

Whitehead, Jack, Delong, Jacqueline and Huxtable, Marie (2017) Participation and democratization of knowledge: living theory research for reconciliation. In: Conference of the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA 2017), 12-16 June 2017, Cartagena, Colombia. (Unpublished)

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## **Participation and Democratization of Knowledge: Living Theory research for Reconciliation from ARNA 2015-ARNA 2017**

**A presentation at the 2017 Conference of the Action Research Network of the Americas 12-16 June 2017 in Cartagena, Colombia.**

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### **Abstract**

This presentation is intended to develop ideas from the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015 ARNA Town Hall meeting in Toronto to the June 2017 ARNA conference in Cartagena, Colombia. It is focused on emerging understandings of knowledge democracy with convergences among those creating knowledge. We will show how Living Theorists draw on diverse approaches including living-cultures-of-inquiry, participatory frameworks, narrative inquiry, self-study and various forms of action research. Data from epistemologies of the South, East-Asian epistemologies and Western epistemologies, are analysed and used to show the mutual exclusion of different forms of rationality. In contrast to the exclusion expressed as 'epistemicide' by de Sousa Santos (2014) the living-logics of Living Theory research are used to show how different knowledges can be reconciled to contribute to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity without denying the rationality of a different perspective. Multi-media narratives with digital visual data from a range of professional and community practices are used to clarify and communicate the meanings of embodied expressions of ontological and relational life-affirming values. These values are being used as explanatory principles in the explanations of individuals of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings.

### **Introduction**

In this paper, we have three purposes: one is to develop our ideas from the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015 ARNA Town Hall meeting in Toronto up to the June 2017 ARNA conference in Cartagena, Colombia; two is to share emerging understandings of knowledge democracy (Ramos & Rowell, 2017) reconciling and contributing to ecologies of knowledges (Santos, 2014); three is to share the growing influence of living-theorists from across the globe in a living-culture-of-inquiry (Delong, 2013) contributing to a movement dedicated to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity (Whitehead, 2015).

We have organized this paper under the following headings:

1. Beginning in the Town Hall meeting on the 8th May in ARNA 2015
2. Developing shared meanings of an ecology of knowledges and knowledge

- democracy.
3. Contributing to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity.
  4. Evolution of understandings from ARNA 2015 to ARNA 2017
  5. Next Steps

## 1. Beginning in the Town Hall meeting on the 8th May in ARNA 2015.

The successful submission by Jackie was as follows:

**Session Abstract** The intent of this Town Hall meeting is to engage practitioner-researchers across the globe as on site and virtual, through the internet, attendees in a living-culture-of-inquiry through values-based dialogue in creating living-theories (explanations of our influence). Multi-screen SKYPE conversations are shown to be influencing our perceptions of the idea of Ubuntu that 'I am because we are/we are because I am' or i~we for shorthand and enabling us to 'pool' our life-affirming and life-enhancing energies, as well as sharing and evolving our relationally dynamic culture of inquiry and Living Theory research. In small groups of 6-7, we will share our experience with these sorts of dialogues and invite others to participate in conversations that are influencing our teaching and research practice and hope to encourage use of this interactive process as a model for joint action, learning with and from each other.

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/arna/ARNA2015TownHallProposal090215.pdf>

It is important to note that there are three ways that people participated in the Town Hall Meeting: as attendees, physically present in the Town Hall meeting at the ARNA 2015 Conference in Toronto, Canada; as virtual participants through multimedia SKYPE; and others through their 'living-posters'. Some physically present and virtual participants also contributed through their living-posters. You can access our account of the Town Hall event produced as a paper for the, 'ARNA 2015 Conference Proceedings of the Town Hall meeting' from <https://sites.google.com/site/arnaproceedings/home/2015/delong>.

We want to share some of our experience and understandings of the Town Hall meeting by inviting you to view the following clips. While we are not expecting you to view the 11:46 minute video data, as you read the following we hope you might get a sense of the embodied energy and connections that contributed to developing a living-culture-of-inquiry in the meeting, by dipping into the video at different places. The visual below gives you a sense of the large screen where the 'Skype' group was located and the on site group that could interact with the laptops focusing on the 'Town Hall' speaker that Jack and Jackie held. In the still we see different laptops being used to bring in different groups from around the world.

Swaroop Rawal in India is also shown on the large screen and Jackie is enabling Swaroop to see the attendees as they can see her on the screen through the laptop. Swaroop Rawal is sharing her excitement in joining the group. Keep in mind that it is 3:00 am her time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYe-8SR9eWQ&index=4&list=PLj7Kbzs74R-s7Kd3ZDeL7CeKhCCfW-dAa>

Swaroop says:

“I’m so excited to be with you. I can see you all so clear. I am working in drama in education to enhance life skills in children. Right now I am working in villages training primary school teachers how to use drama in education in the curriculum and life skills enhancement.”

Jackie is also showing the face-to-face participants the SKYPE participants.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWOof0hh4i8>

We would like to have shown you those physically in the room at the ‘Town Hall’ meeting in Toronto, but we did not ask for ethical permissions at the start of the



meeting.

We were aware as we prepared for the event that many would not be able to come in through SKYPE. Marie (Huxtable, 2015) originated the notion of living-posters as an option that was introduced later. For now we want to continue with the ‘story’ of the virtual participants through multimedia SKYPE and the contribution they made to participation and democratising knowledge. They each draw on diverse approaches as they research their practice as Living Theorists, including living-cultures-of-inquiry, participatory frameworks, narrative inquiry, self-study and various forms of action

research.

The purpose of reviewing each of the 'SKYPE' speakers in the 11 minute clip is to show how we are creating a living-culture-of-inquiry:

The video extract begins with Bernie Sullivan in Ireland introducing her doctoral thesis on A living theory of a practice of social justice: Realising the right of Traveller Children to educational equality (see <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/items.asp?id=47> ). Bernie then introduces the work she has been doing with Mairin Glenn, Caitriona McDonagh and Mary Roche from Ireland and with Pip Bruce Ferguson (who came from New Zealand, to work at Dublin City University) in forming Network Educational Action Research Ireland (NEARI).

The video continues with Pieter du Toit with his interest in academic staff development at the University of Pretoria and Liz Wolverardt, a member of staff at the University of Pretoria and a doctoral researcher who worked with Pieter as supervisor. Their living poster (see <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage061115.pdf> ) focused on their supervisory relationship and on how supervision could be a moral contract between researcher and supervisor as both share their learning.

We hear from Pip Bruce Ferguson, talking from Ireland about her research in New Zealand in support of indigenous individuals and groups and her introduction to Living Educational Theory. Pip communicates directly with one of the attendees about the excitement of communicating through technology and the importance of bringing love as a standard of judgment into the academy. Pip explains she is going to present at ALARA in South Africa in November 2015 and Pieter expresses the hope that they will be able to meet up.

Sonia Hutchison then contributes from the UK. Sonia is executive director of a Carers' Network. Sonia's doctoral research is focused on 'A living-theory of caring'. Sonia explains that she will be presenting at the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA) Conference in Pretoria in November 2015 and expresses her hope that she will be meeting people on the Multi-Media SKYPEs in South Africa.

Delysia Timms from Durban University of Technology (DUT) introduces Lee Scott and Linda Vargas and emphasizes Love and Joy in the work that she does as a staff developer at DUT and a canon in the church. Delysia talks about a 'mentoring action research group' using living-theories and about a paper she has had accepted for presentations at a Conference in New Zealand. Lee shares the importance of well-being; that is student well being and her own well being and that it is all about the love.

The video shows our embodied expressions of our shared meaning of a living-culture-of-inquiry. This meaning has been originally expressed by Delong, (2015):

When I use the language of Culture of Inquiry, I am meaning the creation of a safe, supportive space where students and teachers are enabled to make explicit

their values and make themselves accountable for living according to those values. They learn to recognize when they are not living according to their espoused values and are what Jack Whitehead calls living contradictions. Action-reflection cycles based on asking questions like “How can I improve my teaching of these children?” become as natural as breathing. Experiencing values such as loving kindness and loved into learning in this democratic, non-hierarchical environment and recognition of their embodied knowledge, encourage students and teachers to take responsibility for their own learning. When I use the language of a culture-of-inquiry I am meaning the unique living and embodied expressions of this culture in the individual’s practice. The language of a culture-of-inquiry draws on the language of a Culture of Inquiry. (DeLong, 2013, p. 26) (p. 3).

Each contributor to the multi-screen SKYPE conversations participates in a values-based dialogue in supporting the creation of their living-theories (explanations of our educational influence) with their living-posters at <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/arna/arnaposters270415.pdf> .

We have used Skype as it is readily available technology in our efforts to democratize knowledges. Over the two years we have kept in mind what we learned from the participants in the ‘Skype’ group: that the audio needed improving for them to hear all of the conversations clearly.

We move now to describing and explaining our developing shared meanings of the language of ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2014) and knowledge democracy from Ramos and Rowell (2017).

## **2. Developing shared meanings of an ecology of knowledges and knowledge democracy.**

In our writing and publications, we show how an ecology of knowledges is a way of holding diversity in knowledge that supports the growth and integrity of the whole. The evidence of our emerging and shared understandings of knowledge democracy include convergences and continuing dialogues among those, including ourselves, creating knowledge through Living Theory research programmes.

We begin with our emerging shared meanings of knowledge democracy, ecology of knowledges and reconciliation. As defined by Ramos and Rowell (2017) an ecology of knowledges is a way of holding diversity in knowledge that supports the growth and integrity of the whole. An ecology of knowledges gives us the opportunity to forge a new field of coherences in recognising the value of, but moving beyond, scientific materialist empiricism. As different knowledge systems interact, they can learn from these interplays. Instead of disintegration between competing reality claims, an ecology of knowledges leads to new possibilities of integration. The name for this new orientation is Knowledge Democracy.

Our understandings of knowledge democracy and ecology of knowledges have emerged in several dialogic and written iterations of attempting to fully comprehend their meanings. In particular in her recent publication in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS), DeLong has written *Respecting and Legitimizing The Embodied Knowledge of Practitioners In Contexts of Power Struggles* which was published in the 2017 June issue of the Educational Journal of Living Theories, Volume 10(1): 43-71 at <http://ejolts.net/drupal/node/298>. The abstract reviews the nature of the work:

In this article, I present some arguments to show what is needed for school and medical systems and educational research journals to respect and legitimate the embodied knowledge of practitioners through their own living-theories in terms of making original contributions to academic and professional educational knowledge. The students' stories that address obstacles, constraints and, thankfully, transcendence reveal the significance of leadership, sustainability, and accreditation in respecting their embodied knowledge and for improving the social order and the flourishing of humanity. To support my arguments, I show how a living culture of inquiry and multi-media possibilities focus on clarifying and communicating values-based expressions of meaning. I draw insights from the work of De Sousa Santos (2014) including the idea of 'epistemicide'. Epistemicide draws attention to the ways in which the validity of indigenous and practitioner-knowledge is not recognised or is killed off in the dominant epistemology of western universities.

This article shows how the embodied knowledges of practitioners are being made public in the context of the power struggles in which I am making this contribution as part of my living legacy (Forester, 2015).

Reconciliation seems to mean arriving at a space where different and diverse knowledges thrive and enrich each other. In that space, the embodied knowledge of practitioners would be accredited on an equal footing, same but different, as knowledge based on quantitative statistical design. Reflective, values-based self-studies might better serve questions on human behaviour and statistical; control-group studies might better serve questions on chemical and material processes. And both might work together to improve outcomes for improving human lives. Then we would have integration, as opposed to disintegration, and knowledge democracy.

Pip Bruce Ferguson (2008) describes attempts she has observed to include more diverse perspectives and presentation styles in research. She suggests "that these changes are indicative of an epistemological transformation in what counts as educational knowledge." (p.24)

It takes courage and open-mindedness for people accustomed to and trained in 'traditional' research processes to consider and even embrace alternative ways of researching, and of presenting that research. But it will validate forms of research that can convey knowledge not easily encapsulated just within pages of written text and work to overcome those whose knowledge and skills have been, in the past, inappropriately excluded (p.25).

Each of us makes a concise statement of our understandings of knowledge democracy:

**Jackie:**

For over 20 years, I have committed myself to ensuring that the voices of the practitioners, teachers, consultants, principals, nurses, practising professionals are heard, respected and legitimated. I exhort them to refuse to let anyone, supervisor, academic, anyone, however kind they may seem to be, speak for them, to take away their voice, to assume their knowledge. This passion that fuelled my work came, I think, from sensing condescension, from reading about and hearing that access to the temple of all knowledge is through the gates at the university and that the practitioner's knowledge is only legitimated when university academics speak for them. That practitioners have embodied knowledge and write rigorous research seemed an idea from an alien galaxy to the universities as they were and are negating practitioners' knowledge in forms of epistemicide (Santos, 2014).

Currently, we live in a world of epistemicide where the embodied and lived knowledge of practitioners is dismissed or 'killed off' by some academics, academic institutions/publications and academic accrediting processes. One of the problems lies in the use of ethical procedures that are formulated at universities to assess social science research. One master's student who intended to conduct research on her teaching practice in her classroom was asked if she could assure the ethical review board that she could return the students to the state in which she had found them! (DeLong, 2002)

As we have interacted with different knowledge systems, we have learned from these interplays and helped ourselves and our students to enjoy this new orientation known as Knowledge Democracy. We have seen much growth in the field of Living Theory research but most of our students still have to run the gauntlet of receiving permission to research their own practice, of attaining accreditation and of acceptance for publication. We and our colleagues in Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS) are committed to an ecology of knowledges that leads to new possibilities of integration—more to come on this later in the paper.

**Jack:**

I'd like to start by focusing on the need for reconciliation in the face of epistemicide.

In our experience of the pressures from the Academy to conform to Western epistemological principles, we are aware that these pressures can omit, distort or attempt to replace the practical principles we use, based on our ontological values, to explain our educational influences in learning. This pressure can be appreciated in the mistake acknowledged by Paul Hirst (1983) in a view of educational theory that attempted to replace these practical principles in explanations of educational influence, when he wrote:



Much understanding of educational theory will be developed:

"... in the context of immediate practical experience and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular, many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalisations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices.

In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake. Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate." (Hirst, 1983, p. 18)

In facing and transcending these pressures, throughout our living-theory doctoral inquiries, (Huxtable, 2012; Delong, 2002; Whitehead, 1999), we have shown (DeLong, 2017; Huxtable, 2016; Whitehead, 2017a) how different knowledges can be reconciled in contributing to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity without denying the rationality of a different perspective.

As Living Theory researchers we provide evidence that we have researched our 'I' questions, 'How do I improve my practice in living, as fully as possible, values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity?' These understandings include an alternative form of globalisation to the form of globalisation that is often referred to as economic rationality by critical social theorists (Whitehead, 2017b). By focusing on our 'I' questions, grounded in our practice and our values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, we are not denying the importance of insights from theories. What we are doing is to prioritise our concerns to improve our practice, through living our values as fully as possible, rather than prioritise the application of a general abstract theory, such as critical social theory, to our 'I' questions. This is not to deny the importance of insights from such theories. It is to emphasise the our practical concerns are prioritised by the ways our values and understandings are engaging with the particular contexts in which we are working and researching.

As Living Theorists we draw on diverse approaches including living-cultures-of-inquiry, participatory frameworks, narrative inquiry, self-study and various forms of action research. In addition, we integrate forms of quantitative research such as educational testing used to assess the efficacy of curricula and pedagogical strategies. There seems to be a misconception that rigid boundaries exist that control how research must be done. As an example, positions are taken that determine that qualitative research cannot also include mixed methods so that narrative research might not include statistical, quantitative data when this can and does occur.

## Marie:

The story of the development of an idea about living-posters is given in the proceedings of ARNA 2015 on pages 4-5

<https://sites.google.com/site/arnaproceedings/home/2015/delong>.

The letter we sent out inviting participation is an expression in practice of our value of knowledge democracy. You can see this from these extracts from the letter we sent out; for instance, where we point directly to the rationale of the session given in the successful proposal:

The efficacy of joint actions in learning with and from one another and how to enhance locally, regionally, nationally and globally the values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, could be much improved given the recent increases in inequalities across the world. We are placing education at the heart of the processes of enhancing this flow of values and understandings in creating living-cultures-of-inquiry for producing and sharing the living-theories of practitioner-researchers.

We go on to say:

The Town Hall Meeting affords the opportunity for you to contribute to and benefit from *“the globalising educational dialogues of individual practitioners who are exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ in the generation and extension of living-cultures-of-inquiry.”* We would be delighted if you would join in and help develop educationally productive dialogue with groups and individuals across the globe who share a desire to give expression in their practice to values that contribute to the flourishing of humanity.

Although only a few people can take part in the event through SKYPE we can extend the possibilities of new connections being made by drawing attention to your work and making it available at and after the event if you:

1. create and upload an approximately 2-3 minute video-clip to YouTube of you and which communicates the essentials of your: context; interests; values as the explanatory principles and living standards of judgment to which you hold yourself accountable in your practice; research passions.
2. send us a pdf of an attractive A4 ‘flier’ which includes brief details of your: context; interests; ontological and relational values that motivate you; research passions; details of a few of your key publications; the url to your website if you have one; your contact details and the url to your YouTube video.

As the responses arrived, the challenge was to enable everyone to see themselves recognised and valued in an i~we~i community, and to enable others to find them.

This is the solution then:



Access from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage061115.pdf>

It was possible to have each person on the page and to show them in groups/networks. Between the ARNA 2015 and 2017 conferences we have continued to receive living-posters, both individual and groups/networks. The problem with the visual on the screen with increasing numbers is, 'How to enable everyone to not only have a presence but to feel their ('i') is present and recognised in the various groups/networks to which they belong. This is the best solution at the moment:



Access from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage020617.pdf>

Individuals who are members of groups/networks are not shown individually on the homepage to make enough room. This doesn't feel right; the 'we' feels to mask the 'i' and is not yet expressing values of democratisation of knowledge and participation. It will change after the session, where Jack will present the draft paper at the ARNA 2017 conference, with any creative thoughts and responses we get, working with the notion of 'none of us is as smart as all of us' (attributed as a translation of a Japanese saying).

The archive of snapshots in time, from the first ARNA conference and this one, is proving valuable to learn from not only our own evolving journeys but also that of other people's. Rather than illustrate what learning we believe has occurred between ARNA 2015 and 2017 with individual examples, which runs the risk of just those stories we know of being elevated, we ask you to go into the current homepage and explore some of the stories yourself.

Some people have sent a number of living-posters, and you will find links to their

previous living-posters. Some people have told us that they have found creating living-posters has provided a useful tool as a research method and/or a reflective device and they have offered their learning to others, who subsequently have developed the tool for their own purposes. Has it helped create a living-boundary (Huxtable, 2012) between your different worlds of practice within which you have created new learning that has been of value to you and/or others? What are your experiences? If you contribute your living-poster, with links to the knowledge you are prepared to make public then does that enable us to work together to democratise knowledge. Mellett (2017) coined the term pen-epistemogenesis as a contrast to epistemicide to emphasise contributions to the reconciliation and evolution of diverse knowledges that contribute to the flourishing of humanity.

Next we describe and explain our view of the the evolution of knowledge in our worlds.

### **3. Contributing to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity**

The importance of a living-logic is that it establishes the original contributions of Living Theory researchers to educational knowledge. This living-logic has a relationally dynamic form of rationality that includes 'I' as a living contradiction with dialectical logic, and draws insights from propositional theories that are structured with formal logic (Whitehead, 2013).

In our understanding, logic is a mode of thought that is appropriate for comprehending the real as rational (Marcuse, 1964, p. 105). In a living-educational-theory the researcher provides an explanation for their educational knowledge whose rationality is distinguished by its living-logic. A living-logic has been distinguished in successfully completed, doctoral, educational research programmes. For example, Eden Charles (2007), in answering his question, 'How Can I Bring Ubuntu As A Living Standard of Judgement Into The Academy? Moving Beyond Decolonisation Through Societal Reidentification And Guiltless Recognition', presents a living-logic of an Ubuntu way of being:

This is a living-theory thesis which traces my engagement in seeking answers to my question that focuses on how I can improve my practice as someone seeking to make a transformational contribution to the position of people of African origin. In the course of my enquiry I have recognised and embraced Ubuntu, as part of an African cosmology, both as my living practice and as a living standard of judgement for this thesis. It is through my Ubuntu way of being, enquiring and knowing that my original contribution to knowledge has emerged.

Through Living Theory research, different knowledges can be reconciled to contribute to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity without denying the rationality of a different perspective (in contrast to the exclusion expressed as 'epistemicide' by de Sousa Santos (2014).

Drawing on the content from the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS),

Living Theory research we show and explain how, in practice, a community has developed participation and democratisation of knowledge from around the globe. Data from epistemologies of the South, East-Asian epistemologies and Western epistemologies, are analysed by the practitioner-researcher and used to show how the mutual exclusion of different forms of rationality can be avoided. We show how different knowledges can be reconciled to contribute to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity without denying the rationality of a different perspective. Here are examples from the 2015-17 issues of EJOLTS that support the claims above:

June 2015

Jane Spiro ( <http://ejolts.net/node/250> ) shows how she has created a community and developed participation and democratisation of knowledge with her students; Dan Butcher, Kathleen Greenway, Jenny Harding and Adrian Twissell, 'Paving the way: creating space for the doctoral journey.'

December 2015

A community that has developed participation and democratisation of knowledge is evident in Arianna Briganti's article (<http://ejolts.net/node/262>) 'Generating my own living-theory: An interim report focuses on my practice as a development practitioner having worked in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Georgia and currently Albania.'

June 2016

Neema Parekh (<http://ejolts.net/node/271>) in her paper, 'A journey in learning: My reflective account', says, '... I hope lessons learnt by me can be drawn on by other teachers so that they can make learning an enjoyable, stress--free experience for the children of rural India.' She provides evidence of how East-Asian and Western epistemologies can be reconciled and how the mutual exclusion of different forms of rationality can be avoided.

December 2016

Pip Bruce Ferguson, (<http://ejolts.net/node/285> ) includes Action Research and her work with Maori and non-Maori children and teaches the rationality of a different perspective in her paper, 'The influence of Action Research and Living Educational Theory on my life's work as an educator'. She provides evidence of how Indigenous New Zealand and Western epistemologies can be reconciled.

Sadruddin Bahadur Qutoshi, (<http://ejolts.net/node/287>), 'Creating My Own Living-Theory: An Autoethnographic-soulful Inquiry', includes addressing the culturally disempowering nature of teacher education and research practices in the context of Pakistan. He shows how different knowledges can be reconciled to contribute to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity.

June 2017

Jacqueline Delong (2017) 'Respecting and Legitimizing The Embodied Knowledge of Practitioners In Contexts of Power Struggles (<http://ejolts.net/node/288> ). She shows that through Living Theory research different knowledges can be reconciled to contribute to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity without denying the rationality of a different perspective (in contrast to the exclusion expressed as 'epistemicide' by de Sousa Santos (2014).

We move now to the evolution of understandings between the two ARNA conferences.

#### **4. Evolution of understandings from ARNA 2015 to ARNA 2017**

At the end of our proceedings write-up for ARNA 2015 , we committed to next steps:

##### Next Steps

What we have been exploring is the possibility of bringing Living Theory researchers from around the world into a living, global Culture of Inquiry, that does not require a membership fee or affiliation with any particular organisation, but encourages the sustained and sustaining conversations of individuals and groups who are working and researching to live as fully as possible the values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. Our learning from this session has been used for a similar session in November, 2015 in Pretoria, Africa with the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA) Conference (see Sonia Hutchison's paper and workshop plan at <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/southafrica/soniaALARA2015.pdf> ). We intend to develop the potential of the ideas described above at the June 2017 ARNA conference in Cartagena, Colombia, for generating and sharing the living-theories of action researchers in extending and deepening the influences of living-cultures-of-inquiry with values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. (DeLong, Whitehead & Huxtable, 2016, p. 12)

In this paper we have shown that our emerging shared meanings of ecology of knowledges (Santos, 2014) and knowledge democracy (Ramos and Rowell, 2017) are consistent with the originators meanings. We have also shown how an ecology of knowledges has given us the opportunity to forge a new field of coherences in recognising some value in scientific materialist empiricism, for example in our use of digital visual technology, whilst transcending limitations in this approach to improve social relations, through Living Theory research. As our different knowledge systems interact with each other and others, we have have learned from these interplays. Instead of disintegration between competing reality claims, an ecology of knowledges has lead us to new possibilities of integration. We follow Ramos and Rowell (2107) in naming this new orientation Knowledge Democracy.

We have also shown how an ecology of knowledges is a way of holding diversity in knowledge that supports the growth and integrity of the whole as we have developed ideas from the 8th May 2015 ARNA Town Hall meeting in Toronto and brought these into this presentation to the June 2017 ARNA conference in Cartagena, Colombia. The ideas include:

1) showing how generative conversations can bring people together from other contexts, with multiscreen SKYPEs and living-posters, to share their 'I' questions and their explanations of influence as contributions to an ecology of knowledges.  
an example here from the 2015 Town Hall proceedings from a participant

2) showing how our emerging and shared understandings of knowledge democracy include convergences and continuing dialogues among those, including ourselves, creating knowledge through Living Theory research programmes.  
an example from our video

3) showing how Living Theorists, including ourselves, have drawn on diverse approaches including living-cultures-of-inquiry, participatory research, narrative inquiry, self-study and various forms of action research, in making contributions to an ecology of knowledges.

4) showing how data from epistemologies of the South, East-Asian epistemologies and Western epistemologies, are analysed and used to show the mutual exclusion of different forms of rationality.

5) In contrast to the exclusion expressed as 'epistemicide' by de Sousa Santos (2014) the living-logics of Living Theory research were used to show how different knowledges can be reconciled to contribute to the evolution of knowledge for the flourishing of humanity without denying the rationality of a different perspective.

6) Multi-media narratives with digital visual data from a range of professional and community practices have been used to clarify and communicate the meanings of embodied expressions of ontological and relational life-affirming values. These values have been used as explanatory principles in the explanations of individuals of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings.

## **5. Next Steps**

We are hopeful that we can draw on what we, and others, have learned in trying to bring people into the ARNA 2015 and 2017 conferences in bringing people together to create a knowledge democracy. We are continuing to research our practice and improve it to express our embodied values of knowledge democracy and participation. Our intention is to contribute to reconciling diverse knowledges that may form a richer ecology of knowledges where different knowledges can be generated and shared.

We intend to bring the voices of participants from the 2015 Town Hall into the final paper of the proceedings to provide data as evidence of the growth of the evidential base of the embodied knowledge of living-theorists around the globe. In addition, Jack hopes to engage participants in his workshop on June 12th in Cartagena in the process of Living Theory research; they would go through the process of bringing accounts to a validation group with the purpose of strengthening this paper.

In addition, we intend to continue writing and supporting Living Theorists around the globe to contribute to a global community dedicated to the flourishing of humanity and an ecology of knowledges.

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