

Research in Progress

Reconstructive Democratic Theory

Project Director: John S. Dryzek, Department of Political Science, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1284. (This project has been awarded a one-year, \$39,000 grant by the U.S. National Science Foundation. The Q sample for the study has not as yet been developed.)

(From the NSF project summary): The objective of this study is to revive the empirical and systematic study of democracy -- and, more precisely, democratic possibilities. It is paradoxical that while the *idea* of democracy has never been more universal or more popular, the scientific study of democratic possibilities currently languishes. This project makes use of an intensive method for the study of individual characteristics, capabilities, and dispositions -- Q methodology -- in combination with political discourse analysis. The subjects for the research will be selected from the community with an eye to maximizing likely variety in political dispositions. The intent is to (a) test existing theories of democracy by determining whether or not support for them can be found in the expressed dispositions of the subjects of the research, and (b) determine how individuals who are potentially the constituents of a democratic order themselves conceptualize democracy. The latter, in turn, is likely to contribute to reformulation of the theory of democracy.

Selected Bibliography

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- Seidel, G. (1985) Political discourse analysis. In T.A. Van Dijk (Ed.), *Handbook of discourse analysis*. London: Academic Press.