A & B. The three factor model also only accounted for 6% more variance than the two factor model. Thus, the data was rerun with two factors. A varimax rotation was done due to recommendations by Watts and Stenner (2005) in order to maximize the variance explained by factors and because its orthogonality makes it the most effective method for determining independent factors (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). After varimax rotation, 56% of the total variance was accounted for with two distinct factors. Factor A accounted for 40% of the variance and Factor B accounted for 16% percent of the variance.

The next stage of analysis involved determining which factor loadings were significant. This was done through calculating the standard error. The formula for standard error is  $SE=1/\sqrt{N}$ , where N= number of concourse items (Brown, 1993). For this study the standard error is  $1/\sqrt{47} = 0.15$ . For the loading to be significant it is recommended that the factor loading value be 2-2.5 times the standard error value (Brown, 1993). More stringent value of 2.58 times the standard error is often used for  $p \leq .01$  (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). For this study, the threshold of .387 (rounded up to .39), or 2.58 times 0.15 was used. Using this criteria 13 participants loaded significantly and exclusively on Factor A, and two loaded significantly and exclusively on Factor B, all participants significantly loaded on either factor and four loaded on both factors or were “confounded”. Only participants who loaded exclusively on one factor could be used in further statistical analyses (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

Interestingly, beyond the four participants that co-loaded on both factors with loadings above .39, there were six more participants that would have co-loaded on both factors if less stringent loadings were used (.30-.38). This may imply there is a greater agreement between participants than current data shows. This is discussed in more detail in the qualitative analysis section below.

## **Factor Scores**

Once factors are determined, factor scores or weighted averages must be calculated for each concourse item. The formula for factor weights is as follows:  $\text{weight} = \frac{\text{factor loading}}{1 - (\text{factor loading})^2}$  (Brown, 1993). This calculation is repeated for every participant in the factor. These products are summed for all participants for each item, thus creating factor scores for each item that are the average of the participant's scores and weighted by their factor loading. The formula for item 1 is as follows:  $\text{Factor score item \#1} = (\text{participant 1 weight}) (\text{participant 1 column value for item 1}) + (\text{participant 2 weight}) (\text{participant 2 column value for item 1}) + \dots + (\text{participant n weight}) (\text{participant n column value for item 1})$ . This formula is repeated for each item using the participants' factor weights and column rankings. These resulting scores are not significant themselves, but create the values used to organize the average Q sort for the factors.

## **Factor Arrays**

The next step is to generate the factor arrays in the Q sort shape that represent the aggregate opinion of all participants on that factor. Once the factor scores have been obtained for every item, they are placed into the Q sort shape from lowest to highest starting on the left side of the Q sort (Brown, 1993). The values are then replaced by the items they represent, which creates the average Q sort for participants in that factor. These average Q sorts for factors A and B can be found in Figures 2 and 3, respectively.

16. An abstract ideal imposed from powerful/government systems	45. Continuing the work of a higher power					
28. Equitable distribution based upon different contractual agreements	46. The use of practical and applied theologies to improve the lives of people	27. Equitable distribution to those of equal productivity				
15. A form of natural duty owed by one person to another	37. Using the power subscribed to you by a larger community	33. An internal sense of spiritual responsibility or conscience	38. A general obligation to protect the individual against disease and injury			
41. Balancing and addressing global and local issues	47. Part of or central to the practice of good stewardship	39. Minimizing damage of harmful elements (policy or environment) when exposure cannot be controlled	9. Evaluating effectiveness in one's advocacy efforts	32. Helping individuals develop fulfilling relationships		
17. The empowerment of people through governmental systems that are listening and responding to their constituents wants and needs	1. Possessing knowledge of relevant policies that are empowering or harmful to people	19. Preparing individuals and communities for existing opportunities so people can reach their full potential	31. Equitable distribution of obligations in society	44. Creating reciprocal relationships within communities	20. Harmony between the needs of individuals and needs of the whole	
23. Willingness to make sacrifices with the understanding it will ultimately maintain the best interests for all	6. Recognizing if an individual's or group's behaviors and concerns reflect responses to systemic or internalized oppression	8. Providing and analyzing data to show the urgency for social/political change	36. Examining context, history, culture, and economic and political realities with the purpose of seeing how these mitigate against the full humanity or dignity of themselves and others	35. Treating stakeholders in social endeavors with respect and humility	5. Identifying the social, political, economic and cultural factors that affect people	13. Addressing factors that may impede human psychosocial development
24. Unifying factors underlying the general movement towards a fairer, less oppressive society	11. Professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to tools of self-determination	7. Collaboration with community groups and/or religious organizations to address systemic inequalities	40. Asserting the value and priority of all human life	2. Believing societal forces (e.g., public policies, resource allocation, human rights) affect individuals' health and well-being.	10. Scholarship designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to improve quality of life	
22. The right to participate and/or be consulted on decisions that affect one's life	26. Equal opportunity to obtain social goods (e.g. property)	4. Identifying the social, political, economic and cultural factors that affect people	18. Valuing fairness/equity for marginalized groups who do not share equal power in society	29. Equal opportunity for participation by all groups in a society		
34. Advocating on behalf of marginalized groups as well as mobilizing and empowering them to speak for themselves.	12. Absence of systemic disparities in health between social groups	25. Equal opportunity to obtain social goods (e.g. property)	42. The alleviation of poverty			
30. Equitable distribution of resources in society (health care, education, social rights, etc.)	3. Addressing structural inequalities and barriers in institutional and government policies/legislation.	21. Ability of people to access the knowledge, power, resources, and services crucial to realizing a standard of living that allows self-actualization and self-determination				
43. The liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion.	14. Promoting equity for individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded due to a specific group membership					

Figure 2. Average Q Sort for Factor A

17.The empowerment of people through governmental systems that are listening and responding to their constituents wants and needs	45.Continuing the work of a higher power					
29.Equal opportunity for participation by all groups in a society	16.An abstract ideal imposed from powerful/government systems	37.Using the power subscribed to you by a larger community				
38.A general obligation to protect the individual against disease and injury	40.Asserting the value and priority of all human life	46.The use of practical and applied theologies to improve the lives of people	31.Equitable distribution of obligations in society			
28.Equitable distribution based upon different contractual agreements	23.Willingness to make sacrifices with the understanding it will ultimately maintain the best interests for all	21.Ability of people to access the knowledge, power, resources, and services crucial to realizing a standard of living that allows self-actualization and self-determination	2. Believing societal forces (e.g., public policies, resource allocation, human rights) affect individuals' health and well-being.	26.Equal opportunity to obtain social goods (e.g. property)		
43. The liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion.	15.A form of natural duty owed by one person to another	39.Minimizing damage of harmful elements (policy or environment) when exposure cannot be controlled	5. Identifying the social, political, economic and cultural factors that affect people	25.Equal rights to intangibles (e.g. freedom)	47.Part of or central to the practice of good stewardship	
44.Creating reciprocal relationships within communities	22.The right to participate and/or be consulted on decisions that affect one's life	36.Examining context, history, culture, and economic and political realities with the purpose of seeing how these mitigate against the full humanity or dignity of themselves and others	27.Equitable distribution to those of equal productivity	13.Addressing factors that may impede human psychosocial development	7.Collaboration with community groups and/or religious organizations to address systemic inequalities	20.Harmony between the needs of individuals and needs of the whole
42.The alleviation of poverty	35.Treating stakeholders in social endeavors with respect and humility	24.Unifying factors underlying the general movement towards a fairer, less oppressive society	19.Preparing individuals and communities for existing opportunities so people can reach their full potential	33.An internal sense of spiritual responsibility or conscience	1.Possessing knowledge of relevant policies that are empowering or harmful to people	
41.Balancing and addressing global and local issues	11.Professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to tools of self-determination	32.Helping individuals develop fulfilling relationships	18.Valuing fairness/equity for marginalized groups who do not share equal power in society	12.Absence of systemic disparities in health between social groups		
6.Recognizing if an individual's or group's behaviors and concerns reflect responses to systemic or internalized oppression	14.Promoting equity for individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded due to a specific group membership	10.Scholarship designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to improve quality of life	9.Evaluating effectiveness in one's advocacy efforts			
4.Helping members from marginalized groups to become more empowered by creating more opportunities for success (e.g., educational, career) by developing relevant skills	8.Providing and analyzing data to show the urgency for social/political change	30. Equitable distribution of resources in society (health care, education, social rights, etc.)				
34. Advocating on behalf of marginalized groups as well as mobilizing and empowering them to speak for themselves.	3. Addressing structural inequalities and barriers in institutional and government policies/legislation.					

Figure 3. Average Q Sort for Factor B

## Qualitative Analysis

### Factor Endpoints

Once the aggregate Q sorts have been created, the interpretation begins at the extremes or “poles” of each Q sort (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The endpoints represent the items participants feel most and least describe the definition of social justice. Participants’ discussion of these items and other prominent items is found in the next section as many themes are present in both Factor A and B.

### Factor A

For Factor A the following items were placed in the three columns on the far left or under “Most Like the Definition of Social Justice”. They are listed in order of placement to most extreme to more neutral.

14. Promoting equity for individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded due to a specific group membership
43. The liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion.
21. Ability of people to access the knowledge, power, resources, and services crucial to realizing a standard of living that allows self-actualization and self-determination
3. Addressing structural inequalities and barriers in institutional and government policies/legislation.
30. Equitable distribution of resources in society (health care, education, social rights, etc.)
42. The alleviation of poverty
25. Equal rights to intangibles (e.g. freedom)
12. Absence of systemic disparities in health between social groups
34. Advocating on behalf of marginalized groups as well as mobilizing and empowering them to speak for themselves.

From these items, three themes seemed to emerge. The first of these themes is a focus on *large scale action to correct or change historical disparities*. This includes items 14, 43, 3, and 34. All of these items include action words like “Liberation” “Advocating” “Promoting” and “Addressing”. They also mention a specific population “marginalized groups” “individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded”, “vulnerable and oppressed people”. Item 3

mentions “structural inequalities” rather than an individual group, however it is understood these structural inequalities impact certain groups more than others.

The second and third themes were both related to access and rights. However, they differed in the type of access. One theme focused more closely on *intangible or abstract aspects access and rights*. This theme included items 21 and 25. Item 21 discusses the ability to *access* the resources necessary for self-actualization and self-determination without stating what they might be. Item 25 explicitly states “Equal rights to intangibles (e.g. freedom)”. These statements imply the definition of social justice involves more than goods and services.

The third theme is *tangible or measurable access/resources*. The items included in this theme are 30, 42, and 12. Item 30 includes “equitable distribution of resources” such as health care, education and social rights. These may be harder to measure than “health disparities” as mentioned in item 12 or poverty as mentioned in item 42, but they are also more easily measured than the abstract concepts like freedom mentioned in the previous theme.

For Factor A the following items were placed in the three columns on the far left or under “Least like the Definition of Social Justice”. They are listed in order of placement to most extreme to more neutral.

- 45. Continuing the work of a higher power
- 16. An abstract ideal imposed from powerful/government systems
- 27. Equitable distribution to those of equal productivity
- 46. The use of practical and applied theologies to improve the lives of people
- 28. Equitable distribution based upon different contractual agreements
- 38. A general obligation to protect the individual against disease and injury
- 33. An internal sense of spiritual responsibility or conscience
- 37. Using the power subscribed to you by a larger community
- 15. A form of natural duty owed by one person to another

Four themes emerged from these items. The first theme is *religious motivation*. The items included in this theme are 45 and 46. These items have an overt religious or spiritual nature “higher power” “applied theologies”. The next theme is *obligation*. This includes items 33, 15, and 38. Each of these items speak of “responsibility”, “duty” and “obligation” as motivation for

social justice. It seems while participants think working towards social justice is necessary, it is not a natural burden, but perhaps a chosen cause.

The next theme is *top down power*. This theme includes items 16 and 37. There seems to be a distrust of powerful systems or individuals among participants in Factor A. Perhaps this is related to the theme of changing systems seen in the “most like” items. The last theme is *equitable distribution*. The items included in this theme are 27 and 28. While there are several items around equitable and equal distribution, few of these items ended up in the poles of the Q sorts, which seems to imply participants were carefully considering the full content of the items. In this instance it is equitable distribution based on “productivity” and “contractual agreements”. Participants appeared to think there are some inherently unfair underpinnings of these potential distribution mechanisms.

## **Factor B**

For Factor B the following items were placed in the three columns on the far left or under “Most Like the Definition of Social Justice”. They are listed in order of placement to most extreme to more neutral.

3. Addressing structural inequalities and barriers in institutional and government policies/legislation.
34. Advocating on behalf of marginalized groups as well as mobilizing and empowering them to speak for themselves.
30. Equitable distribution of resources in society (health care, education, social rights, etc.)
8. Providing and analyzing data to show the urgency for social/political change
4. Helping members from marginalized groups to become more empowered by creating more opportunities for success (e.g., educational, career) by developing relevant skills
9. Evaluating effectiveness in one’s advocacy efforts
10. Scholarship designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to improve quality of life
14. Promoting equity for individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded due to a specific group membership
6. Recognizing if an individual’s or group’s behaviors and concerns reflect responses to systemic or internalized oppression

Two themes emerged from these items. The first them is *large scale action to correct or change historical disparities*. This included items 34, 3, 14, and 4. This theme has already been discussed for Factor A with nearly identical items. Item 43 is replaced with item 4 for Factor B.

However, the theme remains unchanged. The second theme for these items is *behind the scenes action to correct or change historical disparities*. This theme included items 8, 9, and 10. These items were all related to the use of data and scholarship to promote and evaluate social justice activities. Two items, 6 and 30, did not fit under any of the themes mentioned above nor did come together to create a new theme.

For Factor B the following items were placed in the three columns on the far left or under “Least like the Definition of Social Justice”. They are listed in order of placement to most extreme to more neutral.

- 45. Continuing the work of a higher power
- 17. The empowerment of people through governmental systems that are listening and responding to their constituents’ wants and needs
- 37. Using the power subscribed to you by a larger community
- 16. An abstract ideal imposed from powerful/government systems
- 29. Equal opportunity for participation by all groups in a society
- 31. Equitable distribution of obligations in society
- 40. Asserting the value and priority of all human life
- 46. The use of practical and applied theologies to improve the lives of people
- 38. A general obligation to protect the individual against disease and injury

Four main themes emerged from these items. The first theme was *top down power*, which included items 37, 17, and 16. This theme was discussed previously for Factor A. In Factor B, item 17 was added. This item directly dealt with power through government systems but also included the caveat that these systems would have to listen and respond to constituents’ wants and needs. It seems this addition was still not enough to sway the participants’ distrust of power systems. The second theme was *religious motivation*. This included items 45 and 46 and was discussed for Factor A.

The third theme was *priorities*. This included items 40 and 38. These items named values that might be espoused by the definition of social justice including the value of all human life and protecting against disease and injury. Participants seemed to prefer action over values or broad statements.

The fourth theme was *equitable versus equal*. This is similar to the theme of equitable distribution discussed for Factor A, however there are significant differences. This theme includes items 29 and 31. Similarly to Factor A, participants seem to have carefully evaluated the meaning of the statement and there continues to be a concern about the implications of equitable distribution. However, item 29 mentions “equal opportunity”, which may imply attempting to do this within the current situation, which may not actually lead to equal opportunity until some of the action mentioned in the ‘most like’ items is accomplished.

### **Differences between Factors**

The next step in the qualitative analysis of a Q sort is to examine the significant differences between the two factor arrays. Generally, when examining differences within item placement between factors, a difference of two columns is considered to significant (Brown, 1993). For this study a distance of at least three columns was used to ensure differences were truly meaningful (Moses, 2012). Table 6 shows the significant final factor array differences for factors A and B.

Table 4.

*Significant Factor Array Differences*

Item	Factor A Value	Factor B Value	Column Difference
43. The liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion.	5	-1	6
29. Equal opportunity for participation by all groups in a society	2	-4	6
21. Ability of people to access the knowledge, power, resources, and services crucial to realizing a standard of living that allows self-actualization and self-determination	4	-2	6
9. Evaluating effectiveness in one's advocacy efforts	-2	3	5
17. The empowerment of people through governmental systems that are listening and responding to their constituents wants and needs	-1	-5	4
26. Equal opportunity to obtain social goods (e.g. property)	2	-2	4
32. Helping individuals develop fulfilling relationships	-2	2	4
27. Equitable distribution to those of equal productivity	-4	0	4
41. Balancing and addressing global and local issues	-2	2	4
8. Providing and analyzing data to show the urgency for social/political change	0	4	4
25. Equal rights to intangibles (e.g. freedom)	3	-1	4
33. An internal sense of spiritual responsibility or conscience	-3	1	4
40. Asserting the value and priority of all human life	1	-3	4
6. Recognizing if an individual's or group's behaviors and concerns reflect responses to systemic or internalized oppression	0	3	3
2. Believing societal forces (e.g., public policies, resource allocation, human rights) effect individuals' health and well-being.	1	-2	3

*Negative factor values = not like the definition of social justice*  
*Positive factor values = like the definition of social justice*

The first theme within the Factor differences is *action*. This theme was discussed for both factors in slightly different ways. In this instance it includes items 43, 17, and 32. Participants varied greatly on what actions they thought were part of the definition of social justice. Individuals in Factor A ranked “liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people” in the most like column where individuals in Factor B ranked in just to the left (less like) side of the neutral column. Individuals from both factors ranked item 17 on the less like social justice side, however individuals in Factor A placed in much closer to neutral while individuals in Factor B placed it in the most extreme column on the left. Lastly for this theme, it seems individuals from both factors feel moderately about the role of “helping individuals develop fulfilling relationships” in the definition of social justice, however, individuals in Factor A felt it was less like the definition and those in Factor B felt it was more like the definition.

The second theme within the factor array differences was the theme of *opportunity and ability*. Again, some aspects of this theme have been mentioned above. Interestingly, individuals in Factor A ranked all of the items contained in this theme (29, 21, and 26) on the right (most like) side of the sort while individuals from Factor B ranked each of these items on the left (least like) side of the sort.

The third theme was *behind the scenes action*. This included items 9 and 8, which have been discussed above. Individuals in Factor A seemed to regards these items as moderately less like the definition and neutral to the definition, whereas, those in Factor B ranked them in the more like pole. The fourth theme contained items 2 and 6 and seems to be related to *awareness of symptoms and systems of oppression*. Those in Factor A ranked both of these items on or near the neutral column, and those in Factor B ranked “recognizing behaviors or concerns as reflections of oppression” in the most like pole and believing individuals are impacted by societal forces as moderately less like the definition of social justice.

Four items (25, 27, 33, and 40) did not fit into any one category but have been discussed separately above under the themes of intangible rights/access, equitable distribution, duty/obligation, and priorities, respectively.

One item that has not been previously discussed and also did not fit under a theme is item 41. Individuals in Factor A felt “balancing and addressing global and local issues” was moderately less like the definition of social justice, while those in Factor B felt it was moderately more like the definition.

### **Similarities between Factors**

The following section focuses on how Factor A and B are similar. Twenty two items (46.8%) were placed in the same column or within one column distance between Factor A and B. This implies a large amount of agreement between all participants. Items on the poles (3, 4, 5, -3, -4, -5) are more clearly interpretable since participants are likely to more carefully consider placement of items on the poles and by definition, these are items around which participants have more conviction. Table 7 shows the non-significant final factor array differences for factors A and B.

Table 5.

*Nonsignificant Factor Array Differences*

Item	Factor A Value	Factor B Value	Column Difference
30. Equitable distribution of resources in society (health care, education, social rights, etc.)	4	4	0
45. Continuing the work of a higher power	-5	-5	0
38. A general obligation to protect the individual against disease and injury	-3	-3	0
46. The use of practical and applied theologies to improve the lives of people	-4	-3	1
16. An abstract ideal imposed from powerful/government systems	-5	-4	1
3. Addressing structural inequalities and barriers in institutional and government policies/legislation	4	5	1
37. Using the power subscribed to you by a larger community	-3	-4	1
14. Promoting equity for individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded due to a specific group membership	5	3	2
34. Advocating on behalf of marginalized groups as well as mobilizing and empowering them to speak for themselves.	3	5	2

*Negative factor values = not like the definition of social justice*

*Positive factor values = like the definition of social justice*

One theme found in these items was *religious motivation*. This included items 45 and 46. Individuals in both factors ranked “continuing the work on a higher power” in the column furthest to the left. Item 46 was also placed in the less like pole for individuals in both factors. Another theme that emerged was *top down power* (items 16 & 37). This theme was mentioned in both factors above as less like the definition of social justice. The third theme was *action*. This included items 3, 14, 34, which have been discussed above. All participants ranked these items are more like social justice. The two remaining items (30 & 38) did not fit into a theme, but have

been discussed previously under the themes of tangible access/rights and priorities, respectively. Participants ranked “equitable distribution of resources in society” in the most like pole and “general obligation to protect the individuals against injury and disease” in the less like pole.

### **Participant Responses**

While Q sort methodology calls for a thematic analysis of the factor poles and similarities and differences, participant responses to items can provide another layer of depth to the data. As part of suggested protocol by Watts and Stenner (2005), participants were asked to respond to the following questions after completing the Q sort:

- What items the participant placed at the poles (column -5 and 5)
- The implications of those items in the participants overall conceptualization of the topic
- What items were placed in the middle or neutral column and why
- If there are additional items they would have used (and why they are important)
- Any further comments on any part of the process including anything that might have been confusing.

These responses were used to assist in the further interpretation of the factor arrays. The most frequently mentioned items are discussed below underneath themed headings from most mentioned to least mentioned. While nearly all of these themes have been previously discussed, the following analyses will serve to expand the analysis by examining the participant’s positive, negative and/or neutral opinions about the items.

#### **Action** (20 mentions)

14. Promoting equity for individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded due to a specific group membership
43. The liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion
34. Advocating on behalf of marginalized groups as well as mobilizing and empowering them to speak for themselves.

There was an acknowledgement by participants of the “the reality of vulnerable/oppressed people” and the fact that “[s]ocial marginalization has been shown to have crippling psychological effects.” Participants clearly identified their affinity for these items as stemming from action. They considered these items to involve “actionable language”, “concrete and obtainable actions”, “fight[ing] for people who have been systemically oppressed” and was

“more than just an awareness of injustice”. One participant stated, “I like this definition because it is about action and access, which to me are the two main component of social justice.” Similarly, another participant wrote, “My idea of social justice equals action. Action in thought and moreover, deed.” Another participant commented, “. . .social justice is an action to correct an injustice. Social injustice lies in disempowerment, exclusion, and to be corrected, the people who are victims need to be the ones who are liberated, empowered, and restored to equal status.” This idea was mirrored in another comment, “Social justice is a corrective action as well as restoration of rights and equality.” Many participants focused on the implications of the language. One participant commented, “The word ‘liberation’ seemed the least neocolonial and most aligned with holistic action directed towards justice in the eyes of the oppressed.” There was also a concern for “balance” and who should be involved in the fight for social justice. One participant stated “. . .you, yourself, take action as an ally and that you know when to step back and let others take action for themselves.” Another participant disagreed and stated,

“I think the idea that marginalized groups should be a part of the fight toward social justice is completely accurate. However, ‘mobilizing and empowering’ them is offensive, assumes “they can’t do it themselves” and speaks from a point of privilege. I don’t believe anyone can empower anyone else. We can work to create contexts that enable empowerment but it is not up to ‘us’ to control someone else’s life and experiences.”

Participants who discussed these items also identified they connected with these statements because they “named problem and solution in systems/context.” One participant wrote this focus “brings the level of analysis up beyond the individual (and thus removes the blame from that level), putting a focus on the social determinants of inequality and disparity.” Again, the wording of the items was carefully considered as demonstrated by this participant’s comment. “I might have put 43 furthest to the right but it would have had to have been clearer that this [liberation] was coming from the oppressed themselves, and not externally pushed by the community organizers.” Another participant commented they liked item 14 because “it did not depend or rely

on a system embedded in injustice such as academia or government.” This statement reflects a distrust of large systems that will be further illustrated in the next theme.

**Top Down Power** (14 mentions)

- 37. Using the power subscribed to you by a larger community
- 16. An abstract ideal imposed from powerful/government systems

Nearly every participant who discussed item 16 stated it was problematic because they did not feel social justice was “abstract or an ideal”. One participant commented they did not believe it could be “imposed”. The participants went on to say they felt social justice is “very real, tangible” “concrete and achievable”, “obtainable”, and “can be action (behavior), policy, thought...many things, [but] not abstract.” One participant mentioned defining social justice using item 16 “...defies the ability to have a concrete idea, which would help promote identification and action.”

Many participants who discussed these items stated a negative view of systems of power in connection with social justice. They stated, “Powerful systems and government are the foundation of social injustice by and large.” “[social justice] rarely comes from those in power”, and “If anything, governments move people away from social justice.” The wording of item 37 was also troublesome for some as they were wary of how the power might be used or if it was “rightfully earned”, thus motivating them to move that item closer to the center. However one participant did comment on this item by stating, “Social justice involves harnessing one’s personal and interpersonal power to work for change”, thus naming how the power would be used. Another participant seemed to hold a slightly more balanced idea about systems of power. They stated:

“The government and the academy, while places to spring board ideas, campaigns, and resources, are spaces which historically advantage those with access and power and therefore are inherently unjust. However, since they exist, they of course can lean towards justice - in participatory, liberatory ways. Generally, constructs that seemed to be defined by the powerful I feel neutral about versus "most like social justice" about.”

Overall, participants who responded to these items exhibited a clear distrust of powerful systems and the way power is bestowed and used. One participant mentioned an interesting idea.

They stated, “I think a practitioner’s action-oriented, tangible, and locally defined definitions of social justice are important.” This points to the idea that social justice is defined by the individual in a specific context and perhaps multiple definitions of social justice can exist simultaneously. Two participants commented on an alternate path to social justice through “grassroots action” “created by a coalition of people...It will emerge from and be forged by communities.” This is similar to the *action* theme discussed above, where participants stressed the action needs to be motivated by the community.

**Religious Motivation** (45 & 47; 13 mentions) / **Duty** (33 & 15; 9 mentions)

- 45. Continuing the work of a higher power
- 47. Part of or central to the practice of good stewardship
- 33. An internal sense of spiritual responsibility or conscience
- 15. A form of natural duty owed by one person to another

While these two themes are discussed separately in context of the factor arrays, participants did not seem to think of them in very different ways. Many of these items were lumped together by participants. For the most part, participants were very clear as to why they ranked item 45 low in their sort. Four participants stated religion is often an oppressive system. This again shows the participants’ distrust of powerful systems. One exemplary comment was, “social inequity is the result of and perpetuated by religion.” Another participant provided a slightly more balanced view by stating, “...belief systems/ religion are often used to oppress as well as empower.” Six participants also mentioned they simply did not believe faith, spirituality or a higher power was involved or at least required in acts of social justice. Three participants commented that not only is faith or a god not involved or needed but that “human decency should suffice and social justice is a very “human” idea or “comes from the ground up, from humanity.” Even participants who stated they believed in a higher power also commented that while their faith may play a role in their personal definition of social justice, they did not believe it was a central component in the overall definition of social justice. One participant stated, “I felt like many of these items could or could not contribute to social justice depending on the person

believing/doing them.” This mirrors the idea above that the definition of social justice may have an individualized component.

For item 15, participants stated social justice is not “owed” or a “natural duty” but rather “what is right and true” and an intentional act”. This seemed to relate back to the idea of empowerment of agents of social justice as well as the potential grassroots nature of social justice movements. In regards to item 47, participants had varied opinions. One thought it was “management, not work with/alongside others”. Another stated it was not concrete enough. Yet another stated it was possible for it to be a part of social justice it was not the “only part”. This idea of an item not being “enough” was present for several other items, which will be discussed below.

**Equitable Distribution** (8 mentions)

- 27. Equitable distribution to those of equal productivity
- 30. Equitable distribution of resources in society (health care, education, social rights, etc.)

Items about equity and equality have been discussed in the quantitative findings section above. Participants seemed to read these items very closely and had more neutral opinions about many of them, however item 27 and 30 were mentioned frequently in the discussion part of the questionnaire. Participants who wrote about these items tended to think 27 was problematic because it “places blame on the individual” and is “not focused on defining or solving a problem”. They also felt it did not take enough context into consideration because “not all individuals can contribute equally”. For item 30, participants did not have a lot to say other than “equity is a core principle of social justice” and “equality of access is key”.

**Behind the Scenes Action** (7 mentions)

10. Scholarship designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to improve quality of life
11. Professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to tools of self-determination

These items were discussed in conjunction with items 8 and 9 in the previous section. All of these items deal with the more research based side of social justice, however, only items 10 and 11 were discussed individually more than twice. Participants seemed to be torn on whether or not these items represented action. Some participants stated they ranked them on the far right because they were “Action that is aimed toward changing values, structures, and policies”. Others stated it was indirect action or “social justice work” but not the definition of social justice. One participant stated they placed item 10 on the far right because “that’s what I do”, which again reflects the idea that individuals likely balance their personal definition and the professional definition of social justice. Lastly, one participant stated they felt item 10 was problematic because it was “putting justice in the eyes and hands of the powerful”. It seems these items held more weight for individuals in the academic realm. The implications of this are further expanded upon in the discussion section below.

**Willingness to Compromise** (6 times)

20. Harmony between the needs of individuals and needs of the whole
40. Asserting the value and priority of all human life

These two items were difficult to categorize because in many ways they are opposites. Item 20 is referring to equity and item 40 insists on equality. However, they are both views on the actions necessary to promote social justice. One participant felt item 40 was too vague and another felt item 20 was problematic because people have different needs. Participants saw these items as “a starting place” and “important for social justice, but...[not] central to the concept”. One participant stated, “...minimizing disparities and the effects of determinants are rooted to the belief of human self-worth”. It seemed participants felt these items were important underlying ideas of social justice but not within the explicit definition. This seems to support the idea there are different levels and potentially predisposing factors for true social justice action.

## Items Suggested by Participants

As mentioned above, participants had the opportunity to suggest items that may be missing from the sort that they felt were relevant or important. It should be noted that up until this point, items have been discussed in themes and generalizations. The following items were each suggested by one individual and thus may not be as generalizable as other data in this study.

- A value of my profession
- Something that balances risk and reward
- Explicitly stating fundamental human rights
- Inclusion of and leadership by those who are oppressed in our society (i.e. grassroots movements)
- Advocacy for someone who personally and negatively affects you and people like you for the benefit of greater society.
- Reparations for histories of injustice
- Individuals with power unifying with individuals with less power for a cause that will lead to more power/resources for those with less power
- A pairing of knowledge and action to foster social equity
- Acknowledging both my oppressed and privileged identities
- (Social justice can be) Impacted by personal life choices and broader scale actions
- Preventing war
- Item(s) about impacting the societal, political, and built environments around humans

Some of these items reflect themes found in the data including using power as a tool for social justice and the personal and professional balance of the definition. Although many participants had strong reactions to strong systems created top down change, other participants did acknowledge those with power can be helpful in the fight for social justice. Thus, the item endorsing those with power unifying with those with less power may to be a compromise allowing those with power to participate if they are partnered with the individuals impacted. Although a similar idea was reflected in item seven of the concourse “Collaboration with community groups and/or religious organizations to address systemic inequalities”. The explicit mention of religious organizations may have impacted participants’ ranking considering their strong opinions on other religious items.

Other items reflect the importance of predisposing factors like knowledge and awareness that were placed near the middle for most sorts. Interestingly, participants discussed item 20

“Harmony between the needs of individuals and needs of the whole” and often placed this item in more neutral columns, however, someone felt advocating for those who negatively affect you was also important, which seems to represent a similar idea of sacrifice.

### **Summary of Findings**

There was a total of 19 participants for this study in the fields of psychology, social work, theology, and public health. After quantitative analysis, two themes emerged. Thirteen people loaded exclusively on Factor A, two people loaded exclusively on Factor B and the remaining four co-loaded on both factors and were thus excluded from the quantitative analysis. As stated in the results chapter, the vast majority of participants (n=15) were from the field of psychology, while only four participants were from social work, public health, and theology combined. Because of the potential impact on the results, the analyses were run with and without the four participants from fields outside of psychology. No significant differences were found between the two analysis sets, and thus the final analysis used all 19 participants. One participant from the field of social work co-loaded on Factor A and B and thus was excluded from the final quantitative analysis, but was included in the qualitative analysis. The other three participants from fields outside of psychology all loaded on Factor A along with the majority of participants from the field of psychology.

Participants in Factor A stated they felt the definition of social justice contained the following themes: large scale action to correct or change historical disparities, intangible or abstract access and rights, and tangible or measurable access or resources. Large scale action included liberation for, promoting equity, advocating on behalf of and mobilizing vulnerable or oppressed groups as well as addressing structural inequalities in policies and legislation. Intangible access included equal rights to things like freedom and justice and the ability to access knowledge, power, and resources needed for a standard of living that allows self-actualization. Tangible access included the alleviation of poverty, equitable distribution of resources like health care and education, and the absence of systemic health and social disparities.

Those in Factor A ranked the following themes as less like the definition of social justice: religious motivation, obligation, top down power, equitable distribution. Religious motivation included the use of theology as a guide to improve lives of others and continuing the work of a higher power. Obligation included social justice as a natural duty to humans, the obligation to protect individuals against disease/injury, and an internal sense of responsibility. Top down power included social justice as an abstract ideal imposed by government and using power ascribed to you by a larger community. Equitable distribution included distribution based on productivity and contractual agreements.

Participants in Factor B ranked the following themes as most like the definition of social justice: large scale action and behind the scenes action. Action included similar items to Factor A with the addition of helping marginalized groups through the creation of opportunities through skills training. Behind the scenes action included scholarship designed to change values and policies, the use of data to show the need for change, and the evaluation of advocacy efforts. There were two items that did not fall into themes including the recognition of behaviors as reflections to oppression and equitable distribution of resources like health care and education.

The following themes were ranked as less like social justice by those in Factor B: top down power, religious motivation, priorities, equitable versus equal. Top down power was similar to the same theme for Factor A with the addition of empowerment of people through governmental systems that's are listening to their needs. Religious motivation was identical to the theme described for Factor A. priorities included asserting the value of all human life and an obligation to protect the individual against disease/injury. Equitable versus equal distribution included equal opportunity for participation and the equitable distribution of obligations.

Participants in Factors A and B were similar in their placement of religiously motivated items as well as top down power items. Participants also agreed equitable distribution of resources like education and health care were more like social justice and the obligation to protect individuals from injury and disease was less like the definition of social justice. Participants had

differing opinions within several themes. Individuals in Factor A ranked the liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people to the farthest right where those in Factor B ranked it slightly left (less like) of neutral. Those in Factor B ranked empowerment from government systems that are listening to their constituents was the least like social justice, while those in Factor A ranked it closer to the middle (neither like nor dislike the definition of social justice). Those in Factor A felt items within the behind the scenes action theme were moderately less like the definition and neutral to the definition, whereas, those in Factor B ranked them in the more like pole. Individuals in Factor A ranked items related to awareness of symptoms and systems of oppression on or near the neutral column, and those in Factor B ranked “recognizing behaviors or concerns as reflections of oppression” in the most like pole and believing individuals are impacted by societal forces as moderately less like the definition of social justice. Individuals from both factors feel moderately about social justice being defined by helping others develop fulfilling relationships and balancing local and global issues, however, those in Factor A feel it is less like social justice and those in Factor B believe it is more like social justice. Participants in Factor A ranked many items related to opportunity and ability on the more like side, where those in Factor B ranked them on the less like social justice side of the sort.

Themes that emerged from participant responses mirrored themes within the factor arrays including: action, religious motivation, duty, equitable distribution, and behind the scenes action. A new theme did emerge, willingness to compromise. These qualitative responses helped provide more nuance to the data. The importance of participation by marginalized groups in the action was highlighted. It seemed important to participants to name the problem and a concrete solution. Participants often discussed religion and obligation as related. There seemed to be a balance of the personal definition and the professional definition. These themes were reflected in participants’ proposed items for parts of the definition of social justice not represented in the sort. Overall, participants seemed to prefer longer items with action words and specifiers. They were

wary of vague or abstract items and openly disliked items that seemed to imply social justice should come from powerful systems or be mandated or forced in some way.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### **Main Findings**

The sample included 19 experts from the fields of psychology, social work, public health and theology. Participants were extremely diverse in location, vocation, and demographics. Two factors emerged demonstrating different schools of thought on the definition of social justice. Participants in both factors valued action, including political action, to reduce marginalization/oppression and increase equity. This value has been present in many definitions of social justice (Blustein et al., 2001; Caldwell, 2008; Crethar et al., 2008; Dean, 2009; Fouad et al., 2004; Goodman et al., 2004; Lewis et al., 2002; & Miller et al., 2009). Action was the most prominent theme both in its factor weight in the arrays and in the amount it was discussed in qualitative responses, thus there is consensus in the literature and participants' responses around the importance of this theme. An important balance to the endorsement of action as a part of the definition of social justice, is the vehement belief of participants that action mandated from powerful systems is not part of the definition of social justice because the power is likely to be misused or not take the needs of the oppressed individuals into account.

Although those in Factor A ranked items around resources and access higher than those in Factor B, participants in both factors prioritized equity and equitable distribution of resources,

which was a theme represented in several definitions of social justice (Braveman & Gruskin, 2003; Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi & Bryant, 2007; Chung & Bemak, 2012; Fouad, et al., 2006; Prilleltensky, 2001; Rawls, 1971; Reisch, 2002). Again, this shows support for existing definitions. Although qualitative responses from participants revealed equity of resources and access is part of social justice, however they did not endorse all types of equitable distribution (e.g. based on productivity or contractual agreements). This shows participants were truly thinking critically about the meaning of items and how some equitable distribution can actually exclude marginalized individuals.

Participants from both factors also placed religious and spiritual items to the far left or less like the definition of social justice. This may come from a lingering dismissal of religion in the field of psychology that has been espoused by Freud and other prominent psychologists for over a century (Gorman, 1985). Richards (2011) stated psychology was even originally a threat to religion by replacing spiritual ailments with scientific ones. It seems while helping fields may share many ideas on the definition of social justice, the involvement of a higher power is not one of them. Social work as a field grew out of theology and while it may have distanced itself from its religious roots to gain academic respectability, in recent years there has been a greater focus on incorporating spirituality or at least knowledge about how to support client's spirituality (e.g. Seinfeld, 2012). Public health seems to have learned to partner with religious groups to aid in their initiatives (e.g. Levin, 2013). Perhaps with larger numbers of respondents from the fields of social work, theology, and public health, overall reactions to these items may be different. Although considering how participants see social justice as a personal value, perhaps the theme would remain unpopular as working with a group is different from sharing the exact same values as that group. The goals of these fields are still very similar in regards to social justice, however, it may be the means or motivation are different.

Those in Factor B ranked items relating to using data to show the need for and aid in change as more important. This idea is represented in a much smaller portion of literature. For example, Goodman and colleagues (2004) described social justice for counseling psychologists as, “scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to these tools of self-determination” (p. 795). This combines some of the previously discussed themes, but also adds the idea that as scientist and scholars, individuals in the helping field can provide data to show urgency for and guide change. Although, the prevalence of this idea in the literature does seem to mirror the proportion of participants who endorsed this part of the definition (n=2).

While there is much overlap in the definitions of social justice in the literature and the participants’ definitions, there are also areas where they differed. For example, participants in both factors ranked items related to obligation and religion low despite this being a prominent theme in the literature (Ellis & Carlson, 2009; Thomas Aquinas in Zajda, Majhanovich & Rust, 2006). This seemed to be related to participants’ ideas that social justice is something that is carried out by individuals and by choice. This more nuanced finding of the personal nature of social justice is supported in the literature as well (Blustein et al., 2001; Lewis et al., 2003; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Qualitative data helped illustrate the struggle of participants as they attempted to sort items while balancing their personal beliefs and professional knowledge.

Factor A and B, while statistically significantly different, still contained many similar items and themes. This implies there is a large amount of agreement between participant groups. As discussed in the results section, four participants were excluded from the quantitative analysis because they co-loaded on both Factor A and B, meaning their response was statistically somewhere between the ideas represented by Factors A and B. It was also mentioned above six other participants who loaded on either Factor A or B would have excluded for co-loading if a less stringent value was used. The fact that 40% of the participants who loaded exclusively on

Factor A or B were so close to co-loading helps to explain why the two factors are so similar. It also provides further evidence that the field of psychology, if not related fields as well, is closer to a consensus on the definition of social justice than previously thought.

Participants struggled with several themes when placing items. Some of these themes have been discussed at length above such as, the idea of how their personal definition of social justice may be different from the profession's definition and the helpfulness or benevolence of power in advocacy. The theme or idea of instrumental items versus important items or exemplary items is mentioned above, but participants did not elaborate much on this topic, so it was left until this paragraph so extrapolations might be made. Participants did mention they felt there was a distinction between examples of social justice work or actions versus the definition of social justice. However, many participants also stated they placed items farther to the right because they contained action and action is key to the definition of social justice. This may point to a hierarchical definition or perhaps a related path model. Some parts of the definition may support more integral parts. Perhaps some items relate closer to a personal definition of social justice while other items relate to a professional definition of social justice.

As one participant observed, we are impacted by our societal and political environments. Thus, it is likely the opinions expressed by individuals reflect our broader social climate and our current point in the social justice movement. It may be that participants reacted so strongly to items about liberation, addressing structural inequalities, and advocating for/promoting equity for traditionally marginalized/oppressed groups because of the current social climate. The invention of social media has allowed and some may say forced individuals in the United States to see injustices occurring across the country and the world (Hladky, 2014). This may have contributed to a shift in the general perception of the fairness or justness of the world or United States. Perhaps if the world climate shifts to a more just way of being, focus will shift more to

establishing agreed upon basic and universal human rights, general respect for others, and harmony.

### **Implications of Study Findings**

#### **Research**

Themes reflected above demonstrate how complex the definition of social justice can be. Recently, a team set out to update the multicultural competencies first developed by Sue and colleagues (1992) (Ratts, Singh, McMillian, Butler & McCullough, 2015). They created a conceptual framework of multicultural and social justice competence that states counselor self-awareness, client worldview, counseling relationship, and counseling and advocacy interventions lead to multicultural and social justice competence (Ratts et al., 2015). This is not the same as defining either multiculturalism or social justice, however it is a parallel idea in that for counselor to be socially just they must follow the aspirational competencies in multiple domains of their lives and practice and if a person is acting in a socially just way they are embodying aspects of the definition of social justice. Participants in this study valued action (advocacy intervention), acknowledgement of marginalized groups and corrupt systems (client worldview), and although they stated it was not a central part of social justice, many participants stated awareness or knowledge of their own identities impacted their definition of social justice (counselor self-awareness).

In moving from multicultural competencies to multicultural and social justice competencies the aspirational competency added was action (Ratts et al., 2015). This singular addition shows how central action is to the concept of social justice. Participants in this study also largely felt action geared toward social inclusion, whether through research, policy change, or partnering with marginalized groups was very important to their definition of social justice. Many of these items focused on broad systemic change. It seems individuals are moving toward, if not fully endorsing, the importance of meso and macro level interventions that were being pushed in

the 2000s (Kiselica, 2004; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Toporek, Lewis & Crethar, 2009; Vera & Speight, 2003; Watts, 2004).

Some suggestions given on how to flesh out the definition of social justice have included being more direct in stating values and how to move toward action (Prilleltensky, 1997) and resolving the central concepts and frameworks (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008), and resolve the discrepancy between defining social justice as a virtue of individuals or a regulative principle of order (Zajda et al., 2006). This study has shown participants clearly value equitable distribution of resources such as education, health care and social rights. While participants seem to value wide scale advocacy efforts, it is unclear if they have the skills necessary to move forward with these actions. It is important to evaluate this within helping fields because even if broad change is an aspiration, they will not be able to work towards it without a nontraditional skillset. This may be an area where fields like public health may have more knowledge and could be of great service to interdisciplinary teams with similar goals. This study revealed several central concepts and hopefully future studies can move towards the creation of a more cohesive framework. It seems participants in this study see social justice as an individual virtue rather than a regulative principle. Not only do they state there is a personal aspect of the definition of social justice, many participants also felt it was very important for efforts to be with marginalized individuals and groups rather than trickle down from systems of power through laws and regulations. We may be closer to an agreed upon definition than previously thought.

### **Practice**

Several participants wrote about the struggle to create a “professional” definition of social justice and how their personal beliefs or work impacted their responses. It seems there is likely a part of social justice that is very personal. Just as counseling is defined differently by every practitioner or scholar, social justice likely has a slightly different focus depending on who is defining it. It may depend on the population you work with, your personal belief system, your

privileged and oppressed identities, your work environment, or other factors not discussed by participants. Ratts and colleagues (2015) acknowledged an intersection of power, privilege and oppression when working toward socially just interactions. This sentiment is reflected in one participant's suggestion that there should be an item about acknowledging privileged and oppressed identities as well as in the theme of personal definitions of social justice. Every person has different identities and some of those identities are likely to be more salient than others.

Perhaps a shorter definition is better than a longer one. This would allow most people to agree with the statement and add "and" instead of "but", thus creating a greater sense of cohesion among the fields and eliminating the fruitless discussion around semantics and specifics. This would also allow advocates to personalize their definition, therefore further empowering them to advocate for the causes about which they are most passionate.

These preliminary results seem to indicate there is a potential for definition overlap between fields. This similarity coupled with the individual aspect of social justice definitions may open the door for multiple disciplines to collaborate on social justice efforts. It may be easier for professionals to collaborate with others in their fields because they are often surrounded by individuals from their profession in their workplace and networks. For example, the American Psychological Association (APA) is the largest professional psychology organization in the world (APA, 2015). While there may be special sections within national professional associations, it is unlikely they will have members from other fields. There are several associations dedicated to social justice, although many of them lean toward political advocacy. Perhaps more widespread social justice efforts could be coordinated and carried out if there was an interdisciplinary association focused on social justice. There is the International Society of Justice Research (ISJR), which focused on "scientific exchange of theoretical developments and recent research on justice-related issues" and "allow[ing] international and interdisciplinary cooperation in justice theory and research" (ISJR, n.d.). It is not clear the full list of fields included in this organization.

The website states they represent “(social) psychology, sociology, business, political science, law-criminology, economics as well as other areas.” (ISJR, n.d.). This association is focused on social justice research and participants in this study stressed the importance of action in their definition of social justice, therefore, perhaps this association would need to be expanded or a new association might be created.

Individuals working in university settings are in a prime position to create interdisciplinary teams and working groups as they are in close proximity to each other. Communities often have coalitions with members from many disciplines focused on improving their communities. These types of groups could be a spring board to regional or national associations. These types of associations would not only aid in networking, but similarly to other professional organizations, they can facilitate the spread of ideas, research, and successful efforts to their constituents.

### **Overall Conclusion**

Finally, social justice is a complex concept to pin down. It is hard to conceptualize or imagine what social justice is when there is such a large range of living and existing conditions. The attempt to define social justice is a perfect example of how research and practice need to be balanced together to create something useful to both groups. Based on participants’ responses as well as a thorough review of scholarship on the topic, social justice might be best defined as: A personal virtue which can be impacted by an individual’s awareness, values, and skills which consists of action at all levels to correct historical marginalization and promote future equity between groups through access to resources and rights and is most effective when it individuals from marginalized groups begin or are central to the movement if individuals with power are advocating with them. This definition brings together decades of professional competencies and expectations, highlights aspirational and actionable goals, and takes power into account. It can also help guide theoretical and applied research in the area of social justice as well as serve as a

reminder to advocates to keep each of these components in mind while working toward change. Because it does seem the definition is impacted by the surrounding cultures (within the profession, nation, and world), this definition may change over time. This supports the notion of Kazemi and Törnblom (2008) stating social justice is a subjective concept. However, this study shows individuals in the helping fields have a strong opinion about social justice and the evidence here will help advocates move from epistemological discussions on social justice into action to reduce disparities.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited by several factors. The largest is the small number of participants from fields other than psychology. With more participants from other fields, the factors may have shown more field specific nuances. One participant mentioned they ran out of space for items they felt were important, thus the items placed in the more neutral or even “less like” columns were given statistical rankings that did not match their true opinion. It may be the Q sort had too many similar items or the final results may actually reflect a skewed representation of participants’ opinions. As mentioned above, some participants were not entirely satisfied with the item selection and wording. The specific suggestions for other items are listed above and the main concerns about wording was lack of specificity for some items and giving power to professionals and systems instead of oppressed individuals. There is likely room for further item edits and creation.

### **Future Research**

One participant made the differentiation between the definition of social justice and examples of social justice work within items. The distinction between concept and examples is important to keep in mind for any future research in the area of social justice. While the sample is much too small to make a generalization that all four fields are similar in their beliefs around the definition of social justice, perhaps social justice advocates in these fields

are more similar than previously thought. Perhaps despite the individual differences, foci, or lenses of these fields, they have a similar core definition of social justice. Future studies in this area should consider piloting measures across fields to test this theory and potentially increase their utility.

Many demographic and situational factors such as personal identities or work environment may impact how individuals conceptualize social justice. Perhaps with a larger sample more factors would have emerged. Future studies might consider how identities or work environment impacts one's definition of social justice. Future studies may also examine if there are different school of thought around social justice within a field like academia or among practitioners.

The items ranked to be most like social justice among participants in this study along with their feedback may be used to develop a pilot a measure of social justice orientation. This scale development would hopefully show a number of factors similar to the themes revealed in this study. After refinement, this measure could be used to evaluate an individual's social justice competency in several areas defined by the newly discovered factors (subscales). All types of training programs and employers could use this measure to guide training, which would in turn increase the individual's overall social justice competency and confidence, allowing them to participate in more social justice activities.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A:

#### EXTENDED LITERATURE REVIEW

##### **Introduction**

Social justice has been called the “fifth force” in counseling psychology (Ratts, D’Andrea, & Arrendondo, 2004; Ratts, 2009; Chang & Gnika, 2010; Lee, 2012). Gaining popularity in the field in recent years, there are now entire journals dedicated to the topic, Justice is one of the five general principles in the American Psychology Association’s (APA) (2010) “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct”, and the American Counseling Association commissioned advocacy competencies to help guide practitioners (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002). Social justice was even the topic of the 2011 presidential address of APA President, Dr. Melba J.T. Vasquez. This popularity has not been gained without reason. A basic tenet of social justice is promoting privileges for groups previously with less privilege. These efforts are built on the shoulders of multiculturalism and require an understanding of a community before partnering with them to create wide scale change (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009; Ratts, Toporek, & Lewis, 2010). Social justice is not for the minority of people, but rather all people, as most people belong to at least one marginalized group: women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, those with different abilities, oppressed religious groups, those involuntary without work, and others (Crethar &

Winterowd, 2012; Vera & Speight, 2003). Even those who do not belong to one of these groups ultimately benefit from a society with greater prosperity (Rawls, 1971). When discussed in these terms, it is clear that social justice is not a sparsely needed principle, but rather, nearly every individual could benefit from increased implementation of social justice advocacy at some point in time.

Those interested in advancing social justice face many obstacles: resistance from members of the counseling professions (e.g., Hunsaker, 2008); distrust from communities that have been mistreated by scientists in the past (e.g., Tuskegee Experiments); political red tape; and the list goes on. While these obstacles are being confronted daily, a bigger problem faces the movement toward social justice. There are numerous definitions of social justice with little evidence of consensus on the operationalization of the concept. This point is the first one attacked or manipulated by opponents of the social justice movement and it must be addressed to create a solid foundation on which research may be built (Fondacaro and Weinberg, 2002).

How does one go about defining such an abstract idea in a way that it can withstand even the scrutiny of the experts on social justice? One possibility is to put it in the experts' hands and allow them to co-create it. This study put the pieces of the social justice puzzle in the hands of experts and invited them to participate in construct development through Q sort methodology. This process allowed an individualized response and opportunity for feedback, not common in many quantitative methods. The results were analyzed to find statistically grounded definitions of social justice, which were combined to create a more complete research-based definition. With a theoretically-based and empirically-crafted definition, counseling psychology and related fields will have a foundation upon which they can build interventions to lift those whom society has long ignored.

## Overview of Topics Covered

In this literature review, I address a select number of topics relating to the definition of social justice. I will begin by outlining the importance of social justice. Finding an empirical definition of social justice is partially warranted because of the far reaching impacts social justice activities can have on society. I will also briefly discuss the history of the term justice. This information will primarily be used to set the stage for defining the differences between justice and social justice. I will focus on modern developments on the topic of social justice in psychology, with an emphasis in its development within counseling psychology. Finally, I will examine current themes within current definitions of social justice and resulting issues.

I will not be addressing the argument that the social justice movement is too political or pushes a liberal agenda other than in the next few paragraphs. This argument has been alluded to in many articles (e.g. Fouad et al., 2004; Speight & Vera, 2004; Vera & Speight, 2003; Vasquez, 2012) However, the actual number of articles articulating these arguments (e.g. Hunsaker, 2008; Canfield 2008a; Canfield, 2008b; Lockhard & Stack, 2008) are dwarfed in the presence of literature supporting social justice. Although, one may claim that is due to publishing bias. A study examining the connection of political ideology and social justice views of 214 American Counseling Association (ACA) members found several interesting findings on the topic (Steele & Bischof, 2010). Participants in this study had overall positive views of social justice with 77.57% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that ACA should use their resources to fund social action projects. Those who identified as extremely conservative had a less positive view of the issue, but their perceptions did not significantly differ from their moderate and liberal counterparts except in their opinion of the importance of social advocacy, which was significantly lower than other groups. Participants who identified with liberal political ideologies scored significantly higher than the other groups on social advocacy attitudes, behaviors and skills. Steele (2011) argued that the assumptions around more politically conservative counselors not supporting social justice may be unfounded. A town hall meeting at the 2001 National Counseling Psychology Conference

in Houston, Texas revealed 88% of the 115 participants attending strongly supported the importance of social justice activities in the field (Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006; Foud et al., 2004).

Furthermore, some have argued that research in the field of counseling psychology has never been value free but instead takes clear value-laden stances (Prilleltensky, 1997). Others have stated that since this is the case counselors should align themselves with values that promote empowerment and social justice (Vera & Speight, 2003). Regardless of any of these arguments, it is hoped that this study will be of use to those who value social justice within the counseling fields and thus is not attempting to convince others of its importance.

### **The Impact of Justice and Social Injustice on Society**

Researchers have found that a core concern for people all over the world is the idea of fairness (Fiske, 2002). The basic concepts of rewarding those who do good, returning favors, and punishing those who commit wrongs seems to be fairly universal. However there are many cultural differences on how people define justice, appropriateness of distribution of justice and values of resources (Hatfield & Rapson, 2012). An individual's focus on justice can be activated in many ways: current distributions being unfair; sudden change in distribution systems; scarce resources (Leventhal, 1976); issues around inclusion/exclusion from a moral community (race/social groups) (Deutsch, 1985); and when it threatens one's identity (Skitka, 2003). The activation of the idea of justice has large effects on an individual's perception of an issue. Tyler (2005) found that if a decision is framed in way that reflects justice, people were less likely to call attention to gains and losses than if no justice frame was used.

The perception of justice effects many parts of society. Kazemi and Törnblom (2008) provide an overview of such effects including rates of employee theft; work-place retaliation; work satisfaction and commitment; arson; violence; disloyalty; gossip; and destruction of property. Hatfield and Rapson (2012) discuss interpersonal relationship justice and its connection to cultural values. Essentially, if an individual does not feel "the system" is just, they will begin to

undermine the relationship in order to make it more just for them. Adams (1965) found six common types of reactions to injustice or inequality: changing one's efforts or outcomes; developing cognitive distortions around one's efforts or outcomes; leaving the unjust situation; altering or cognitively distorting other's efforts or outcomes, and changing the object of comparison. This might be seen in a variety of social situations. More advantaged groups might devalue contributions of less advantaged groups in order to make the situation seem more just to them. Other justice-leveling cognitive distortions include denying harm, denying responsibility for a negative situation, or justifying an injustice (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). These reactions can become patterns for entire cultures, thus creating systems of inequality without merit.

Social psychology has done an excellent job of examining the wide-spread impact of social injustices. Some researchers have posited that social justice has served as a bridge between cross-cultural studies and main-stream social psychological theory (Morris & Leung, 2000). Research in this area has found that value dimensions (individualistic/collectivistic, power distances, masculine/feminine) of a culture effect their perceptions of justice. For example, feminine cultures prefer equality whereas more masculine cultures prefer equity (Morris & Leung, 2000). Research in this vein is relatively young and there is still much debate about the connection between culture and social justice (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008).

Another angle on social justice in social psychology is research on the impact of biological and evolutionary factors (Hatfield & Rapson, 2012). Researchers like Dawkins (2006) have created theories that postulate altruism and social exchange evolved with humanity as ways to fulfill selfish needs. This has become such an engrained part of human nature that groups will go to extraordinary lengths to reward just behavior and punish that which they find unjust (Boyd, Gintis, Bowles, & Richerson, 2003). It has been shown that different parts of the brain are used in consideration of relational duty as opposed to societal duty, although the real-life implications of this difference are unknown (Robertson et al., 2007). Other researchers have observed justice like

attitudes in animals like punishment for social norm violation and jealousy for unequal rewards (Bekoff, 2004). These researchers argue that justice is in our genes.

Counseling psychology's roots grew out of advocacy movements and a push from prominent members in the field in the 1980s and early 1990s led to a focus on multiculturalism and problems faced by minorities (Froud et al., 2006). Many systems currently in place can affect one's well-being, growth and ability to reach his or her true potential including: educational and organizational systems; political, economic and social structures; and discrimination based on race, gender, social class, sexual/affectional orientation, or other personal traits (Arthur & Collins, 2014; Ratts, 2009; Lewis, 2011). These systems create and perpetuate injustice and oppression (Ratts et al., 2010). Those in power within these systems can perpetuate injustice consciously and unconsciously through intolerance, prejudiced beliefs, lack of multicultural awareness, or a desire to maintain the status quo (Chung & Bemack, 2012). Oppression is a more than force against an individual or group; it involves ideological and institutional control as well as a system of continued domination of the dominant group (Hardiman & Jackson, 1982). Hardiman and Jackson (1982) explained oppression's entrenched nature by describing it as "a *system* of domination with many interlocking parts" (p. 2). This description of oppression asserts the United States has a social hierarchy based on group membership (Manis, Brown, & Paylo, 2009). A hierarchy by definition puts some sections of the system above others, which in this case creates social inequities and discrimination through the unequitable distribution of resources.

Ratts (2009) explained that oppression can be seen on individual, social, and cultural levels. He went on to give examples of oppression at each level. Individual oppression stems from interactions of individuals and their personal value and belief systems. Social or cultural oppression occurs through expressions of the dominant culture's norms and values (spoken and unspoken). It has been argued that institutional systems maintain oppression through both unwritten and written policies and laws (Ratts, 2009). Farrell (2009) stated new experiences cause anxiety in those who have power and privilege and those individuals oppose these new

experiences to decrease their fear of loss of power. Another example of individual and societal oppression is the linear, hierarchical and dichotomous thinking that is often promoted in the dominant White Eurocentric worldview, which may prevent others from taking others' viewpoints (Jun, 2010). These and other forms of oppression have been empirically shown to negatively impact human development. A few examples include: psychological development of minority children (Callahan, Brighton, & Hertberg Davis, 2007; Clark & Clark, 1939; Kozel, 2005); levels depression and academic performance for youth who identify as LGBT (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, 2011); the unequal employment of women in STEM fields (Wang & Degol, 2013); and gender gaps in pay and positions (Cha & Weeden, 2014). Chung and Bemack (2012) outline four examples of social justice/human rights issues in the United States (a) growing rates of poverty (b) interpersonal violence (c) racism and discrimination (d) health care and mental health care access and quality of treatment. These are just a few examples of the pervasive nature of oppression in our society today. Blustein (2006) summarized discussions of oppression in his foreword for the *Handbook for Social Justice in Counseling Psychology: Leadership, Vision, and Action* by stating the reality, "life is not fair" (p.x). His tone is not one of flippancy, but of recognition and reverence for a sad truth that needs to be addressed.

This introduction has outlined the impact of justice and systems of injustice on society. Because there is no agreed upon definition of social justice, it is impossible to discuss it with much authority at this time. There is a general consensus that social justice should be concerned with injustice and attempt to address/resolve it (e.g. Caldwell, 2008; Chung & Bemack, 2012; Crethar, Torres Rivera & Nash, 2008; Goodman et al., 2004; Lewis et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2009; Prilleltensky, 2001; Ratts, 2009). If the field of counseling psychology can incorporate more acts of social justice in their practice, advocates would likely have a tremendous positive impact on the lives of others. If individuals in this and related fields are able to research these injustices and provide data, institutions and systems may find it harder to ignore claims of injustice and may even make changes to rectify the injustice. Even if attempts to advocate only

work one percent of the time, interventions like policy change has the potential to reach exponentially more individuals than individual psychotherapy by itself due to its far reaching nature. The next several sections are meant to provide a philosophical and practical base of knowledge in order to set the stage for an attempt to define social justice. A definition provides an empirical base from which counselors can securely operate in their attempts to eradicate oppression.

### **Philosophical Roots of Social Justice**

Some scholars argue that social justice is a natural logical goal by stating arguing for the opposite, social injustice, is absurd (Clark, 2006). Zajda, Majhanovich and, Rust (2006) provided an excellent account of justice and social justice through the ages. They state Plato (427-347 BC) was one of the first great thinkers to value justice, followed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who was influenced by Aristotle. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) stated that acts of justice were things that should be made into universal law. The term “social justice” was first used by Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio, a Sicilian priest in 1840 and the idea was held most highly by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). The term was used throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to force ruling classes to consider the conditions of peasants (Zajda et al., 2006). While there are no singular definitions for social justice or justice, there exist several well-discussed component of justice that may provide a base for beginning to define social justice.

### **Types of Justice**

Historically, justice has been broken down into three major parts: distributive (which is sometimes considered to contain retributive justice), procedural, and interactional (Coates, 2007; Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). More recently, resource theory has been used to provide new insights on the different types of justice (Törnblom & Vermunt, 2012). The first type of justice, distributive justice, was based off an equity theory framework, which was developed by John Stacy Adams in 1965 and compares the perception of one’s input and output against a similar person’s input and output (as cited in Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). This framework was not

expansive enough and soon others like Deutsch (1975) enlarged the theory to include principles of equity (proportional rewards for contributions), equality (receiving the same rewards regardless of differences), and need (reward proportional to the necessity). Distributive justice may be affected by resource theory through input/output discrepancies. This idea centers around the hypothesis that different resources are related to each other in intricate ways and their exchange holds certain feelings about their equivalence for individuals (see Fig 11.2 in Törnblom & Vermunt, 2012). For example, in many cultures, an exchange of information for services would not seem fair to one of the parties involved. This is explained by the opposite placement of information and services in matrix of particularism (vs. universalism) and concreteness (vs. abstractness) (Törnblom & Vermunt, 2012).

Distributive justice is seen throughout counseling psychology literature. Prilleltensky (1997) named distributive justice as one of fourteen values to be assessed for moral implications of psychological approaches. Vera and Speight (2003) called for expanding psychologists' roles through emancipatory strategies that balance self-determination and distributive justice. Crethar and colleagues (2008) called for the promotion of "human development and common good through addressing challenges related to both individual and distributive justice" in social justice counseling (p.270). Community psychologists also mention distributive justice as a main component of prevention and health promotion (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002).

Retributive justice is thought to be the negative side of the principles of distributive justice in society - rule violation and the setting of sanctions and retributions (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). In other words, this is the distribution of punishment for actions a society perceives as wrong or hurtful as well as the compensation provided to victims. This type of justice is tricky because as society changes, so does the evaluation of what is right and wrong (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). Törnblom (1992) reported people's sense of justice was affected by the following: characteristics of the actor, contribution, social relationship, socio-cultural and

historical context, outcome and outcome allocation in his review of the literature. Thus, there can be no constant or consistent rules set in this area.

Procedural justice focuses on the process used to make decisions and its perceived fairness (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). This concept was well researched by Thibaut and Walker (1975) who found several key markers of procedural justice. The first is third party decision makers are critical influences to the perception of procedural fairness. The second involves two types of control; process (opportunity to present relevant facts) and decision (disputants' influence over outcomes). Thibaut and Walker (1975) state process control to be more important in creating outcomes that are positively perceived. The evaluation of justice can be summarized by the following values: consistency, bias suppression, accuracy, correctability, representativeness, and ethicality (Leventhal, 1980).

Interactional justice was first described by Bies and Moag (1986) as the fairness perceived in interpersonal interactions during decision making procedures. The criteria for this principle are truthfulness, justification, politeness, dignity and respect, feedback, and adequate explanation of decisions. These criteria are very closely related to multicultural competency literature that states counselors should be aware of their biases and treat people with respect regardless of their personal background (Lewis, 2010). There is still debate on whether or not interactional justice belongs under the umbrella of procedural justice (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). Although, even one of the primary authors of the subject has stated he believes it is not a separate construct (Bies, 2005). Lewis (2010) argued although this type of justice is not as popular in the literature, it may be the form of justice counselors can contribute to most due to the field's appreciation of the effects of interpersonal relations on one's experience.

Resource theory is thought to be able to provide new insights on procedural and distributive justice (Törnblom & Vermunt, 2012). Resource theory is an extension of social exchange theory and states that interpersonal relationships are vehicles that transmit resources (material and symbolic commodities) (Foa & Foa, 1974). This theory is thought to be able to give

more predictive power by examining the nature of procedural violation, the response to violation and whether they are similar to a “third entity” (hypothesized to be resources class, e.g. status, love, information, etc.) (Törnblom & Vermunt, 2012). It is hoped that with this knowledge, we will be able to determine which responses to injustice will more or less likely be chosen (Törnblom & Vermunt, 2012). This may be helpful in predicting societal reaction to sudden changes in laws and norms.

### **Modern Philosophical Musings**

Blending the philosophical nature of justice and the action-oriented nature of social justice has not been an easy or natural task. Modern philosophers have attempted to trace back the philosophical roots of social justice, although the results have been varied. Coates (2007) stated each of the three main types of justice (distributive, interactional, and procedural) are thought to be subsumed under social justice. Coates (2007) stated social justice must operate and flow from systemic and institutional sources rather than individuals to be successful. Walsh & Gokani (2014) argued psychologists cannot contribute to social transformation in larger political systems, but they should focus on the impact in their immediate communities and workplaces. Coates (2007) debated on the issue of defining or enacting social justice often are reduced from discussions of merit to deservedness, which ignore the theoretical basis of the issue. He argued the central issue of social justice can be reduced to tension between “rights and duties of the state and other social institutions and the rights and duties of individuals and groups” (p. 579) and basic universal principles need to be established to lead our understanding of justice. Although these philosophical musing are interesting, they do not put the field any closer to theory, which Toporek and colleagues (2005) stated is imperative to the work as it helps to name risk and protective factors as well as create tools which can be used to measure and evaluate programs and initiatives. Establishing a theoretical basis, would allow the field to make change initiatives a central focus.

Discussions of a social justice paradigm and pedagogy have become more common in recent years, although the literature is still sparse. Ratts (2009) argued that naming social justice as paradigm is important because of how paradigms guide our understanding of the world and our foundations for practice. Prilleltensky (1997) attempted to create a paradigm of social justice based on emancipatory communitarianism (EC) which is based on the following value domains: caring and compassion; self-determination; human diversity; collaboration and participation; distributive justice; assumption about knowledge; the good life; the good society; power in relationships; professional ethics; practices regarding problem definition; role of client; role of helper; type of intervention; and time of intervention. Brubaker, Puig, Reese and Young (2010) incorporated EC into other counseling theories pedagogy and demonstrated how it could be used to help students develop a social justice orientation. Blustein, McWhirter and Perry (2005) also used Prilleltensky's (1997) framework and applied it to vocational psychology. Lewis (2011) also created a social justice paradigm that stressed: recognizing the dignity of all human beings; community involvement; and rights of individuals to decide his or her own goals and move towards them. Chung and Bemack (2012) created the Multi-Phase Model of Psychotherapy, Counseling Human Rights and Social Justice (MPM), which was meant to be a synthesis of earlier models and defines how mental health professionals can work towards social justice and human rights. This model includes examples of required specific counseling skills/techniques (e.g. instilling hope and optimism and working with severe trauma), social justice skills (e.g. advocacy, interdisciplinary team work), cultural awareness/acceptance and social justice/human rights (political awareness) as well as the structural elements of cultural empowerment, working with indigenous healers, psychotherapy, mental health education, social justice/human rights, and the therapeutic partnership.

Coates' (2007) framework for social justice pedagogy rests on established ideals to which emerging systems can be compared, contextual understanding of the experiences of fairness of different groups, and continual assessment of systems and policies in place. These three themes

are touched on in other philosophical and theory literature as well (Arfken & Yen, 2014; Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002; Louis et al., 2014). Communitarian justice is said to guide best practices of social equity through analyzing and opposing systems of oppression (Caldwell, 2008). Lewis (2010) discussed how distributive, procedural and interpersonal justices can be taught and fostered within practicum experiences to help counselors develop social justice orientation. Scholars in Community Psychology claimed procedural justice was at the core of their empowerment movement (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). Coates (2007) felt social justice must be implemented systemically. Although Coates (2007) admitted his model is focused on “American” (seemingly just the United States) culture and universal ideals do not translate well to other microcultures even within the United States.

### **Development of Social Justice in Helping Fields**

#### **Public Health/Health Promotion**

Public Health and health promotion are the intersection of clinical practice and prevention science to address multifaceted issues with several causes requiring a wide-ranging perspective (Norman, 2009). In Beauchamp’s (1976) seminal article, “Public Health as Social Justice”, he states the field of public health focuses on decreasing instances of death and disability from the perils such as: “automobile-related injury and deaths; tobacco, alcohol, and other drug damage; the perils of the workplace; environmental pollution; the inequitable and ineffective distribution of medical care services; [and] the hazards of biomedicine...” (p.3). This reduction of systemic issues is the very heart of social justice. He goes on to point out that while systemic issues such as poverty frequently cycle into public attention, they often fade out when the cost of repairing the broken system is examined. Beauchamp (1976) wrote the United States operated on a market-justice system where people achieve status, income, happiness, etc., through their own individual efforts, actions, and abilities and this system goes directly against the mission of public health. He calls to those in public health to move towards social justice in all areas of public and private sectors and “reveal through the process of confrontation and challenge the structured and

collective nature of the problems of death and disability and the urgency for more adequate structures to protect all human life” (p.11).

This call did not go unheard. If the amount of publications on the topic is any indication of the popularity of the subject, a keyword search in an academic database of “public health’ AND ‘social justice’” reveals an increase beginning in the late 90s, much like the trend in psychology and social work. Thousands of articles have been written on the subject. More recently Norman (2009) briefly discussed several theories and models that could be used to promote a more systemic focus within public health work. Ruger (2009) writes about some of the same theories along with dozens of other frameworks, theories and approaches along with several sections on health reform in her book, *Health and Social Justice*. Raeburn, Akerman, Chuensatiansup, Mejia, and Oladepo (2007) stressed a balance of global actions and local efforts involving community capacity building, which empowers communities to participate in local social change. Baum (2008) argues the field needs to reinforce the move of health promotion toward creating conditions where well-being and health can flourish and away from behavior change. The importance of the topic of social justice can be seen in the passion of these authors as they argue for more work in the area. Passionate as these authors are, the issue of defining social justice persists. It is only ambiguously mentioned in a book reviewed by the author (Donohoe, 2012) as well as the texts cited above with the exception of Beauchamp (1976).

### **Community Psychology**

Social justice is beginning to reach into many areas of psychology. Some subfields, such as Community Psychology, moved into social action back in the sixties with a focus on prevention rather than treatment and energized by the call for civil rights (Prilleltensky, 2001; Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). Fondacaro and Weinberg (2002) discussed how social justice was assumed to be an understood term in Community Psychology without any literature that empirically examined the term or concept. They stated that if social justice was to be treated as a scientific concept in the literature, than it must be critiqued like a scientific concept. The authors

help give light to how social justice crept into their field, and many others, quietly hidden in the inner workings of their early initiatives. They claim social justice evolved along side their passion for prevention, as community leaders and funders ultimately decide who is deserving of what initiatives or services. The empowerment movement within this field was rooted in the importance of the client being a part of decisions made during interventions and in policy related to them (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). This mirrors the multicultural movement of counseling psychology that was also occurring in the 1980s. For their own definition, Fondacaro and Weinberg (2002) skirt around the issue of defining social justice by saying it is context specific, essentially, “it depends”.

Fondacaro and Weinberg (2002) pointed out the irony of having a term like social justice remain undefined for so long in a field that prides themselves on making their concepts, values, and assumptions explicit. They called for future researchers to continue to empirically explore the concept, which has not generated much new research in the area (e.g. Prilleltensky, 2007; Sandler; 2007; Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olsen, 2012) More recently, community counselors have created the Community Counseling Model that uses focused and broad-based strategies to facilitate human and community development through a base of multicultural competence and social justice orientation (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D’Andrea, 2011). It is difficult to believe that even after more than four decades of growth and attention in a special issue of epistemological issues in Community Psychology, there is still so little empirical evidence on social justice.

### **Critical Psychology**

Fondacaro and Weinberg (2002) also discussed the new subfield of Critical Psychologists. They state while critical psychologists work from similar theoretical base, critical psychology examines the epistemological foundations of scientific psychology. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2013) claimed Critical Psychology evolved out of the work of Martín Baró (1994) and his contributions to liberation psychology through the ideas of emancipating people in power down situations. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2013) went on to state the ontological basis of critical

psychology is power struggles between individuals and political systems that result in oppression, resistance, and liberation and the epistemological focus is on using “quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the human and social experience of domination and resistance” and promotes action (p.143). Critical Psychology is unique in its endorsement of specific values (e.g. autonomy, freedom, compassion, participation, collaboration), rather than claiming to be value free (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2013). While Critical Psychology has made great efforts in social initiatives, some think their open claim to be partisan, actually creates epistemological problems in their writings (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). Scholars in Critical Psychology claimed the field is relevant in prevention work (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2013) as well as the world of work (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2013).

### **Theology**

Theology, like critical psychology, also draws some of its social justice focus from the work of Paulo Freire, liberation theology, and Martín-Baró (Conde-Frazier, 2006; Opatow, 2001). Liberation theology is an interpretation of Christianity and society through the struggles and suffering of the poor (Boff & Boff, 1987). Scholars in theology have been urged to move away from searches for truth and instead to interact with those less fortunate so that all parties may learn from each other and all can work toward a democracy where more people can be heard (West, 1989). Conde-Frazier (2006) stresses the importance of participatory action research (PAR) as a socially just tool to bring parties together so they may educate one another and come to peaceful resolutions. She states theologians must stand beside community members through this process to create meaningful change. She goes on to state a relationship with the community is important as “unconnected” research can contribute to oppressive policies.

Discussion on social justice in theology is not limited to current issues. Houston (2008) wrote an entire book detailing the interactions of social justice in the Old Testament of the bible. Sloane (2012) discusses examples from both the New and Old Testaments in his article. Minow (1998) states in the reconciliation of injustices, theology’s role is forgiveness where judicial

systems have a role of punishment/compensation, and therapists are to aid healing. Theologian scholars often discuss the interdisciplinary nature of social justice work (Conde-Frazier, 2006; Opatow, 2001). One group of Christians named the Society of Jesus or Jesuits promotes justice as part of their general mission (Society of Jesus, 2015).

One argument against theologians, and Christians in general, being involved in social justice work, is that Christians should be more focused on the gospel (Sloane, 2012). Sloane (2012) argues that those in the religious community are often given power within their own larger social communities and that systemic power should be used for socially just endeavors.

### **Vocational Psychology**

Those in Vocational Psychology stated the roots of their field was intertwined with the social justice efforts of Frank Parsons who worked to find safe work for young boys in Boston in the early 1900s (Fouad, 2006). This field continued to be involved with social justice initiatives in the 1930s, focusing on finding work for men in The Great Depression and for soldiers after World War II (Fouad, 2006). Richardson (1993) stated vocational research was too focused on middle and upper-middle-class individuals. Blustein (2001) echoed this call nearly a decade later, calling for more research and work with impoverished or working class individuals. Fassinger and Gallor (2006) stated the structure of the economy in relationship to occupations is flawed at its core and maintains a system of patriarchy and inequality. They also state that we must develop all new “tools” to rebuild this house which includes advocacy and policy change. Scholars in Vocational Psychology have made attempts to create a framework to approach clients in a more empowering way backed by theory (Blustein, et al., 2005). Blustein and colleagues (2005) argued work life satisfaction rests within a socioeconomic hierarchy and it is necessary to view issues of access from a socio-cultural-political frame rather than just an empirical one due to our inherent world beliefs.

## **Social Psychology**

Modern ideas of social justice in Social Psychology stemmed from writings on distributive justice and relative deprivation (Kazemi and Törnblom, 2008). The concept of distributive justice was introduced into sociology by Homans (1958) who believed the notion of social justice arose from the frustration-aggression principle and social exchange theory. The frustration-aggression principle states that when an expected outcome is not achieved it leads to hostile reactions (Berkowitz, 1989). Social exchange theory states that humans use cost-benefit analyses to create and maintain their relationships and that these negotiated exchanges explain social change (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013). This theory tends to focus on individuals at a similar social level and beliefs of what people morally deserve (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008).

Relative deprivation states the sensations of satisfaction and dissatisfaction stem from comparisons of outcomes and an external standard, which gives these sensations a subjective nature that is unaffected by objective evaluations (Crosby, 1976). Crosby (1976) went on to say feelings of deprivation are related to resentment which is only present when an individual who lacks something knows: someone else does not lack it; wants it; feels entitled to it; believes having it is feasible; and does not feel responsible for already not having it. Kazemi and Törnblom (2008) stated feelings of justice and injustice are closely related to satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their subjective and comparative nature. They also stated this theory is more concerned with comparing individuals in different social groups and personal preferences. Because of the subjective nature of these social comparisons, even the term justice cannot be objectively defined (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). Without a definition for justice, social justice must remain ambiguous as well.

## **Social Work**

Social justice has long been a core value to Social Workers (Maschi & Killian, 2011). The global definition of the Social Work profession states, "Principles of social justice, human

rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work” (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014, p.1). Many subfields and sections of Social Work also include social justice as a guiding principle for their work, including clinical social work, the Council on Social Work Education, the National Organization of Forensic Social Workers (Maschi & Killian, 2011; Swenson 1998). Engagement in social justice activities is explicitly called for in Social Workers Code of Ethics; in fact, social justice is one of the six core values of the code (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

Lundy gives an overview of influential persons at the cusp of the birth social work. Mary Richmond (1861-1928) who started the practice of case work with individuals. Jane Addams (1860-1935) was a leader in the settlement house movement, which provided housing to those in dire need. She was widely recognized for her efforts towards social change and received a Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts in opposing World War I much turmoil. Since the inception of social work in the 1920s, four major themes have evolved: providing services to those in need; advocating for social change; empirical research from other fields informing the practice of social work; the persistent but unsuccessful search for a unifying framework (Lundy, 2004). In the early years of social work, Freudian theory was dominant. In the 1930’s functionalism was introduced by Virginia Robinson and Jessie Taft, which focused on client’s participation in the relationship and was more humanistic in nature. In the 1960s Lawrence Shulman, built roles for helping professionals into the theoretical framework developed by C. Mills Wright, which noted the difference and connection between personal and systemic troubles and by William Schwartz who stated social workers should focus on mediating between these systems. In the 1970s, Marxist System Theory became more popular amongst “radical” groups of social workers as a way to stop perpetuating the status quo of a ruling class.

In the 1980s social work took a more generalist stance as the debate about the role of politics in the field raged on. Ferguson (2007) calls the 1980s a time of “retreat” as economic and political factors pressed the profession away from more progressive practice. Beginning in the

1990s, social work leaned more towards postmodernism and narrative therapies that allow clients to tell their own stories and focuses on diversity. Lundy (2004) introduced Structuralism that promotes using knowledge about how structures produce and maintain inequality to help understand and aid clients. She further posits this approach will help social workers advocate for clients at the individual, community, and societal levels rather than having one specialty. The field of social work continues to evolve like many other helping fields.

Like many authors in psychology, Bisman (2004) claims social work is not value free. Hare (2000) outlines the values that guide social work in her discussion of the International Federation of Social Workers' revised definition of social work. Bisman (2004) goes on to say that a moralistic code is not necessarily a negative one as the world itself is ambiguous and morals can help to guide research and practice in positive directions like it did in the early years of social work. She goes on to say this guidance is necessary and social workers have lost their way in the search for "scientific knowledge and technical expertise" (p.119). It is the movement towards moral ends that sets social work apart from other helping fields (Bisman, 2004). Social work and social justice are related in a way that "is decidedly uneasy, fraught with tension, contradiction and conflict at both the ideological, conceptual and theoretical levels as well as the levels of policy and practice" (Colton, 2002, p.659).

### **Counseling Psychology**

Social justice is not a new term or practice in Counseling Psychology and other mental health fields. An upswing of literature calling for social justice and social advocacy in the 1970s corresponded with many social movements occurring in the United States of America at that time (Black power, war, environmentalism, women's rights, etc.). This also corresponded with the English release of Paulo Friere's (1970/2000) text "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", which argues if people are made aware of oppressive systems in their lives they will be empowered to change them through advocating for themselves. This text was stated to be the roots of social justice counseling pedagogy along with constructivism (Brubaker, et al., 2010). However social action

conversations of the 70s gave way to discussions of multiculturalism in the 1980s (Steele & Bischof, 2010). The evolution from multicultural and feminist theory to an explicit focus on social justice was a slow one, spanning two decades (Steele & Bischof, 2010). For a more in-depth history of the evolution of social justice from the 1970s to present day, please see Steele's dissertation (2011) and *ACA Advocacy Competencies: A Social Justice Framework for Counselors* by Ratts, Toporek & Lewis (2010).

Social justice reemerged as an important concept in recent years as multicultural and feminist theories gained significance within the counseling field (Goodman et al., 2004; Vera & Speight, 2003). Goodman and colleagues (2004) state that both feminist and multicultural movements in Counseling Psychology evolved from dissatisfaction in how the counseling field and theories were including or not including experiences of the members of those groups. Feminist and multicultural viewpoints have taught those in mental health fields that society affects minorities mental health status; coping skills used by these groups are seen by society as pathologies; and the therapists role is to help the client address societal oppressions (Goodman et al., 2004). Brubaker and colleagues (2010) argued the main aspect that separates social justice from multiculturalism is the continued focus on community engagement.

A widely cited article by Prilleltensky (1997) stated psychologists had been tiptoeing around the issues of morals and values for too long and the time had come for psychologists to not only be explicit about what they felt was the "good" life/society, but to also to create ways to turn these ideals into action plans. Arthur and Collins (2014) shared a similar message nearly two decades later, "...in a society in which cultural oppression exists, there is no neutral stance" (p.172). In the 2001 Houston National Counseling Psychology Conference, which had 1,052 attendees, a main focus was creating social actions groups (SAGs), which clearly demonstrated the values of the group (Fouad et al., 2004). Ratts (2009) stated in order to practice social justice advocacy, one was required to consider whether their personal values and beliefs aligned with their profession.

Vera and Speight (2003) stated, “If counseling psychology is to be committed to an agenda of multiculturalism, and there is no doubt that this commitment exists, then the field must be committed to social justice” (p.254). Other voices of that time also voiced their discontent with lack of social action associated with multiculturalism stating that practitioners were passive, only able to focus on remediation, which was morally questionable and could even perpetuate injustice (Vera & Speight, 2003; Sue, 1995; Prilleltensky, 1997; Albee, 2000). Given these foci and other traditionally valued areas of counseling psychology such as: diversity, person-environment interaction and prevention, the move into social justice is a natural one (Gelso, Williams & Fretz, 2014). The multicultural competencies and the advocacy competencies attempted to explicitly state their respective ideals and how to take action on those ideals. This set the stage for social justice to become an action oriented initiative.

#### **Multicultural competencies.**

As multicultural and feminist theories have developed, new competency areas have arisen. The multicultural competencies are counselors’ attitudes/beliefs, knowledge and skills used when working with clients from variety of racial and cultural groups (Sue et al., 1992; Sue et al., 1998). The multicultural competencies were born out of a position paper from the Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) of the APA (Chung & Bemack, 2012). The original 11 guidelines were developed by Derald Wing Sue and colleagues in 1982. This was expanded into 31 multicultural competencies (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992), which were operationalized by Arredondo and colleagues in 1996. Two more racial identity competencies were added in 1998 by Sue and others, bringing the total to 33 competencies. These competencies were not endorsed by the APA until 2002 and the ACA followed in 2003. Vera and Speight (2003) further state the multicultural competencies call for counselors to be knowledgeable on the topic through self-examination of their culture, privilege and biases.

Although these competencies in counseling psychology have acknowledged societal pressures, most of the work has been focused on the micro or individual level (Constantine, Hage,

Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). Arthur and Collins (2014) argued our efforts for multicultural competence gave the field a deeper understanding of individuals through taking cultural and social context into account, thus allowing counselors to see the connection between these contexts and distribution of and access to resources like education, employment and other services. This realization in turn has led to an understanding that individual interventions are sometimes less appropriate, and more stigmatizing, than more systemic interventions (Arthur & Collins, 2014). Lewis (2011) stated that once counselors believe clients have a right to socially just environments, advocating change in unjust environments becomes a professional responsibility. This means although counselors are more aware of the environmental stressors that affect their clients, they now need guidance on how to help advocate for their clients.

#### **Advocacy competencies.**

The explicit outline and expansion of multicultural competencies paved the way for the creation of the advocacy competencies (Ratts et al., 2010). The advocacy competencies were developed by Lewis, Arnold, House and Toporek (2002) and were endorsed by the ACA Governing Council in 2003 and published a few years later (Toporek, Lewis & Crethar, 2009). They were actually endorsed in the same ACA Governing Council meeting as the multicultural competencies. The APA to date has not officially endorsed the advocacy competencies. The advocacy competencies are skills and behaviors deemed necessary to be an effective advocacy against social injustices. This document outlines 43 advocacy behaviors that should be mastered within the six domains of advocacy competencies: client/student empowerment (micro), client/student advocacy (micro), community collaboration (meso), systems advocacy (meso), public information (macro) and social/political advocacy (macro). Ratts (2009) outlined examples of each level of intervention. Client/Student interventions center around counselor's awareness of oppression and empowering clients/students through helping them understand the connection between their issues and oppressive systems. Examples of the school/community level

interventions include: consulting with leaders; collaborating with groups to provide expertise in the areas of leadership or conflict management; and advocating with and for groups to eliminate oppressive policies or practices within these local systems. Macro level interventions take place through lobbying legislators, writing grants to advance social justice initiatives, and advocating for change through technology and media (Ratts, 2009). By making the examples more explicit, counselors may better be able to understand what social justice looks like. However, without guiding principles of a definition, it is difficult to establish other social justice initiatives.

It is implied within the competencies that trainees and professionals are already aware that social justice exists and that social equality is an important value. For example, in the third competency “Recognize the signs indicating that an individual’s behaviors and concerns reflect responses to systematic or internalized oppression” (Lewis, et al., 2002, p. 1), one must first acknowledge systematic and internalized oppression exist and then believe it is important to help others identify these barriers as a part of the therapeutic process. Again, these assumptions do not provide an empirical or theoretical base from which counselors might be better able to navigate through grey areas. Ratts and colleagues (2010) further expanded upon how to put the advocacy competencies into practice across populations, settings and specialty areas. They describe the advocacy competencies as a way for counselors to expand their help in nontraditional ways. In order to integrate these competencies into practice one must be knowledgeable of the change process, flexibility of intervention styles and introspection (Ratts et al., 2010). These writings of example led to voices calling out in the literature for action.

#### **Call to action.**

Social justice has been described as the next step of feminist and multicultural theories; an attempt to focus and expand the work to meso (community) and macro (policy) interventions in counseling (Kiselica, 2004; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Ratts & Hutchins, 2009; Toporek, Lewis & Crethar, 2009; Vera & Speight, 2003; Watts, 2004). This transition calls for those in the mental health fields to do things to change the world for the better (Prilleltensky, 2001; Vera &

Speight, 2003). Indeed, Vera and Speight (2003) state "...a social justice-informed psychologists seeks to transform the world, not just understand the world" (p. 261). Maintaining the status quo was stated to no longer be an option; individual interventions were suggested to be supplemented with attempts to help the larger community (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Prilleltensky, 2001; Vera & Speight, 2003). Ratts (2009) suggested that practitioners gain a deep awareness of oppression and how it impacts groups and individuals. Various authors have made it clear the concept of social justice was important, but few had suggestions on how to apply current knowledge to the quest for social justice. Watts (2004) detailed how to "scale up" specific proven individual interventions such as building self-efficacy to build collective efficacy and focusing on social liberation rather than self-actualization. This attempt to apply well-known ideas to large communities was a stride forward in making social justice a concrete concept, rather than an ideal. Ratts (2009) suggested a shift in the how services are rendered to clients, focusing on changing the environment rather than the client if the environment is the origin of the issue. This reimagining of services takes the blame off of clients and places it on the systems it belongs to.

Ratts and colleagues (2010) stated counselors have a responsibility to advocate for four reasons: the empirical evidence that discrimination and oppression negatively impacts people's ability to reach "optimal mental health"; ethical and moral obligation as helpers; compliance with United Nations' (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and counseling training on human development, research, multiculturalism, and system impact makes counselors ideal agents of change. Social justice activities often attempt to provide opportunities to those groups and individuals marginalized by systems of oppression. A social justice stance in counseling psychology acknowledges overarching constructs of power, privilege and oppression (Froud, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006). Beyond this acknowledgment, those with a social justice orientation use social advocacy and activism to address these systems that may be impacting groups or individuals (Ratts, 2009). Acts of social justice are not only performed against domineering systems. They are also part of a way of being. Arthur and Collins (2014) wrote, "Social justice is

also a fundamental value for supporting personal and human potential...” (p.172). It is something that counselors can foster even in their individual work with clients. Support for social justice or injustices can be found in language and other communications with clients (Paré, 2014, as cited in Arthur & Collins, 2014). Paré (2014) cautioned that counselors’ professional frameworks should also be monitored for their contributions to the social status quo as frameworks along with personal communication have the ability to help create a space where clients can better understand systemic pressures in their lives and help them reframe and address these issues appropriately.

### **Related groups.**

In an attempt to push the field forward in the area of social justice, groups of like-minded individuals began to come together for support. Within American Counseling Association Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) emerged. Their mission is “to work to promote social justice in our society through confronting oppressive systems of power and privilege that affect professional counselors and our clients and to assist in the positive change in our society through the professional development of counselors” (Counselors for Social Justice, 2011). This division is guided by Lewis and colleagues (2002) advocacy competencies and focuses on distributing scholarly work related to social justice topics as well as providing support and professional development in order to increase their members’ knowledge of and ability to work toward social justice (Sloan & Toporek, 2007). They have become a prominent division of ACA

Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR), an independent non-profit organization, formed in 1982 in an attempt to reduce the threat of nuclear attacks during the Cold War (Psychologists for Social Responsibility, n.d.). Their mission goals explicitly extended to social justice after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since this time their efforts have been mostly focused on enhancing peace in war torn areas and social issues of minimum wage and women’s rights. Their current mission states

“Psychologists for Social Responsibility is an engaged community of members and supporters who work to advance peace and social justice through the ethical use of psychological knowledge, research, and practice. Representing a variety of cultural and disciplinary perspectives, we recognize diversity as a valuable resource in our efforts to address economic, racial, and gender-based injustices and other forms of oppression. We believe that peace with justice in an environmentally sustainable world depends upon a commitment to global well-being, universal human rights, mutual understanding, and collaborative partnerships in the pursuit of change.” (Psychologists for Social Responsibility, n.d.).

In 2005 PsySR and CSJ decided to come together to fulfill parts of both of their missions by creating a journal that focused on issues of social justice and in 2007, *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology* was published bilingually (Spanish) with open access online (Sloan & Toporek, 2007). Since that time, they have published 12 issues and more than six times that number of articles all promoting scholarly work on social justice.

In APA, Division nine, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) was originally created in 1935, was affiliated with APA in 1937 and became an official division in 1945 and currently has over 3,000 members (SPSSI, n.d.a). Like PsySR, SPSSI also has a global focus as well as other initiatives in promoting research on social issues, influencing policy at a national level, and promoting public education and social activism (SPSSI, n.d.a). Their publication *Journal of Social Issues* has contributed to furthering social justice through focus on topics of socioeconomic status, policy and globalization (Walsh & Gokani, 2013). While SPSSI tends to focus more on policy than social justice specifically, their policy initiatives focus on areas of social justice such as marriage equality and psychological effects of unemployment (SPSSI, n.d.b). SPSSI is an important partner in this journey towards a more socially just world as policy is how wide spread change is distributed.

### **Moving forward.**

The literature from the early 2000s to present day has been patchwork in nature. Resources exist for those who wish to expand their skills related to social justice in specific areas such as: advocacy (Stewart, Semivan, & Schwartz, 2009), policy (Kiselica, 2004; Toporek, 2006) or just in general (Hage & Kenny, 2009; Lee, 2007; Ratts, Lewis, & Toporek, 2010; Toporek & Vaughn, 2010). The “how-to” literature has certainly expanded with time, as has the literature that focuses on characteristics of those dedicated to social justice.

Many different characteristics have been examined in relationship to social justice. Studies have shown the following characteristics to be positively significantly correlated with higher levels of social justice beliefs and behaviors: education level (Paylo, 2007); professional roles (Paylo, 2007; Ritchhart, 2002); perceived self- efficacy (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011; Miller et al., 2009; Ritchhart, 2002); membership in multiple professional organizations (Lange, 2010); identifying as a political activist or interested in politics (Beer et al., 2012; Corning & Myers, 2002; Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005; Paylo, 2007); integrating social justice into personal practice (Singh et al., 2010); having higher levels of personal moral development (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011); spirituality (Beer et al., 2012); and a desire to be involved in social justice (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005; Torres-Harding et al., 2012).

The following experiences have significantly positively correlated with higher scores on measures of social justice: exposure to injustice and influence of significant persons (Caldwell & Vera, 2010); prior volunteer work; participation in conversations about controversial topics with friends or classmates; and being from a more racially/ethnically diverse high school (Hurtado et al., 2002). Prior training experiences have been highlighted in several studies as a potentially significant factor in development of commitment to social justice. Miller and colleagues (2009) stated, “...by providing individuals with structured hands on learning experiences while at the same time providing a forum for discussion and reflection, it may be possible to cultivate interest (and ultimately engagement) in social justice advocacy efforts.” (p. 496). Although, it seems

training should be a key factor in developing social justice commitment, the research shows mixed results. Ritchhart (2002) found it to be not significantly correlated. Miller & Sendrowitz (2011) found it to have a significant indirect effect through self-efficacy in their path model. Lange (2010) found training to be directly significantly positively correlated with social justice advocacy for the profession.

As enlightening as some of these studies may be, they all contain the same problem. Social justice is rarely defined the same way twice and thus each of these studies is actually referring to different phenomena. Lewis (2011) stated social justice counseling is “eminently practical”. While this may be true, we cannot ignore the empirical and theoretical base of social justice – the definition.

### **Definitions of Social Justice**

The latest wave of social justice literature has been creating definitions of social justice since the late 1990s (e.g. Bell, 1997; Lee & Walz, 1998; Reisch, 2002; Goodman et al., 2004; Crethar, Torres Rivera & Nash, 2008; Crethar & Nolan, 2009; Fouad et al., 2004). Several modern definitions of social justice are drawn from the writings of John Rawls (1971) who leaned heavily on writings of Bentham, Mill, Kant, and Locke. Definitions are hard to pin down. Jun’s (2010) book, *Social Justice, Multicultural Counseling and Practice* has less than one page of text that explicitly focuses on social justice and seems to make a quick attempt at a broad amorphous definition without any further explanation, “Social justice and equity is an essential component of multicultural counseling, in which a practitioner assists clients with rising above systemic oppression and works with them to deconstruct, transcend, and transform internalized and systemic oppression” (p.6). Other texts have attempted to pull definitions of social justice from justice and injustice (Chung & Bemack, 2012). In recent literature, there is not one definition that is commonly used, but rather several that are loosely referred to (Walsh & Gokani, 2014). Manis and colleagues (2009) stated that while there are many definitions of social justice, they all have a core of desire to relieve inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. As shown in

Table 1, equitable distribution of goods and resources is the most prominent theme, but certainly not the only theme. Several articles have been written expressing frustration at the lack of an agreed upon definition (Arfken & Yen, 2014; Hunsaker, 2011; Novak, 2000). Others have stated there simply is not a single definition due to the contextual nature of the term (Louis et al., 2014; Coates, 2007; Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). An entire issue of the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* was dedicated to “interrogating and clarifying the philosophical and theoretical issues that lie at the intersection of psychology and social justice” (p.1) and yet the editors of the issue conclude that even this effort was unsuccessful in defining social justice (Arfken & Yen, 2014). Table 1 is provided to summarize themes in social justice definitions.

### **Issues in Defining Social Justice**

Perhaps the largest problem with defining social justice is that it went undone for so long. Volumes upon volumes have been written about social justice without ever defining the term, as if everyone should be familiar with what it entails (Hayek as cited in Novak, 2000). Perhaps it was the early ambiguity that contributed to lack of clarity in present day. Perhaps the complex nature of social justice has contributed to the elusiveness of the term. Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar and Israel (2006) named four types of systems involved in social justice: stakeholders, context, environment, and structures. Each of these systems can involve many people or subparts, each with potentially different ideas or desires. In most instances, it is impossible for every stakeholder to have a say in the final decision. Thus, it is important that leaders are very careful and deliberate in the actions as to not create a new type of oppression (Toporek et al., 2006). Similar conversations have been started before. For example, Prilleltensky (1997) advocated that counselors become more active rather than discussing principles as well as be more direct with their definitions of what is “good” and how the vision can move to action. Ten years ago, the field might have claimed the excuse that social justice simply had not been operationalized as a part of multicultural competencies (Vera & Speight, 2003). However, a decade has past and not much progress has been made.

A basic but significant issue in the literature on social justice is the lack of resolution around central concepts and frameworks (Kazemi & Törnblom, 2008). As stated above there is still much debate around what parts of justice belong where and whether or not the list is exhaustive. Without knowing the ground theory fully, it is hard to interpret information beyond it. In theoretical discussions, there is a discrepancy between describing social justice as a virtue (can only be applied to individuals) or as a regulative principle of order (can be applied to societies (Zajda et al., 2006). Zajda and colleagues (2006) go on to list several issues of assumptions of social justice. The term has a monocultural connotation that implies there is only one correct way to achieve it, when in fact the term is dependent on the culture (Louis et al., 2014; Coates, 2007; Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). Other claims include social justice can be obtained at any time by any society, when this directly goes against some societal ideals (capitalism). The issue is not a simple one, but is compounded by issues of state and social stratification. As daunting as the task seems, some consensus on the definition of social justice should be sought out.

## APPENDIX B:

### DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

2. With what gender do you most closely identify?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your sexual/affectional orientation?

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Questioning
- Two spirit
- Polyamorous
- Pansexual
- Prefer not to label
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your religious orientation?

- Christian
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Buddhist
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Hindu
- None
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your ability status?

- Person with Different Physical/ Psychological/Developmental Abilities
- Currently Abled (no different ability)

6. What is your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

- African American, Black, African Descent
- Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino(a)
- Native American or American Indian
- White/Caucasian or European
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the highest level degree you have obtained/are in the process of obtaining?

- Master's Level
- Doctoral Level

8. Working Status

- Currently working in a helping field
- Currently working, but not in a helping field
- Retired from working in helping field
- Currently a student in a helping field

9. What is your primary work setting?

- Academia (students and professors)
- College Counseling Center
- Community/Non-profit Agency
- Government
- Consulting work
- Religious Organization
- In-patient
- Day Treatment
- Private Practice
- Other: (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. What type of program did you last attend/are you attending?

- Counseling Psychology
- Counselor Educator
- Clinical Psychology
- Educational Psychology
- School Psychology
- Professional Psychology (Psy.D.)
- Mental Health Counseling
- Community Counseling
- Marriage and Family Counseling
- Social Work
- Health and Human Performance

- Public Health Master's (MPH, MSPH, MMSPH)
- Public Health Doctorate
- Health and Human Performance
- Masters of Arts in Theology
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Religious Arts/Education
- Doctorate of Divinity
- Doctorate of Ministry
- Doctorate of Philosophy
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you a licensed practitioner?

- Yes
- No (If no skip to 13)

12. If yes, what is your license?

- LPC, LMHC
- Ph.D.
- Psy.D.
- Ed.D.
- LMFT
- LCSW
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are you currently a student?

- Yes
- No (If no skip to #16)

14. If yes, what type of program are you attending?

- Master's program
- Doctoral program – post bachelors track
- Doctoral program – post master's track

15. What year are you currently in your program?

16. How would you describe your political ideology?

- Very Conservative
- Conservative
- Slightly Conservative
- No interest in any political stance
- Slightly Liberal
- Liberal
- Very Liberal

Please continue to Q sort instructions. ☺

## APPENDIX C:

### INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE Q-SORT

Sort the statement cards (post-it notes) into three stacks (this will make the second part faster):

- Statements most like the definition of social justice
- Statements least like the definition of social justice
- Statements that you feel more neutral or torn about

You may place the post-its in any order you like (you do not have to work from left to right or right to left). Statements you feel are **least** representative of the definition of social justice should go on the **far left**. Statements you feel are **most** representative of the definition of social justice should go on the **far right**. These two categories will meet in the middle, where more neutral items will be placed.

You are allowed to rearrange post-its after placement on the grid.

When you are satisfied with your response please transfer the post it number (located on the lower right hand side of the post it) into the lower right corner of the grid space where it is placed. This is a precautionary measure, should post-its come off in the process of mailing the grid back. For example if you place post it number 7 in block 1, you would write number 7 in the lower right corner of block 1 on the large grid sheet.

You will need to reference your answers for the follow up questions. Once those questions are complete, please carefully fold the grid sheet and place it in the return envelope.

If you have any questions at any time please feel free to contact the PI, Fae Frederick by phone or email. She is more than happy to assist you through these means or video chat.

Call/text – 857.540.2366

Email – fae.frederick@okstate.edu

## APPENDIX D:

### CONCOURSE

The definition of social justice is.....

1. Possessing knowledge of relevant policies that are empowering or harmful to people
2. Believing societal forces (e.g., public policies, resource allocation, human rights) effect individuals' health and well-being.
3. Addressing structural inequalities and barriers in institutional and government policies/legislation.
4. Helping members from marginalized groups to become more empowered by creating more opportunities for success (e.g., educational, career) by developing relevant skills
5. Identifying the social, political, economic and cultural factors that affect people
6. Recognizing if an individual's or group's behaviors and concerns reflect responses to systemic or internalized oppression
7. Collaboration with community groups and/or religious organizations to address systemic inequalities
8. Providing and analyzing data to show the urgency for social/political change
9. Evaluating effectiveness in one's advocacy efforts
10. Scholarship designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to improve quality of life
11. Professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices in order to increase access to tools of self-determination
12. Absence of systemic disparities in health between social groups
13. Addressing factors that may impede human psychosocial development
14. Promoting equity for individuals and groups who have been systemically excluded due to a specific group membership
15. A form of natural duty owed by one person to another
16. An abstract ideal imposed from powerful/government systems
17. The empowerment of people through governmental systems that are listening and responding to their constituents wants and needs
18. Valuing fairness/equity for marginalized groups who do not share equal power in society
19. Preparing individuals and communities for existing opportunities so people can reach their full potential
20. Harmony between the needs of individuals and needs of the whole
21. Ability of people to access the knowledge, power, resources, and services crucial to realizing a standard of living that allows self-actualization and self-determination
22. The right to participate and/or be consulted on decisions that affect one's life
23. Willingness to make sacrifices with the understanding it will ultimately maintain the best interests for all
24. Unifying factors underlying the general movement towards a fairer, less oppressive society
25. Equal rights to intangibles (e.g. freedom)
26. Equal opportunity to obtain social goods (e.g. property)
27. Equitable distribution to those of equal productivity
28. Equitable distribution based upon different contractual agreements
29. Equal opportunity for participation by all groups in a society
30. Equitable distribution of resources in society (health care, education, social rights, etc.)
31. Equitable distribution of obligations in society

32. Helping individuals develop fulfilling relationships
33. An internal sense of spiritual responsibility or conscience
34. Advocating on behalf of marginalized groups as well as mobilizing and empowering them to speak for themselves.
35. Treating stakeholders in social endeavors with respect and humility
36. Examining context, history, culture, and economic and political realities with the purpose of seeing how these mitigate against the full humanity or dignity of themselves and others
37. Using the power subscribed to you by a larger community
38. A general obligation to protect the individual against disease and injury
39. Minimizing damage of harmful elements (policy or environment) when exposure cannot be controlled
40. Asserting the value and priority of all human life
41. Balancing and addressing global and local issues
42. The alleviation of poverty
43. The liberation of vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion.
44. Creating reciprocal relationships within communities
45. Continuing the work of a higher power
46. The use of practical and applied theologies to improve the lives of people
47. Part of or central to the practice of good stewardship

APPENDIX E:

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Which items did you say were least like the definition of social justice (on the far left) and why?

Square 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Square 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which items did you say were most like the definition of social justice (far right) and why?

Square 46 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Square 47 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which items did you place in the middle (neither like or unlike the definition of social justice) and why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are additional items you would have used (and why are they important)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any further comments on any part of the process (including anything that might have been confusing)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How long did it take you to complete the Q sort? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F:

### IRB APPROVAL AND INFORMED CONSENT

#### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

#### OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

**Title:** Defining Social Justice through Q sort Methods

**Investigator(s):** Fae Frederick, M.A., Applied Health & Educational Psychology, Oklahoma State University

Hugh C. Crethar, Ph.D., Applied Health & Educational Psychology, Oklahoma State University

**Purpose:** The purpose of the research study is to triangulate a definition of social justice through statistical analysis of data provided by experts on social justice. The intended result will be a single definition that encompasses the parts of social justice deemed most significant by experts to be used in research and other venues. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

**What to Expect:** This research study is administered remotely. Participation in this research will involve completion of three questionnaires. The first questionnaire will ask for basic demographic information. The second questionnaire is a Q sort where you are asked to rank items in a least to most format. The third questionnaire will ask you for your opinions and reactions on the Q sort. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. You will be expected to complete each questionnaire once. It should take you about 45-60 minutes to complete. If there is any confusion on returned materials, the researcher may contact you to clarify your responses.

**Risks:** There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you. However, you may gain a deeper understanding of your own thoughts on social justice and the research process.

**Your Rights and Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

**Confidentiality:** No identifying information will be collected. You will not be asked for your name nor will you be asked for your specific institutional or organizational affiliation. The materials have been marked with a code that cannot be traced back to you once data collection is complete. The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed three years after the study has been completed.

**Contacts:** You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: Fae Frederick, M.A. 305 Willard Hall, Dept. of Counseling Psychology Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-7233 or Hugh C. Crethar, Ph.D., 422 Willard Hall, Dept. of Counseling Psychology Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-9442. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Hugh Crethar, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu)

**If you choose to participate:** Please fill out the materials included, following the directions ahead of each set of questions. If you have any questions during the process, please feel free to contact the PI by the means stated within the instructions. Please use the envelope provided to return your materials once you have completed them, postage has been provided. Returning your completed surveys in the envelope provided indicates your willingness to participate in this research study.

APPENDIX G:

IRB APPROVAL

**Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board**

Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2015  
IRB Application No: ED1526  
Proposal Title: Empirically defining social justice

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):      Protocol Expires: 3/16/2018**

Principal Investigator(s):

A. Fae Frederick  
818 N Husband St #8  
Stillwater, OK 74075

Hugh C. Crethar  
422 Williard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Tamara Mix, Vice  
Chair Institutional  
Review Board

## VITA

Amanda Fae Frederick

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: EMPIRICALLY DEFINING SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH Q SORT  
METHODOLOGY

Major Field: Counseling Psychology

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology with an option in Counseling Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in August, 2017.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts in 2013.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Auburn University at Montgomery, Montgomery, Alabama in 2011.

Experience: Clinical Experience: Carl Albert Public Internship Fellow; Counseling Intern at Creoks Behavioral Health Services; Counseling Intern at OSU Counseling & Counseling Psychology Clinic, Counseling Intern at Wings of Hope Family Crisis Services; Mental Health Counseling Intern at Bridgewater State Hospital.  
Research Experience: Building Resilient Communities Team; Gar Bar Study; 21<sup>st</sup> Century Athenas; Enhancing Survivor's Wellbeing through Program Evaluation; SECURE: Promoting Students' Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Regulation and Academic Success; Self-Harming behavior among College Students. Current Research Interests: Interdisciplinary Community Partnerships; Social Justice.

Professional Memberships: American Psychological Association