

### **General Comments**

This dissertation is a very unusual combination of a deep and far reaching literature review, a grounded theory case study which allowed fresh views to arise out of the ground of the cases involved, and a series of theoretical lenses, which were integrated to make sense of the problems of several ecological sustainability issues. The lingering multifaceted problems in this field make it almost impossible to produce solutions contained by a lens that is simple enough to understand, and yet large enough to hold the complexity of all of the issues of concern. This dissertation makes a serious attempt to integrate all these facets and to create a uniquely new approach, which, ultimately may work for problems in many areas outside of the sustainability and ecological field.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is very well organized and flows easily from chapter to chapter, each chapter clearly building on the former one. Beginning with the first introductory chapter, the chapters themselves have an advanced organizer telling you what to expect in the chapter, then a full description in the same order of the organizer; next a summary of the chapter and finally a glimpse into the next chapter, which is organized in the same fashion.

Throughout the dissertation there is a brief summary of what has been covered in order to maintain the flow of the dissertation. This is a complex dissertation, so it needs an organizing feature like this to maintain clarity for a reader as they move through the work. As I read I found that the constant summaries and introductions allowed me to maintain my understanding of what was building, and in the case of this particular dissertation, that, to me was a requirement, for sifting through so much material was simply a necessary and important step to understanding the most important aspect of the dissertation itself; a brilliant new theoretical lens that looms in the simplicity of its capacities and shines brighter than any other lens I have read about for many years—however if this lens was introduced first, one wouldn't understand it from the ground up, and that is how this beautiful meta theory was discovered—from a grounded approach.

### **The Literature Review:**

In many dissertations, the literature review is a separate chapter, but Simon has laced the literature throughout his writing, applying it in just the right places. This made the Literature far more effective, for the thesis had so many conceptual lens side by side with the two cases, that the emergence of the new meta-theory arose out of the combination of the interaction of the two for the reader. As a result he demonstrated in his writing, for the reader, one of the critically important end results—that these are dynamic processes en-route, that contribute to an evolutionarily growth of understanding that is represented in the new meta-theory itself.

### **The research methodology:**

The research methodology itself, while named as grounded theory was actually more than that. It seems like a new kind of methodological approach, from my view, for it constantly sifted the grounded approach with its arising contents and themes, through the integral theory lens, which included developmental levels---and these were summarized neatly, succinctly and efficiently in the revisioned first, second and third level looped learning. When you put these loops into each of the quadrants from a developmental

perspective you have an entirely different lens to look through and this new view then fuels the next evolution of the theory which has the capacity to continue to evolve itself, continually, growing itself to take in all of the material that falls outside of each ensuing loop. Because this is a developmental perspective, there is no reason there won't be a single loop, double loop, triple loop and eventually a quadruple loop---on and on---looping through future developmental lenses that appear in humanity through time. Because the three loops are ones that have already been written about doesn't mean that these are the only ones that will evolve. Simon has created an evolutionary theory that has the potential to grow with the largeness of the problems that are not only facing humanity now but will be facing humanity in the future. So his research methodology itself, appears to be evolutionary, and this, in and of itself, is a contribution to the research.

### **The final theory: Integral Action Loops**

To me this is a brilliant contribution to the field of sustainability, but it seems to me to be farther reaching than that. This lens could be deeply relevant to much more than sustainability and organizations---because it is dynamic and thus constantly adapts to the new material that comes through it. Theoretically, Integral Action Loops could be applied to problems in other fields such as terrorism, the world economy, and the Arab Spring, to get new insights which could inform their dynamic movement through time and thus dynamic solutions. The possible contribution from this meta-theory, seems very promising to me as a general adaptable lens for finding the dynamic gaps in multiple problem areas on a planetary basis in the world today.

### **Suggestions:**

While there may be a very few, simple technical edits that can be pointed to, these seem irrelevant in the whole of the presentation of this work. I know that any of these smaller details will be cleared in the final draft and it is my recommendation that this dissertation be approved with commendations.

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Dear Thesis Examination Committee,

I have reviewed Simon Divecha's Doctor of Philosophy thesis and recommending that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy unconditionally. I have provided my Thesis Examination Report Form, which presents my recommendation as well. Here I would like to detail why I have made this strong recommendation.

To begin with the topic of the thesis is timely and of crucial importance. In effect Mr. Divecha is asking why we don't more people act on core environmental and social issues. He explores how we can create "action loops" that support sustainable action. He focuses on climate change as way of exploring these issues. I found Mr. Divecha's treatment of the topic and the way he grounded it in the literature and in the context of two multinational companies well executed. He takes on one of the most complex topics – one that requires a scholar-practitioner to consider multiple perspectives – and meets that complexity through an elegant use of metatheory in general and integral theory in particular. In short, the scale and scope of this thesis is impressive.

The thesis reads well and has good links within and across chapters. There is good cross referencing of sections and chapters to aid the reader often helping the reader to make links across the many threads of discussion that Mr. Divecha is animating. The 7+ years it took to do this research and write it up has helped produce a well integrated text that demonstrates fluidity across multiple theories and contexts. Also, Mr. Divecha has done a great job of bringing together grounded theory, mixed methods, case studies, and semi-structured interviews. The result is a multi-layered analysis that is well thought out, reflective, and provocative. The research is an illustrative example of what I would call "integral research" in that it manages to integrate first-, second-, and third-person methods.

Mr. Divecha is successful in incorporating stages of human development into his analysis. I found his treatment impressive for a number of reasons. I have seen many include this lens in their analysis but all too often it is done in a simplistic way that doesn't serve the analysis much. In contrast, Mr. Divecha demonstrated a real depth of understanding of these models and the research behind them. He included his own reflectivity around working with such assessments, and he made some very insightful links to the role of worldviews and levels of development in his analysis.

One thing that stood out for me after reading this thesis is I felt that it was both a contribution to integral theory and to sustainability. Integral theory needs sophisticated examples of its tenets applied to real world concerns like environmental action. The field of sustainability needs meta-frameworks like integral theory. So this thesis is successful in making a contribution in both directions of its main subjects. His pairing of various quotes with different action logics was very illustrative. I believe this thesis contains the first application of O'Fallons' new model of stages and so it breaks new ground there as well. Though in chapter 6 I would have liked to have seen some discussion around the difference between hierarchical stage models and sequential phase models. I felt this distinction was lost and thus muddled some of the analysis provided. As well as I feel a more robust discussion of the similarities and differences between psychological stage models of individuals versus groups.

The use of tables and figures adds much to the text. Figure 3.1 was very interesting in its multi-paradigm review of energy efficiency. Figure 3.3 was very innovative in how it mapped the 60 lenses onto the four quadrants of integral theory. This alone was a powerful bridge between Mark Edwards work and Ken Wilber's. Similarly Figures 6.2 and 6.3 are conceptually innovative showing the dynamics between meta lenses and how different lenses support different loops (out of the 3 in his model). Figure 7.2 is also an exciting image that shows how the action loop model that Mr. Divecha can add considerable value to integral theory. In many ways he is helping to build bridges between Wilber's body of work and Torbert's body of work and this is also an important contribution contained therein.

Mr. Divecha demonstrates that not only does he have a solid grasp of meta-theory, sustainability, and human psychology. But he this thesis demonstrates he is a meta-thinker in his own right – weaving together many important sources of insight and data into new views of reality and how we might interface with reality in more productive and sustainable ways.

I highly commend Mr. Divecha for a job well done and I look forward to see where he goes from here. If I can be of any more assistance to the Thesis Examination Committee please don't hesitate to call on me.

Best,

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