

### **Advantage of Q in Bridging Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies**

I have found that Q's incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative methods serves to bridge these two research traditions. I continue to marvel at its ability to convince both camps that Q deserves consideration. Qualitative researchers, of course, identify with the analysis of concourses while the quantitative community identifies with the use of factor analysis to reveal underlying patterns. The magical nexus between these two components is the Q sort. When skeptics reconceptualize the Q sort as a link between qualitative and quantitative methods, their appreciation of Q methodology grows dramatically.

### **A Reason for Optimism**

I remain optimistic about the future of Q. I believe that Q leaders will emerge naturalistically; we do not need a "cult of Q" to ordain new ministers. As long as we understand Stephenson's Q, remain vigilant against R tendencies, adopt a non-reactionary posture to new ideas, engage in civil and informed debates, and demonstrate the power of Q to analyze and solve real-world problems, I expect that Q will continue to grow in stature and application.

Perhaps in part because I am not among those who had the privilege of studying under Stephenson, I am not as concerned about threats to his legacy. His contributions will survive through the ISSSS and our continued discussions, presentations, and publications. Nevertheless, I believe that we can and should build on his legacy to advance Q theory and its application. After all, Einstein's special and general theories of relativity did not render Newton's theories of motion and gravity irrelevant; rather, they merely extended them to realms not contemplated by Newton. It seems to me that the evolution of Q can also extend the work of Stephenson into realms not contemplated by him, and thereby pay homage to his work.

*Will Focht <wfocht@okstate.edu> is in the Department of Political Science, Oklahoma State University, 519 Math Sciences, Stillwater, OK 74078-1060.*

## **Factor C: "Orthodoxy Reinforced"**

### **Michael Stricklin**

*Federal University of Piauí, Brazil*

The factor structure, as reported and discussed by Hurd and Brown, makes sense to me because, as is most often the case with a successful Q study, the communication scene has been untangled without harming any of the strands. Additionally, it makes sense to characterize the four resultant factors in terms of conventional standards, the appropriate usage of the word "orthodoxy" in this instance, because Q methodology has come to be, over a period of seven decades, a collection of theoretical principles and standards of practice. Finally, it makes sense to show how members of our

community of practitioners, now entering into a third generation, are active in pursuing our various objectives.

This matter of generations is central for me. I remember vividly the moment Steve Brown told me he would no longer teach a doctoral-level seminar on Q. I was shaken by the news; it came at about the same time as a realization that the eldest members of the second generation of the Q movement were at or near retirement age—Donald Brenner, Wilma Crumley, Joy Patterson, Keith Sanders, Won Ho Chang, Albert Talbott, and Martin Brouwer, among others. My first thoughts upon hearing Steve's news were: Who will teach Q? Where? How often? I remember realizing that the younger members of the second generation, i.e., those of us who learned Q from Stephenson first-hand, were not in positions that would lead any of us to take up these tasks. Why not? Most of us, namely those from the University of Iowa, had gone our separate ways, mostly in institutions which emphasize undergraduate instruction. While we were using Q in our own projects and teaching a little about it to our students, I think the doctoral seminar is the appropriate level for growing Q. I think this is a relevant point especially because our intellectual claims are not in good order. I commented on this publicly at the 2000 Q Conference in Tulsa in a paper titled "On the Reality of the Quantum-Communicability Question," in which I tried to draw attention to the community's fragility on at least three institutional dimensions: (1) little recognition and support of doctoral seminars; (2) no contemporary book-length treatments of the methodology; and (3) no systematic inquiries into the philosophic grounding of Q. As they say on Madison Avenue, I ran up these flags, but no one saluted. Now, I must take responsibility for the brevity of my presentation that day, and I plead guilty to the charge that since I did not write the paper up for publication my ideas remain only "nice to know." Nevertheless, our state of fragility continues without much of a community-wide strategy for setting it right. I hope we take to heart the lessons laid bare in the Hurd and Brown factors.

With the above in mind, I want now to comment on the factor structure as a whole. It is a truism in the literature of sociology that a crisis occurs in the third generation, the generation our community is entering. The factor structure reported by Hurd and Brown supports this notion, and they have named the factors wisely: Orthodoxy Applied and Promoted, Orthodoxy Upheld, Orthodoxy Reinforced, Beyond Orthodoxy. Since Q methodology is not a theory so much as a new way of knowing, it is not governed or controlled; it is neither strictly scientific nor artistic; it is a way of inquiry more along the lines of a school of thought. We lay claim to a new way of knowing, a way of seeking knowledge in a way more legitimate than we believe possible via any other approach. On this basis alone I am able to accept the various senses of orthodoxy laid out for us with much precision and detail in this Q study. The factor structure gives us a lot to think about and shows us in detail what we have to accomplish. Each point of view can be taken as a call for action, and I am able to accept the sense of Factor C—

Orthodoxy Reinforced—because the actions I believe are required now by our community are of greatest importance, especially those related to improving our intellectual and institutional infrastructure.

Yet, one must keep in mind that while the tasks indicated by Factor C are essential to keeping the community going, they are something like rebuilding a sewer system: the dirty work lies largely out of public view.

*Michael Stricklin <mstrick44@yahoo.com> is Emeritus Professor, University of Nebraska, and Visiting Professor, Department of Social Communication, Federal University of Piauí, Brazil*

## **Factor C: “Orthodoxy Reinforced”**

**Philip Christman**

*Malone College*

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was the originator of the phrase “knowledge is power,” which, in the advancement of Q in the scientific community, one might construe to mean to disperse sound research, combined with education, as the primary way to gain credibility within the walls of higher education, where Q has yet to earn its rightful place as a research methodology. Since its introduction to the science community in 1935 (Stephenson, 1935), Q has struggled to gain that acceptance as evidenced by the number of universities that offer, even require, traditional R-methodological courses compared to those few that offer a course on Q methodology. Further support on the lack of acceptance of Q in the scientific research community can be found when one examines interest in either topic via attendance at professional conferences. Thousands hold membership and will annually participate in traditional research methodological conferences (with, sadly, few presentations on Q methodology). In comparison, there are approximately 130 members of the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity (ISSSS), which is devoted to the support of Q research (Hurd & Brown, 2005), and less than that number typically attend the international conference sponsored by ISSSS.

Gaining recognition within the scientific community, and thereby assuring the stability and advancement of the movement, does not appear to be as simple as stating that Q is an important methodology in science’s attempt to further knowledge of the world and individuals. The study of subjectivity is not that simple, nor has the study of human nature been so easy to analyze. Some in the scientific community of higher education have erroneously defaulted to the belief that subjectivity can only be studied within the qualitative paradigm, typically considered to be an arduous and oftentimes singular effort, in contrast to quantitative research where numbers of participants are significantly larger. Stephenson, and subsequently ISSSS, have discovered and advanced a valid third alternative.