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Investigating Political Types, Part I: A Study of “Phil,” the Political Agitator¹

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Abstract: After the administration of a political style Q-sort (Brown, 1981), intensive analysis is conducted with an exemplar of a factor correlating with Lasswell’s (1930/1960) political *agitator* type of political personality. A life history interview is conducted, and the subject is invited to complete 18 Q-sorts under various conditions of instruction. The resulting factor analysis produces three factors, a *Conservative GOP*² view, a *Conspiracy/Libertarian* view, and an *Ideal* view. The study adds to the literature demonstrating the strengths of combining the life history interview with Q-methodology to provide a richer understanding of political personality. This article is Part I, while Part II examines a different political type – Lasswell’s political *administrator*.

Keywords: Agitator Type, Intensive Analysis, Lasswell, Political Role, Political Type, Single-case

Introduction

Harold D. Lasswell in his seminal work *Psychopathology and Politics* (1930/1960) identified three types of political personality: the *agitator*, the *administrator*, and the *theorist*. These personality types are formed developmentally through the processes of psychodynamics. Agitators are bold in expressing their opinions, often contentious, and seek to provoke emotional responses in their audiences. “The agitator has come by his name honestly, for he is enough agitated about public policy to communicate his excitement to those about him” (Lasswell, 1960, p. 78). Lasswell contended that “agitators as a class are strongly narcissistic types” (1960, p. 125), who are often model children “who swallow their resentments” and go on to “choose remote and general social objects for their assault” (Davies, 1980, p. 15). As Brown (2016) described the agitator type, “The agitator has difficulty establishing warm interpersonal relations despite outward appearances of loyalty and comradeship when things are going well. Detailed life histories often reveal repressed hatred and aggression behind the mask of a model child” (p. 2). Lasswell also suggested that agitators engage in this behavior because they have an unconscious desire to be made to submit to authority.

In contrast, political individuals of the administrator type relish routine, order and “on the whole view authority in a positive way, look up to supervisors who support,

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² GOP, or “Grand Old Party,” is a nickname for the Republican Party in the United States.

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direct, set goals, and are sympathetic” (Davies, 1980, p. 53). Administrators take comfort in routine and have a fondness for detail and accuracy. They have little use for abstractions. Additionally, administrators are attached to particular people, and these ties make it difficult for administrators to develop a strong sense of self. “By way of contrast [with the agitator type], the administrator is too bound to specific individuals to achieve a cathexis with abstract principles. These individuals are too concerned with what father or mother would say and end up trying to please parental surrogates throughout their lives” (Brown, 2016, p. 2). Meanwhile, theorists, “though they may attach themselves to particular activists whom they hope to influence, deliberately choose the abstract and impersonal, and prefer to deal with problems, and people, at one remove” (Davies, 1980, p. 15)

These orientations are in keeping with Lasswell’s broader definition of political man, $P = p \} d \} r$, where private motives (p) are displaced (d) onto a public object and rationalized(r) in terms of the public interest (Lasswell, 1960, pp. 75-76). As Ascher pointed out, “using this formulation, Lasswell argued that some political attitudes are derived from impulses and affects originating in the smaller world of each individual’s personal relationships” (2005, p. 23).

This study began with the administration of a 45 item Q-sample, developed by Steven R. Brown in 1981, and containing statements he drew from Lasswell’s and Davies’s descriptions of the three political personality types. The Q-sample was administered in 2011 to 30 individuals, mostly undergraduate students as well as some older persons, and three factors emerged, one correlating, essentially, to each type. Below are representative statements for the *Agitator* factor:

1. I have been known to be forceful and aggressive, and my contentiousness is notorious. I am accustomed to distinguishing myself by bold opinions. (+4)
43. When I really get going on one of “my issues,” I begin speaking rapidly and with great fervor and earnestness. In fact, I can be quite fierce in public on behalf of my point of view. (+4)
5. I often feel a special fitness or “right” to represent a public issue before others – to bring it to other people’s attention. (+3)
29. When I speak, I like to make a big impression – to startle and inspire. In fact, I get a good deal of pleasure from rubbing the fur the wrong way. (+3)
34. I find public speaking and writing both challenging and deeply satisfying. (+2)
24. When I get agitated and worked up about something, I want other people to get aroused too. I like to communicate my excitement to those around me. (+2)
10. I get a certain thrill from playing an audience like a violin, and from the cut and thrust of public debate. I like to be provocative and to stir feelings. (+2)

By comparison, the following are representative statements demonstrating the character of the *Administrator* factor:

22. On the whole I look up to superiors who support, direct, set goals and are sympathetic: I try to cooperate and maintain good relations with them. (+4)
26. I like for people to think what I do is useful and important. My main reward is a feeling that my efforts are appreciated. (+4)
40. I am capable of decisiveness, of settling an issue: resolving problems and giving orders come easily to me. (+4)
4. I have a talent for bargaining and making decisions. I prefer working through a system of interlocking agreements and arrangements. (+3)

37. My life is very much dominated by my relationships to definite people. Abstractions don't interest me much. (+2)

Finally, the following are representative of the *Theorist* factor:

28. I feel many personal relationships, especially in social contexts, to be exhausting and emotionally draining. (+4)
44. I like the idea of being cut off from the world and treating it as a spectacle. There's a certain safety in it. (+4)
16. I have the habit of doubting – my own judgment as well as everyone else's – and of regarding every question as open. (+4)
41. In many respects, I feel I've grown beyond my associates and even society itself, so that I have an outside view of it all. (+2)
6. My preferences are for theory rather than practice, for detachment rather than intervention. (+2)
36. I prefer impersonality and have a distaste for gushiness. (+2)

Following these results, a research strategy was decided upon in which representative exemplars from the factors would be interviewed at length, then asked to perform a series of Q-sorts under various conditions of instruction, which would reveal a deeper understanding of their political personality and how their political world is constructed. In Part I, the life history of an *agitator* will be reported, while in Part II, an *administrator* will tell his story.

Intensive Phase:

Phil: Life History and Political Beliefs

"Phil" (a pseudonym) had the highest factor loading on the Agitator Factor and was selected as a specimen for further investigation through an intensive analysis. Although the use of single-case studies has been in decline in the social sciences, such an approach is relatively common in Q.³ Brown (1980) makes the case for the role of single-case studies in the study of behavior:

[W]e are confronted with the fact that most advances in our knowledge about behavior have resulted from the careful observation of only a few cases. Freud's discoveries are prototypical, but even outside dynamic psychology the role of small numbers has been considerable. Piaget (1950), for example, developed a theory of moral development by observing a handful of schoolchildren playing marbles; Ebbinghaus (1913) arrived at a durable theory of memory by performing experiments on himself only; and Skinner (1969: 112), regarded by most as in the vanguard of modern human science, places primary emphasis on the virtues of the single-case: "Operant methods make their own use of Grand Numbers; instead of studying a thousand rats for one hour each or a hundred rats for ten hours each, the investigator is likely to study one rat for a thousand hours." (p. 112)

³Examples of single-case studies employing Q methodology include Baas, 1979; Baas, 1984; Baas, 1997; Brown, 1974b; Brown, 1980; Brown, 1981; Brown, 1982; Brown, 1993-94; Goldstein & Goldstein, 2005; Nunnally, 1955; Rhoads, 2001; Stephenson, 1974; Stephenson, 1987; Stephenson, 2014; and Thomas, 1979.

Phil was interviewed for a number of hours over several weeks in the spring of 2012. The interview meetings were scheduled a few days a week during this time. At the time of the interview Phil was in his early twenties and politically interested/involved. He had been involved in a few local campaigns, including for a US Congressman. He was an accomplished student, bright and articulate, and enjoyed discussing politics with family, friends and acquaintances. He currently works in the political realm as a legislative aide. The life history interview was structured along the lines suggested by Dollard (1935) and accordingly focused on developmental issues as well as specific people who were of importance to Phil.

Phil was raised in a two-parent home with his younger sister and describes his childhood as “very happy,” when he dreamed of being a professional athlete. His mother interrupted her career working in an office to stay home when Phil was pre-school age, and he describes her as the disciplinarian when needed. Phil said that he felt closest to his father and characterizes that as being a “normal tendency to identify with the same gender parent.” The relationship with his father, according to Phil, revolved around a mutual interest in sports and, later, politics. He described his relationship with his sister, who is two years younger than Phil, as full of conflict: “I saw her as a problem child and she had a temper like no other.” Phil maintains that the relationship with his sister is more harmonious today.

As he grew older, Phil said he had good relationships with both his teachers and his peers. He believes his peers see him as a leader, as he was a member of both the “jock” and “gifted” cliques. However, while in high school he quit playing baseball and joined the soccer team – an act, Phil described, as one of rebellion against his father; his father loved baseball (had coached Phil years earlier) and didn’t care much for soccer.

Although raised a Catholic, Phil is now nonpracticing. His earliest memory is being left with his grandmother, when he was about three years old, while his parents enjoyed a night out. He remembers sobbing as he looked at a photograph of his parents that was on display at his grandmother’s home. Phil’s earliest political memory was the contested and controversial presidential election of 2000 between Al Gore and George W. Bush. When Bush was eventually declared the winner, Phil said that it “really hurt” as, at the time, his parents still “thought they were Democrats,” and Phil had incorporated that political outlook. Phil recalled, “I just remember thinking the sun wasn’t going to come out the next day, because Al Gore lost.”

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, seem to have been a political turning point for both Phil and his parents. Phil recalls that in high school he gave a speech to his “Multicultural Class” on the “evils” of Islam, evidence of his agitator style. Phil’s parents became more attentive to politics after 9/11, and Phil’s father began listening to talk radio programs such as Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage, Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity. Phil began to listen to these programs as well, and the family grew more conservative in their outlook. Although a registered Independent, Phil describes his father as a “Hannity Conservative.” His mother is now a registered Republican and a social conservative. Phil describes her as a “Rick Santorum Republican.” Abortion is an issue of particular concern to Phil’s mother.

When asked to name his political heroes, Phil answers, “Ron Paul and his son Rand.” Phil refers to Ron Paul, a former congressman, as a “political messiah” and is conversant with Paul’s issue positions as well as the economic theories that guide much of Paul’s political philosophy. After naming the Pauls, a long pause ensues and then he adds “Senator Robert Taft, Mr. Republican.” Curiously, he acknowledges that he admires former Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich, a political progressive. Of Kucinich, Phil

said, "I don't agree with him on a lot of things, but, you know, I like somebody who can actually stand up to leadership in the party and vote against something. I like that...I wouldn't say Kucinich is a hero, but he's one of the Democrats that I can actually admire." Given Phil's agitator predisposition, it is easy to see why he would admire the maverick Kucinich despite their fundamental disagreements on most policy issues. In a similar vein, Phil takes issue with the way Republicans "idolize" President Ronald Reagan: "They throw his name out so much, it's like it's some magical thing."

In his college days, Phil enjoyed discussing politics with his friends. As he sums it up:

Most of my friends, if they weren't conservative before, I feel the more I hang out with them, the more I can turn them conservative...I'll talk to liberals, and people who think they are liberals, and I'm usually trying to convince them that they are not seeing the whole picture or something. When talking to my more conservative friends, I'm not trying to convince them so much as trying to educate ourselves...If I'm talking to someone who doesn't have a lot of political opinions, *I'm definitely in propaganda mode.* [Emphasis added]

Along with his notion that his parents used to "think they were Democrats," the college students he tries to persuade are often young people who "think they are liberals"; that is, Phil believes people are persuadable to see the "truth" if they can see the "whole picture." Phil sees the modern Republican Party as being split between social and economic conservatives, and he sides with economic conservatives. Phil takes issue with the Christian Right movement within the Party for trying to legislate morality. He also is critical of the Neo-Con element of the Republican Party that he believes is too "pro-war" and laments that establishment Republicans dismiss Ron Paul because he doesn't support their foreign policy agenda. Phil also has an affinity for the Tea Party, whom he believes has been unjustly characterized by the media.

Phil argues that the modern Democratic Party is "driven by leftist ideology" and dismisses the "Occupy Wall Street Movement" as unfocused and uneducated. When our conversation turned to President Obama, Phil began to talk in conspiratorial tones. There was something "just not right" with the 2008 election, and Phil is of the opinion that Obama is a front-man for "hard-line leftists." When pressed who these folks behind the scene might be, Phil maintained that there were a group of wealthy individuals who control world affairs:

There are many theories that abound about who controls world affairs, but I always find it interesting that the richest of the rich – the Warren Buffets, the Ted Turners – they're all liberals and they're all for these policies that are supposed to hurt the rich and help the poor...I'd like to see how much money they have involved in him [Obama]. Last but not least is Wall Street – I mean, look where Goldman-Sachs put their money in '08, they put it behind Obama. If you look at where they are putting it now, they are putting it behind Romney [Phil chuckles]. I think it goes to both parties, as far as that goes.

As for the 2012 GOP nominee, Phil considered Mitt Romney to be a "very good man" but worries that he wouldn't "get dirty enough" to win, describing the Republican as a "milquetoast." He intends to vote for Romney but allowed that in a hypothetical three-way race between Obama, Romney and Paul, he might well vote for Paul. Phil is clearly

dedicated to Paul. He has read Paul's books and can cite the economists who Phil claims have largely influenced Paul's views.

Phil has a higher opinion of Hillary Clinton than he does President Obama. He likes that her views are more "hawkish" than Obama's and describes her as a "pretty strong woman." He did criticize Clinton for her book, *It Takes a Village*, as it has a "collectivist ring to it." He described collectivism as "the notion that the individual would subjugate themselves to the collective in order to prosper," and he sees this as destroying individual liberty. Additionally, Phil discussed his views of some other modern politicians, but of note was his discussion of Yale University's Skull and Bones Society while talking about both President George H. W. Bush and Senator John Kerry. Phil was disturbed that both candidates belonged to this exclusive, secretive organization whose members went on to wield such powerful influence later in life. He clearly saw such organizations as grooming a new generation of leaders by powerful elites. The discussion of Skull and Bones led Phil to also comment on the Council of Foreign Relations and the Bohemian Grove (a secretive retreat of GOP leaders), all evidence of his willingness to embrace conspiratorial ideas.

With regard to the issues that Phil finds most important, he describes both the national debt and a moral decay that he sees in the country. Phil maintains that the national debt will lead to a dollar crisis — an idea that Ron Paul has promoted — and that "we have a real moral problem here and I think it's a laziness, it's a feeling of no responsibility." Phil opposes Obamacare, especially the individual mandate that requires people to purchase health insurance: "the whole notion that I have to buy something just because you are alive. I have a problem with that."

Phil considers global warming to be a "sham" and sees the environmental movement as driven by leftist ideology coupled with a conspiratorial element — that people like Al Gore "are making money off of it." He is opposed to a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages (an issue that was in front of voters in 2012). Phil argues that government should not be involved in marriage, even opposing tax credits for married couples. He opposes affirmative action policies as "racism" and another "attack on the white male." He considers himself pro-life on the question of abortion, but is clearly uncomfortable with a federal response, believing this an issue better resolved by the states.

His answer to the problem of undocumented workers in the US is self-deportation (a policy recommended by Mitt Romney in 2012) and to beef up border security. Phil contends that we can take the tens of thousands of US troops now deployed in places like West Germany and redeploy them to our southern border with Mexico. The discussion of what to do about immigration really animated Phil in our conversation.

He is opposed to the continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, believing that we are involved in a "never-ending war" against terrorism that not only puts strain on our military, but limits our freedoms at home. Phil harkens back to the Founders and says that the US's role in the world should be "free trade with everyone and no entangling alliances." He complains that we have too many military bases overseas and that our presence in these countries is hurting our reputation.

When asked if he was generally optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the country, Phil replied, "pessimistic." He contended that we are on our way to losing "more freedom." His elaboration of that theme sounded like a politician's stump speech:

If we stay on the road we are on, this creeping socialism, this acceptance of government intervention and everything. If we continue to believe that the

protector of the public is the government. If we continue to believe that we won't have a safe environment without the EPA. If we continue to believe that we won't be able to buy things safely without a Consumer Protection Board...It's just so hard to pinpoint exactly what is going on but, we're becoming – we're a far cry from what our Founders intended.

When asked if there were any other political subject not touched upon in our interview that he would like to comment on, Phil mentioned that he was opposed to laws against drugs. He said, "I have a problem with drug prohibition totally because for one, just on a liberty argument, I should be able to do what I want to my body at all times, no matter what. I should be able to kill myself if I want to."

Phil: Experimental Conditions

After the in-depth interviews were concluded, Phil was presented with a 32-item Q-sample, comprised almost entirely of things that he had said during the course of the life history interview. The Q-sample was augmented with statements from Tomkins *Polarity Scale* (1995), which was first introduced by Tomkins (1954) as a measure of *humanism/normativism*. Phil was invited to complete 18 sorts under various conditions of instruction (thought to be salient), which he completed over a few weeks. The data were then factor-analyzed, and three factors were produced (Table 1).

Table 1: Factor Matrix for "Phil" the Political Agitator⁴

Q sort	A	B	C
View that my father would like me to have	(.62)	.35	.30
GOP view	(.67)	.25	.15
Romney thinks my view is	(.63)	.19	.27
Michael Savage thinks my view is	(.69)	.37	-.06
Boss thinks my view is	(.72)	-.17	.10
Obama thinks my view is	(-.48)	.06	.24
Self	.19	(.83)	.16
If I were to take a different view	-.11	(.48)	-.27
Alex Jones thinks my view is	-.19	(.66)	.09
Male friends think my view is	-.01	(.61)	.06
Excited to talk about	.17	(.72)	-.00
Ron Paul thinks my view is	-.28	.33	(.60)
Female friends think my view is	.08	-.17	(.74)
Ideal view	.28	.23	(.77)
View that my mother would like me to have	.57	-.28	.47
Important to me	.35	.51	.51
Hillary Clinton thinks my view is	.41	.46	-.41
Libertarian view	-.62	.59	.32

Factor A: Conservative GOP View

Factor A is bipolar and defined by the following six sorts: "The view my father would like me to have"; "GOP view"; "What Mitt Romney thinks my view is"; "What Michael

⁴ Factor loadings in parentheses are statistically significant at the .01 level. Only "pure" loaders are identified, i.e., sorts who load significantly on only one factor. The formula for determining a statistically significant factor loading at the .01 level is $1/\sqrt{n} * 2.58$, where n = number of statements.

Savage thinks my view is”; “What my boss (a political figure) thinks my view is” and “What Barack Obama thinks my view is,” negatively correlated. The theme of Factor A is a Conservative Republican view, with support given to the importance of Judeo-Christian beliefs in American success, opposition to illegal immigration, critiques of Obama and Democrats, as well as opposition to affirmative action and same-sex marriage. Phil, within this factor, appears to merge mainstream GOP ideas with the more bombastic attitudes of Michael Savage, who espouses “Borders, Language and Culture” as the most important things to preserve in contemporary America. Savage regularly rails against what he perceives to be an assault on the white male, often contending on air that he was denied a position in higher education because of his race and gender.

Factor A appears to be a reflection of the type of conservatism that Phil says is espoused by his father – a reflection of the right-wing media’s interpretation of establishment Republican orthodoxy. It is also of interest that this is the view Phil believes his boss (a political figure) thinks his view is.

+4 Statements

8. I think one of the reasons we have been so successful is because of our Judeo-Christian values.
7. On the issue of illegal immigration, I’m right with Patrick Buchanan. Too often they cloister in their own groups and don’t assimilate.

+3 Statements

2. It seems as if Democrats, especially Obama, are always on the offensive against the white male.
18. I think we have a real moral problem here and I think it’s a laziness. It’s a feeling of no responsibility. You can just see it the way people are growing up lately – people are 28-29 and still living at home.
14. I think we really need to be color-blind and, if anything, Affirmative Action is the most racist thing you can do, by treating people differently according to groups.

–4 Statements

9. I have a problem with drug prohibition. Just on a liberty argument, I should be able to do what I want to my body at all times, no matter what. I should be able to kill myself if I want to.
26. I don’t like the Religious Right.

–3 Statements

19. I feel like Conservative should mean Libertarian – small government ideas. So, I would say, I’m more Libertarian actually.
17. If you ask me, Obama is an empty suit.
29. Conservatives want to put an amendment to the Constitution defining marriage as between a man and a woman. I think that’s terrible. I don’t even know why the government should be involved in this.

Factor B: *Conspiracy/Libertarian Views*

Factor B is defined by the following five sorts: “What is your view (Self)?”; “If you had to take a different view”; “What Alex Jones thinks my view is”; “What my male friends

think my view is” and “What I am excited to talk about.” The theme of Factor B is a Libertarian/Conspiracy view, promoting both conspiracy theories as well as Libertarian ideas.

These conspiratorial and Libertarian views are seen by Phil as his actual political stance. These are the ideas that animate his conversations, those which he is most excited to talk about. Alex Jones is a radio talk show host who embraces wild conspiracy theories, for example, that the US government is behind the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, the Oklahoma City Bombing, and even the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Jones also runs a website, InfoWars.com, that traffics in these conspiracies. Phil may well believe these absurd theories, but it is also quite possible that his agitator personality enjoys discussing these matters because they provoke reactions from people.

The statements most agreed with in Factor B are those that give voice to conspiracy theories involving the rich, President Obama as a front-man for others behind the scenes, and global warming being a hoax. The Libertarian agenda is reflected in agreement with equating Libertarian with small government and questioning the “never-ending war” on terrorism.

It is curious that Phil’s “Self” view loads on the same factor as his “If I had to take a different view,” unless he interpreted “different” as outside the norm and not as a view dissimilar from his own. It may well be that Phil misinterpreted the intent of that condition of instruction. Also of note is Phil’s disagreement with his description of Romney as a “milquetoast,” which is how he described Romney in the interview. However, one could see how this view of Romney is not in keeping with the overall theme of Factor B, and his offering that opinion of Romney in the interview may have been a reflection of his agitator style – that is, to be provocative.

+4 Statements

25. I always find it interesting that the richest of the rich – the Warren Buffets, the Ted Turners – they’re all liberals and they’re all for these policies that are supposed to hurt the rich and help the poor.
17. If you ask me, Obama is an empty suit.

+3 Statements

6. Global warming is a sham. I think it is kind of arrogant to think that we can actually change the temperature of the entire globe.
19. I feel like Conservative should mean Libertarian – small government ideas. So, I would say, I’m more Libertarian actually.
4. I don’t know what the war on terrorism is anymore. It seems like a never-ending war.

–4 Statements

15. The Democrats have done a good job of painting Republicans as women-haters – “The He-Man Woman Haters Club,” especially now with this so-called “War on Women,” which is a joke.
30. A government should allow only such freedom of expression as is consistent with law and order.

–3 Statements

5. I think Romney is a real milquetoast. I fear what is going to happen in the election is it’s

going to get dirty and he won't get dirty enough.

10. I feel like something was wrong with the 2008 election.
26. I don't like the Religious Right.

Factor C: *Ideal View*

Factor C is defined by three sorts: "What Ron Paul thinks my view is," "What my female friends think my view is," and "What is an ideal view?" It should also be noted that "What view my mother would like me to have" is also associated with Factor C (as well as Factor A). While Phil's "Self" view is associated with Factor B, his "Ideal" is loaded on Factor C. Geoffrey Gorer made an observation about the American conscience that is particularly apt in interpreting Factor C:

The idiosyncratic feature of the American conscience is that it is predominantly feminine. Owing to the major role played by the mother in disciplining the child, in rewarding and punishing it, many more aspects of the mother than the father become incorporated. Duty and Right of Conduct become feminine figures. (Gorer, 1948/1964, p. 56)

There does seem to be a feminine character to Factor C, as it is defined (in part) by what Phil believes the view is that his mother would like him to have, as well as what his female friends believe his view to be. Recall that Phil had indicated that his mother was the disciplinarian when needed during his childhood, in keeping with Gorer's claim. Ron Paul is seen by Phil as a "political messiah," who seems to transcend mere politics for Phil. It is also in this factor where the issue of abortion and the attending moral implications appear.

+4 Statements

19. I feel like Conservative should mean Libertarian – small government ideas. So, I would say, I'm more Libertarian actually.
23. Morally, I do have a problem with abortion. I think it's murder.

+3 Statements

12. I feel the more I hang out with people, the more I can turn them conservative.
6. Global warming is a sham. I think it is kind of arrogant to think that we can actually change the temperature of the entire globe.
3. I think that life is about freedom and individuals being able to pursue their own goals.

-4 Statements

17. If you ask me, Obama is an empty suit.
15. The Democrats have done a good job of painting Republicans as women-haters – "The He-Man Woman Haters Club," especially now with this so-called "War on Women," which is a joke.

-3 Statements

25. I always find it interesting that the richest of the rich – the Warren Buffets, the Ted Turners – they're all liberals and they're all for these policies that are supposed to hurt the rich and help the poor.

30. A government should allow only such freedom of expression as is consistent with law and order.
10. I feel like something was wrong with the 2008 election.

Discussion

At the time of the interviews with Phil (Spring 2012), the divide within the Republican Party was of interest to political observers. The Republicans had lost the popular vote in four of the previous five presidential elections (President Obama's reelection later that year would make it five out of six). The Tea Party had emerged by 2012, energizing many in the grassroots of the party. Indeed, Phil had spoken in glowing terms of the Tea Party during the interviews. Libertarianism has also pushed its way into the Republican Party, through Representative Ron Paul's presidential campaign – a campaign which had great appeal to conservative youth. At the same time, as the Republicans sought their bearings, the Party became more ideological in its character. Mann and Ornstein in the *Washington Post* characterized the GOP in this way in 2012:

The GOP has become an insurgent outlier in American politics. It is ideologically extreme; scornful of compromise; unmoved by conventional understanding of facts, evidence and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition. When one party moves this far from the mainstream, it makes it nearly impossible for the political system to deal constructively with the country's challenges. (Mann & Ornstein, 2012)

This is the political environment in which Phil is operating and providing a view into the construction of his political world. In this analysis, Phil reveals three “selves”— one an Establishment Republican view (albeit tinged with a right-wing media influence); one a Libertarian/Conspiratorial Thinking view, most in keeping with his agitator personality; and one an Ideal view that seems reflective of a moral stance, perhaps related to Gorer's observations about the feminine nature of the American conscience. These results paint a richer portrait of Phil and add further insight into his agitator personality.

Interestingly, when Phil was presented with this interpretation of the factor structure that he produced, he said it was “like magic!” Although the descriptions of all three factors resonated with Phil, he particularly recognized the divide between his Establishment Republican “self” and the Libertarian/Conspiratorial “self.” Factor structures are as Stephenson (2014) described them: “Q methodology, then, stands for *discovery* in subjectivity, of reality in nature, made possible by technique. We can, so to speak, see the structure, as if by X-ray” (p. 43).

The present study not only contributes to the literature concerning political personality, but to the value of conducting single-case studies, applying both the strengths of a life history approach with the power of Q methodology to reveal significant results under experimental conditions. The factors that emerge provide a structure to Phil's political worldview that the interview alone simply cannot provide. Importantly, the factors permit Phil to reveal his own subjectivity, independent of having his interview interpreted solely by the investigator.

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