*PINS, 2006, 34, 17-30*

# CRITICAL INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY: WHAT IS IT AND WHERE IS IT?

*Gazi Islam*
*Department of Business Administration*
*Ibmec*
*São Paulo*

*Michael J Zyphur*
*Department of Management and Organization*
*National University of Singapore*

**Abstract.**
*In this paper, we apply major trends in critical and post-structuralist theories to the theory and practice of Industrial-Organizational Psychology. We begin with an examination of relevant strands of social theory, moving from a discussion of Weberian institutionalism to the "discursive turn" in Habermas, and finally to a critique of organizational communication in Foucault's post-structuralist writings. We then apply these general theoretic approaches to the current state of the art in Industrial-Organizational Psychology, attempting to show how, despite the lack of integration of these theories in the current literature, key ideas may be relevant to the development of theory. Finally, we attempt to sketch some of the main theoretical and applied considerations that a critical approach to industrial-organizational psychology would take into account.*

## INTRODUCTION.

Within the organization science (OS) literature, there has been an increasing amount of critical and postmodern discussion (Jermier, 1998). In fact, within OS, a variety of discussions of a critical nature often centred on ethics and related topics have even been proffered by editors of major journals (e.g., Brief & Cortina, 2000; Brief & Bazerman; 2003; Eden, 2003). However, when examining industrial psychology (IP) for a similar trend, one is left almost empty handed (although other areas of psychology have seen a recent infusion of critical scholarship, e.g., Gergen, 2001). This state of affairs begs the question of why such a popular movement within a closely related discipline has been ignored in IP.

In order to answer this question and provide insight into how a more critical focus could benefit IP, the current paper explores the position of critical OS theorists and the differences between this position and that which is commonly taken in IP. We do this by first discussing the major critical perspectives in organization science and their origins. We go on to take a critical perspective of IP, providing an example of these foci for the

field. We conclude by pointing out the benefits of the rigorous self-reflection which are inherent in critical perspectives.

## CRITICISM IN ORGANIZATION SCIENCE.

Critical perspectives have become quite popular within OS (e.g. Alvesson & Deetz, 1996, Fournier & Gray 2000, Parker, 2002), providing a relative boon to the field in terms of 1) the overall range of acceptable discourse, 2) an increased focus on the well-being of organizational actors and other entities affected by organizations, 3) a significantly greater acceptance of alternative epistemologies and, thus, methodologies, and 4) significantly more self-reflexivity within the field. In large part, these alterations have been driven by rejecting the perspectives of strict logical positivism and objective realism, and taking more subjectively focused interpretations of what may be called "organizational reality". These interpretations, in the critical domain of OS, are driven in large part by developments in late-modern critical and post-modern trends in social theory. In order to briefly sketch the outlines of these trends, we will describe some early roots of critical concepts in Weberian institutional theory (1968, 1992), and the elaboration of these ideas through the Frankfurt school and Habermas' (1981) communicative turn in speaking about institutions. We will then discuss how the problematizing of communicative processes themselves became central to critical thought, most famously in Foucault's post-structuralist (1972, 1992) writings. Below we briefly discuss each of these perspectives.

### Rationality and institution building.

A variety of authors (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, Scott, 1995, Tolbert & Zucker, 1996) have utilized Weberian (1968, 1992) institutional theory to provide insight into organizational functioning and the behaviour of individuals within organizations. At the heart of work constructed around institutional theory are postulations about the isomorphism of organizational fields and the establishment of institutional norms (e.g., Kondra & Hinnings, 1998). These views describe mechanisms of institutional control and coercion, processes of organizational legitimation, and reasons for organizational action that are not necessarily focused on optimal efficiency (e.g., Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott & Meyer, 1983).

In essence, Weber (and OS institutional theorists) understood that institutions act as mechanisms of rationalization, that is, they act to carry out specialized technical functions which are supported by society. In this view, instead of being interpreted as moving toward that which is objectively good (e.g., profit), institutions move toward that which is deemed as appropriate (either explicitly or through more implicit mechanisms which support the organization) and the notion of objectivity may be used as justification for their functioning. Because of the rationalistic bias in institutions, social relations become codified into technocratic fields that dissipate the moral and ethical concerns in social action in favour of a purely procedural focus. The outcome of this rationalization is that the very structures that allow efficient functioning of an institution become transformed into an "iron cage" (Weber, 1992) that limit the free moral agency of social actors.

The Weberian "iron cage" thesis has been extensively used in the OS literature, where foundational thinkers such as Selznick (1949) and key works in the "new institutionalism" such as those by Dimaggio and Powell (1983) and Scott (1995) have

consolidated Weber's thinking about bureaucracy and described how businesses in modern capitalism use institutional categories to structure beliefs and actions. These thinkers formed part of a wave of post-war organizational thought where traditional economic assumptions about human beings and organizations as rational actors was increasingly replaced by the view that actions arise out of regulatory, normative and cognitive institutions. These institutions, following Weber, take on a life of their own, and produce actions that are rarely aligned with rational financial objectives (e.g. Scott, 1995).

While the view that institutional mechanisms serve to shape organizations and the individuals which inhabit and surround them represents a great development in the process of understanding organizations, it takes somewhat of a shortsighted view of the necessity of intersubjective consensus in organizational life (Habermas, 1981). In order to account for this necessity, many organization scholars have adopted a more discursive approach to understanding organizations through the lens of Habermas' (ibid) formulations regarding communication (Gibson, 1994; Jones, 2003), which are largely an extension of post-Marxist, Frankfurt school critical theory. In essence, Habermas' position is that, instead of just being comprised of institutions and their norms, individuals actively construct their environment and institutions through communication and, through this communication, may emancipate themselves through free discourse. Organization scholars, such as Alvesson & Willmott (1996), have used Habermas' ideas to argue that, by resolving "communicative distortion", discursive activities in organizations which allow consensus, such as planning, may provide for more ethical and emancipatory organizations. Further, by encouraging norms such as understanding and honesty, organizations may allow for more autonomous and emancipating communication and action. Interestingly, scholars have also used Habermas' ideas as they relate to scientific inquiry (e.g., Willmott, 1997), as Habermas provides a useful account of knowledge production and the legimitation of discourse. According to Habermas, instead of referencing anything "objective", we socially construct our reality through our communication and, as scientists, use notions such as "objectivity", "methodology", and "reality" for their legitimizing functions.

A central part of this construction is Habermas' (1981) famous relocating of the structures of rationality outside of either subjective mental processes or the objective structure of the world, and into the process of communication, through which both subjective and objective spheres are mediated. For example, rather than simply explaining a work related construct such as job satisfaction or workplace empowerment as a strategic managerial tool or as a perception to be promoted by management, a communicative rationality view would attempt to understand how individuals in the workplace collectively interpret their environment to create a vision of a satisfying or empowering organization. Important to this is Habermas' vision of the "public sphere", a space where individuals can openly discuss ideas without threat and with mutual respect. Habermas sees this type of dialogue, which takes place between equals, as the basis of collective rationality and of democratic society.

**Foucault's post-structuralism.**

Habermas' public sphere, and his conception of the ideal communication situation, runs into one of the most cited difficulties with Enlightenment thought in general; the idea that communicators can create unbiased democratic discourse that is divorced from their

material conditions and only takes into account abstract principles. The problem with this view of social interaction is that it overlooks underlying inequalities and power relations that lie in the background of all communicative forms (e.g., Rorty, 1991).

Critiques of rational discourse hold that the search for ideal principles through unbiased discussion is problematic, because consensus is often an illusion that is used to mask inequalities in bargaining power, and the resulting social decisions use this illusion of consensus to justify binding principles (Nietzsche, 1974). Foucault drew heavily upon this critique in his attempt to formulate a history of scientific discourses that exposed the power interests behind supposedly unbiased discussion (e.g., Flyvbjerg, 1998). Rather than attempt to eradicate power from discourse, the goal of such critique was to uncover the "working of institutions which appear to be neutral and independent" (Chomsky & Foucault, 1974:171). Through historical analysis of science, Foucault demonstrates that discourses are constitutive of the orders of which they speak, and communication becomes a vehicle for, rather than a way to avoid, power (Foucault, 1972, 1998).

Thus, while Habermas' view of the world as constituted by communication which may be emancipatory is interesting and useful, it has been critiqued by other authors, such as Foucault (1972; 1998; see also Chomsky & Foucault, 1974). Foucault's position is that, instead of allowing equality, communication is often used as a means of expressing and exerting power over individuals. Foucault also argues that, while some discourse may allow consensus, through institutionalization this discourse often becomes dogma and disallows free expression. Many authors have used Foucault's postulations to provide insight into organizational phenomena (Deetz, 1998; Knights, 2002). For example, Knights and Morgan (1991) and Townley (1993) examine the discourse of both strategy and human resources management in terms of their creation and reference to various subject positions and forms of subjectivity, and how organizational life is shaped by these discourses. Townley, in addition, discusses Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, that is, the embeddedness of power relations within forms of everyday knowledge, in discussing the framing of organizational situations. Along this same line of analysis, critical scholars often take a Foucaultian position when examining the discourse of OS (e.g., Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Knights, 1992). Using Foucault to dissect the rhetoric of OS literature, these critical scholars often come to the conclusion that through the use of empiricism, and in its reliance upon the assumptions of logical positivism, OS has often taken the perspective of management and not attended to the consequences of their science, in part due to the assumption of the objectivity of their methods and the amoral nature of scientific inquiry (see also Brief, 2000). While the study of Foucault's works is rare within mainstream IP, we argue that the concepts of power and knowledge used in Foucault can bring the social element into concepts usually seen as purely technical.

To elaborate on this point, it is important to recognize that Foucault emphasized the unpacking of social power relations in what may formerly have been seen as purely technical or specialized scientific fields (e.g. Allen, 1970). These power relations can be seen in the delimiting of specialized scientific fields whose conclusions are viewed by the public as resulting from impartial or objective study. However, these specializations also become endowed with a unique capability to define and control social processes, for example, in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, the design of public policy, or

the strategic formulation and implementation of business models. This mix of specialization and power is the basis of power/knowledge (Allen, 1970). In this sense, industrial psychologist could be seen as expropriating typically lay persons´ such as making friends, resolving conflict or finding happiness, and appropriating these elements of daily life into a specialized "scientific" field that exists under an organization's control (e.g. Townsley, 1993). Thus, the possible political and subversive qualities that can emerge from human interaction become short-circuited as these interactions become governed regulated through institutional meaning systems.

While the relationship between Foucault's thought and IP approaches will be elaborated further in the next section, some of the basic links to Foucault's critique may be mentioned here. As stated above, the power/knowledge relationship central in Foucault problematizes the ideal communication situation that Habermas found necessary for democratic society, and in doing so, also problematizes approaches in IP such as workplace democracy, participative management, and worker empowerment programs. Such programs, which emanated from humanistic schools in psychology, were ostensibly meant to better the lot of workers by providing a voice in workplace situations. However, the programs, in practice, tended to be implemented top-down by management, and the cursory nature of participatory processes in organizations has led many scholars to question the effectiveness of such programs (e.g. Dachler & Wilpert, 1978; Locke & Schweiger, 1979). According to Dachler and Wilpert, for example, the individualizing nature of participation programs has turned attention away from structural problems in organizations, thus paradoxically reinforcing the structures that prevent fully democratic organizing.

Another key factor in Foucault that is relevant to current approaches in IP is the archeo-genealogical method Foucault used (Carter et al, 2002). Foucault's official post at the College de France was as professor of "History of Systems of Thought", a title which reflects the importance of tracking an idea through its historical progression. Such a tracking, according to Foucault, can be used as a tool to unpack the social relations that go into the crafting of an idea, the interests at stake, and the power relations that are ruptured and created when a new concept is defined and made current. This type of approach stands in contrast to IP orthodoxy, which tends to view issues in IP in the progressive light of scientific problems that are incrementally solved, rather than historical artefacts that mask social interests. The historicizing of IP is thus a move in the direction of humanistic studies, which tend to view history as a source of wisdom, rather than scientistic psychology, which tends to view history as a source of bias (e.g. Zald, 1994; Carter et al, 2002).

In summary (and quite generally), critical positions in OS have allowed examining the manner in which organizations relate to their environment, the way their members interrelate and their relations are constituted by discourse, and the manner in which their members are controlled not only by management, but also by their adoption of institutional rhetoric. In using a critical lens for understanding organizations, the attention of critical scholars has also been drawn to the manner in which they construct their own field of study. Specifically, by allowing the infusion of views which acknowledge the socially constructed aspects of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) and the power inherent in those constructions, critical scholars have acknowledged the construction of their field and the power inherent in the acceptance of empirical

epistemology and method. In order to relate IP to these developments within OS, below we propose an interpretation of IP.

**INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY.**

The above discussion makes clear that OS has adopted a critical perspective in part because the substantive content of its field lends itself to the perspectives of critical theorists (as organization scholars often study institutions, communication, and power relations). Given that scholars in IP and OS often publish in similar journals, participate in the same professional societies, and inhabit the same departments (Organizational Behaviour, I/O psychology, and Management, for example), one would expect a fluid transfer of theoretical perspectives across this porous academic boundary. However, it is surprising to find that the vast majority of critical work done in Management thought appears on the OS side of the divide, which is heavily influenced by sociology and social theory, and much less on the IP side, which is mostly dominated by the positivist psychology tradition.

Part of the separate theoretical tenors of OS and IP may have to do with diverse historical developments. Whereas OS relied heavily on a sociological tradition that emphasized Weber, Durkheim and Marx, among others, the IP area was more focused on experimental findings within the American psychological tradition, and the application of those findings in business productivity studies. Early examples of this focus are evident in key classical works such as Hugo Munsterberg's (1913) **Psychology and industrial efficiency**, as well as Taylor's (1911) **Principles of scientific management**.

Thus, in general, while OS concerns itself with very broad, macro-level topics of study, IP has had a much more micro-level focus and often deals with phenomena of a different type. Specifically, IP commonly deals with topics such as psychometrics, job analysis, selection, training, and utility analysis. With these topics has come a focus on the very precise measurement and prediction of individual-level behaviour, personality, and affect. In order to allow for the very precise measurement of these constructs, scholars within IP have made a number of methodological gains. With these gains, IP has often paid little attention to the assumptions underlying these developments. Below, we outline two aspects of the field of IP that may have led to this state of affairs, beginning with a focus on the application of IP findings.

**Application … but for whom?**

The major sources for publication in industrial psychology are journals with a highly applied focus, such as the **Journal of Applied Psychology** or **Personnel Psychology**. In these publications, it is often made clear that it is not just the application of IP which is of paramount importance; it is also the application of IP toward increased organizational performance and greater profit for organizations. (We note here that this is not always the case. For example, some literature, such as that on safety training, has worked to benefit many individuals in and around various organizations.) Often inherent in the discourse of these journals is the perspective of management and those who hold positions of power in organizations (for an example of this, we direct the reader toward literature on utility analysis).

With such as strong focus on profit and management, it is likely the case that industrial psychologists have simply overlooked the question of whether or not this focus is

(ethically and otherwise) the best idea (what may have further added to this is the fact that much of IP's history has links to the military during WWII, which was, almost unquestionably, a worthy impetus for IP scholarship). Instead, IP scholars have worked diligently to develop better testing procedures, more accurate estimates of the utility of these procedures, and worked toward organizational profit and performance maximization. We propose that, at least in part, this "management myopia" (Brief & Bazerman, 2003:187) occurs as a function of the unquestioned epistemology associated with IP, discussed below.

As will be expanded below, we argue that this myopia is not due to a willing denial of IP scholars to ignore or downplay the importance of workers or workers rights in organizational settings. On the contrary, many central ideas in IP were based on pro-worker movements that attempted to revive the "humanistic" side of management (e.g. Porter, 1961). For example, the extensive literature on job satisfaction (e.g. Judge et al., 2001), intrinsic motivation (e.g. Deci et al, 1999), and various facets of interpersonal relationships within organizations offers a great deal of potential to improve the lives of people in the workplace. However, following critical tradition heavily influenced Habermas and Foucault, as well as other thinkers in the 20$^{th}$ century critical tradition, we argue that the managerial biases inherent in IP studies arise not so much from the topics they study, but from the subject positions (Davies & Harre, 1990) they take in studying these topics. That is, whenever a topic is studied, an important question to ask is "for whom is this concern important" and "who is being positioned as an actor and observer, and who is being observed as an outsider". The "management myopia" described by Brief and Bazerman (2003) points out the fact that much organizational research assumes the position of management, informing decisions of management and worrying about management concerns.

In order to exemplify this, the study of job satisfaction provides an excellent example. While literally thousands of studies have examined job satisfaction, the main theme of the majority of studies has been to establish a link between satisfaction and job performance. The implicit idea is that humanistic psychologists can bring worker concerns to the forefront by showing how they are congruent with management concerns. The idea that job satisfaction should be promoted for its own merits, independent of its effect on performance, while not altogether absent, is a rare idea in the IP literature.

**Objective study.**

Many of the topics associated with IP are inherently vague. For example, IP is often concerned with ability, personality, performance, and productivity. In response to the difficulty associated with measuring these concepts, IP has developed quite a strong methodological focus. In their methodological focus, IP researchers are very concerned with the "objective" measurement of their constructs, leading to related statistical and theoretical developments concerning the nature of their study. However, and interestingly, instead of the degree of uncertainty associated with many of the constructs measured within IP being a motivator of a critical perspective, it appears to have been a motivator for a stronger focus on the need for better methods, causing the field to become somewhat entrenched in a strictly realist epistemology.

In essence, this epistemology is based on classic positivist, behaviouristic notions that there is an external, objective reality that may be accurately measured if a researcher uses the correct measuring instrument. For the measurement of their variables, IP researchers often invoke the notion of "latent" variables in order to describe the content of their study (see also Borsboom, Mellenbergh, and van Heerden [2003] for a discussion of the necessity of an objective reality for the invocation of latent variables). These variables are assumed to be real, but not directly measurable and, because of this somewhat difficult epistemological standpoint, industrial psychologists have opted for a strong methodological focus.

Associated with this methodological focus, IP researchers often quantify their variables of interest. Through this quantification, researchers are often put in the position of performing statistical analyses and have come to rely (almost totally) on quantification to support their hypotheses. Through this quantification, researchers may be tempted to equate numbers with objectivity, forgetting that the quantities with which they are dealing rely on an epistemological foundation which often goes unmentioned. In order to bring this epistemological position more into the limelight, below we attempt to create a small enclave of critical industrial psychology (CIP).

The focus on objectification and quantification, we argue, is not a simple choice of epistemological preference or a historical outcome of the largely positivistic American psychological tradition. Rather, we argue that this epistemological choice reflects political dynamics that are often left unquestioned in the IP literature. Drawing on Foucault's (1977) **Discipline and punish** may give us a tool with which we can better understand the particular ways in which positivism allows the perpetuation of managerial power relations through human resource practices.

In **Discipline and punish**, Foucault argues that measurement and evaluation provide powerful mechanisms of control over populations because they reduce the potentially infinite complexity of social behaviour into discrete units that can be administered. By treating these units as fixed ontological entities, rather than moral agents with self-transformative potential, administrators may reduce normative prohibitions against the treatment of human beings as means to an end, and thereby transform dynamic and complex human relations into discrete and measurable human "resources". This is important because while the former require a communication sphere marked by mutual respect for differences (as in the Habermasian ideal), the latter can be manipulated toward the ends of the organizations without ethical reservation.

This process of objectification of workers is usually framed within the IP field as arising from the necessity to validate conceptual schemes through empirical indicators (e.g. Binning and Barrett, 1989). However, from a Foucaultian standpoint, we can see objectification in light of modern control techniques. Among the techniques outlined by Foucault are *enclosure, partitioning*, and *ranking* (Townsley, 1993).

Enclosure works to define a space of social action in which actions may be considered without reference to the context of the system. In a managerial situation, for example, a business sphere may be differentiated from and ethical or personal sphere (e.g. Tensbrunsel & Messick, 1999), allowing impersonal or callous actions to be justified by reference to the relevant sphere: "It is just business". In order for such justifications to

have social legitimacy, it must first be accepted that “business” exists as a separate sphere of life, which is not subject to the same normative principles as the rest of social life.

The next technical-scientific process described by Foucault is partitioning, in which the relevant sphere is divided in to various independent unities, each of which is given specific functional roles. The human resource management principle of job analysis, for example (Harvey, 1991), uses a scientific management pretext in order to systematically divide and dictate behaviours of people within the organizational space. This control extends even to the physical bodies of workers when, for example, training programs break jobs down into their physical elements, so that each movement of a worker is considered a unique administrative target. On a macro level, sub divisions of organizations act as communicative barriers, locating people in functional spheres where their incentives, goals, and surroundings create often incompatible group cultures.

Finally, the ranking function is one of the best developed in IP, and comprises the evaluation, testing, and hierarchical placement activities of management. Social control in contemporary society depends on this ability to create hierarchies not based on natural right or on predestined caste, but on “scientific” principles which give a legitimating veneer to unequal access to resources and authority. IP, which is heavily associated with the field of psychometrics and performance evaluations, should have a great deal to say about the social implications of testing and ranking. It is certainly true that important social issues, such as gender (e.g. Sackett et al, 2003) and racial (e.g. Staufer & Buckley, 2005) bias in testing, selection and promotion, are hotly debated in IP, these debates usually take the form of discussions about the predictive validity of certain tests, and ways to improve measurement quality. The social fact of measurement itself, however, largely remains unquestioned, and it is assumed that testing and ranking people hierarchically is an unproblematic and purely technical necessity of business.

## TOWARDS A CRITICAL I/O PSYCHOLOGY.

Above we have briefly discussed two aspects of IP that may contribute to the lack of a critical paradigm for understanding the substantive content of IP. Here we attempt to take a critical perspective of IP in order to both expand discourse on IP in general and to work toward a critical understanding of IP. We begin by outlining the social construction inherent in IP.

### Constructing constructs.

Much of the discourse in IP revolves around the idea of “constructs” (e.g. Woehr et al, 2000). In the concept “construct”, IP researchers often mean an idea or concept which is (usually) characterized by a thorough definition. In understanding that every variable under consideration within IP is a construction, and one which reviewers and editors must agree upon (to some degree) in order to find the light of day within an IP journal, the social and political basis of the field becomes clear. As we suggest, this process may be understood through the literature of Weber, Habermas, and Foucault.

Taking an institutional perspective, the fact that IP exists at all is evidence that there are other, institutional support mechanisms for the literature which IP produces. This, in

turn, likely means that IP is satisfying technological function desired by society (e.g., science, consulting, legal assistance, academic training, etc.), understandable because IP is largely focused on the betterment of other institutions across the globe. Thus, one manner of understanding IP is through the idea that IP exists not necessarily because the content of its study is necessarily 'objective' or even objectively determinable, but because various institutional mechanisms function to provide for its existence.

Further, by integrating the views of both Habermas and Foucault, some of the discursive properties of IP may be disentangled. Specifically, the literature which largely constitutes IP may be seen as the discursive space which allows for the mutual construction of an IP-centred reality by IP scholars. It is interesting to ponder then, that if it is the case that IP scholars are those who are actively constructing IP, and the majority of these scholars reside in academia, then why is so much of this literature focused on the activity of individuals who exist in for-profit organizations? We answer this question from a Foucaultian perspective and see the world of business, commerce, and management (even if these are simply constructions within IP literature) as the major driving force of a majority of this literature (see also Whitley, 1984). Also, in the insistence upon organizationally-valid application, which often references profit and increased performance, we see the role of many 'gate-keeping' agents within IP acting as agents of management (although we note here that the rhetoric of application may be so institutionalized that it is sometimes added as an afterthought in IP research). In this sense, academics provide epistemological tools for management to legitimize power relations by discussing them in terms of scientific facts, where these power relations are further hidden by the fact that these tools emanate from a third party (i.e. academics). On the other hand, management provides a legitimizing function for IP scholars, who can justify their theories as "practical", because they purport to further the successfulness of industry.

**Ethical concerns and a different applied focus.**

The above construction, where we indicate IP scholars as taking the perspective of management, begs the question, "What are our ethical obligations within IP?" While the Society for Industrial and Organization Psychology (SIOP), the largest international professional organization in the area, provides some useful guidelines for ethical and legal applications of IP, it provides almost no guidance for those who are more critical (in fact, we note here that some of the guidelines provided by SIOP even justify discrimination through a focus on situations where "job relevance" overrides the social problem differential test functioning). For the critical industrial psychologist, the focus should not simply be on profit and performance, but should take into account the institutional, social, environmental, and personal effects of their study in both academic and consulting pursuits.

For example, when developing a measure for an organization or for an academic work, critical industrial psychologists should ask themselves more than just the perfunctory validity-related questions and focus more on who will use the measure and if it will effect more social harm than good (we take here a utilitarian ethical perspective, but we also recommend more Kantian and existential notions of ethics). Further, when training graduate students, critical industrial psychologists should ask themselves what the effects of their training will be on their students/society and if the content of their pedagogy is justified by examining more than simply the methodological rigor of their

instruction. By asking themselves these questions, critical industrial psychologists may work toward not just greater profit, but organizational social performance which is beneficial to employees and other organizational stakeholders.

By making these statements we hope to show that a critical perspective does not necessarily mean that an applied focus is inherently 'wrong'. On the contrary, what we, in part, attempt to say is that the application of a content domain which is socially responsible is highly desirable (in fact, we believe that it is too often the case that the term 'application' is demonized in OS critical literature, with the assumption that application is necessarily negative). Further, with the strong history of IP in organizational problem solving, critical industrial scholars are sure to find a host of beneficial uses for IP technologies.

## CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, we hope that the current work allows for a greater focus on the presuppositions of industrial psychology and has provided some insight into various theoretical positions which may allow those who perform within it to be more aware of their field. While this work is meant more to spur discussion and debate rather than be an opus on critical theory, we hope that its content is found useful by industrial psychologists and others. In closing we would like to note that, although many scholars are discontented with the subjectivity involved in more critical perspectives (e.g., Donaldson, 1992; Locke, 2002), we believe that the loss of absolute epistemological certainty is well worth the investment in a critical perspective. For only when the claims of objective validity made in tradition I/O research are submitted to criticism can the social relations underlying these claims be brought to light.

## REFERENCES.


Allen, B (1999) **Power / Knowledge: Critical Essays on Michel Foucault.** New York: G K Hall & Co.

Alvesson, M & Deetz, S (1996). Critical theory and postmodernism approaches to organizational studies, in Clegg, S R, Hardy, C & Nord, W R (eds) **Handbook of Organization Studies**. London: Sage.

Alvesson, M & Willmott, H (1992) Critical theory and management studies: An introduction, in Alvesson, M & Willmott, H (eds) **Critical management Ssudies.** London: Sage.

Alvesson, M & Willmott, H (1996) **Making sense of management: A critical introduction**. London: Sage.

Binning, A & Barrett, A (1989) Validity of personnel decisions: A conceptual analysis of the inferential and evidential bases. **Journal of Applied Psychology, 74,** 478-494.

Brief, A P (2000) Still servants of power. **Journal of Management Inquiry, 9***,* 342-351.

Brief, A P & Bazerman, M H (2003) Editor's comments: Bringing in consumers. **Academy of Management Review, 28***,* 187-189.

Brief, A P & Cortina, J (2000) Research ethics: A place to begin. **Academy of Management: Research Methods Division Newsletter, 15***,* 11-12.

Berger J & Luckmann, T (1967) **The social construction of reality***.* London: Allen Lane.

Carter, C, McKinley, A, & Rowlinson, M (2002) Introduction: Foucault, management and history. **Organization, 9 (4),** 515-526.

Chomsky, N & Foucault, M (1974) Human nature: Justice versus power, in Elders, F (ed) **Reflexive water: The basic concerns of mankind**. Souvenir: London.

Dachler, H P & Wilpert, B (1978) Conceptual dimensions and boundaries of participation in organizations: A critical evaluation. **Administrative Science Quarterly, 23,** 23-39.

Davies, B, and Harré, R (1990) Positioning: The Social Construction of Selves. **Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20,** 43-63.

Deci, E L, Koestner, R & Ryan, R M (1999) A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. **Psychological Bulletin, 125 (6),** 627-668.

Deetz, S (1998) (Re)constructing the modern organization: Discursive formations, strategized subordination and self-surveillance, in McKinley, A & Starkey, K (eds) **Foucault, management and organizational theory***.* London: Sage.

DiMaggio, P & Powell, W W (1983) The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields*.* **American Sociological Review, 52,** 147-60.

Donaldson, L (1992) The Weick stuff: Managing beyond games. **Organization Science, 3,** 461-466.

Eden, D (2003) Critical management studies and the *Academy of Management Journal*: Challenge and counterchallenge. **Academy of Management Journal, 46,** 390-394.

Flyvbjerg B (1998) Habermas and Foucault: Thinkers for civil society? **The British Journal of Sociology, 49 (2),** 210-233.

Foucault, M (1972) **The archeology of knowledge and the discourse on language.** New York: Pantheon (1969-French).

Foucault, M (1977) **Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison***.* Harmondsworth: Penguin (1975-French).

Foucault, M (1998) **The history of sexuality – Volume 1: An introduction.** Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (1976-French).

Fournier, V and Grey, C (2000) At the critical moment. **Human Relations, 53**, 11, 7-32.

Gergen, K J (2001) Psychological science in a postmodern context. **American Psychologist, 56,** 803-813.

Habermas, J (1981) **The theory of communicative action - Vols. 1 & 2**. Boston: Beacon Press (1973-German).

Harvey, R J (1991) Job analysis, in Dunnette, M D & Hough, L M (eds) **Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology - Vol. 2.** (2nd ed). Palo Alto, Ca: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Jermier, J M (1998) Introduction: Critical perspectives on organizational control. **Administrative Science Quarterly, 43***,* 235-256.

Jones, C (2003) Theory after the postmodern condition. **Organization, 10***,* 503-525.

Judge, T A, Thoresen, C J, Bono, J E & Patton, G K (2001) The job satisfaction-job performance relationship: A qualitative and quantitative review. **Psychological Bulletin, 127 (3),** 376-407.

Kondra, A Z & Hinnings, C R (1998) Organizational diversity and change in institutional theory. **Organization Studies, 19,** 743-767.

Knights, D (1992) Changing spaces: The disruptive power of epistemological location for the management and organizational sciences. **Academy of Management Review, 17***,* 514-536.

Knights, D (2002) Writing organizational analysis into Foucault. **Organization, 9***,* 575-593.

Knights, D & Morgan, G (1991) Strategic discourse and subjectivity: Towards a critical analysis of corporate strategy in organizations. **Organization Studies, 12,** 251-273.

Locke, E A (2002). The dead end of postmodernism. **American Psychologist, 57***,* 458.

Locke, E A & Schweiger, D M (1979) Participation in decision making: One more look, in Staw, B M & Cummings, L L (eds) **Research in organizational behavior – Vol. 1.** Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Meyer, J W & Rowan, B (1977) Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. **American Journal of Sociology, 83***,* 340-363.

Munsterberg, H (1913) **Psychology and industrial efficiency**. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Nietzsche, F (1974) **The gay science.** New York: Vintage Books (1882-German).

Parker, M (2002) **Against management: Organisation in the age of managerialism.** Oxford: Polity Press.

Porter, L (1961) A study of perceived need satisfactions in bottom and middle management jobs. **Journal of Applied Psychology, 45.** 1-10.

Sackett, P R, Laczo, R M & Lippe, Z P (2003) Differential prediction and the use of multiple predictors: The omitted variables problem. **Journal of Applied Psychology, 88 (6),** 1046-1056.

Scott, W R (1995) **Institutions and organizations.** Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

Scott, W R & Meyer, J W (1983) The organization of societal sectors, in Meyer, J W & Scott, W R (eds) **Organizational environments: Ritual and rationality.** Beverly Hills, Ca: Sage.

Selznick, P (1949) **TVA and the grass roots.** Berkeley, Ca: University of California Press.

Stauffer, J M & Buckley, R M (2005) The existence and nature of racial bias in supervisory ratings. **Journal of Applied Psychology, 90 (3),** 586-591.

Taylor, F W (1911) **The principles of scientific management.** New York: Harper.

Tenbrunsel, A E & Messick, D M (1999) Sanctioning systems, decision frames, and cooperation. **Administrative Science Quarterly, 44**, 684-707.

Tolbert, P S & Zucker, L G (1996) The institutionalization of institutional theory, in Clegg, S, Hardy, C & Nord, W R (eds) **Handbook of organizational studies.** London: Sage.

Townley, B (1993) Foucault, power/knowledge, and its relevance for human resource management. **The Academy of Management Review, 18,** 518-545.

Weber, M (1992) **The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.** London: Routledge. (1930-German).

Weber, M (1968) **Economy and society - Vol. 1.** New York: Bedminster Press.

Whitley, R (1984) **The intellectual and social organization of the sciences**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Willmott, H (1997) Management and organization studies as science? **Organization, (4),** 309-344.

Woehr, D J, Hudspeth, N A & Edwards, B D (2000) Examination and evaluation of frequency estimation based personality measurement, in Ladd, R T (chair) **The measurement of complex constructs in I-O psychology: Issues and challenges***.* Symposium conducted at the 15th Annual Conference of Society for Industrial Organizational Psychology, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Zald, M N (1994) Organization studies as scientific and humanistic enterprise: Towards a reconceptualization of the foundations of the field. **Organization Science, 4,** 513-528.