

## ***From a Sustainability to a ThriveAbility Charter***

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On December 16, 2015, I attended a meeting at the University of Melbourne about the development of its Sustainability Charter.

Perhaps riding a rising tide of new possibilities for more appropriate action on climate change coming out of the recent Paris conference, some people were excited about the draft Sustainability Charter, whereas others were much less enthusiastic. So much so, that one group had already created an alternative Sustainability Charter.

Unsurprisingly, neither the draft nor the alternative Sustainability Charter is acceptable in the context of Integral Meta-Theory. Both documents need to be criticised due to many important absences, some of which will be introduced below.

At the 2015 Integral Theory Conference, Zak Stein provided a meta-theoretical approach to *Desperate Measures: The Global Crises of Measurement and their Meta-Theoretical Solutions*. Stein summarises his perspective in his blog *Global Crises of Measurement: Whose Measures, Whose Future?* <http://www.zakstein.org/global-crises-of-measurement-whose-measures-whose-future-video/>.

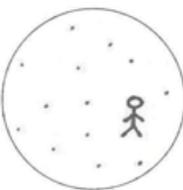
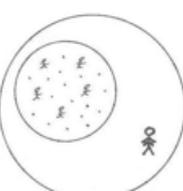
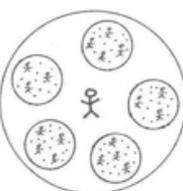
Here is his abstract from his conference paper:

**Abstract:** Measurement infrastructures come in many forms and impact our lives in many ways, from the intimacy of psychometrics and biometrics, to the anonymity of econometrics and global climate change indicators. This paper explores the need for meta-theoretical approaches that address measurement infrastructures in terms of the ethical, political, and metaphysical aspects of our current global crises of measurement. This term—global crises of measurement—is meant to convey the fact that, despite appearances, the majority of our global challenges revolve around measurement infrastructures. For example, the recent economic crisis was largely the result of inadequate and deceptive econometric practices (e.g., the ratings applied to collateralized debt obligations), while the ecological crisis continues to revolve around disputes over, and innovations in, measurement (e.g., calculations of global temperature changes). Measurement infrastructures function to generate (and impose) a shared understanding of the world, and in so doing literally create realities; whether these realities are true, good, and beautiful is another matter. Measures and their related standards also facilitate complexly coordinated social actions and set the terms by which a wide range of evaluative judgments are made, from those about the self (bathroom scale; IQ) to those about whole countries (GDP). Recent decades have brought a rapid proliferation of measurement infrastructures and related forms of standardization, which impact the most intimate details of our lives and the most significant planetary initiatives. A meta-theoretical approach is needed that can expose the false realities created by inadequate and oppressive measurement practices as well as inform the creation of new approaches to the representation of complex global realities, including transactions involving non-monetary value, psychological interiority, and non-linear dynamical systems. This paper takes the first steps toward

outlining just such a meta-theory of measurement, drawing heavily on the work of Ken Wilber and Roy Bhaskar.

Stein in his aforementioned blog provides an overview of six crises:

1. *Economic crisis: poverty, inequality, and econometrics*
2. *Ecological crisis: the politics of measurement and complex systems*
3. *Educational crisis: testing, standards, and marketization*
4. *Political crisis: voting, polling, and the representation of interiors*
5. *Health care crisis: biometrics, diagnostic categories, and the future of medicine*
6. *Personality crisis: the hyper-realty and hyper-reflectivity of the over-measured lifestyle*

Developmental Stage/ Order of Mind (typical ages)	What can be seen as <i>object</i> (the content of one's knowing)	What one is <i>subject</i> to (the structure of one's knowing)	Underlying Structure of Meaning-Making
<b>1st Order: Impulsive Mind</b> (~2-6 years-old)	one's reflexes	one's impulses, perceptions	Single Point 
<b>2nd Order: Instrumental Mind</b> (~6 years-old through adolescence)	one's impulses, perceptions	one's needs, interests, desires	Categories 
<b>3rd Order: Socialized Mind</b> (post-adolescence)	one's needs, interests, desires	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	Across Categories 
<b>4th Order: Self-Authoring Mind</b> (variable, if achieved)	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	self-authorship, identity, ideology	Systemic 
<b>5th Order: Self-Transforming Mind</b> (typically > ~40, if achieved)	self-authorship, identity, ideology	the dialectic between ideologies	System of Systems 

Adapted from Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: the Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 314-315 by Peter W. Pruyne, <http://developmentalobserver.blog.com>.

Taking on board the sub-title of Stein's blog, I ask in our global interconnecting crises, [whose sustainability, whose measures, whose futures?](#)

Stein recently completed his Doctor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is deeply versed in the dynamics of adult development.

Robert Kegan, Harvard Graduate School of Education, describes five orders of consciousness in his theory of adult development:

Looks like both draft and alternative Sustainability Charters are not products of 5<sup>th</sup> Order: Self-Transforming Minds.

Both documents are ideological. Neither considers the dialectic of ideologies.

The draft Sustainability Charter champions scientific materialism with no indication of the importance of consciousness studies. Nor is there any mention of 2<sup>nd</sup> Order tribal cultures, nor 3<sup>rd</sup> Order law and order conservative societies, nor 5<sup>th</sup> Order communities of inquiry into timely action.

The alternative Sustainability Charter describes our socio-environmental emergency. There is no mention of adult development. Nor is there any meta-theoretical understanding of our multiple crises and our questionable uses of metrics.

Just as Australia is a clear laggard in dealing with climate change, the draft Sustainability Charter is a clear laggard in dealing with sustainability, or better said, thriveability.

Besides the work of Zak Stein and other meta-theorists in *Meta-Theory for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Critical Realism and Integral Theory in Dialogue*, I also recommend Robin Wood and the ThriveAbility Foundation's *A Leader's Guide to ThriveAbility: A Multi-Capital Operating System for a Regenerative Inclusive Economy*, and Hilary Bradbury and Bill Torbert's *Love/Eros: Love in the Spirit of Inquiry*.

With all of that onboard, the next iteration of UoM's Sustainability Charter, I hope, will be much better attuned to emerging living conditions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than the current document.

In an Action Inquiry community,

“We commit to enacting a vision of ThriveAbility:

**TIMELY ACTION INQUIRY that grows Personal INTEGRITY, Relational MUTUALITY & mutually-transforming power, as well as non-violent, ecological SUSTAINABILITY across generations.”**