

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.

