

# THE 3D WISE DEMOCRACY MODEL

One way to explore democracy is through the lenses of power, participation, and the intelligence and wisdom of its outcomes. These dimensions of democracy are always present to some degree, and each can be improved.

The power dimension includes how things are decided and implemented. The participation dimension covers who is included in deciding and implementing policy and what perspectives are welcomed in the process. The intelligence and wisdom dimension deals with the quality of the resulting outcomes. The wiser we are collectively, the more factors we take into account to generate broad long-term benefit.

The wise democracy approach seeks to enhance all these dimensions in an integrated way. Ideally, all politics and governance would be effective, participatory, and wise.

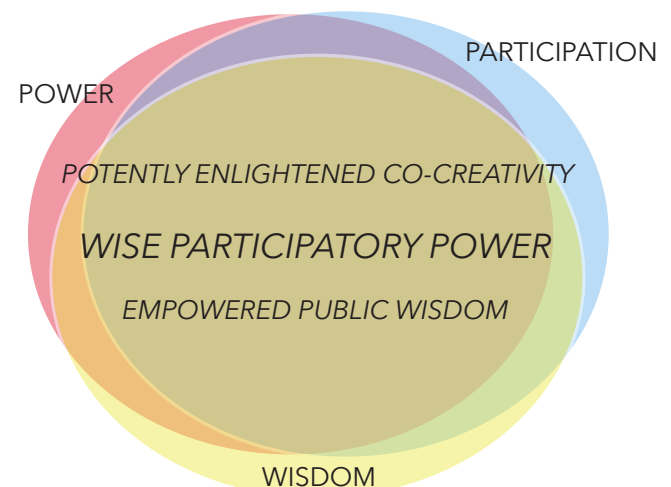
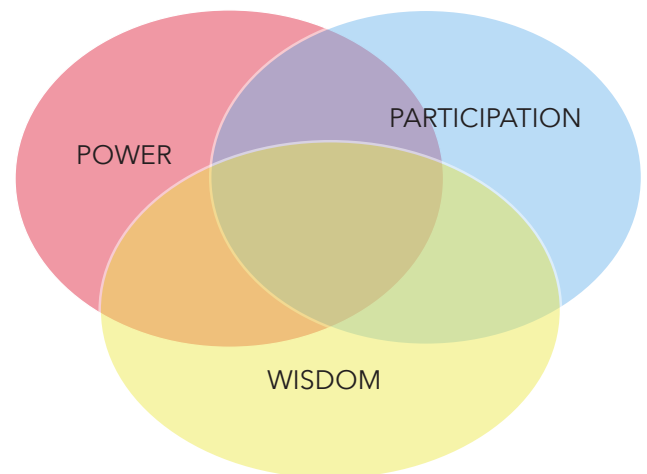
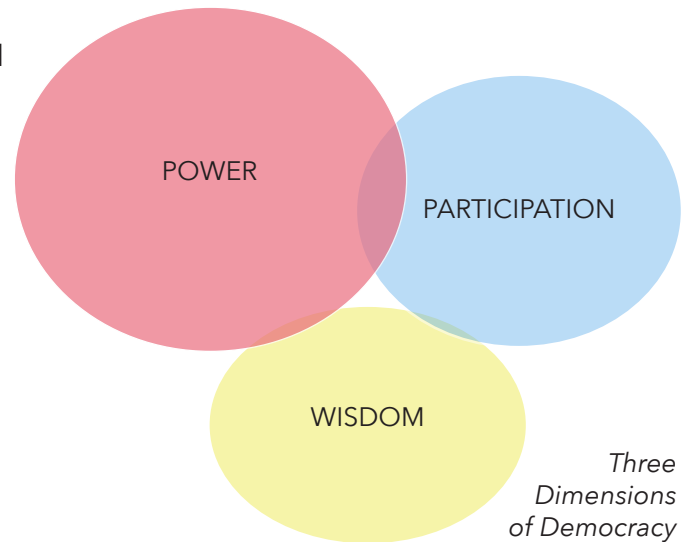
The top set of overlapping ovals illustrated to the right - a Venn diagram - attempts to suggest the relative roles of these dimensions as they exist in our current quasi-democratic systems. Power dominates and there is little overlap among the dimensions and precious little resulting wisdom. The second illustration represents the developmental trajectory proposed by the wise democracy approach: Here we find more balance among the three dimensions and more overlap between them - more participatory power, more collectively generated wisdom, more wise exercise of power, etc.

In the final illustration - an envisioned truly wise democracy - the three dimensions would be both larger and virtually congruent. We would have a lot of powerful public wisdom and wise participatory power at work in our public affairs.

So we can productively ask what democracy would look like

- if POWER were more wholesome, participatory and wise...
- if PARTICIPATION were more inclusive, wise and empowered... and
- if the outcomes of political activity arose from collective WISDOM that was more comprehensive, participatory and effective.

That is the challenge and mission of the wise democracy approach to political transformation.



# OVERVIEW OF THE PATTERNS

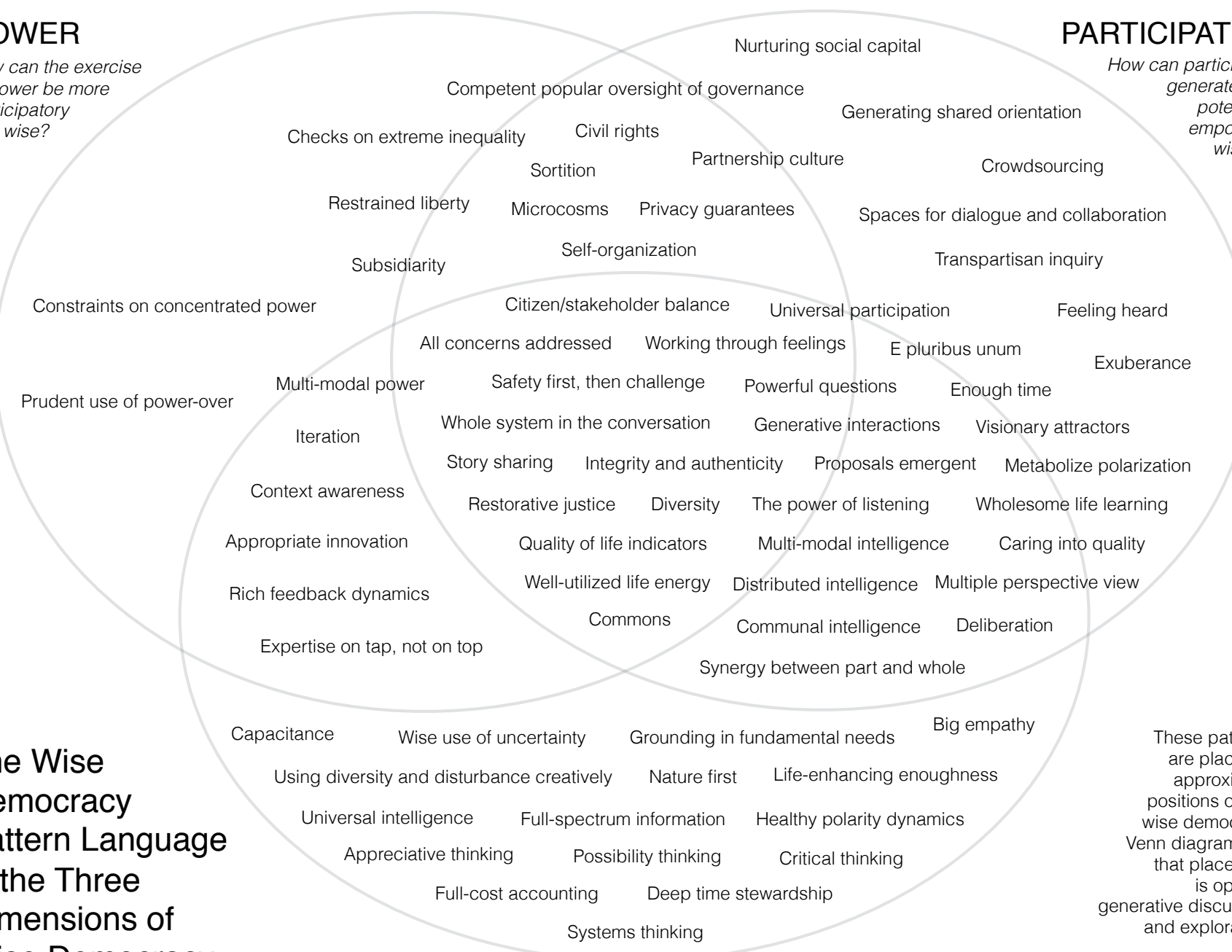
1. All Concerns Addressed
2. Appreciative Thinking
3. Appropriate Innovation
4. Big Empathy
5. Capacitance
6. Caring into Quality
7. Checks on Extreme Inequality
8. Citizen/Stakeholder Balance
9. Civil Rights
10. Commons
11. Communal Intelligence
12. Competent Popular Oversight of Governance
13. Constraints on Concentrated Power
14. Context Awareness
15. Critical Thinking
16. Crowdsourcing
17. Deep Time Stewardship
18. Deliberation
19. Distributed Intelligence
20. Diversity
21. E Pluribus Unum
22. Enough Time
23. Expertise on Tap (Not on Top)
24. Exuberance
25. Feeling Heard
26. Full Cost Accounting
27. Full Spectrum Information
28. Generating Shared Orientation
29. Generative Interactions
30. Grounding in Fundamental Needs
31. Healthy Polarity Dynamics
32. Integrity and Authenticity
33. Iteration
34. Life-Enhancing Enoughness
35. Metabolize Polarization
36. Microcosms
37. Multi-Modal Intelligence
38. Multi-Modal Power
39. Multiple Perspective View
40. Nature First
41. Nurturing Social Capital
42. Partnership Culture
43. Possibility Thinking
44. Power of Listening
45. Powerful Questions
46. Privacy Guarantees
47. Proposals Emergent
48. Prudent Use of Power Over
49. Quality of Life Indicators
50. Restorative Justice
51. Restrained Liberty
52. Rich Feedback Dynamics
53. Safety First, Then Challenge
54. Self-Organization
55. Sortition
56. Spaces for Dialogue and Collaboration
57. Story Sharing
58. Subsidiarity
59. Synergy Between Part and Whole
60. Systems Thinking
61. Transpartisan Inquiry
62. Universal Intelligence
63. Universal Participation
64. Using Diversity and Disturbance Creatively
65. Visionary Attractors
66. Well-Utilized Life Energy
67. Wholesome Life Learning
68. Whole System in the Conversation
69. Wise Use of Uncertainty
70. Working Through Feelings

# POWER

*How can the exercise of power be more participatory and wise?*

# PARTICIPATION

*How can participation generate more potent and empowered wisdom?*



## The Wise Democracy Pattern Language in the Three Dimensions of Wise Democracy

# WISDOM

*How can democratic outcomes be more truly wise, effective and participatory?*

These patterns are placed in approximate positions on the wise democracy Venn diagram, but that placement is open to generative discussion and exploration.

## PATTERN CATEGORIES – 1



### INTELLIGENCE FACTORS

Intelligence is how we maintain a semblance of understanding of and appropriate engagement with relevant realities and energies present in our complex, changing World. So tap into intelligence that is more than individual rationality. Work with any diverse cognitive capacities that can help us generate collective wisdom.



### GENERAL WISDOM-GENERATING FACTORS

Certain factors tap the energies of wholeness and are thus particularly vital as we delve deeply enough and widely enough into the living world to generate broad long-term benefit. So appreciate the role these factors play in wise democratic functioning and promote their discerning application to all social process and design.



### EXPLICIT SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS

Sustainability involves maintaining our existence and functionality. In environmental economics it is described as the capacity to meet current needs without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their needs. So pay special attention to our relationship to the ongoing wellbeing of our shared world in all that we do.



### POWER FACTORS

Power shapes whatever happens. It is the capacity to do, to influence, to create desired effects. Democracy, like all politics, organizes social power. So promote the wise power of the whole with nuanced, wholesome power dynamics that take seriously traditional democratic power principles while reaching beyond them for even greater benign potency.

2 Appreciative Thinking  
4 Big Empathy  
5 Capacitance  
11 Communal Intelligence  
14 Context Awareness  
15 Critical Thinking  
19 Distributed Intelligence  
37 Multi-Modal Intelligence  
43 Possibility Thinking  
60 Systems Thinking  
62 Universal Intelligence

20 Diversity  
30 Grounding in Fundamental Needs  
27 Full-Spectrum Information  
31 Healthy Polarity Dynamics  
33 Iteration  
52 Rich Feedback Dynamics  
54 Self-Organization  
59 Synergy Between Part and Whole  
64 Using Diversity and Disturbance Creatively  
66 Well-Utilized Life Energy

3 Appropriate Innovation  
10 Commons  
17 Deep Time Stewardship  
26 Full Cost Accounting  
34 Life-Enhancing Enoughness  
41 Nature First

7 Checks on Extreme Inequality  
12 Competent Popular Oversight of Governance  
13 Constraints on Concentrated Power  
38 Multi-Modal Power  
48 Prudent Use of Power-Over  
58 Subsidiarity

## PATTERN CATEGORIES – 2



### WISE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

Institutions are the ways we have things set up. They are particular structures and practices, guidelines and expectations, that shape everything we do. And a political system is largely about such institutions. So set things up so that citizens can engage in public activity that effectively helps realize collective wisdom.



### CULTURE: GENERAL

Culture creates a field of assumptions and narratives about who we are and what is good and possible. Within that field and its associated practices, people act out those assumptions and narratives. So help bring to life assumptions, narratives and practices that make it increasingly likely we'll be able to generate collective wisdom.



### CULTURE: COLLABORATION

In a wise democracy we know we are all in this together. Not only do we share our destiny, but we possess the resources to co-create a better shared destiny if we work together. So support anything that helps us come together effectively without losing our uniqueness and diversity. Make that the norm.



### GROUP DYNAMICS AND PRACTICES

*(These can also manifest in culture.)*

So much know-how exists about how to bring people together in groups that generate collective wisdom that serves them and their communities. So gain this competence, take it seriously, share it, and apply it in groups of all kinds, spreading it into the larger culture so it becomes expected and experienced in everyday life.



### INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES

*(These can also manifest in groups or in the whole society.)*

So much of wise democracy depends on group dynamics, culture, systems and power dynamics. But individual qualities and capacities that serve wholeness are vital and can also characterize those larger contexts. So invite, support and honor people who bring greater life, flow, and insight to the adventure of being collectively wiser than we are individually.

9 Civil Rights  
36 Microcosms  
46 Privacy Guarantees  
49 Quality of Life Indicators  
50 Restorative Justice  
51 Restrained Liberty  
55 Sortition

6 Caring into Quality  
8 Citizen/Stakeholder Balance  
22 Enough Time  
23 Expertise on Tap (not on top)  
39 Multiple Perspective View  
65 Visionary Attractors  
67 Wholesome Life Learning

16 Crowdsourcing  
21 E Pluribus Unum  
35 Metabolize Polarization  
41 Nurturing Social Capital  
42 Partnership Culture  
56 Spaces for Dialogue and Collaboration  
61 Transpartisan Inquiry  
63 Universal Participation

1 All Concerns Addressed  
18 Deliberation  
25 Feeling Heard  
28 Generating Shared Orientation  
29 Generative Interactions  
44 Power of Listening  
45 Powerful Questions  
47 Proposals Emergent  
53 Safety First, Then Challenge  
57 Story Sharing  
68 Whole System in the Conversation

24 Exuberance  
32 Integrity and Authenticity  
69 Wise Use of Uncertainty  
70 Working Through Feelings

## CHALLENGES & DYSFUNCTIONS WE SEEK TO ADDRESS – 1



### INTELLIGENCE-DEGRADING FACTORS

- Narrow, short-term, over-rationalistic thinking
- Narrow, short-term, over-personalized feeling
- Sloppy jumping to conclusions
- Conformist, in-the-box thinking
- Inability to learn or benefit from challenges
- Unduly limited or biased information; deception

### FOLLY-GENERATING FACTORS

- Homogeneity
- Stuck in positions and antagonism
- Neglected, trapped or suppressed life energy
- Little or life-degrading feedback
- Alienation, isolation, sense of separateness
- Cynicism, hopelessness, lack of vision
- Shame and blame
- Hubris, presumption

### UNSUSTAINABILITY FACTORS

- Nature as only resource or background
- Money the sole measure of value
- Everything exclusively owned; possessiveness
- Social and environmental costs externalized
- Irresponsible short-term self-interest, greed

### RESOLVING PATTERNS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Appreciative Thinking</i></li> <li>• <i>Big Empathy</i></li> <li>• <i>Critical Thinking</i></li> <li>• <i>Deliberation</i></li> <li>• <i>Distributed Intelligence</i></li> <li>• <i>Full-Spectrum Information</i></li> <li>• <i>Multi-Modal Intelligence</i></li> <li>• <i>Systems Thinking</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Capacitance</i></li> <li>• <i>Communal Intelligence</i></li> <li>• <i>Crowdsourcing</i></li> <li>• <i>Possibility Thinking</i></li> <li>• <i>Proposals Emergent</i></li> <li>• <i>Story Sharing</i></li> <li>• <i>Working Through Feelings</i></li> </ul>                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All Concerns Addressed</i></li> <li>• <i>Diversity</i></li> <li>• <i>Generating Shared Orientation</i></li> <li>• <i>Powerful Questions</i></li> <li>• <i>Rich Feedback Dynamics</i></li> <li>• <i>Universal Participation</i></li> <li>• <i>Visionary Attractors</i></li> <li>• <i>Wise Use of Uncertainty</i></li> <li>• <i>Well-Utilized Life Energy</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Healthy Polarity Dynamics</i></li> <li>• <i>Iteration</i></li> <li>• <i>Multiple Perspective View</i></li> <li>• <i>Self-Organization</i></li> <li>• <i>Using Diversity and Disturbance Creatively</i></li> <li>• <i>Whole System in the Conversation</i></li> </ul>                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Commons</i></li> <li>• <i>Full Cost Accounting</i></li> <li>• <i>Life-Enhancing Enoughness</i></li> <li>• <i>Nature First</i></li> <li>• <i>Quality of Life Indicators</i></li> <li>• <i>Synergy between Part and Whole</i></li> <li>• <i>Universal Intelligence</i></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Appropriate Innovation</i></li> <li>• <i>Citizen/Stakeholder Balance</i></li> <li>• <i>Context Awareness</i></li> <li>• <i>Deep Time Stewardship</i></li> <li>• <i>Exuberance</i></li> <li>• <i>Grounding in Fundamental Needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Wholesome Life Learning</i></li> </ul> |



## CHALLENGES & DYSFUNCTIONS WE SEEK TO ADDRESS – 2



### POWER FACTORS

- Ubiquitous hierarchical power-over
- Little cooperative, synergistic or spiritual power
- Extreme inequality
- License, corruption, abusive freedom or privilege
- Oppression, surveillance, victimization
- Lack of constraints and oversight
- Punitive “justice”

### CULTURAL DYSFUNCTIONS

- Not enough time
- No available gathering spaces
- Fragmentation and polarization
- Hyper-competitive, winner-take-all dynamics
- Hyper-individualism
- Nobody listening
- Pretense, inauthenticity, posturing, deceit
- Intolerance and prejudice
- Carelessness
- Extremes, imbalance

### RESOLVING PATTERNS

- *Checks on Extreme Inequality*
- *Competent Popular Oversight of Governance*
- *Constraints on Concentrated Power*
- *Civil Rights*
- *Multi-Modal Power*
- *Privacy Guarantees*
- *Prudent Use of Power-Over*
- *Restorative Justice*
- *E Pluribus Unum*
- *Expertise on Tap (not on top)*
- *Microcosms*
- *Restrained Liberty*
- *Safety First, Then Challenge*
- *Sortition*
- *Subsidiarity*
- *Caring into Quality*
- *Enough Time*
- *Integrity and Authenticity*
- *Metabolize Polarization*
- *Multi-Modal Power*
- *Partnership Culture*
- *Power of Listening*
- *Spaces for Dialogue and Collaboration*
- *All Concerns Addressed*
- *Feeling Heard*
- *Generating Shared Orientation*
- *Generative Interactions*
- *Nurturing Social Capital*
- *Transpartisan Inquiry*
- *Using Diversity and Disturbance Creatively*



## WISE DEMOCRACY PATTERN LANGUAGE CARD ACTIVITIES: AN INTRODUCTION – 1

You can use the wise democracy pattern language cards to understand wise democracy and its patterns more deeply, to reflect on real or hypothetical situations or democratic examples, and to envision how an activity, community or political-governance system could be more wisely democratic. Here are a few group exercises to get you started. You will find more group and individual activities at <http://www.wd-pl.com/activities/>.

***The most common exercise uses the cards to help a group explore the relative democratic wisdom of an existing (or hypothetical) group, activity, method, approach, community, system, etc.***

For this exercise you deal out the deck more or less evenly to everyone in your group, so that each person has a “hand” of several cards. Then if, for example, you want to explore a public engagement exercise the group has just witnessed or facilitated, you could say to the group: “Look at the cards in your hand and pick a pattern that you think was handled fairly well.” When they’ve done that, say “Let’s go around the circle and each of us show our choice and read its name and description from the card, and then say why we think this pattern qualifies.” Depending on the time available, you could also say, “And then after each person presents their pattern, we can discuss it for a bit before going on to the next person’s pattern.”

The group would then go around the circle. Some people may ask to present 2 or 3 cards, and that can be permitted or not, depending on the time available. When the circle is complete, you would do another round, this time with an instruction like this: “Now look at your cards and identify a pattern you think could and should be given more attention, something that definitely needs more work, and explain to us why you chose it.” The group could then discuss each of those patterns, if there is sufficient time. The result? Participants will gain useful insights about the public engagement activity they were exploring through the lens of the wise democracy patterns and - if they will be involved with it in the future - be able to help it evolve in wise democratic directions.

***Variations:*** The basic process described above can be adopted to analyze a country’s political or economic system, to envision a better public engagement culture for a community, to plan a stakeholder gathering, or for any other systems or activities that could, if consciously designed well, generate empowered participatory wisdom. Such exercises can be used purely for their educational value or as an approach to action learning to guide specific transformational change by a group who aspire to promote wise democracy.





## WISE DEMOCRACY PATTERN LANGUAGE CARD ACTIVITIES: AN INTRODUCTION – 2

***Now here are examples of workshop activities intended to engage people who have at least some familiarity with the wise democracy patterns in a shared dive into deeper understanding.***

***This exercise is a dive into the relationships between patterns.*** You distribute the cards as above. You tell everyone to choose a card in their hand and then pick a “related pattern” on that card. You then chose a participant at random and have them stand up and ask who has the card about their chosen related pattern. That person then joins them and, in turn, asks the group who has their chosen related pattern. This process continues until there are 4-6 people in their group. Then the process starts again with another randomly selected person, until the class is sorted into groups of 4-6 people. Then you instruct each group to put their heads together to explore as many connections between the cards in their hands as they can and to discuss why they think those patterns are related. This will involve both exploring connections explicitly indicated by the “related patterns” lists, but also any connections they can think of that aren’t explicitly indicated on their cards. This exercise can continue for anywhere between 15 minutes and more than an hour. You’ll need to provide longer times if you encourage them to explore on the wd-pl.com website for related patterns not included in their hands.

***Here’s an exercise intended to stimulate mutual learning.*** You tell participants to pick a pattern (from cards in their hand or from the whole list). You then invite them to ask a question or share a story related to that pattern from their own knowledge or experience. Given the way the patterns are grounded in the real work of thousands of people, we usually find participants have much to teach each other. They can often answer each other’s questions and/or they can research a pattern online together to see what the answer might be. Also, if you as facilitator of the process are experienced with the pattern language, you may be able to answer participants’ questions or guide them toward deeper understanding. You can use every question, story or example as an opportunity for deeper exploration by the group, especially looking at other patterns that may be relevant to that question or example. Any given inquiry can expand and deepen as long as participants wish. At the leading edge of such explorations is the possibility that participants may feel that (a) online descriptions or resource lists associated with a pattern are inadequate or (b) that a new pattern is needed to cover some dynamic they are noticing. In those cases you can encourage them to submit their thoughts on the site’s comment sections or other forums set up for the community of practice.

***Feel free to vary these exercises in any ways you wish. If you want even more variety, explore the activities on <http://www.wd-pl.com/activities/>. And if you stumble on a great new exercise of your own creation, please describe it in the comment section at the bottom of that page so that others can try it out.***

Enjoy!