

Democracies Joining Hands in the Here and Now

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In the Introduction, James Tully foregrounds the horrendous inequalities of life chances that lie at the basis of the multiple crises humanity is facing. As the volume has progressed, the project of “democratizing democracy” that brought all of the contributors together has emerged as a response. It has become clear that the volume is not defining one family of democracy in contrast and competition with other forms of democracy.¹ Rather, it is a book about the “eco-social-democratic footprint of every step one takes alone or with others.”² In this sense, it attempts to describe how different types of democracy – state, Indigenous, international, grassroots, and Gaia democracies – are in practice woven together in healthy and virtuous ways that provide paths past the ecosocial crises we face.

In the spirit of the Cedar Trees Institute (CTI) gift–gratitude–reciprocity worldview, I aim to further amplify the voices that participated in both the conference and the edited volume, in order to reveal the numerous ways in which, in practice, different forms of democracy are woven together in democratizing ways.³ Through their chapters, the contributors crystalize the myriad of ways in which citizens of representative democracies across the globe have become witnesses to and participants in the democratic dying of their liberal democracies.⁴ Although this is without a doubt a point of deep concern amongst the contributors, through their exchanges we get a clear idea of how ever more citizens are also contesting nondemocratically constructed relationships with their

¹ See Tully, Introduction.

² James Tully, email correspondence with author, November 10, 2020.

³ The Cedar Trees Institute (CTI) is home to pioneering engaged research and citizenship at the nexus of the local and the global, of practice and theory. The Institute is rooted in a nonviolent integral ethics that guides all aspects of research, education and public engagement.

⁴ “Democracies are dying democratically” is an expression used by Boaventura de Sousa Santos to explain phenomena like the presidency of Donald Trump in the United States and Jair Bolsonaro’s presidency of Brazil. See Val Napoleon, Chapter 11, this volume and Boaventura’s own chapter (5) in this volume for a more in-depth understanding of what is meant by this idea.

governors. We can see how citizens across the planet are gaining awareness of their contributions to and responsibilities toward dedemocratization processes. At the same time, growing numbers of people are colearning to weave different democratic traditions together in ways that move away from power-over, governor-governed relationships and experiment with new, power-with, citizen-to-citizen relations as they democratize their democracies from below. It is perhaps because of this that we might be reaching a tipping point regarding the way in which citizens understand their position vis-à-vis each other and those that govern different aspects of their lives. We see this shift as the common thread uniting various attempts to democratize democratic practice, and we see this volume as a contribution in that general direction.

This volume is therefore a response to the ways ideology, dogma and disciplining thwart aspectual seeing and thinking, trapping us in familiar ideas and making untangling ourselves from the vicious processes that are facilitating the current conjuncture an arduous and challenging task. Instead, the fellows and friends of the CTI respond by trying to use the power of dialogue to open up new ways of seeing and acting democratically. In so doing, they model an answer to one of the most important questions of our time: How do we relate with each other and with all other living beings democratically? Through dialogue, the authors in this volume are themselves enacting democratizing processes and thereby exploring new possibilities for democracy moving forward. The volume begins a conversation about how types of democracy join hands or fail to do so, opening up a new integrated field of study of democratic theory and practice that includes diverse types of democracy and ways of studying these types and their interconnections locally and globally. This is the primary motivation for this volume and the workshop and conference that preceded it.

A reading of the chapters in the volume as a multilogue among types of democracy reveals how, although liberal representative democracy is in crisis, many types of democracies are alive, even experiencing a resurgence. Their experiences, practices and possibilities are becoming more accessible to growing numbers of people. This multilogue between democratic traditions also reveals that many of the problems of liberal representative democracy that plague and limit our imaginaries of what it means to be democratic stem from the tendency to limit discussions of democracy to its representative liberal form. In fact, as the volume argues, the crisis of democracy is partly caused by not seeing the field of democracy in the broadened and (potentially) integrated way in which the volume presents it. Unless we are able to understand the field of democracy in an integrated manner, we will fail to act democratically within it in integrated ways.

At present, most theorists, scientists and citizens focus on their own type of democracy. Most often, their focus ignores, isolates or opposes other types of democracies and their interconnections. In contrast, we from the CTI aim to use dialogue to generate transformative cycles of democratic succession, transition and transformation. We refer to this as 'democracy here and now' and 'democratic democratization'. It is through deep listening and dialogues of reciprocal learning

between and across types of democracies that we can better understand how to coordinate and democratize our struggles for democracy through democratic means.

LOOKING BACK

Back in March of 2019, when we held our workshop and conference in Victoria, the world was experiencing a multiplicity of crises that already seemed to be reaching their respective tipping points. Income inequality, ecological crisis and political repression had already triggered unprecedented mass mobilizations around the world. One year later, the Covid-19 pandemic led governments across the globe to make unprecedented transformations in the way we organize and interact, using the crisis to reinforce governor–governed relations through a serious planetary reduction or suspension of civil rights; a growing tendency toward expert-led, top-down, governance; and a renewed suppression and demonization of popular democratic contestation. At a time like this, it is more important than ever to remain vigilant, critical and dialogical. We must avoid falling into the trap of letting ‘institutional experts’ determine our fate without us having a say. We must hold firm in our faith that complex problems can be solved and crises managed in genuinely democratic ways. Failing to do so could lead to even weaker formal democratic institutions of representation, an ever-increasing pauperization of most humans and an accelerated depletion of all life on earth.

Our workshop, and the volume it birthed, is a testament to our faith in our ability to tackle these complex and critically important topics in democratic ways. In the workshop we tried to imagine, at least in our person-to-person conversations, that we were equal democrats exploring how we could work well together without subordination, assimilation or recolonization. Our dialogue circles therefore engaged with a double movement, both engaging in a genealogical visualization of Western imperialism while also asking ourselves how we can now study and learn from the people and peoples who are marginalized by this tradition.

To have a multilogue of this kind is very difficult for everybody involved; it requires getting the tone right as the conversation moves around from one perspective to another. Sometimes, a participant’s epistemology is to look away as much as possible from Western concepts.⁵ Often there is no shared

⁵ Here I am thinking of Peyman Vahabzadeh, who, in the context of our dialogue circle, presented the figure of the refugee as a theoretical construct that can help the mental rethinking of democracy. According to Vahabzadeh, looking from the angle of such a radically heterogeneous inassimilable figure can help us rethink radically our present condition and go beyond it. Adding a metaphor from his hiking experiences at night, he explains how hiking in the dark one learns that sometimes the best way to actually find your path is not to look at the path but to look away: “If you look at the tree the path shines on the corner of your eye. Following from this, my epistemology is looking as much as I can away from Western concepts although my training has been in the Western tradition.” Democracy and its Futures workshop and conference, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC March 21–22, 2019.

diagnosis of what the issues are: “What are the symptoms and what are the causes?”⁶ At times, people are wondering who the patient is.⁷ Nevertheless, in the process of reciprocal learning we expand the field of what counts as democracy. By deparochializing democracy, representative institutions appear as one amongst many modalities of democracy. At the same time, such a move also helps us to think about the planet as being full of types of democratic activities and practices, networks and so on that may give us more avenues of research or/and more spaces of hope where we engage with people who are regenerating democratic relations amongst themselves.

In a certain sense, our multilogue has been an experiment in joining hands.⁸ A space in which lateral relationships count more than hierarchical ones. As a consequence, an underlying thread in our conversation has been a discussion regarding horizontality and verticality in politics and other social relationships. For Fonna Forman, such a language helps with the critique of institutions that should not be behaving as vertically as they do.⁹ Robin Celikates points out that some of the institutions that need to be transformed struggle to change direction; they seem to have a gravitational pull toward verticality built into them.¹⁰ Christina Gray suggests that we think of vertical and horizontal alignments symbolically as a concentric circle with no beginning and no end and in which you can be in a different position at different times.¹¹ For Heidi Stark, the problem might not necessarily be with whether some things are vertical or horizontal, but the way in which the verticality is being constructed.¹²

As David Owen highlights, there are plenty of examples in the world in which we live where functions are sent up a level without authority being sent up a level.¹³

⁶ David Owen during our first dialogue circle at the Workshop.

⁷ Anoush Terjanan during our first dialogue circle at the Workshop. Terjanan participated in our conference but could not contribute a chapter to this volume.

⁸ During the workshop’s first dialogue circle, Jeanne Morefield referred to joining hands as “the James Tully practice” and described it as the pincer move that deconstructs and reconstructs at the same time.

⁹ Fonna Forman during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop. Forman points to the number of universities that are relating to communities that are struggling and are doing so vertically instead of horizontally.

¹⁰ Robin Celikates during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the workshop. Celikates highlights the importance of being aware of the limits of trying to make vertical institutions more horizontal. As he puts it, “one of the things about the institution is that in the end it is almost always stronger than the individuals that try to change it.”

¹¹ Christina Gray during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop.

¹² Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop. Stark describes vertical relationships in which someone might be transferring up particular responsibilities or obligations but not necessarily have to carry them out or exercise them in coercive ways. Stark participated in our conference but could not contribute a chapter to this volume.

¹³ David Owen during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop. Owen points to most global regimes and diverse federalism as examples where horizontality shifts into verticality while the authority remains at the horizontal level. He also refers to Arendt’s sparse

Chantal Mouffe sees the tendency among certain horizontal movements to refuse any form of leadership – because of the fact that they understand verticality as necessarily authoritarian – as problematic.¹⁴ Jeanne Morefield, although inclined toward horizontal modes of organizing, questions how its slow temporality can grow in the context of urgency.¹⁵ In response to this challenge regarding the efficiency of horizontality in times of big decisions and great perils, Keith Cherry reflects on the climate crisis and how much of the argument against horizontality in that context emphasizes that the problem is so large that only the state is large enough to take the dramatic action needed. According to Cherry, those who follow this line of argument are hypnotized by the abstract but seldom actual potential capacity of states to tackle climate change, when in fact the actual bulk of the action is happening in more horizontal citizen-led spaces.¹⁶

What crystalizes through my deep engagement with the horizontal 15M movement of 2011 in Spain is that those engaging with each other horizontally to deal with urgent crises are making a clear distinction between having a sense of urgency and being in a rush.¹⁷ The move to verticality they see as rushed, whereas their horizontality is understood as a democratic response to the urgency. As Cherry points out, it is not verticality per se that they are critiquing, but the fact that in the rush of crisis leadership is not distributed randomly but instead reveals a consistent elite with a vested interest in maintaining and deepening both verticality and the crises that sustain it.¹⁸

Although verticality and horizontality were ever-present during our conference conversations, other themes acquired prominence as the multilogue advanced. John Borrows emphasized the importance of listening and learning to listen more and more deeply.¹⁹ Heidi Stark pointed to Indigenous communities as a learning ground from which to better understand how different nations live together.²⁰ Stark asked us to broaden our imagining of a real recognition of

speculations on the council system and the early days of the Russian Revolution and the Soviets as examples where authority is mediated at various levels but always based at the bottom.

¹⁴ Chantal Mouffe during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop. For Mouffe, a leader can be the symbol of common affects and, in that sense, she thinks it plays an important role in political struggles.

¹⁵ Jeanne Morefield during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop.

¹⁶ Keith Cherry during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop. As Cherry puts it, when having to choose between an enormous but potential capacity (the state) or a very small but actual capacity (social movements), he sides with the small but actual. For him the presumption that vertical organizations are necessarily more efficacious shows a lack of actual engagement with horizontality.

¹⁷ See Pablo Ouziel, *Democracy Here and Now: The Exemplary Case of Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022).

¹⁸ Keith Cherry during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop.

¹⁹ John Borrows at the public discussion of the Workshop. As Borrows puts it: “How do I listen more in quiet, when political life and activism and the things that I am concerned about seem to point all in other directions.”

²⁰ Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiiik Stark at the public discussion of the workshop.

Indigenous nationhood and governance that need not be a threat to the state but reconfigures it in innovative ways.

For Johnny Mack, the deep kind of pluralism experienced during the workshop and conference is not of the kind that presumes the rigid structures that we associate with liberal democratic institutions. Instead as he describes it, it presumes an agency that humans have to act outside of such rigidity.²¹ As Mack puts it, the workshop's dialogical gift–gratitude–reciprocity approach to democracy resonates with how many Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island turn to multiple spaces that have to do with the kinds of relationships that communities form with the land and the lifeways they find on it. As Mack emphasizes, when relating with their kin, Indigenous peoples do not talk about democracies but talk instead about families and relationships through that register.²² These kinds of kincentric relations inspire what we refer to as “joining hands,” and both the conference and this volume are learning-from and learning-with such kinship relationships.

JOINING HANDS HERE AND NOW

One important theme of this volume is that if we have a better grasp of ‘the entangled, crisscrossing and overlapping relationships’ that exist today amongst various forms of democracy, we will have better chances for coordination and cooperation amongst them as the multiplicity of crises humanity is generating, contributing to and facing intensify.²³ When these relationships are democratic from the point of view of all participants, we can think of them as a way of “joining hands” across democratic traditions: each participant stands in their own concepts of democracy, yet together they form linkages which allow for shared struggles and endeavors without homogenizing or hierarchicalizing. If we take joining hands seriously, its processes of cooperation and contestation by means of critical democratic dialogue reveal to us the actuality of a ‘participatory democratic countermodernity’ in the ‘here and now’. Joining hands relationships are the actual living expression in the here and now of Peter Kropotkin’s mutual aid. As Kropotkin pointed out, it is these relationships that have kept human communities from extinction against all

²¹ Johnny Mack at the public discussion of the Workshop.

²² *Ibid.* In contrast to the dialogical and horizontal nature of the workshop, Mack contrasts the current postpolitical conjuncture as one in which Indigenous Peoples in Canada have no space where they have “the authority to make law where there isn’t already law.” As he puts it, the question is whether it is provincial or federal, so what ends up happening is that lawyers do not look to the people to decide what is lawful and meaningful relative to the land, but instead look to federal and provincial regulatory regimes and work to draft laws in a way that harmonizes with them so as to not trigger a conflict. His concern is that the different treaties and the regulatory regimes they put in place, together with the way of understanding law and regulation relating to territory that they represent, will come to displace the other, deeper democratic foundation that Indigenous peoples inherit from their ancestors.

²³ Tully, Introduction.

odds as they have struggled over the centuries (and continue to struggle) to overcome dominant vicious power-over systems of subordination and control.²⁴

In my work with the 15M movement in Spain, I disclose six distinct types of joining hands relationships between civil citizens (those seeking to reform and improve existing institutions within their democracies) and civic citizens (those seeking to broaden their traditions by exercising democratic cogovernance in new ways, beyond existing institutions).²⁵ I see these six distinct types of joining hands relationships that I witnessed working *within* 15M also operating *within* the chapters of this volume. Table 20.1 presents the six joining hands relationships as I have learned-with them in discussions with both 15M and the contributors to this volume.

These six ways of joining hands and the different ways in which they are exemplified by the previous chapters present us with a Banyan tree of “democratizing demoarchies,” or efforts to reform low-intensity democratic institutions, while serving to excavate long-standing modes of direct democracy that are often overlooked in mainstream political imaginaries.²⁶

What the chapters in the volume are showing is not a joining of hands of the middle-class population with their middle-class legislators. If, for example, one considers what Forman explains in Chapter 8, what one sees are exemplary cases of the precariat self-organizing and joining hands across diverse forms of

TABLE 20.1 *Six distinct types of joining hands relationships*²⁷

JH1	civic citizens joining hands with each other
JH2	civil citizens joining hands with each other
JH3	civic and civil citizens joining hands
JH4	civic citizens work with representative governments
JH5	civil citizens work with representative governments
JH6	civic-civil citizens are joining hands with each other in order to influence governments

²⁴ Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006).

²⁵ When thinking of “joining hands,” I have in mind a dynamic process rather than a steady state through which communities of practice relate with supporters and potential supporters outside of their particular communities of practice.

²⁶ I am thinking of the Banyan tree, with its innumerable interrelated branches, in the manner that Mahatma Gandhi thought about it – that is, with joining hands relationships as “the parent trunk from which innumerable branches shoot out.” See James Tully, “Integral Nonviolence,” in Richard B. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), xxix. 15M is a classic case of this integral approach at joining hands, therefore it is not surprising that the six distinct types of joining hands relationships were thought about in dialogue with those being 15M in Spain.

²⁷ The table is borrowed from Ouziel, *Democracy Here and Now*.

precarious existence. It is true that often when the precariat try to join hands with established parties, they are rapidly sidelined by middle-class left parties worldwide, or are used instrumentally, as we have seen in the case of the United States with the Democratic Party or in Spain with party-movement Podemos. Nevertheless, as the 15M mantra says, *vamos lentos porque vamos lejos* (we go ever so slowly because we are going on forever). Following from this, with patience and through ever-growing concentric circles of critical democratic dialogue, democratic families can continue their ongoing processes of democratizing democracy.

If we look at Anthony Laden's chapter, he describes democratic politics as an ongoing activity with no ending as long as "people remain committed to continue working out together how to live together."²⁸ In this manner, the chapter mostly presents the basic features of civic-to-civic joining hands relationships (JH1) oriented around sustainability conditions. Although addressed to civil citizens, it encourages them to think about democratic participation in the civic sense while thinking about the sustainability crisis (JH3).

Owen's chapter reminds us of the importance of democratic agency – 'freedoms of and in participation, and with fellow citizens'.²⁹ At the same time, it also highlights the importance of seeing democratic struggles as bifocal – that is, as consisting of both a focus on defending, securing and extending rights (JH2, JH5), and on the prefigurative civic enactment of alternative civil orders (JH1, JH3, JH4, JH6).³⁰ Throughout the chapter, Owen clearly contrasts civil and civic modes of citizenship. Nevertheless, as the chapter progresses he argues for civic modes of engagement as the better way to join hands with nonmembers of the civil order, such as immigrants and refugees (JH1). What he reveals is how civic citizens can offer this kind of joining hands relationship to refugees, and thus enable them to present their demands and be listened to.

Lasse Thomassen's chapter invites us to think about democracy as a question to be pressed. He sees democracy as both solution and experiment and reminds us that when thinking about what democracy is, since there is no ultimate answer we are inevitably left with a plurality of answers.³¹ Thomassen is describing a feature of all forms of democratic citizenship – provisionality. Nevertheless, this feature of democracy is clearly a civic property in the sense of deparochializing one's own viewpoint, being open to the views of others and acknowledging the nonfinality of any agreement. The provisionality is what makes possible all six joining hands relationships mentioned above (JH1, JH2, JH3, JH4, JH5, JH6).

Oliver Schmidtke's chapter emphasizes how community and civic engagement nurture each other and are dependent on each other in order to be sustainable. His main concern is that unless channels for citizens to have a say remain open and effective, the simplistic message of right populist movements and parties will continue to gain ground as political struggles intensify.

²⁸ Laden, Chapter 1. ²⁹ Owen, Chapter 2. ³⁰ Ibid. ³¹ Thomassen, Chapter 3.

In essence, what Schmidtke is writing about are the failures of civil-oriented political demoarchic parties that are losing touch with civic communities of participatory democracy. Rightly, he is blaming these parties for the present crisis for failing to join hands in respectful ways. In this piece, Schmidtke revives an old German tradition called “associationalism” that began in the 1830s (JH4, JH5, JH6).

In his chapter, Boaventura de Sousa Santos is mainly concerned with the fact that civil demoarchy is in essence open to capture by authoritarian movements.³² He is adamant that demoarchy is currently moving in such a direction. It is true that he does not write much about alternatives in this text, except by highlighting mass civil-oriented movements on the left. Nevertheless, in his other writings de Sousa Santos is emphatic about the importance of civic Gaia participatory democracy on the ground and coordinating through platforms such as the World Social Forum 2.0 at a planetary level to promote alter-glocal change (JH1, JH3, JH4, JH6).

In Chapter 6, Mouffe speaks about the current conjuncture in Western Europe, inscribing herself in it and trying to understand it in order to intervene. She acknowledges there is much to learn from our discussions in Victoria on civic and civil citizens, horizontality and verticality and joining hands, and that much can be learned from the struggles of Indigenous peoples in Turtle Island. Nevertheless, from her viewpoint, what is most important in the here and now is to intervene in order to impede the development of more oppressive and authoritarian regimes across the globe.³³ Ultimately, Mouffe is asking all sorts of participatory civic democrats to join hands with party-civil citizens in order to gain political power in representative governments. That is,

³² We know that the term “democracy” is made up of the two Greek terms: *demos*, meaning the people who come together and govern themselves; and *kratos*, meaning power. This means that democracy is a form of self-government in which the people themselves exercise power. That is, they reason together, they exercise power together and they agree and/or disagree together. Democracy is not, therefore, a representative system. As Tully points out, democracy was a special form of government even in Athens, and Athenian theorists of democracy contrasted it with other forms of government where some segment of the population ruled over the other, such as, for example, *monarchy* or *oligarchy* (using the term *archy*, which means rule). These are forms of rule where one segment of the population rules over others, whether it is a minority or a majority or a system like the one we have in representative democracies today. These forms of rule are not democratic in the original sense of the term. In representative democracies today, it is not “we the people” who exercise power, but through elections we pass it on to our representatives who then rule over us. What we have is a system that is really, from the original meaning of the term democracy, antidemocratic. Following from this, and in alignment with Tully, I find the term “demoarchy” more accurate when speaking about what is commonly referred to as representative democracy today. Instead of people exercising power together (democracy), what we have is people who come together and allow the differentiation of society into those who are ruled and those who rule (demoarchy). James Tully, “What Are the Biggest Challenges Democracy Is Facing Today?” (lecture, Constitutionalism in the Age of Populism, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, March 6–8, 2020), www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvG-oQDduFw.

³³ Chantal Mouffe during our first dialogue circle at the Workshop.

she enjoins civic citizens to join hands with civil citizens in parties and movements (JH3, JH6). She encourages civic citizens to remain civic in their own activities (JH1), but encourages them to help their civil fellows capture and transform the institutions of the state.

Morefield approaches both political problems and dialogue with humility and openness. Without a doubt, she is angry at the closures that she sees and wants to bust them open. Yet, she quickly reminds herself about the need for generosity in her analysis. As she puts it, the liberal societies that are settler colonial states and imperial states need to stop the “constant preening in the mirror without looking in the mirror.”³⁴ According to Morefield, this unseeing allows for exclusion, domination and dispossession to continue while citizens still imagine themselves to be living in liberal democracies.³⁵ Morefield is promoting a reflection that does not look away but looks at the past in order to reconceive a different kind of democratic practice in the future. What Morefield is doing is to describe the hegemony of imperial political relationships and top-down politics of liberalism and authoritarianism, and she is calling for civic, participatory democracy from below, around solidarity and compassion. She encourages civic citizens to join hands with each other (JH1).

Celikates argues that democracies that are now in crisis have actually been structurally in an enduring crisis for many excluded population groups. These include groups that have been colonized, marginalized, assimilated and/or subjected to forms of genocide, cultural or physical, by those states whose crises of democracy we today lament.³⁶ As Celikates puts it, “the good old days that some seem to be longing for when diagnosing the crisis of democracy have not been so good for quite a lot of people and peoples.”³⁷ Following from this, and learning with Hannah Arendt, Celikates presents a substantive argument for reconceiving revolution in a tighter relationship to actual existing practices of democracy. Endorsing Arendt’s conception of revolution as “begin something new,” he addresses self-reflexive and self-limiting notions of revolution while embracing a logic of the political that moves “beyond and against hegemony” while also moving “beyond and against the borders of a world divided along state lines.” He seeks to construct a new concept of revolution that does not subordinate ‘here and now democracy’ to some future project, but, rather, grounds revolution in democracy here and now (JH1, JH2, JH3, JH6).³⁸

In both the conference and in her chapter, Forman’s emphasis is on learning to do better as academics by listening better. For Forman, researchers can contribute to addressing specific crises by learning horizontal practices of

³⁴ Jeanne Morefield during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Robin Celikates during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop.

³⁷ *Ibid.* ³⁸ Celikates, Chapter 10.

engagement with members of affected communities. What she advocates for is the cocreation of spaces in which community members and researchers assemble as partners to share knowledges and learn-with one another how to coproduce new knowledge together.³⁹ Practicing a ‘political theory in solidarity with border communities’, Forman gives us an astonishing account of civic, democratic, Gaia citizenship among local, poor, oppressed US and Mexican citizens who organize into *demoi* both to improve their own lives and neighborhoods, and to contest the power-over structures of the dominant societies.⁴⁰ What is particularly interesting about her work is that it demonstrates the *glocal* element of the struggle as local communities scale-up globally their contestation and constructive programs (JH1, JH2, JH3, JH4, JH5, JH6).

Rebeccah Nelems’ ‘radical copresence’ and her ‘canopies of understanding’ lay the foundation for a deeper understanding of how coexisting yet distinct worldviews ‘intra-actively’ relate to one another through inter-beingness.⁴¹ In her pluriverse of democratizing practices one experiences the unsettling of Western thought. What the chapter is doing is contrasting Gaia and demoarchic citizenship and then showing how Gaia citizens are able to join hands with demoarchic citizens. Through this interaction, she sees Gaia citizens as able to show demoarchic citizens the limitations and destructiveness of their own form of citizenship. The chapter is an invitation for demoarchic citizens to join hands with a larger and more pluralistic Gaia citizenship and its way of seeing the world we are in as plain members and citizens of Gaia (JH3, JH6).

Val Napoleon’s contribution, both during the conference and in her chapter, points to what different kinds of democracies and different kinds of citizenship look like when there are no hierarchical state organizations maintaining systems of law and their respective institutions of enforcement. What she highlights is that, when this is the case, how one understands oneself and one’s obligations in that legal order is very different.⁴² Therefore, what we must do as scholars is to learn by asking critical questions about such systems without treating them as cultural artifacts. Following from this, she describes Gitksan democracy as an example of intense democracy, and explains how colonial legislation is attempting to murder it ‘democratically’.⁴³ As an alternative to learn from and with, Napoleon discusses how two Indigenous peoples are joining hands across deep differences and resolving conflicts. I am hesitant to use my own language of description to explain what it is that these Indigenous communities are doing, because Napoleon’s emphasis is always on keeping descriptions of what is going on in “their own terms.” While I see many connections to the diverse ways of joining hands I am describing, I also honor that translating

³⁹ Ibid. ⁴⁰ Forman, Chapter 8. ⁴¹ Nelems, Chapter 9.

⁴² Val Napoleon during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop.

⁴³ Napoleon, Chapter 11.

Gitxsan practices into my own language would act along the lines of the colonial logic she is trying to challenge in her writing.

Josh Nichols, in his usual style, throws cold water on any democratic claims made by the Canadian state in regards to its relationship to Indigenous peoples. For Nichols, it is clear that in Canada Indigenous peoples “have been subjected to sovereign power without any claim to actual representative accountability.”⁴⁴ What he seeks to do is to explain two types of membership in different *demoi*: Indigenous and Settler. He shows how historically these types of membership have failed to join hands, and suggests that in order to resolve this we need to study the history of these two conflicting forms of citizenship so that new ways of joining hands between them as equals can take place (JH1, JH2, JH3, JH4, JH5, JH6).

Stacie Swain successfully draws on a lot of complex recent theory to compose her own appropriate language of description of what is going on in the three stories she tells in Chapter 13. She argues that non-Indigenous allies can become democratic citizens of shared *demoi* by engaging with Indigenous democratic organizations that are themselves grounded in a normativity of gift–gratitude–reciprocity ecosocial relationships. This is how non-Indigenous subjects become active ethical responsible agents. This is what the Laurier Memorial calls being a ‘good guest’.⁴⁵ Her chapter is a beautiful example of participatory democratic civic and Gaia citizens forming a *demos* among themselves and then joining hands with, and under the authority of, the First Nation with whom they are cogenerating relations of solidarity (JH1, JH4).

Phil Henderson’s chapter points to how those of us living through the last days of the Holocene can struggle against the “cannibalistic urges of empire.”⁴⁶ Learning from and with grassroots political movements, he advocates for an expanded and expansive view of the political “in which power and authority are not mediated through logics of hegemony/counter-hegemony.”⁴⁷ He highlights that this type of grassroots politics draws its strength from what it is defending and producing rather than from what it seeks to abolish. Henderson’s chapter compliments Swain’s chapter closely, focusing on the Canadian state’s blockage of Swain’s types of joining hands relationships (JH1, JH4, JH6).

Jeremy Webber’s chapter explores the diverse practices that generate and sustain democratic community by putting Gitxsan and Canadian practices of citizenship and self-determination in dialogue. He carefully describes how the institutions and practices of Gitxsan governance allow participants to join hands with others across difference and over time. Webber then shows how

⁴⁴ Nichols, Chapter 12.

⁴⁵ Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier, Premier of the Dominion of Canada from the Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan and Couteau Tribes of British Columbia presented at Kamloops, BC, August 25, 1910, www.skeetchestn.ca/files/documents/Governance/memorialtosirwilfredlaurier1910.pdf.

⁴⁶ Henderson, Chapter 14. ⁴⁷ Ibid.

these processes actively create and sustain the foundations of communal self-determination. Turning to the present crises in liberal practices of citizenship and community, he shows what non-Indigenous citizens of representative democracies can learn from Gitxsan governance about sustainable, engaged democratic praxis. In so doing, Webber shows how the engaged, contested and never-finished process of joining hands is not merely something that different democratic traditions can choose to do; rather, it represents the very process through which democracy is constituted and maintained, both between traditions and within them (JH2, JH3, JH5, JH6).

In his chapter David Held asks us to look at the intersection of the national and international in order to identify what is causing the retreat to nationalism and authoritarianism.⁴⁸ According to Held, it is also in this space that one sees what is generating the multiple threats to globalization that our modern societies are experiencing. His chapter shows how the failure of these power-over systems to join hands is causing the global gridlock we are enduring. As he argues, the inability of national and international institutions to enact power-with forms of joining hands and only knowing how to practice power-over/under forms of joining hands has spiraled our societies into the reproduction of vicious cycles which are deepening the multifaceted crises. Held does think that there is a solution to be found in the reform of these institutions, yet, at the same time, his chapter leaves open the possibility that a deeper transformation is necessary (JH4, JH5, JH6).

Antje Wiener invites us to be less shy about broadening our imaginary in regards to the type of institutional change that is possible. As she points out, often the crises our societies face are responded to by filling the institutions that are already there with new meaning.⁴⁹ Yet, as she puts it, sometimes we need different institutions. We need to think more boldly and rethink institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union. Inviting us and all affected and/or responsible governance institutions to enter into much needed dialogues of reciprocal learning, she is advocating for an ‘ontology of societal multiplicity’.⁵⁰ The chapter describes international democratic practices of both civic and civil citizens while inviting us to seek joining hands with the powers-that-be so that changes to the status quo can be negotiated (JH1, JH2, JH3, JH4, JH5, JH6).

Keith Cherry’s chapter addresses different ways of joining hands. Alongside common federal and co-decision practices, Cherry introduces what he calls “conditional authority” as a means of democratizing relationships between democratic traditions. He makes distinctions between what he describes as the “mutual” and “asymmetrical” varieties of such authority. The chapter relates nicely to a number of the other chapters. In particular, it helps to

⁴⁸ Held, Chapter 16.

⁴⁹ Antje Wiener during our second dialogue circle with graduate students at the Workshop.

⁵⁰ Wiener, Chapter 17.

connect western legal pluralism chapters with Indigenous pluralism and Indigenous-Western pluralism chapters, showing how both settings have embraced diverse practices of conditional authority. Cherry's is a complex account of joining hands across different types of governments and, within them, their different types of citizenship (civic, civil, Indigenous). The result of these attempts at joining hands (legal pluralism) generates a new, more democratic form of citizenship among the participants that is cogenerated as a result of their participation and the change it induces in their understanding of self and other (JH1, JH2, JH3, JH4, JH5, JH6).

Tully in his usual mode, acknowledges the vicious social systems that we inhabit and are reproducing, but reminds us of the fact that we are able to think and 'act otherwise'.⁵¹ He explains how demoarchy and capitalism are destroying the planet and causing the democratic crisis we are facing. Then, he tries to persuade demoarchic citizens to reorient themselves, learn-with, and join hands with Gaia democratic citizens. According to Tully, Gaia democratic citizens can inspire demoarchy citizens through exemplarity in their constructive programs (countermodernities) and through their negotiation and reconciliation dialogues (Satyagraha contestation). That is, dialogues that are always open to revision and starting anew in a circular way. For Tully, this is the only way forward because of the relation between means and ends: democratization must be carried out by democratic means – something that Satyagraha does by always treating the demoarchic opponent as already a democratic citizen and member of the "we" (never as an "other").

MOVING FORWARD IN THE HERE AND NOW

All of these modes of being democratic, and their joining hands intra-actions, constitute the 'democratic permaculture' of the present and the ground of a sustainable future. Learning-with the five families of democracies outlined in the Introduction and disclosed throughout the chapters, the democratic dying of democracy can be avoided. The current conjunctures that democracies across the planet need to respond to call for an extraordinary effort by all affected. We all need to look beyond our own family of democracy and embrace a 'radical copresence' with other democratic families. We need a democratic ethos that sustains all democracies. Such an ethos requires the kind of virtues, capabilities and skill sets presented by the contributors. We hope, therefore, that it adds to the regeneration of democracy as we collectively begin the process of reversing its hollowing out. We have not presented an abstract, theoretical and future-oriented account of some utopian 'democracy-to-come', but have focused instead on disclosing the actual and living pluriverse of democracies interbeing in the here and now.

⁵¹ Tully, Chapter 19.

As the volume comes to an end, still in the midst of a global pandemic, we are beginning to see how a post-Trump world is far from being a virtuous one. Much work is still needed, and we hope this volume can help orient and set the tone by offering a multiplicity of ways in which we can relate to ourselves and others. Enacting democratic relationships with one another requires practices of care of the self to sustain us in our ability to continue to do so. By inviting all readers into this pluriverse of democracy we are welcoming you into a space of cocaring, colearning and cotransformation.