Industrial Psychology: Goodness of fit? Fit for goodness?

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Note:
Although the discipline is internationally better known as industrial-organisational psychology, or industrial/organisational psychology, the name of the discipline used in this paper is the traditional one of industrial psychology. The term industrial is logically interpreted to refer to industry, and industrial psychology is thus universally viewed to be psychology in industry. However, industrial, as in industrial psychology, also alludes to industrious. The latter interpretation, conceptualised by Jan Waterink (1952), translated from 'de bedrijwige mens' in Dutch, is the one preferred for the purpose of this paper. Industrial psychology is often referred to as occupational psychology in the United Kingdom.

ABSTRACT

Orientation: This theoretical opinion-based paper represents a critical reflection on the relevance of industrial psychology.

Research purpose: Against a historical-developmental background of the discipline, the inquiry questions its goodness of fit, that is its contribution to organisation *and* society.

Motivation for the study: Regular introspection in the discipline ensures that it remains relevant in both science and practice. As such, such introspection calls for a meta-theoretical imperative, to ensure that industrial psychology is fully aware of how the theoretical models applied in the discipline influence people and the society that they form part of

Research design, approach and method: The question of industrial psychology's potential fit for goodness that is broader than what is merely good for the organisation and its employees is explored with a view to enhancing its relevance. The exploration is conducted through the utilisation of theoretical argumentation in which industrial psychology is analysed in terms of contextual considerations that require the discipline to evaluate its real versus its potential contribution to society.

Main findings: It is found that the fit is limited to its relevance for inwardly focused organisational behaviour due to its endorsement of the instrumental (strategic) motives of organisations that subscribe to an owner and/or shareholder agenda.

Practical/managerial implications: In light of the main finding, industrial psychology's potential fit for goodness is explored with a view to enhancing its relevance in an era of goodness. The creation of a scientific and practical interface between industrial psychology and business ethics is suggested to facilitate movement away from a descriptive approach.

Contribution/value-add: The heuristics of reflection, reform, research and resources are suggested to facilitate movement towards a normative (multiple stakeholder) paradigm aimed at broad based goodness and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Although there is no doubt that industrial psychology involves the study of human behaviour in all organisations, big and small, profit-driven and non-profit driven, private sector and public sector, the context of the argument, and therefore the operational domain of the industrial psychologist, is by and large that of the *larger organisation* in the private and parastatal sectors. Seeing as the words 'ethics' and 'morality' essentially mean the same thing, they are used interchangeably in this paper.

The mandate of industrial psychology has traditionally been the matching of workforce to workplace by explaining and influencing human behaviour in organisations. The question can be posed here, however, as to whether the boundaries of industrial psychology practice are limited to organisational boundaries. This perceived 'confinement' may, in turn, raise the question as to whether industrial psychology research and practice is limited to serving the often narrowly defined needs of owners, shareholders and leaders in organisations. Does industrial psychology, by virtue of its professional obligations, not also have a role to play in making the world a better place for society at large? Therefore a broader obligation to society? It may be time for industrial psychologists to ask incisive questions of their discipline and profession, questions that relate to

- the positioning of industrial psychology in the pursuit of success as defined by organisations' leaders who hire and remunerate industrial psychologists
- its real sense of relevance and resultant contribution to broader, societal sustainability.

The inquiry sets out to question the discipline's goodness of fit, in other words, its contribution to both organisation and society. The inquiry is based on an assumption that the fit is limited to its relevance for inwardly focused organisational behaviour due to its endorsement of the instrumental (strategic) motives of organisations that subscribe to an owner and/or shareholder agenda. The question of industrial psychology's potential fit for goodness, that may be broader than what is merely good for the organisation and its employees, is explored with a view on enhancing its relevance. This relevance is of particular importance in the era of goodness that contextualises organisations. The aim is to provide a paradigm for the discipline that could be normatively based with the intention to suggest a much broader responsibility that an intra-organisational and descriptive approach would presuppose. In a sense then, the ability of discipline to leave a footprint on the world that is not limited to what it can do for organisations and their employees. The discussion commences with a historical-developmental overview of the discipline.

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Industrial psychology: An overview

The need for meta-theoretical inquiry

Pietersen (1989) calls for continuous self-examination based on meta-theoretical inquiry by the discipline of industrial psychology. A meta-theoretical imperative is required, to ensure that psychology is fully aware of how the theoretical models applied in the discipline influence people and the society that they form part of (Retief, 1989). Regular introspection ensures that the discipline remains relevant in both science and practice. In the process, the existing status quo and the paradigms that maintain it should be continuously critically reflected upon. The absence of introspection may cause inadvertent tunnel vision within the profession. This may manifest in an unconditional acceptance of the perceived importance of micro processes and 'generally accepted practices'. This may, in turn, inhibit sustainable *relevance* of the discipline.

Relevance of the discipline

One can surely reflect on the relevance of the discipline of industrial psychology in many ways. For example, one can focus on its ontological and epistemological premises, the scientific status thereof, its methods of enquiry, the value it adds to organisational success and its professionalism. However, the question posed in this paper is whether industrial psychology has relevance for those they serve. Before an approach to facilitate such relevance is presented, an overview of the discipline is provided to establish the premises upon which it is built and operationalised.

Human beings spend most of their life engaged in work related activities. There are therefore few other fields as critical to human welfare as industrial psychology (Cilliers, 1991; Muchinsky, Kriek & Schreuder, 2005). As its name implies, industrial psychology, or industrial-organisational (I/O) psychology as it is known in many parts of the world, is a specialised field within the larger discipline of psychology that focuses on the workplace. A scrutiny of several descriptions of industrial psychology reveals that it is the scientific study of human behaviour in the workplace, or the application of psychological facts, principles, theory and research to the work setting (Blum, in Muchinsky, 2003; Cilliers, 1991; Landy & Conte, 2004; Muchinsky, *et al*., 2005; Veldsman, 1986). In other words, industrial psychology refers to the study of behaviour at work (Berry & Houston, 1993).

Landy and Conte (2004) suggest that because many factors influencing workplace behaviour are not always found within the work setting (e.g. family responsibilities, cultural influences, employment relations legislation and non-work events such as the September 11 attacks that changed the working lives of many), one should not be fooled by the phrase *workplace* and that the domain of industrial psychology stretches well beyond the physical boundaries of the workplace. In South Africa, the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 could probably rate as a non-work event that triggered change in the working lives of many, notably through employment equity legislation and Black Economic Empowerment.

Industrial psychology's traditional *raison d'être* is the existence of human problems in organisations and its objective is to somehow provide the basis for resolving or minimising these problems (Augustyn 1982; Berry & Houston, 1993; Dipboye, *et al*., 1994; McCormick & Tiffin, 1974; Raubenheimer, 1970, 1974). As a move away from the existence of human problems in organisations, an emerging reason for existence of late is the contribution of the discipline to organisational health and the wellness of its members.

The scientist-practitioner model

Industrial psychology has become 'a recognised science and a diversified applied field' in the post-World War II era (Bergh & Theron, 2009, p. 25). Industrial psychology is one part applied science, which means that it contributes to the general knowledge base of psychology and one part application, which involves using that knowledge to solve work-related problems. This dualistic orientation has earned it the label of following a scientist-practitioner model (Augustyn, 1982; Dipboye, *et al*., 1994; Muchinsky, 2003). The 'scientist' component of this model indicates that industrial psychology accumulates, orders and disseminates knowledge through research, using rigorous scientific methodology. The epistemology of scientific knowledge in the discipline is to understand, predict and change or influence workplace related human behaviour. The 'practitioner' component relates to how industrial psychologists apply this knowledge in the workplace to identify and solve specific problems and, in the process, often create new knowledge through interaction, reflection and evaluation. Schultz and Schultz (1994) explain the practical impact of industrial psychology as follows: 'The services of I/O psychologists are used by many organizations of so many different types and sizes because they *work* – they promote efficiency and contribute to corporate profits' (p. 8, author's emphasis).

Historical overview

The discipline of industrial psychology had its origins about 100 years ago when psychologists in the United States of America started using principles of psychology to solve work-related problems. As time moved on, trends and problems pertaining to human behaviour in the workplace led to studies focusing on scientific phenomena. These studies resulted in new areas of interest, new theories and new methodologies for industrial psychologists. An evaluation of the extent to which the discipline has succeeded in meeting industries' and organisations' expectations of its ability to effectively respond to problems and to anticipate and minimise problems that might have occurred during its 100 years of existence requires urgent reflection. This evaluation will be conducted through an analysis of the discipline's responsiveness to work-related problems.

At any point in time, industrial psychology concerns itself with what is happening in the broader discipline of psychology, the work organisation and society at large of which both are a part (Dipboye, *et al*., 1994). Given that organisations function as open systems (Katz & Kahn, 1966), which impact on organisations' environments and absorb and respond to changes in their environments, industrial psychology's focus and methodologies should continuously be affected by external forces. Examples of these external forces include employment relations legislation (i.e. labour law), HIV/Aids, the increased diversity of talent organisations can draw from and globalisation.

Multidisciplinary character

The responsiveness of industrial psychology to contextual change and resulting demands has over time manifested in the discipline assuming a multidisciplinary character consisting of a number of subfields. Although American and South African opinions on the naming of the specific subfields differ slightly, the six major subfields of industrial psychology are, for the purpose of this paper, Personnel Psychology, Organisational Psychology, Career Psychology, Psychometrics and Ergonomics and Consumer Psychology. Each one of these subfields will be briefly described with emphasis on its origins and responsiveness to work-related problems.

Personnel psychology is one of the oldest and more traditional activities of industrial psychologists (Muchinsky, *et al*., 2005). It emanated mainly from societal demands during the two World Wars to match applicants with job demands. Personnel psychology focuses on measuring and predicting individual differences in behaviour and performance (Cascio, 1998) and improving person-work fit (Dipboye, *et al*, 1994). It is operationalised as the line function of Human Resource Management in organisations where it focuses on the attraction, selection, retention, development and utilisation of human

resources in order to achieve both individual and organisational goals. Veldsman's (2001) opinion is that human resource management is focused on the management of the employment contract that exists between organisations and its employees. Within the domain of personnel psychology, the psychology of employment relations has been an area of particular interest since the legitimisation of organised labour (in the form of trade federations and unions) in the USA in the 1950s and South Africa in the 1970s (Tustin, 1994; Tustin & Flowers, 1993).

Organisational psychology had its origins in the post World War II human relations movement, when the need to reflect the growing influence of social psychology and other relevant social sciences arose. Psychologists started focusing, from a humanistic perspective, on what human needs need to be satisfied in the workplace (Dipboye, *et al*., 1994). Contingency theory within organisational psychology created the basis for answering questions on how organisations should be run for best results. This of course depended on a host of considerations at individual, group and macro-organisational level (Beehr, 1996; Dipboye, *et al*., 1994). Some of the phenomena of interest in organisational psychology are work motivation, participative management, leadership, communication, group dynamics, conflict, decision-making, leadership, power, organisational culture and climate, organisational change, organisational health, organisational development and organisational structure. The significance of organisational psychology as a subfield of industrial psychology is seen in the addition of 'organisational' to the name of Industrial-Organisational psychology, which was known as 'industrial psychology' prior to 1973. Division 14 of the American Psychological Association (APA) was formally established in 1973 as the 'Division for Industrial and Organizational Psychology'.

Career psychology is the subfield of industrial psychology that probably shows the greatest overlap with some of the areas of specialisation of psychology as mother discipline. It has as some of its areas of focus the following: the meaning of work in peoples' lives, quality of work life, vocational and career counselling, organisational mental health, stress and work-personal life balance issues. Where personnel psychology, in its applied form (i.e. human resource management) is concerned with the formal employment contract between organisation and employee, career psychology has as a core focus the psychological contract (also referred to as the psycho-social contract) between the organisation and the employee. Career psychology then, is about optimising the respective expectations of organisation and employee and what both are prepared to give to the other party to ensure the integrity of the psychological contract. Large-scale changes in the world of work, for example changing technologies, mergers and acquisitions, new organisational structures, downsizing and retrenchments, new compositions of the workforce, globalisation and the international workforce, have all contributed to the disappearance of the notion of life-long employment. A redefining of job security as skills portability caused the demise of the psychological contract as it was traditionally conceptualised. The focus of many career psychology research and application interventions of late has shifted to issues such as job and organisational commitment, employee turnover, skill obsolescence, human consequences of downsizing, fair layoffs, smooth re-organisation, dealing with job loss, retraining and outplacement counselling.

Ergonomics, or human factors psychology or engineering psychology, is concerned with the human-machine interface where work areas, tools, equipment and machines are designed to be compatible with and safe for the physical and physiological parameters of humans and human abilities and skills (Blignaut, 1988). Ergonomics had its origins in the two World Wars. For example, during World War I, (when pilots still dropped bombs by hand from their bi-planes), there were several fatalities ascribed to pilots having to fly aircrafts with vastly differing cockpit layout configurations. Pilots' retarded reaction time when having to adjust to new instrumentation caused many accidents. Standardisation of instrumentation was therefore a typical ergonomic intervention. In a sense, ergonomics is the opposite of personnel psychology. With ergonomics, the environment is adjusted to be compatible with humans, whereas the aim of personnel psychology is to fit the human to the job and its requirements.

Consumer psychology, as one of the oldest subfields of industrial psychology, is aimed at understanding the way consumers make decisions on how they spend their resources on products and services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Already at the turn of the previous century, Walter Dill Scott applied psychology to advertising. McCormick and Tiffin's (1974) description of industrial psychology as the study of human behaviour that has to do with organisations and the production, distribution and *consumption* of products and services, neatly captures consumer psychology as a subfield. Seeing that consumer psychology is not directly related to workplace behaviour, it is somewhat on the periphery of industrial psychological inquiry and intervention. Although information on buyer decision-making, behaviour and expectations may inform the quality, design, safety and marketing of products or services, consumer psychology is not about workplace behaviour *per se*.

Although not a 'subfield' in the true sense of the word, many industrial psychologists utilise psychometrics, which, in essence, provides the measurement tools for application in the other subfields, most notably personnel psychology. Towards the end of the 19th century, James McKeen Cattell, a student of Wilhelm Wundt, in association with Francis Galton, were the pioneers in using statistical methods to assess individual differences, in particular, differences in mental ability. Psychometric assessments or 'tests' for use in the work setting are designed to differentiate between individuals based on traits, such as cognitive ability, personality, interests, values, integrity and learning potential. The results of these assessments, are then utilised to predict person-job and person-environment fit. Having the competence to use psychometric tests and their results in a responsible way is supposed to be the exclusive domain of licensed psychologists.

Interdisciplinary character

The *interdisciplinary* nature of industrial psychology also needs to be highlighted. It is seen as an *intermediate* (or linking) science (Raubenheimer, 1974) that bridges the gap between psychology and the management and economic sciences, for example, accounting, business management, marketing management and economics. Industrial psychology is therefore often positioned in the Faculties of Management and/or Economic Sciences at many South African universities. However, industrial psychology also has links to other fields and disciplines, for example, sociology, education, philosophy, business ethics and anthropology. It is thus also viewed as a *supporting* science that, through its practical application, assists industrialists and business leaders to reach their economic goals (Raubenheimer, 1974).

Within the profession of psychology, industrial psychology is deemed a sub-profession. As practitioners, industrial psychologists ply their trade as professionals; Aamodt (2007) states that it has a specific professional identity. Many industrial psychologists are in academic positions at institutions of higher learning. Others are employed by (mostly larger) organisations as human resource practitioners or managers, or as internal consultants advising on human behaviour issues in the workplace. A third group are those who sell their services to organisations as external consultants. Industrial psychologists in this country register as psychologists with a licensing body, which is the Professional Board for Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa. According to Berry and Houston (1993), industrial psychology offers more employment opportunities than any other brand of psychology.

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An analysis of the future trends the discipline needs to focus on, reveals the following: dealing with the changing nature of work and job types (e.g. the legal Western world sweatshops known as call centres), ferocious competition for and retention of human talent, the increasing diversity of the workforce, increasing globalisation of business, further organisational downsizings, drugs and violence in the workplace and work-life balance (Muchinsky, 2003; Muchinsky, *et al*., 2005; Riggio, 2000).

Preliminary evaluation

Having presented the origins, nature and foci of the discipline of industrial psychology in a rather cursory fashion (which did not remotely represent the richness and scope of the discipline), one's first instinctive reaction may be the following:

- As an applied science, industrial psychology has built up a solid body of knowledge over the span of about 100 years.
- Industrial psychology provides through its subfields, which also allow for specialisation, a wide spectrum of solutions to workplace issues.
- Industrial psychology has responded very well to workplace problems.
- As a profession, industrial psychology has rendered its services in a responsible manner.

Although industrial psychologists have been somewhat reactive in dealing with behavioural issues in the workplace (Cilliers, 1991; Dipboye, *et al*., 1994; Offerman & Gowing in Dipboye, *et al*., 1994; Schreuder, 2001), it seems as if they have responded well to the changing contexts of the discipline of psychology and the work organisation. Bergh and Theron (2009) report that during the 1980s and 1990s industrial psychology was particularly enriched by sophisticated statistical techniques, the utilisation of cognitive psychology, recognition of and enhanced research in balancing work-family issues and increased variation in strategy and methodology. The 2000s were a particularly significant era in which positive psychology was established (cf. Seligman & Csikzentmihalyi, 2000; Luthans, 2002). Positive psychology has since emerged as a major driving force in many industrial psychologists' thinking. The latter era also saw an intensive exploration for identifying and applying qualitative research methodology.

It appears that it has contributed significantly to understanding, predicting and influencing behaviour in organisations in terms of

1. psychometric assessment (e.g. Ones, Viswesvaran & Schmidt, 1993)
2. selection (Goodstein & Lanyon, 1999)
3. assessment centre technology (Jansen & Finkenburg, 2006)
4. human resource development (i.e. training) (Parry, in Aamodt, 2009; Swart, Mann, Brown & Price, 2005)
5. ergonomic fit (Bridger, 2009).

A 27-year-old example of this takes the form of research conducted by Katzell and Guzzo (1983), who found that, at the time, 87% of psychological approaches to improve employee productivity had been successful (Muchinsky, *et al*., 2005, p. 18). Guzzo, Jette and Katzell (1985, p. 275) revealed through meta-analyses that 'the effects on worker productivity of 11 types of psychologically based organizational interventions showed that such programmes, on average, raised worker productivity by nearly one-half standard deviation'.

In this section, the relevance of the discipline was reflected on by focusing on its ontological and epistemological premises, the scientific status thereof, its methods of enquiry, the value it adds to organisational success and its professionalism. In progressing towards an answer to the question as to whether industrial psychology has relevance for those it serves, a concept termed 'goodness of fit' is used to further analyse the discipline.

GOODNESS OF FIT?

An assumed responsiveness

Industrial psychology is aimed at helping organisations achieve their economic goals (Cascio, 1995; Raubenheimer, 1974; Schultz & Schultz, 1994). For a century, it has rendered a service to organisations and more particularly, to those that exist for the purposes of making money for its owners or shareholders. Naturally, services rendered by the discipline's practitioners are available to those organisations that can afford to permanently employ industrial psychologists or buy their knowledge and interventions temporarily. Judging by the number and variety of areas of research interest and practical application as listed in the discussion on the subfields, the discipline has grown in stature and demand. Indeed, if the relevance of industrial psychology is interpreted strictly according to its reason for existence as mentioned earlier, in other words, to provide the basis for resolving or minimising problems relating to human behaviour in organisations, or to contribute to organisational health and members' wellness, one only needs to analyse its *responsiveness* to validate its contribution. A good example is the work done by industrial psychologists to mitigate the human trauma associated with job loss resulting from downsizing. Industrial psychologists therefore have a two-pronged approach: the first is to help organisations make money by properly utilising their employees, which to an extent, is tempered by the second, which is the humanistic orientation to assist employees in coping with the increasing demands of the workplace.

A question of relevance, or goodness of fit

However, has industrial psychology been relevant? According to Berry and Houston (1993) 'we can evaluate the field according to who is doing what and for what personal reason' at any point in history (p. 26). The reason for evaluating the field is the following: Indications of the sources that could have provided a sense of discomfort in merely accepting industrial psychology as 'good work', has been growing steadily in some scholars' minds during the last few years. There seems to be a disjunct or tension in what industrial psychology can *potentially* contribute to and the contribution it *does* make. One therefore needs to explore industrial psychology's 'goodness of fit'.

The notion of goodness of fit is a concept that is, for the purpose of this paper, borrowed from the field of psychometrics (Howell, 1995) to analyse the question relating to the contribution the discipline makes. Goodness of fit is a test used to assess the extent to which that which is observed, corresponds to the predicted characteristics of a theory or model. One could therefore ask whether the discipline of industrial psychology could, over time, have adequately adjusted to render it appropriate and relevant. Or, stated differently, whether there is correspondence, or 'goodness of fit', between that for which it is intended and that which has been observed to have actually happened.

The organisational context

Although not all explicitly articulated, there have been strong signals reflecting scholars' discomfort regarding the goodness of fit in the past 30 years. Examples of these, in the form of quotations, are:

Quotation 1: '… industrial psychology, has not always grasped the opportunities to make a positive contribution to society' (translated from Raubenheimer, 1974, p. 5).

Quotation 2:

> *There is the temptation in industrial psychology, and thus a trend, to become primarily practically focused, with solutions for an unavoidably* narrowly defined *practical problem the* most important, *and often the* only important *driving force*
>
> (translated from Raubenheimer, 1980, p. 8; author's emphasis)

Quotation 3: 'On the whole, I/O psychology has been slow to recognize the implications of societal changes for its own agenda.' (Dipboye, *et al*., 1994, p. 31).

Quotation 4: '… across the full spectrum of work organizations in society, psychological interventions designed to solve social and organizational problems are underutilized' (Colarelli, 1998, in Muchinsky, 2003, p. 20).

Quotation 5: 'During the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s management was I/O psychology's only interest group … their work was mainly reactive, *intra*disciplinary and *intra*organisational … Industrial psychologists were instrumental in a passive role in an authoritarian system' (Schreuder, 2001, p. 5; author's emphasis).

Quotation 6: 'The real impact of industrial psychological knowledge on society is unsatisfactory'. (Kriek, 1996, p. 9).

Quotation 7: '*Communities* and *societies* must receive more attention from a world-of-work perspective' (Veldsman, 2001, p. 35; author's emphasis).

Quotation 8: 'The cares of the present are anxiety, uncertainty and cynicism' (Schreuder, 2001, p. 5).

Dipboye (*et al*., 1994, p. 21) noted that the focus of industrial psychology was increasingly confined to micro workplace issues, which involve the behaviour of individuals and groups, rather than entire organisations. Many authors of industrial psychology textbooks (particularly books on organisational psychology) are structured around three dimensions of human behaviour in organisations, namely individual, group and organisation (Beehr, 1996; Crafford, Moerdyk, Nel, O'Neill, Schlechter & Southey, 2006; Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman, 1998; Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992; Riggio, 2000; Robbins, 1989, 1993; Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003). However, the organisation dimension is inwardly focused and does not account for the behaviour of an organisation as an entity towards its external stakeholders, or what Rossouw and Van Vuuren (2010) terms, its moral agency. It may be stated that industrial psychologists have negated their responsibility of also studying and influencing outwardly focused organisational behaviour.

From a meta-scientific point of view, several scholars have questioned the relevance of the discipline (Argyris, 1976; Biesheuvel, 1991; Pietersen, 1986, 2005; Veldsman, 1982, 1988). Thirty four years ago, in 1976, Argyris (1976) viewed industrial psychologists as a group that supports and maintains the managerial status quo. Ten years later, in 1986, Pietersen (1986) asks the question whether industrial psychologists as practitioners behave impartially and in an ethically accountable way, or whether they unilaterally identify with the interests of management and organisations. A further ten tears on, Pietersen (2005) reports that, since the inception of the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology in 1974, locally published research in the discipline is dominated by articles of an empirical nature that serve industrial psychology as a *profession* (knowledge application endeavour), rather than as a *science* (knowledge development endeavour) (Pietersen, 2005). Contributions to a special edition of this journal dedicated to 'Industrial psychology as discipline and profession' in 2001, are 'largely concerned with the serviceability of the discipline to *management* and *organisations*' (Pietersen, 2005, p. 81; author's emphasis). Criticism that *research* in industrial psychology is being undertaken purely for the benefit of capital and that it often ignores the interests of the employees, organised labour and the community, has also been levelled (Cloete, Muller & Orkin (1986) and Dawes (1985), both in Biesheuvel, 1991).

Having investigated the relation between industrial psychology as science and industrial psychology as practice, Veldsman (1988) describes a number of models of involvement of industrial psychology. It appears as if the model of technocratic involvement is probably the one that epitomises industrial psychological involvement at present. In a technocratic model, the science of industrial psychology is seen to be subservient to the organisational context in which it operates (Veldsman, 1988). This would imply that industrial psychology, as defined within the rigidity of the status quo, focuses on the practical issues as defined by those who have power in the organisation. The context of the organisation, in other words, the broader societal context, is an 'incidental side-issue' (Veldsman, 1988, p. 27). It seems that the consciously or sub-consciously chosen motive of the industrial psychologist is 'knowledge that serves the status quo'. Problem identification is a function of the here-and-now practical issues faced by organisations and industrial psychologists dealing with these in a prescribed fashion. 'Generally accepted industrial psychology practices', similar to the GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Practices) determined by the accounting profession, may even result as a need for alignment to a technocratic order. In this regard, several attempts by professional associations and regulatory bodies are in the process of circumscribing the scope of practice of industrial psychology in South Africa (cf. SIOPSA, 2010).

It seems as though the discipline was founded upon noble intentions, as can be deduced from the following quote that hails from 1917:

> *Every psychologist who besides being a 'pure' scientist, also cherishes the hope that in addition to throwing light upon the problems of his science, his findings may also contribute their quota to the sum-total of human happiness.*
>
> (Hall, Baird & Geissler, 1917, quoted in Muchinsky, 2003, p. 11; author's emphasis)

A further attempt to accommodate the broader societal good in the discipline's reason for existence, from a humanistic basis, was the post-World War II human relations movement, which, for a while at least, was quite the scientific *zeitgeist*. Industrial psychology's reactions to the pervasive downsizing frenzy that followed on the economic recession of the 1980s also kindled awareness for the welfare of the society to counter the negative socio-economic effects of retrenchments, for example, the psychological ills of unemployment. These intentions, however good, were not sufficient to change the reigning fundamental identity of industrial psychology, which is to serve organisations in solving workplace problems.

The economic context

If the workplace or the organisation is the context in which industrial psychology is engrossed, the economic context beyond organisational boundaries may not have been accounted for. The question is whether the prevailing economic system engenders a sense of confinement for industrial psychologists by setting unchallenged boundaries for the science and practice of the discipline. Or stated differently, has there been an unconditional acceptance of the economic system? If so, why is this the case? This 'sense of confinement' may be ascribed to the fact that the very economic system dictates profit as the goal of organisations (or financial viability for non-profit organisations). This singular profit motive that characterises the economic system has, in turn, led to the establishment of similar singular motives and possibly rigid *modus operandi* for organisations that operate within that system.

Although this paper is not a forum for debate on the ethics or virtues of capitalism, a few comments on how this may pertain to the relevance of industrial psychology are presented. We have to understand the context within which the core material of industrial psychology takes on meaning (Dipboye, *et al*., 1994). For example, the economic trends that caused large-scale organisational downsizing and resultant retrenchments since the 1980s, forces one to reflect on how organisations are run.

Industrial psychology's aim of helping organisations achieve their economic goals is, in itself, not problematic. What might be

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problematic though is that these economic goals are formulated within the context of capitalism, or more specifically, a context of a strategic, or instrumental, stakeholder model. Goodpaster (1993) distinguishes between strategic and multi-fiduciary stakeholder models, whereby the *strategic* stakeholder approach is aimed at satisfying owner's and/or shareholders' needs and the *multifiduciary* (or normative) stakeholder model that indicates an organisational intention to account for the needs and expectations of multiple stakeholders which includes owners and/or shareholders.

It seems that many organisations have progressed beyond Milton Friedman's (1993) notion that the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. This implies that organisations provide work for their community members, use their resources and engage in activities designed to increase profits, on which they pay taxes. The condition here is that they stay within the rules of the game, in other words, they must not commit deception or fraud (Friedman, 1993).

Although Friedman (1993, p. 167) referred to corporate social responsibility (CSR) as 'a subversive doctrine in a free society', many organisations in modern society fulfil their responsibility to society in a sterling way. Corporate social responsibility initiatives may include sport sponsorships, the building of schools, supporting various charitable causes and protecting the environment. In South Africa listed companies can volunteer to be audited for inclusion in the JSE's Social Responsibility Investment Index (SRI). Organisations also regularly report on their CSR activities in their annual reports. However, when the reasons for the fulfilment of social responsibility are in doubt, for example, when CSR becomes a marketing exercise, it may be seen to reflect an organisational philosophy of instrumentality. This implies that organisations will be good to employees, customers, the community and the environment, on the condition that this goodness is also 'good' for business. These organisations use ethics to their own advantage. In turn, the ethics of their business ethics may then be questioned. What is of concern though is the so-called dark side of capitalism, or what Mintzberg, Simons and Basu (2002) call dogmatic individualism. This manifests when, from a strategic (instrumental) stakeholder model, organisations' ends supersede their means in the quest to pursue a singular (financial) bottom line. De George (1999, p. 5) refers to the amoral nature of business when he describes the myth of 'the business of business, is business' and therefore not ethics (see also Handy, 2002). The notion that everyone prospers in a selfish economy amounts to what Mintzberg, *et al*. (2002, p. 72) refer to as 'a cynical justification of greed'. Due to the frequent absence of Adam Smith's (1776) ambitious notion of an invisible hand that will protect society's needs, through taxes for example, capitalism, as has been evident in most countries, by and large profits only owners and shareholders. Shareholders, fund managers and the stock market pressure decision makers in organisations to pursue corporate missions that emphasise short-term wealth creation (Mamman & Saffu, in Moalusi, 2001). Industrial psychology, by virtue of its practitioners' positioning within organisations and relations with organisations, then serves a strategic (instrumental) stakeholder model where the enrichment of owners and shareholders determine organisational goals, strategies and processes.

An enlightened form of the strategic stakeholder model is one where the needs and expectations of employees and customers are catered for, provided of course that it does not deter from profit maximisation and shareholder and/or owner wealth creation. The instrumental approach of 'being good to employees and customers on the condition that it is good for the shareholders and/or owners', is the context within which industrial psychologists often find themselves. Frequently then and not as last resort as organisations often claim during announcements of downsizing and concomitant retrenchments, employees are viewed as costs to be cut in order to ensure continued benefits for shareholders and/or owners. Add to this organisations that offset costs that may be incurred for preventing the loss of human life or environmental damage by rather paying the fines for not doing so, which is a less expensive option. The invisible hand of capitalism, which is purported to moderate the effects of wealth creation through taxes used for societal benefits, turns into an invisible fist when people's lives and the sustainability of the environment are compromised in this way.

Industrial psychologists operate in organisations that have political and economic power over managers, who, in turn, exert similar power over the psychologists. May it be then, that the cynicism Schreuder (2001) referred to, relates to frustrations and perhaps even feelings of powerlessness in the face of unrelenting at worst, or reluctant relenting at best, contemporary owner/shareholder paradigms, or paradigms of instrumentality?

It is unavoidable that this context could have an impact on the relevance of industrial psychology. Traditionally, industrial psychology's sense of success was dependent on how it solved workplace problems. In doing so, industrial psychology may have fallen into a trap of serving the agenda of corporations within a system of instrumentality. The best example of this is probably their innovations during the World Wars, which admittedly contributed greatly to the science and practice of the discipline and legitimised the discipline. This may, however, have been a false sense of relevance and contribution, as the greater well-being of society was often sacrificed in favour of corporate goals in the realm of instrumentality.
A dilemma for industrial psychologists is that they find it extremely difficult to maintain a focus on a cause greater than that of their employers' or clients' immediate problems, for the simple reason that their livelihoods depended on serving the organisation's best interest. Most industrial psychologists work in organisational settings in which an owner and/or shareholder model is endorsed, or at best, a tentative stakeholder model. Industrial psychologists that find themselves in service of organisations that subscribe to these philosophies may experience a conflict of interest dilemma. Should they take the moral high ground, they could be reminded that they are dependent on the organisation for their livelihood. If they endorse the strategic stakeholder model, they lose their credibility by 'not adding value to the business', when they have to spend most of their time and effort on mitigating the human trauma often caused by 'bottom line' focused obsessions. This 'hold' that organisations may have on industrial psychologists disqualifies the discipline in a way. May it be then that the discipline sacrificed, albeit not purposefully, the sustainability of society in favour of short-term economic goals?

One may even speculate on the role of industrial psychology, or the application of techniques and processes developed by industrial psychologists, in the fall of Enron, Arthur Andersen, Worldcom, Saambou and Leisurenet. Or, on the hand, what is the role of industrial psychology in the loss of reputation of many other organisations, for example, Nike, Hewlett-Packard, American Airlines, Parmalat, Clover SA, South African Airways and Tiger Brands. The role industrial psychologists played in the design of these organisations may also be scrutinised, as well as their roles in the building of cultures.Furthermore, what roles did industrial psychologis have in formulating the contents of leadership training programmes? In the structuring of incentive and pay-for-performance remuneration packages? In the selection of leaders and managers? In determining selection criteria? And lastly, on what criteria were the 'hard men and women', who 'showed the shareholders the money', originally selected for duty?

An evaluation

As a science and practice industrial psychology has grown remarkably over the last 100 years. It has made excellent contributions towards understanding, predicting and changing behaviour in the workplace. However, the question is 'What is

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the status quo in terms of *who* the discipline serves?' Therein lies the relevance of industrial psychology. This may be but a qualified relevance. The irrelevance that is of concern here is the phenomenon that it has neglected one of the basic premises that defines the discipline, accords it its identity and provides it with an important reason for existence, namely that of *outwardly focused organisational behaviour* that impacts on the broader society. If the implicit ideological undertone of the status quo is owner and/or shareholder satisfaction, perhaps with a touch of care for employees and customers, industrial psychology may have forsaken its ethical obligation towards societal sustainability.

Furthermore, it appears as if, on the whole, the technocratic model still dominates, as industrial psychologists continue to be servants of the owner and/or shareholder model. In other words, the 'psychological lackeys of capitalism'. In a sense the discipline may be accused of practicing intellectual dishonesty. Industrial psychologists functioning in instrumental contexts, may be under the illusion that their work facilitates some noble outward focus. They may therefore have a perceived sense of relevance rather than a real sense of relevance. Thus, a false sense of contribution.

Are industrial psychologists exposed to the theory and practice of the impact of organisations on the society that goes further than organisational financial goals and customer needs and expectations though? A perusal of the competence models endorsed by professional psychological associations in three other countries, the United Kingdom (BPS, 2006), Australia (APS, 2006) and the USA (SIOP, 2006), reveal that competencies required of industrial psychologists in these countries are geared at behaviour in organisations, although the principles that underlie these competencies allude to aspirations for the good of society, that is, beyond organisational boundaries. Yet, from a psychology-as-profession perspective, psychologists are supposed to be well versed in their ethical obligations that extend beyond what is good for employees and good for the organisation. According to the HPCSA's (1999) Ethical Code of Professional Conduct,

> *Psychologists work to develop a valid and reliable body of scientific knowledge based on research. They apply that knowledge to human behaviour in a variety of contexts. Their goal is to broaden knowledge of behaviour and where appropriate, to apply it pragmatically to improve the condition of both the individual and society.*
>
> (HPCSA's Ethical Code of Conduct: 1999 p. 7; author's emphasis)

Lowman (2006, p. xiv) states that 'It may be that industrial psychologists, perhaps due to the pressures exerted by organisations in which they practice, have negated this basic professional ethical obligation'. Schultz and Schultz (1994, p.23) explain that 'Managers facing time constraints may have unrealistic expectations and become impatient when the company psychologist – their so-called expert on human behavior – cannot provide a quick fix' (p. 23). Moalusi (2001) ascribes this to an inability to read the complexities of organisations. A quick fix would certainly exclude a broader, normative, stakeholder consideration. This type of intellectual capitulation would clearly confirm the existence of a technocratic orientation present in industrial psychology practice.

If industrial psychology is as critical to human welfare as Muchinsky *et al.* (2005) suggested, the following question has to be posed: Has there been goodness of fit for industrial psychology? It seems that it has been *fit* to solve problems related to human behaviour in the workplace. In particular, creating person-job match (e.g. by means of psychometric testing) or a workplace-person match (e.g. the human-machine interface explained by ergonomics). The goodness of the fit may therefore be quite commendable insofar as the means are concerned.

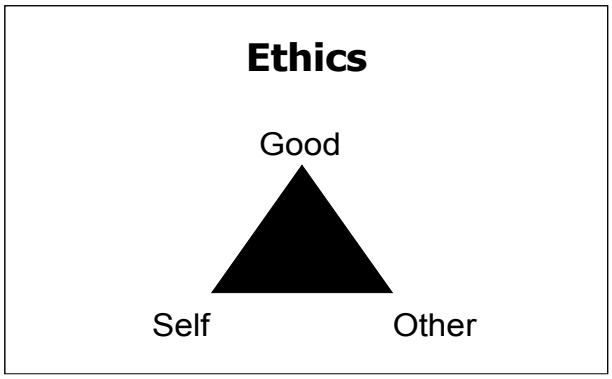

FIGURE 1
Defining ethics

However, there seems to have been little focus on an organisation-environment match. The quality/magnitude/property of the 'goodness' component of the fit is thus doubtful. The fit seems insignificant in the pursuit of some greater ends, that are beyond the short term finishing line of owner and/or shareholder wealth. What can the discipline therefore do to establish, over time, an optimal goodness of fit?

FIT FOR GOODNESS?

Having exposed shortcomings in terms of the relevance of industrial psychology, the current section is aimed at exploring the concept of goodness, presenting a case for goodness and the presentation of a frame of reference for industrial psychology's fit for goodness.

Goodness

Goodness, or 'moral excellence' (Butterfield & Editors, 2003, p. 702), is an inextricable component of any definition of ethics, or business ethics, for that matter. Ethics in general can be defined around three core concepts (Rossouw, 2002), namely 'good', 'self' and 'other' (see Figure 1).

Ethics concerns itself with what is good (or right) in one's (the self's) interaction with others. Behaviour can thus be considered to be ethical when it is not merely based on what is good for oneself, but also consider what is good for others (Rossouw & Van Vuuren, 2010). Business ethics may be defined by applying the above definition to economic interaction. The King Code of Governance for South Africa indicates that 'Business ethics refers to the ethical values that determine the interaction between a company and its stakeholders' (IoD, 2009).

Goodness in an organisation often hinges on the extent to which its leaders have formulated and embraced the organisation's ethical values in addition to its other core values of strategic and work values origin. Typical ethical values are those of trust, honesty, respect, fairness and transparency. As laws, policies and regulations can only prevent unethical behaviour up to a point and because organisations cannot make rules for everything that could potentially go wrong, it is in the long term interest of organisations to adopt values-based approaches to ensure ethical behaviour. Furthermore, organisations cannot blame unethical behaviour on 'bad apples' – unethical behaviour only occurs in environments (or 'barrels') that allow for the encouragement or condoning of such behaviour (Rossouw & Van Vuuren, 2010).

For goodness sake (or for business sake?)

In applying the definition of ethics, it can be seen that the inherent challenge is twofold:

1. defining 'the good'
2. balancing self-interest with what is good for the other.

Business leaders, however, often in a Friedmanian mode, question the sake of goodness for 'the other'. In the process they sometimes irrevocably contaminate the trust of their stakeholders. The suspicion that business takes care of itself before it takes care of others only fuels the latent distrust (Handy, 2002). A possible reason for this may be ascribed to a unilateral vision of strategically striving for an instrumental focus on owner and/or shareholder wealth that typifies many organisations.

World-wide actions for moral reform to moderate the effects of the dark side of capitalism have been visible in last decade. Academic/scientific indicators to this effect have been the proliferation of research, books and articles in the field of business ethics and the growth of professional business ethics network organisations and societies around the globe. Global initiatives to encourage ethics in business have included the Caux Round Table principles for business conduct, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) guidelines, the activities of Transparency International and the Global Compact of the United Nations. In Africa, the continental Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative of NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development) is an indication that governance is also an issue on this continent. Corporate governance laws and guidelines are being laid down in many countries. Examples of these are the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in the US, the Combined Report on Corporate Governance in the UK and the King Report on Corporate Governance in South Africa of 2009 (generally referred to as 'King III'). Some national governments have also been actively pursuing the combat of corruption and fraud.

Can it be that the eras that marked the socio-economic history of the last two millennia, namely the eras of agriculture, industrialisation and information (Toffler in Ungerer, Herholdt & Uys, 2006), may be followed by one of governance, or, can it be followed by an era of goodness? Governance is certainly a response to the inability of capitalism where the only criterion of success is shareholder value (Handy, 2002). The intention with corporate governance is to ensure corporate accountability to *all* stakeholders, with a view on ensuring global sustainability. Although many forms of corporate governance are high-handed and autocratically enforced, the intentions are surely underpinned by *goodness*?

In posing the question 'For whose benefit should organisations be run?', the importance of the shareholder as an important stakeholder that is also exposed to risk, is not negated. However, a new perspective on shareholders may be required. Handy (2002) describes the European notion of a shareholder that is viewed to be a trustee of the wealth inherited from the past. Within this paradigm, shareholders' duties are to preserve and increase wealth so that it can be passed on to future generations. This view is the antithesis of the view that sustainability and social responsibility are pursuits that only wealthy organisations can afford. Doing good does not rule out making a reasonable profit and profit comes from progress (Handy, 2002). Perhaps in the worldview of Charles Handy (2002), organisations should become reluctant capitalists, or what Novak (1993) calls democratic capitalists striving for virtuous self-interest - capitalists with a conscience.

It should not be too difficult to persuade organisations that the endorsement of a normative (multi-fiduciary) stakeholder model (Goodpaster, 1993), or to convince organisations to adorn a mantle of organisational citizenship (Goodpaster, 2001), would enhance their reputations. Reputation, in turn, enhances organisations' capacity to ensure stakeholder trust. This will of course facilitate the confidence of government, legislators, investors, consumers and business partners to engage with the organisation and will facilitate the ability to attract talented, but discerning employees. Doing good for goodness sake, or being ethically accountable, would then naturally result in the entrenchment of a business case for goodness (or ethics).

The moment that goodness becomes the end, the organisation ceases being the ultimate goal. If this were to evolve as a philosophy taught in business schools or in the economic and management sciences, it could result in collective and real sustainability. Organisations have to be good to society. There is no doubt that large organisations can and should play a crucial role in the betterment of society and global sustainability. Schwartz & Gibb (1999) emphasise this requirement quite poignantly: 'Organisations with power can benefit themselves and others in the long term, by identifying and acting on opportunities to improve the societies in which they operate' (p. xii). Or, in the words of Mintzberg, *et al*. (2002): 'Corporations are economic entities to be sure, but they are also social institutions that must justify their existence by their overall contribution to society' (p. 69). After all, they use men and women from society to help them reach their economic goals. Bjorn Stigson (2006, p. 1) of WBCSD (World Business Council for Sustainable Development) notes that 'A business's long-term competitiveness – its license to operate, innovate and grow – will increasingly depend on how it embraces societal challenge'.

Industrial psychologists have been either circumspect, or perhaps covert, in their contribution to the paradigmatic, scientific and pragmatic initiatives of promoting goodness. However, in the past, 'some unexpected societal changes and events have modified the direction and growth of industrial psychology …, and we can expect this trend to continue' (Berry & Houston, 1993, p. 26). Will the goodness (or governance) imperative be a watershed moment in the history of the discipline whereby it can assume broader relevance? The quest for global goodness and particularly goodness in and by organisations, provide industrial psychologists with an opportunity to not only acquire a broader relevance, but to also utilise an interdisciplinary collaboration with business ethicists to promote goodness. The reason for this is quite simple: goodness and business ethics are about organisationally related human ethical (or unethical) behaviour. Are industrial psychologists not supposed to be experts on behaviour in and of organisations?

Achieving fit for goodness

Industrial psychology has traditionally focused mainly on moderating the balance between what is good for the organisation and its employees (internal stakeholders). Although there was probably some focus on the needs and wants of the consumer as an external stakeholder group, industrial psychology's influence did not stretch much beyond that. If one is led by the presupposition that it has a role to play in finding the balance between what is good for the self (the organisation) and the 'other' (internal *and* external stakeholders), they would have to facilitate, from a behavioural scientific point of view, an understanding of the balance between the economic goals of the organisation and that of other stakeholders for the sake of longer term sustainability. It implies that the discipline needs to be relevant for goodness. How can industrial psychologists become relevant, or fit, for goodness?

'Fit' is defined as

> *to be appropriate or suitable for a situation. To be of the correct size or shape. To adjust in order to render appropriate. To supply with that which is needed to make competent or ready.*
>
> (Butterfield & Editors, 2003, p. 615)

Is industrial psychology fit to facilitate organisational ethical behaviour? Are industrial psychologists competent to facilitate ethical behaviour? May it be that industrial psychologists can use business ethics as an entry point to ensure a shift to

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outwardly focused organisational behaviour, or behaviour that is a move away from an instrumental (strategic) owner and/or shareholder model to one that is normative, that is, a multifiduciary or multiple stakeholder model?

Four heuristics to explain what could be done to re-define the relevance of industrial psychology, namely reflection, reform, research and resources are presented below.

Reflection

This section focuses on three aspects of industrial psychology that require reflection, namely identity, definition and paradigm.

Reflecting on the identity of industrial psychology

Theory on identity is largely limited to theory on either individual or organisational identity (organisational identity: Carstens & Van Tonder, 2006; Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000; Sarason, 1995; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998; Whetten & Mackey, 2002). In applying this theory to the identity of a discipline, such as industrial psychology, one has to ask the question 'who are we?' A discipline's sense of identity would be its self-defined distinctive character in response to this question. If one transposes the components that constitute organisational identity to a discipline, such as industrial psychology, one could state that the identity of industrial psychology consists of attributes that are core, distinctive, unifying and enduring to the discipline.

The discipline has to understand itself in relation to the system(s) s in which it functions. It has to be remembered that the industrial psychologist lives in two worlds (or systems), namely the scientific thinking community and the society and organisations in which they practice (Veldsman, 1988). The 'who are we?'-question therefore has to be expanded to 'who are we for whom?' Only then can the role of the discipline in and beyond the organisation be explored. Assumptions about its purpose have to be re-conceptualised to include the real reasons for its character as a discipline. This may afford the discipline a renewed legitimacy. This legitimacy will be judged by all stakeholders who are affected by the identity of the discipline and who can in turn affect its identity.

The identity component of *core* is its unique knowledge and expertise regarding human behaviour in the organisational contexts. At its core is also its *raison d'être* (the existence of human problems in organisations) and its objective (to somehow provide the basis for resolving or minimising these problems). The *core* component also relates to its relevance, which is about collectively accomplishing something meaningful towards the understanding, predicting and changing of human behaviour in organisational contexts.

The *core* of identity is the component that should be critically evaluated for its assumed relevance. The humanism that already exists in the discipline could be extended, embraced and entrenched to an outwardly focused organisational behaviour towards greater goodness. Industrial psychology's humanism extends further than employees or managers they serve as a strategic obligation in an owner and/or shareholder or technocratic model, to include all stakeholders potentially affected by its identity. This humanism would include the notion of doing 'good work'. Good work, as conceptualised by Gardner (in Landy & Conte, 2004), is work that 'exhibits a high level of expertise and it entails regular concern with the implications and applications of an individual's work *for the wider world*' (p. 5; author's emphasis). Martin Luther King Jr described good work in his own poignant way (quoted in Landy & Conte, 2004):

> *If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well'.*
>
> (Martin Luther King Jr Quoted in Landy & Conte: 2004, p.5)

The *core* of industrial psychology's identity also indicates[1] *stewardship* for human flourishing. This implies 'holding something in trust for another' and choosing service over self-interest (Block, 1996, p. xx). The implication for industrial psychology is that it may have to reach beyond tangible organisational boundaries and economic aims, to hold global sustainability in trust for future generations. The moment that goodness becomes the end, the organisation ceases being the ultimate goal.

The *distinctive* component pertains to the methodological rigour, values and beliefs that industrial psychologists display as scientists and as practitioners. Industrial psychology cannot abdicate this component, which shows in its responsibility towards externally focused organisational behaviour to other scientists who, besides business philosophers and business ethicists, do not pay much attention to externally focused organisational behaviour as it is.

Industrial psychologists who converge as a group of people under the umbrella of the discipline to exist as scientists and professionals with a common purpose signifies the unifying component of its identity. Psychologists' professional identity also reflects the unifying component.

The component *enduring* could potentially have a static character. It does, however, not exclude fluidity or continuity. It implies that the discipline 'shifts in its interpretation and meaning while retaining labels for core values and beliefs that extend over time and context' (Gioia, *et al*., 2000, p. 3). Humanism, then, is the enduring component, but due to the implied fluidity, humanism can be extended as explained in the stewardship notion.

Reflecting on the definition of industrial psychology

The aim here is not to redefine the discipline. The fluidity of the discipline's identity, together with the fact that the discipline concerns itself with human behaviour, which has a distinctively dynamic nature, prevents one from formulating definitive definitions. However, some guidelines that could be taken cognisance of during other attempts at re-definition are provided below.

At the start of this paper industrial psychology was defined as the scientific study of human behaviour in the workplace, or the application of psychological facts, principles, theory and research to the work setting. Or, simply, as the study of behaviour at work. Given the complexity of the field, it is no profound deduction to state that these descriptions were probably formulated with ease of student recall in mind.

Industrial psychology's *raison d'être* is the existence of human problems in organisations, or the establishment of healthy organisations and employees and its objective is to somehow provide the basis for resolving or minimising typical problems or challenges. Its dualistic orientation of being part science and part application, has earned it the label of being a scientist-practitioner discipline.

It also emerged that industrial psychology is an applied science aimed at helping organisations achieve their economic goals. It is furthermore viewed to be a supporting science that, through its practical application, assists industrialists and business leaders in reaching their economic goals. A critical inspection of these descriptions, together with a revisit of the identity of industrial

1. The notion of *stewardship*, as a replacement for leadership, can, when adopted as a business philosophy, facilitate normative goodness (see Block, 1996).

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psychology, naturally produced guidance that could inform the formulation of an expanded definition to allow for inclusion of issues addressed up to this point in the paper. Insights that have come to the fore are:

- the discipline's reason for existence: problems in the workplace
- the setting: the workplace
- the means: the application of psychological facts, principles, theory and research
- the roles of members of the discipline: scientists and practitioners
- the ends: diffuse.

To allow for additional insights, three more opinions need to be presented here. Firstly, Landy and Conte (2004) suggest that one should not be fooled by the phrase *workplace* and that the domain of industrial psychology stretches well beyond the physical boundaries of the workplace (many factors that influence workplace behaviour are not always found within the work setting). Secondly, McCormick and Tiffin's (1974) description of industrial psychology as the study of human behaviour that has to do with organisations and the production, distribution and consumption of products and services. Thirdly, Raubenheimer's (1970) explains that industrial psychology is

> *the science that is concerned with the study of human behaviour in industrial and occupational life that directly or indirectly relates to the goal for which the industry is run or the occupation is practiced.*
>
> (translated from Raubenheimer, 1970, p. 1)

The following additional insights flow from these:

- The concept 'organisations', in its plural form, should apply to the definition.
- The workplace as context is limiting, as it does not allow for externally focused organisational behaviour.
- The goal for which the organisation (or industry) is run, needs to be accounted for.

A synthesis of the above, plus reflections on the identity, leads to the following dimensions that should be considered additionally during redefinition ventures:

- Human behaviour should refer to behaviour and its reciprocity in organisations and their contexts, that is, both inwardly and outwardly, focused organisational behaviour.
- Humanism is at the core, in other words, good work and stewardship for human flourishing.
- Stakeholders are more than just employees, organisations or consumers.
- The ends should be goodness for broad based sustainability (a move away from the singular financial bottom line).

Reflecting on the paradigm

As a manifestation of continuous meta-theoretical introspection by the discipline, a shift in the basic paradigm of industrial psychology may be required to ensure relevance for goodness. At an ontological level one might ask whether the current descriptive paradigm, within a technocratic model, will be sufficient to ensure an optimistic reflection on identity and definition. In a descriptive paradigm, reality is described as it is (Schmidt, 2005). Within this paradigm one asks the question 'How does one build the road?' The status quo is described and systematised, because that is what exists.

On the other hand, a normative paradigm is one that improves the levels of effectiveness of the status quo and knowledge that is thus generated facilitates productive change (Schmidt, 2005). A normative paradigm provides for asking the following questions: 'Where should the road go?' and 'Should the road be built here?', or 'Should the road be built at all?' Such a paradigmatic shift for the discipline may also facilitate movement away from the technocracy in which the discipline is currently positioned. A normative paradigm could afford the discipline an opportunity to acquire what Biesheuvel (1991) refers to as communal relevance. Communal relevance may enable industrial psychologists' to

- reflect on the moral conditions of society
- consider the extent to which inwardly and outwardly focused organisational behaviour affects these moral conditions
- facilitate changes therein. A normative paradigm may furthermore pave the way for industrial psychology to fulfil its ethical obligations for scientific and professional citizenship.

For the purpose of this paper a normative scientific entry point is therefore suggested for urgent consideration. A paradigm of this kind poses the question 'what ought to be done about this?' It could be utilised to endorse a humanistic question of 'how should we live?' This paradigm relates to what Pietersen (2005, p. 79) suggests to be, a *subjectivist-empyrean mode of thought*. In this conceptual mode of thought, the discipline would be concerned with society (the generalised *other*) and values would be emphasised (humanism). Industrial psychologists would become communally-engaged 'to change, renew and re-engineer life/world/society according to valued ideals' (Pietersen, 2005, p. 79). This is equated to a Marxian political mode of thought that would turn industrial psychologists into 'movers' (Pietersen, 2005). As a mover, the role of the psychologist then becomes an ideological-universal-reformist one. This role suggests engaging in 'a critique of current management paradigms' (Moalusi, 2001, p. 21).

Reform

How can this paradigm be translated into a practical intra-organisational role for industrial psychologists? If they were to become movers, they need to reform thinking within organisations. To become truly relevant and to make a real difference on a normative level, implies impact beyond superficial congeniality. Pienaar and Roodt (2002) suggest that 'Industrial psychology has the *potential* to lead and direct change, rather than to react to it' (translated; p. 26). In demolishing the house that self-interest built (Mintzberg, *et al*., 2002) in a singular shareholder and/or owner paradigm, industrial psychologists need to challenge current management paradigms that may no longer be appropriate. There is clearly a need for continuous constructive criticism on how managers behave and organisations are run for the benefit of a greater good. Kriek (1996) states that industrial psychologists' role within organisations needs to be redefined. He suggests a change from analyst/technician role to that of change agent/strategist. This may require formulation in even more assertive vernacular.

A broader role that is suggested here epitomises the resolve required by the industrial psychologist, namely that of being an organisational reformer. This, according to Pietersen (2005), is a Bennis-like subjectivist ideology based on persuasion for humanism. It 'appeals to general maxims and the inspiring examples of great leaders and institutions' (Pietersen, 2005, p. 80). The aim would be to 're-*engineer* and *renew* the organisational system and management philosophy' (Pietersen, 2005, p. 80; author's emphasis).

In more specific everyday terms, this implies engaging ourselves to engage others, so as to restore a sense of balance. However, this only holds if the discipline is prepared to undermine an owner and/or shareholder model in favour of a multiple- stakeholder model. As an organisational reformer, the industrial psychologist needs to become a Socratic gadfly. In practical terms 'a gadfly is a person who, through the analysis and defence of ideas, intentionally stimulates others by his or her persistence' (Reeves, 1994, p. 609). In becoming a gadfly, industrial psychologists embody the superego or conscience of the organisation, within the limits of their mandate. This mandate is their expertise on human behaviour and how it may be utilised or affected. As

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gadflies they would ask questions of organisations' contribution towards human flourishing and broader societal sustainability.

Those who deal with the 'softer', human, dimension of organisations, that is, psychologists, human resource practitioners and talent development specialists, are constantly required to prove the value they add in order to justify their legitimacy. Credibility is what is required. Resolve alone will not earn them legitimacy or credibility. This can only be earned if the respect they receive is based on them being competent gadflies that make a real difference. Organisations invest in opposing forces to avoid chaos and ensure adherence to requirements of good governance, for example, internal and external audit, risk management and corporate governance structures. Why can industrial psychologists not play a similar role? Perhaps the role of a gadfly for questioning the behavioural implications of goals, strategies, structures, systems, processes and decisions for their propensity to affect goodness?

How can this be accomplished in the organisation? Moalusi (2001) recommend that 'Industrial psychologists encourage the creation of conditions that will persuade organisations to challenge their existing modes of thinking and working' (p. 20). Practitioners need to be gadflies in questioning and influencing the ethics of, amongst others, managerial worldviews (e.g. employees as assets vs. costs), how organisational behaviour affects stakeholders (this includes consumers), leadership selection, the psychosocial contract between organisations and employees, remuneration at all hierarchical levels, work-life balance of employees, organisational culture and climate and organisational design.

An imperative attribute for fulfilment of the gadfly role is moral courage. In Robert Kennedy's (1966) words:

> *Moral courage is a rarer commodity than great intelligence or bravery in battle. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality of those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change.*
> (Robert Kennedy, 1966)

Moral courage is what Rossouw (2004, p. 39) describes as 'a determination to improve the ethics of business behaviour'. It is often possible to know what is right and be sensitive to others, but often difficult to convey this to others. In this regard, Rossouw (2004) states that 'Moral courage thus entails the *resolve* to act on moral convictions, even when it is not comfortable or self-serving to do so' (p. 39; author's emphasis).

Research

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the approach to research and inquiry into the discipline. Suffice it to say that although some critical meta-theoretical reflection and inquiry has been conducted in industrial psychology in South Africa over the past 20 years (Biesheuvel, 1991; Cilliers, 1991; Kriek, 1996; Pietersen, 1986, 1989, 2005; Schmidt, 2005; Veldsman, 1986, 1988, 2001; Watkins, 2001), the discipline may require more of this to ensure further establishment as a science. Inadequate and irregular critical reflection on a science's meta-theory, ontology, epistemology and paradigms renders it vulnerable, particularly if it functions within the confines of a technocratic model. It is therefore essential that the discipline's thinking community continuously reflects on its identity and relevance.

However, focusing on the content of research required to facilitate the paradigm of goodness is in order. In this regard Retief's (1989) insistence on producing psychological knowledge for the good of society could be heeded. Mauer's (1987) call for social relevance in psychological research could also be noted. He suggests adding 'what society needs' to 'what psychology knows' as a research focus. Inquiry of this kind can lay the foundation for 'good work'.

The field in which goodness in or by organisations is usually positioned, is that of business ethics. A gadfly role would naturally imply intense cooperation with organisational ethicists. Internally to the organisation, this implies a substantial role in the institutionalisation of business ethics. Areas of influence could include formulation of organisational core values, the ethical impact/dimension of organisational strategy and stakeholder engagement. Contributions towards ethics management (i.e. ethics risk analysis), codifying and implementing ethics standards and reporting on ethics performance to stakeholders are also crucial. The areas where the legitimacy of industrial psychological involvement should be above reproof are integrity testing, the development of ethics competence, employee performance assessment and the promotion of organisational ethics talk.

In creating a meaningful interface between industrial psychological paradigms and knowledge and that of business ethics, academic interaction is required. A short selection of some joint research focus areas are proposed, namely

- corporate values, assessing integrity and ethical behaviour
- changing ethical behaviour
- ethical behaviour in different organisational modes of managing morality
- the moral dimension of leadership
- the ethical impact of organisations (corporate moral agency)
- the impact of codes of ethics on behaviour
- institutionalisation of ethics
- the ethics of institutionalising ethics
- group dynamics and ethics
- ethics and coaching and mentoring
- the behavioural dimensions of whistle-blowing
- andragogy as applied to value acquisition and transfer.

Research findings could be disseminated as widely as possible; results of 'good work' need to be communicated and widely read.

Other meaningful interdisciplinary research partnerships to facilitate cooperation of research on 'good' knowledge and practice, could be negotiated and executed between industrial psychology and the areas of psychology, governance, human resource management, financial management, criminology, sociology, economics, business management, accounting and corporate communication. In this type of interdisciplinary interaction it appears imperative that industrial psychology maintains a focus on that which gives it the core of its identity, namely the fact that 'human behaviour' is the core focus of its attention.

Resources

To aid industrial psychologists in a quest to 'become relevant for goodness', three resources are discussed: competence, organisational partnering and scientific and professional partnering.

Competence

Muchinsky, *et al*. (2005) point out that industrial psychologists find themselves on the threshold of some areas where they have little prior experience. They add that 'We would be remiss if we did not venture into these new territories, for they are legitimate and important concerns within the world of work' (p. 18). A re-orientation of the discipline to promote goodness is such a new territory and important concern. In addition to the established competencies that should already be in their repertoire, they require ethics competence to legitimise their contribution.

In a study by Pienaar and Roodt (2001) that polled industrial psychologists for their perceptions of current (at the time) and future roles, competencies and consequent training requirements, revealed *no* perceived role for practitioners' organisational

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TABLE 1
1 Dimensions of an ethics (moral) competence (integrated from Rossouw, 2004, pp. 37-41)

Core competence	Features	Sub-competencies	Features
Cognitive	Acquiring intellectual knowledge and skills; identify, analyse, judge and evaluate ethical matters in business.	Moral awareness	Understanding 1. moral obligations and responsibilities of business 2. moral issues and dilemmas.
		Moral understanding	Intellectual tools: theories, frameworks, models, concepts.
		Moral reasoning	Ability to: 1.compare, evaluate different perspectives; 2. intellectual independence to make own assessment of ethical matters; 3. participate in critical moral discourse.
		Moral decision-making	Understanding: 1. problems and processes around moral decisions; 2. nature of ethical disputes and decision-making; 3. approaches, procedures, techniques available for decision-making.
		Moral tolerance	Ability to endure moral ambiguity; tolerate other moral perspectives; continued search for moral clarity.
Behavioural	Cognitive competence alone does not imply ethics performance; Attention to affective, volitional and imaginative dimensions of ethics; A shift in focus from moral cognition to moral character.	Moral sensitivity	Caring about impact of business actions on affected parties; minimalising negative impact of behaviour; empathy for those affected.
		Moral courage	Determination to improve morality of business behaviour; acting on convictions.
		Moral imagination	Envisage moral alternatives; imaging other, "better" situations; empowerment for moral transform of situations.
Managerial	Cognitive and behavioural competencies necessary, but not sufficient to deal with ethics in organisational settings; Managing ethics in a systemic and organisational fashion.	Systemic morality	Understanding moral threats and opportunities; discern systemic implications of moral behaviour.
		Moral efficiency	Codifying and implementing ethical standards; integrate ethics into the fibre of the business; apply ethics knowledge to ethical matters.
		Instrumental morality	Ability to turn morality into a strategic advantage for the business; forsaking short term gains for sustainability.
		Moral leadership	Ability to provide moral vision and support to others; awareness of shared moral responsibility.

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ethics. A mere five years later, in a study that produced a 'sixteen dimensional utility framework for defining and describing the future roles and contributions of industrial psychologists', Barnard and Fourie (2007, p. 45) found that three of the 16 dimensions identified contained a substantial ethics component. They were the dimensions of governance and ethics, customers and other stakeholders and corporate social responsibility. It is clear from their analysis that an ethics competence goes further than merely professional ethics. In the absence of a competency framework for the ethics role of industrial psychologists to fulfil the utility dimensions as identified by Barnard and Fourie (2007), an adjusted version of Rossouw's (2004) framework for the teaching of business ethics is adopted as a competency framework for the purpose of this paper.

In terms of this framework an ethics (or moral) competence consists of three core competencies, namely cognitive, behavioural and managerial competencies in ethics (Rossouw, 2004). Each of these competencies has its own set of unique and distinctive competencies (see Table 1). Acquisition of these competencies may provide industrial psychologists with an ethics vocabulary, thus enabling them to understand and influence organisational ethics at different levels of research (inquiry) and intervention.

In addition to the competencies described by Rossouw (2004), industrial psychologists would still have to acquire what has always been expected of them, namely a professional ethics competence. This will enable them to conduct their scientist-practitioner activities with the ethical responsibility and rigour expected of members of a profession. Professional ethics, if applied properly, should also then inform the ethical dimensions of their work as operationalised in the discipline's subfields. Within the notion of goodness as end-state, a particular emphasis as a focus area of personnel psychology and psychometrics, could be the continued exploration of integrity testing for selection purposes, thereby facilitating organisations' procurement of 'good apples'.

The acquisition of a broad-based ethics competence needs to occur in members of the discipline's academic training, research/inquiry endeavours, as well as internship training

and post-professional registration continued professional development. To catalyse the imminently required competence of ethics, it is suggested that departments of industrial-organisational psychology at South African universities include in their undergraduate and postgraduate training 'Industrial psychology and ethics' as a subject. The emphasis of such a course should be on the development of students' ethics competence. Curricula with such content should, however, be devoid of moral indoctrination, in which case, ethics tuition would be perceived as a sermon.

Organisational partnering

Schreuder (2001) emphasises that 'If industrial psychologists are to exist and work on the edge of chaos, they will have to adopt other roles and master appropriate skills' (p. 5). Moalusi (2001) suggests that industrial psychology adopts 'an interdisciplinary approach' and that the gap between theory and practice be closed 'by creating partnerships with the public and private sectors' (p. 21). This could equally apply to role players within organisations who, besides line management, are responsible for organisational ethical behaviour. Examples of such role players are those responsible for corporate communication, corporate social responsibility, human resource management, organisational development, employment relations, internal audit, risk management, governance and ethics.

The basic premise of industrial psychology is human behaviour in the workplace, which, in turn, is cast in humanism. Seeing that ethical behaviour is a core dimension of human behaviour, there is a need for some interdisciplinary fusion of industrial psychology and the field of business ethics. Partnering ethics officers, who may or may not have a background that equips them to be human behaviour specialists, is hence a distinct possibility.

The field, in which goodness in or by organisations is usually positioned, is that of business ethics. A gadfly role would naturally imply intense cooperation with organisational ethicists. Internally to the organisation, this implies a substantial role in the institutionalisation of business ethics. Areas of influence could include formulation of organisational core values, the ethical impact/dimension of organisational strategy and stakeholder engagement. Contributions towards ethics management (i.e. ethics risk analysis), codifying and implementing ethics standards and reporting on ethics performance to stakeholders are also crucial. The areas where the legitimacy of industrial psychological involvement should be above reproof are integrity testing, the development of ethics competence, employee performance assessment and the promotion of organisational ethics talk.

Professional and scientific partnering

No science is an island. Reaping the benefits of the paradigm as suggested here, which implies the concerted creation of a fusion between the knowledge bases of industrial psychology and business ethics, requires partnering. Partnerships with the funders of research, for example, the National Research Foundation (NRF), as well as the regulated and non-regulated professional associations and societies of both industrial psychology and business ethics, are therefore proposed. In South Africa, this would mean formal participation in and influencing of, for example, the activities of the Professional Board for Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa (SIOPSA), the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA), the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) and the Business Ethics Network of Africa (BEN-Africa). The message could obviously also be conveyed by delivering papers and seminars at relevant conferences.

RISKS

It is often said that life is about choices; becoming fit for goodness is also about choice. To choose to assume a role for goodness is also a choice about taking risks. Real risks are to be found in the two worlds in which industrial psychologists live though, the scientific thinking community and the organisation and its society. Inhibiting factors in the world of thinking are scientific superficiality, a divergence of the discipline (Pietersen, 1989, p. 101), the possibilities of a descriptive-normative collision (Rossouw, 2004, p. 11) and inadequate reflection. Examples of inhibiting factors in the other world, or the organisation, are

- the comfort zone that technocracy creates
- the dilemma of being a gadfly to the entity that pays one's salary,
- underperformance of practitioners' basic duties in the organisation due to conscientious overkill
- a cursory resolve due to incompetence and/or the low occupational self-esteem sometimes characteristic of practitioners involved in 'softer' issues in business environments
- quasi-goodness.

The latter is the phenomenon where ethics is merely used to appease employees and stakeholders, but where the instrumental quest for owner/shareholder wealth remains the reigning philosophy. In such a case the ethics of business ethics would be unethical. Most of these risks could be moderated by credibility based on competence and expert power.

However, a paradigm shift will take time. Concern for others will not replace self-interest overnight (Mintzberg, *et al.*, 2002). It may not be possible to delay concerted efforts for the promotion of goodness within the realm of the discipline's scope of practice for much longer. Democratic pressures may cause governments to 'enforce' sustainability, by shackling corporations and thus limiting their independence and regulating the smallest details of their operations, the Sarbanes-Oxley type of legislation being a case in point. A timely paradigm shift is therefore of the essence.

Conclusion

The mandate of industrial psychology is a daunting one:

> *to strengthen the bond between workforce and workplace at a time when the composition of both is rapidly changing. As nations face increasing problems of economic productivity, the field of industrial psychology continues to contribute to making the world a better place in which to live.*
>
> (Muchinsky, *et al.*, 2005, p. 17)

It may be time for industrial psychologists to ask incisive questions of their discipline and profession – questions that relate to, (1) the positioning of industrial psychology in the pursuit of success irrespective of the *means* and (2) its real sense of relevance and resultant contribution to broader societal sustainability.

In admonishing those that blindly pursue ends, Viktor Frankl said the following about American democracy and freedom: 'I recommend that the Statue of Liberty be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the west coast'. When considering the theme of this paper, which is about industrial psychology being fit for goodness, a similar balance may be of importance. Specifically, balancing for the sake of relevance, which is the freedom of being in a free market democracy, with the responsibility required to anticipate and mitigate the negative consequences of the system. When translated into a 'fit for goodness' orientation, the balancing for relevance may be accomplished through

- continuous critical *reflection* (particularly in terms of identity and paradigm)
- reform (having the resolve to be organisational reformers, or gadflies to resist and to reform organisational practices)

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- relevant research on ethics issues that moves beyond short term problem solving for the sake of the bottom line
- a utilisation of resources (i.e. acquiring an ethics competence).

These heuristics could be applied to promote goodness and the flourishing of society and thus sustainability of all life as we know it. Looking back ten years from now, will industrial psychologists, as either a collective professional grouping or as individual scientists/practitioners, testify that they were able to make a difference through goodness? Or may it be that they will, albeit without intentions of malfeasance, have contributed to corporate scandals and unethical behaviour by having contributed to the maintenance of a technocratic status quo? What will be the discipline of industrial psychology's footprint on the world?

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