The Bones of a Concourse

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Abstract: Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes famously claimed that the "life of law has not been logic; it has been experience" (1881). Without experience, the law has no bones (Menand 2001, 341). William Stephenson claimed, in essence, that understandings grasped through interpretations of factors are the "life" of the concourse. It follows that Q methodology puts the bones in a concourse as "conversational possibilities." New conversational possibilities flow from Q sorting, post-sort interviews, and factor interpretations. They may be distinguished from the "distinct feelings" (Stephenson 1983, 81), or factor interpretations, construed as the bones of a concourse, which are examined at a remove from the concourse.

To provide an example of the "life" of a concourse, a Q methodology study of the views of senior public policy officials and academics in New Zealand on the implications of diversity for policy is reported. The bones of the concourse are interpreted through three factors. One factor represents a view that adopts a "practical" orientation, in which government is interventionist. A second factor considers diversity as a fact to be accommodated through good policy analysis, not as a value to be actively managed. The third factor is distinctive in conveying a "passion" for diversity. Looked at differently, as if from within the concourse, these three factors are subtle variations on a theme, one emphasising process, one concept, and the third colour or feeling. This suggests that Q methodology serves to evoke study participants' responses as from a viewpoint, or perspective, in a flow of communicability on diversity and policy of which all have a part. This understanding, complementing that gained through factor interpretations, draws on the similarities as well as the differences among views. In the illustrative case, the understanding potentially may assist the concourse "owners" (strategic policy thinkers) to better address the challenges in New Zealand policy making.

Bones in Q Methodology

Louis Menand describes Oliver Wendell Holmes' idea of *experience* as "everything that arises out of the interaction of the human organism with its environment: beliefs, sentiments, customs, values, policies, prejudices," or in Holmes' own words, "the felt necessities of the time." Further, experience in Holmes' view is not reducible to propositions, and it is collective and

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consensual (as evidenced by the *reasonable man* standard that Holmes established). Noting that anyone can carve a boned goose, Menand explains that, for Holmes, the thing called experience puts the bones in the goose, which for Holmes was the law (Menand 2001, 341-3).

Q scholars relate readily to Menand's presentation of Holmes' ideas. Holmes' "experience" is operant subjectivity. Stephenson refers to the "felt necessities of the times" as "characteristic values" or "feelings" (1983, 78), a very few of which can account for a high percentage of the variability among individual Q sorts (Stephenson 1986, 75). Holmes' "collective and consensual" nature of experience is like Stephenson's concourse. Menand's goose is the concourse, and Stephenson's methodology *puts the bones in*.

Here the matter requires some finer nuance. First, for those interested in Q methodology, the notion of bones in the goose occasions a different look at concourse as a *flow of communicability*, and not, as seems sometimes to be assumed in reports of Q studies, as more or less the same thing as the larger set of statements from which a sample is taken. Second, if Q methodology is to stand as analogous to a judge's way of reaching and explaining a decision, then it should be that Q sorting and factor interpretation will have some ongoing engagement with the concourse, even long after the sorting and analysis are complete. Third, from the first two points, it follows that Q methodology, used by, on behalf of, or with, a *community*, has a strong potential to benefit them in their efforts to learn, have insights, understand. Finally, with regard to a community and its concourse, a (methodological) theory of how Q methodology puts bones in a concourse is also a meta-theory for how a community comes to know better what its own concourse has to say.

In a typical Q study, a researcher nominates a concourse by identifying a topic of interest and its indigenous community. A miniature of the concourse provides Q sorters (drawn from the community) with materials to model their subjectivity. The resulting Q sorts are factor analysed and interpreted. The interpretations may be the endpoint of the research, or these findings may be used for further research or in practical applications. In addition to this typical research design, in which subjectivity is studied, Q methodology is increasingly in use as a tool of discourse analysis. There the primary objective is to learn more about the concourse (conceived as a site of competing or complementary discourses) rather than about subjectivity. Rarely, however, once factor interpretations are in hand, do researchers look again at the *conversational possibilities* of the topic and community at issue. Yet, it is in this activity that the Holmes/Menand analogy comes into play.

In this paper the matter of *putting the bones in the goose* is highlighted, to take its place alongside *interpreting the bones of the goose*. Both activities are illustrated with a study of strategic policy thinkers' views on diversity and policy. Any Q-methodological study can include consideration of the bones in

the goose, but the diversity study is well suited to this purpose. The collective nature of the concourse/experience is well known to the diversity and policy study participants, but they tend to be unreflective regarding its main currents or points of consensus; unaware of the *bones*, so to say. Furthermore, for the participants, the prospect of opening up conversational possibilities is itself of value, because of their roles as strategic thinkers.

While every Q sort can influence the sorter, by offering a way for a person to see what is on his or her own mind, Q methodologists have tended not to focus on this aftermath (preferring, if any further work is contemplated at all, to focus on the practical and research implications suggested by factor differences). Yet, a Q study surely leads study participants — to a degree — to understand better their attitudes and beliefs, and those of others, with or without any further *interpretation* supplied by the researcher. As a result, the conversation is likely enriched, and the purpose of the conversation likely advanced. Thus, the diversity and policy study illustrates how new conversational possibilities can arise in sorting, post-sort interviews, and, hypothetically, as a result of the researcher's own abduction.

The introduction for this paper details alternative ways of construing *bones* in Q methodology. Then the background and aims of the diversity study are set out, and the factor interpretations are presented. As expected, new insights into subjectivity open up *forward looking* applications in the focal context of strategic policy. The discussion then moves to the Holmes-inspired "backward turning" or *returning* potential of Q methodology, as elaborated in the introduction.

There are at least three main ways in which the bones of a concourse can be understood. In sense one, bones may be thought of as structural elements that exist within a concourse, like the ribs in a whale. They are assumed to be there waiting for discovery. Q methodology allows a researcher to see the concourse as with x-ray goggles, to *see through* the surface peculiarities of communications.

Notwithstanding the valuable contributions of research using Q methodology as a tool of discourse analysis (such as Dryzek and Berejikian 1993), it is important to emphasise, following Menand, that the goose, as concourse, does not *have* structural elements that are there to be discovered with the assistance of Q methodology. There are no pre-existing discourses with characteristic values, which Q methodology serves to reveal, just as Holmes argued there are no fixed principles in law that a jurist can rely upon to reach a decision in a factually unique case. (To the extent that Q methodology has served discourse analysis, it may be in spite of an assumption that discourses are like ribs in a whale. It follows that discourse analysts might benefit from recasting their views in line with the third sense of bones, below.)

According to a second way of construing bones in Q methodology, bones *emerge* from the analysis, but they are no longer in the goose. Bones, in sense two, are skeletal frames, or *schemata*, that account for much of the variability in the complexes of experience that individuals possess with respect to a given topic (Stephenson 1986). Q researchers *abduce* such schemata of experience without recourse either to ideas of essential principles, or to preconceived frameworks. Yet, these schemata are not *in* the goose. They emerge from sorter subjectivity rather than directly out of the concourse. They are there *because* Q sorters made a freeze-frame photograph of their views. The goose, the concourse, serves its purpose by offering up a sample of statements to enable the process, and is then shunted under the table. Once the methodology has had its way with one or more individuals, the researcher can make claims about characteristic attitudes, preferences, or beliefs, as revealed by Q sorts.

A third sense of bones resonates with abductive logic's way of drawing insights from a scattering of signs. This sense is not inconsistent with the sense two "bones *of* the concourse," and it refines the quasi-fixed structural sense one *bones like the x-rayed ribs of a whale*. Holmes held that judges decide the result of cases first, and afterwards figure out plausible accounts of how they reached the decisions from compiled case experiences. Judges face a "vortex of discursive imperatives" — to find a just result, a result consistent with the results reached in the past, a result that when generalised will be beneficial, and so on (Menand 2001, 339-40). Both factor interpretations and a sense of the whole that a Q sorter gains are like judges' decisions about cases that derive from experience. Factor interpretations and judges' immediate decisions are *sense two bones*. As with a "plausible account," *sense three bones*, reveal where the experience (subjectivity) *must lie* in the goose (law or concourse).

Put differently, legal decisions and factor interpretations are models, which assist the jurist or researcher to *abduce* where the bones in the concourse must be (without the need for x-ray goggles). Factor interpretations as schemata thus lead the researcher (and study participants) back to the entire flow of communicability that gives rise to them. Using factor interpretations in this manner, the researcher (or participant) puts bones in the concourse, just as judges are required to give an account of the *bare bones* of the law operating in their decision. In a concourse, the bones are conversational possibilities.

In law, a decision may or may not endure as successive cases are adjudicated. Q methodology coalesces experiences at the instant of sorting, and the modelled subjectivity may or may not endure for long. Taken, then, as one of an infinite number of snapshots, subsequent analysis reveals to the curious observer only a fleeting image of what must be the coherence, the streams of meaning, in the large flow of communicability from which a miniscule sample was extracted and sorted. That the bones fleetingly appear

and dissolve again reminds us of the quantum nature of Q and the fact that the residue of the image alone remains, as insight, not as facts, for those who would make something of the real world applications. Further, in the act of Q sorting and the sorter's conversation with the researcher, the concourse flows on, however imperceptibly. Neither the bones removed from the concourse, nor bones appearing in it, last longer than the time taken in the act of measurement.

A good Q study results in a flowering of fine nuances in the concourse. A coherent pattern in a factor can only mean that a corresponding pattern *must be* present in the concourse, such that it gives rise to the experiences revealed. The insights and applications that we are accustomed to see in recent vintages of Q studies derive their persuasiveness from this connection. The basic argument holds that factors define or highlight features of the concourse, and thus contain insights that point, for example, to new ways of problem and solution identification (Maxwell and Brown 1999), recasting policy issues (van Eeten 2001), and facilitating policy dialogue (Steelman and Maguire 1999; Focht and Lawler 2000). Durning (1999) provides a list of generic uses in policy analysis, including obtaining insights into the context of policy issues, and identifying different policy definitions.

A study of diversity and policy was initially conceived as a search for similarities and differences in views in order to contribute to policy design in the medium- to long-term. The research set out to find bones (sense two), and bring them as relics to the world of application. In the course of the study, the possibility to illustrate bones *in* the concourse (sense three) emerged. While there is nothing unique about the diversity study that makes it a special case to illustrate how Q methodology puts the bones in the concourse, it is a good case for this aim. All the Q sorters in the study are professionally engaged in understanding their own and others' attitudes and beliefs.

Part II turns to the background and aims of the diversity and policy study, and its *bones* — as factor interpretations and as conversational possibilities. The study draws from an abstract concourse, and centres on the views of a small, fairly homogenous, and articulate P set. Methodologically, this fine-grained approach exposes very deep currents in the concourse by finding where quiet eddies signal something powerful hidden below.

Diversity and Public Policy

The Diversity Study

The concept of diversity and its relation to public policy is of central interest to a group of senior public servants in New Zealand, especially those who think strategically. Aotearoa/New Zealand is a small country faced with richly varied social and economic problems and opportunities. Population projections signal a very different face of New Zealand 20 years and more from now. A

prominent government publication notes, "we no longer have a single public and single nation, but have many different sets of values in contention" (NZ Government 2001, 53). This articulation of different values in contention is only one of numerous expressions of the challenges of diversity for public policy and public policy making (this cumbersome phrase draws attention to both the process of making policy and the policy itself once it is made, but in reporting the study *policy* means both process and outcome.)

As part of a turn to *whole-of-government* policies aimed at addressing this challenge, the New Zealand Chief Executives Forum (comprised of the 35 heads of central government departments) commissioned research to understand better the many dimensions of diversity for policy, and to develop the conceptual and methodological underpinnings to take diversity into account in policy. Phase one aimed to create an environment for interactive consideration of the *idea* of diversity in policy contexts.

In phase one, an annotated bibliography of meanings of diversity drawn from every corner of the literature (Wolf 2002a), was sent to 30 public officials and academics (including five chief executives). In groups of 15, participants met in a decision support lab to consider their ideas of diversity in a strategic (future focused) context. In the lab, each person typed comments into a computer in response to stimulus questions. This allowed for a speedy generation of a wide range of views, and for anonymous give-and-take among the participants.

Participants noted a number of key issues and tensions in the idea of diversity (Wolf 2002b). They saw that taking diversity into account might imply a shift from a sector-by-sector policy focus to one that is more demographically attuned, and further, attuned to individual interests and contexts. Diversity is both a matter for the policy making process as well as for achieving socially desired outcomes. For example, one participant stated:

> *Increasing pluralism of society will present a challenge for society to give everybody a say and a place while still providing for coherent governance - i.e. addressing the tension between leadership and participation.*

However, most of the attention in the sessions was to the operational aspects of policy, and the implication of diversity for service delivery. Two distinct views emerged. Some held that policy analysis should strive to more finely differentiate groups and group characteristics, and better understand the differential impacts of policies, so as to enable service providers to target services more precisely to those with different needs. Participants noted that this raises the issue of deciding when to use the same rules but accept different outcomes, and when to accept different rules in order to obtain desired outcomes. Others thought the solution lay in rejecting an effort that would fine-tune existing approaches because of rapidly diminishing returns. Among

the suggestions offered in this vein were that analysts should concentrate on making policy that is more principled or universal at a *meta* level; on re-establishing trust and de-emphasizing accountability mechanisms; and on considering that interrelationships may be more important than the polar ends of an aspect of diversity.

A Q methodology study (guided by Brown 1980) was designed as a follow-up of this first phase of the Chief Executives' study. The aims were to understand better the subjectivity of strategic policy thinkers on the implications of diversity for policy. The intent was to discover how policy thinkers negotiated their understandings of diversity in policy contexts. It was not intended to study views of diversity *per se*, or whether there were distinct views on whether diversity was good or bad, or on what should be done to manage diversity.

The core statement population consisted of 400 separate entries in the decision lab transcripts, which were up to a paragraph in length. A small number of additional statements came from the project's database of 255 articles, reports, and books. At the time, the literature-sourced statements were considered sufficiently indigenous to the community since the participants had access to the database, and since the authors were deemed like the participants in terms of advanced education and experience.

The project proceeded in standard fashion. The design of the Q sample was complicated by the size and abstractness of the concourse, centring as it did on the interface of an abstract term (diversity) with a decision-making system (policy). In place of a theoretical sampling frame based on diversity, the policy system was modelled for purposes of selecting statements about diversity in a balanced manner. The model has five interrelated dimensions (see Figure 1). The focal point at (C) represents the policy decision itself, conceived broadly as a collective objective and means to achieve it. In the top triangle, the *future* of that decision unfolds. At (D) are the implementation variables — the actions, behaviours, attitudes, etc — that will intervene between the decision and its outcomes at (E). In the lower triangle, *before* the decision, (A) captures the structures and institutions of a policy making system; the conditions in which policy is made, including aspects such as participation in the policy process, in a particular context, which in this case is New Zealand, 2003; and (B) the process of decision making and problem solving, including the perspectives, frameworks, theories and evidence that affect the policy debate and lead to a particular policy decision.

A second dimension for sampling statements had two levels: (1) aspirations/ideals and (2) assertions of fact. Fifty-five statements were selected (see Appendix).

A decision to concentrate the Q sorters accompanied the decision to model the concourse using the policy system. One chief executive of a central government department, two public policy academics (colleagues of the author), and twelve senior policy advisors in the social sector (health, education, social development) sorted the statements. They were assumed to be a fairly homogenous group. They were instructed to sort statements according to the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, based on their own views about the interaction of diversity and policy. At the completion of the sort, participants were asked to explain their extreme choices and to make any other comments on the exercise. The interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts range from half a page to three pages. The sorts were intercorrelated and factored by principal components analysis. Varimax rotation was used to tease apart the variability among the views.
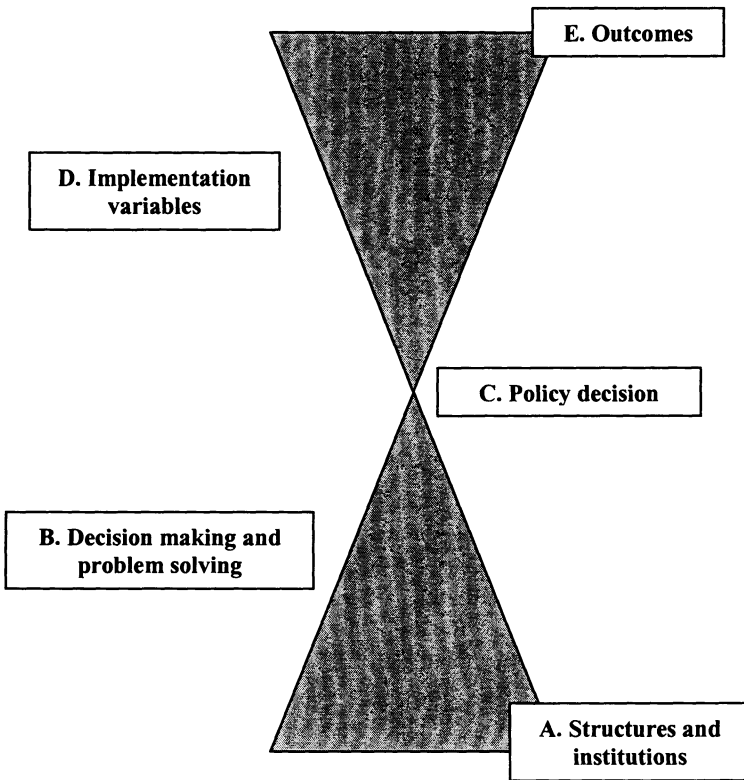

E. Outcomes

D. Implementation variables

C. Policy decision

B. Decision making and problem solving

A. Structures and institutions

Figure 1: The Policy System

Factor Interpretations: Bones *of* the Concourse
The participants' sorts revealed a high degree of communality, which was expected since the participants were selected from a small, homogenous community. Across the three factors with eigenvalues above 1, communalities ranged from 38 percent to 75 percent. The three factors explain 64 percent of the variation among sorts. The correlation between factor scores for Factors 1 and 2 is 34 percent, for Factors 1 and 3 it is 68 percent, and for Factors 2 and 3, it is 39 percent (all of which are statistically significant at p <0.05).

Inspection of the factor loadings in Table 1 makes clear that varimax rotation served to find a *pure* view in Factor 1, relegating a strongly correlated view to Factor 3. In fact, eight of the ten sorts that define Factor 1 or Factor 3 are also significant (p <0.05) on both factors. (Analyses with centroid factor extraction with both varimax and judgemental rotations produced two factors, aligned with 1/3 and 2, with similar interpretations. An unrotated factor solution is suited to characterising the significant communality.)

Table 1: Factor Scores

QSORT	FACTOR 1	2	3
1	**82**	10	01
2	**80**	20	27
3	**73**	00	33
4	**70**	20	34
5	**58**	21	34
6	-12	**80**	22
7	29	**80**	-13
8	05	**59**	18
9	*44*	**57**	18
10	18	23	**79**
11	*58*	10	**62**
12	*52*	-23	**60**
13	*41*	34	**56**
14	32	*45*	**56**
15	21	*56*	*58*

*Defining sorts (p <0.01) are shown in **bold**, with decimals omitted.*
Other significant sorts (p <0.01) appear in italics and are shaded.

Interpretations of each factor follow, with key statements shown with the factor scores for Factors 1, 2, and 3. Some interpretation draws from

interviews associated with defining sorts. The factor interpretations reveal *sense two* bones. They reflect the *schemata* based on sorters' subjectivity, which the researcher seeks to understand in general terms of attitudes or dispositions.

Factor 1: Practical
The Practical point of view, as expressed in several interviews, has little time for negativity, cynicism, or ideas that lack utility. In common with Factors 2 and 3, diversity is good for nationhood and for society, and requires tolerance.

No.	Statement	1	2	3
16	Our well-meaning desire for diversity entails a culture of equal opportunity for everything, except excellence.	-4	-3	-5
31	Greater attention to diversity will erode nationhood.	-5	-3	-4
41	In a pluralistic society such as New Zealand, social cohesion needs to include tolerance for diversity in cultural values, religious beliefs, tastes, and preferences.	4	4	4
45	Diversity has many positive aspects and can enrich our society.	3	4	5

However, complacency would be dangerous. The *status quo* legal framework does not "affect real positive outcomes" (interview). Moreover, change will need to address the existing power relationships, and take seriously the relationship of the Crown and Maori. "The most important thing is the relationships of individuals within society" (interview). (The "Crown" is the capital-*G* Government that endures across successive Parliaments, and the Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand; the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi established a base for partnership between the Crown and Maori in governance).

No.	Statement	1	2	3
5	Diversity cannot be so pronounced that it makes unity impossible.	-1	2	0
9	Concepts of difference and diversity are hollow if disconnected from specific social and historical contexts in which power relations create and perpetuate disadvantage.	5	0	2
24	We need to recognise the place of the Crown and Maori in discussion of diversity.	5	1	1

Government needs, practically, to be interventionist. To intervene effectively requires an understanding of diversity and there will be different rules of the game for different groups. The change that is required involves changing the processes of policy making.

No.	Statement	1	2	3
34	Understanding the diversity within a system allows one to intervene in that system more effectively.	3	4	3
43	A common legal framework should underpin policies and regulation. We should strive to avoid different rules of the game for different groups.	-4	3	-1
50	We need to adopt a fresh policy paradigm likely to produce new prospects affecting life chances.	2	-5	-1
51	No active change is required to any system in order to enable people to live with diversity. Diversity is a fact that societies have been dealing with since they evolved.	-3	-1	-2

One sorter commented, "I looked for policy ideas, not truisms [when choosing +5 and +4 statements]. We need to be practical, against going for 'old familiars;' get out of our comfort zones." In addition, since the process by which policy decisions are reached is essential, there is a need to attend to the diversity of voices and identities present in society.

No.	Statement	1	2	3
21	We need to listen to the wide range of voices that represent diversity and then discuss possible solutions/problems with those voices, not just a select few that constitute a definition of diversity that the current public service is comfortable with.	4	1	2

Statements that attracted little reaction were seen as empty or unhelpful, eliciting a "so what?" reaction.

Factor 2: Let It Be
The Let It Be view sees diversity positively, but as a fact rather than as a value in society.

No.	Statement	1	2	3
45	Diversity has many positive aspects and can enrich our society.	3	4	5
49	Diversity exists in society — it is not a case of government either promoting or not promoting it — unless you want a police state.	0	3	-3

While there is a need for a common setting for policy, diversity is more likely to enrich society when there is less, not more, government intervention. "Diversity occurs at sort of a middle ground level but for society to function, for states to function, a small set of universals [is needed]" (interview).

No.	Statement	1	2	3
3	Minimal commonalities of civic life should trump the claims of diverse particularism.	-1	3	-3
14	The presumption of government is that it is intended to produce an agreed outcome, or an agreed range of outcomes, and it is important therefore, to set rules which will discourage too diverse a range of outcomes.	-2	-4	-4
33	Need an idea of underlying universal, not one size fits all plus extras.	0	2	-1
43	A common legal framework should underpin policies and regulation. We should strive to avoid different rules of the game for different groups.	-4	3	-1
46	I see diversity as creating the potential for economic, social, cultural and political disruption.	-5	0	-2
55	There is no "common good" anymore. We (Government) can't prescribe for *a* public anymore.	-3	-4	-5

Sorters loading on this factor sought to resolve the place of the concept of diversity in terms of other concepts, such as democracy and inequality, by separating the idea of diversity as a condition from diversity as a goal. "Diversity seen as a fact can help us draw a distinction between diversity and the right to have various positions in society, for instance" (interviews). Democracy is "bigger" than diversity (interview).

No.	Statement	1	2	3
5	Diversity cannot be so pronounced that it makes unity impossible.	-1	2	0
44	Diversity is the very condition of democracy.	-1	-3	3

Mere difference, however, is not a cause for government action. No active protection is needed "[We should not] define people into groups and magnify the significance of the categories" (interview).

No.	Statement	1	2	3
22	Public policy should undermine group-based oppression by affirming rather than suppressing social group difference.	1	-4	-1
38	Government will have a key role in changing attitudes and building understanding amongst the people they govern.	1	-2	3
53	Liberalism is about the protection of diversity, not the valorisation of choice.	0	-3	0

There is support for individual choice, not "shoe-horning people into groups" (interview). This factor lacks Factor 1's attention to power and process in policy making. Good analysis, not many different voices at the table, is needed to make good policy.

No.	Statement	1	2	3
19	The more diverse your table is, the better the quality of decisions you make.	0	-2	0
32	There is a collective power and wisdom locked inside our divided diversity which is released when we create deep dialogues and synergies among our diverse perspectives.	2	-1	2

Factor 3: A Passion for Diversity

Factor 3, as noted, shares much in common with Factor 1, but adopts a more celebratory stance in place of 1's practicality. The interviews note a "passion" about "expressing and valuing diversity" and comment that certain other statements (e.g., 46) are "scary" or "give me the heebie-jeebies," and "we all have to feel we are part of something," a tone of language that is absent from other interview transcripts.

No.	Statement	1	2	3
12	It is indispensable for the functioning of the state that it be legitimate for all communities.	-1	-1	3
32	There is a collective power and wisdom locked inside our divided diversity which is released when we create deep dialogues and synergies among our diverse perspectives.	2	-1	2
38	Government will have a key role in changing attitudes and building understanding amongst the people they govern.	1	-2	3
46	I see diversity as creating the potential for economic, social, cultural and political disruption.	-5	0	-2

Only one defining sort (number 10) out of five did not load significantly ($p<0.05$) on Factor 1 as well. In the interview, this participant stated, "In an environment of diversity ... government has a greater role ... than kind of providing the glue and sometimes the lubrication for a diverse society to work coherently." Other statements reinforce the view that government cannot put too much weight on diversity.

There is a role, beyond what practicality might suggest, for government to take diversity explicitly into account and to ensure rules allow government to pursue a range of outcomes. Despite the overall "passion" and sense of celebration of diversity in the Factor 3 view, it is notable that the power and Maori connections in Factor 1 are not prominent. One participant explained

that the relationship of the Crown and Maori is fundamental, and thus assumed in the context (not a matter that one might "agree" with or not).

No.	Statement	1	2	3
13	We may be actually decreasing well-being by placing too much of an emphasis on diversity between recognised population groups.	-2	3	-3
22	Public policy should undermine group-based oppression by affirming rather than suppressing social group difference.	1	-4	-1
31	Greater attention to diversity will erode nationhood.	-5	-3	-4

Putting the Bones in the Concourse

In each of the three factors, there is a *coherence* across the statements. The portraits that emerge are compelling to those who know the challenges facing strategic policy thinkers in New Zealand. At the same time, it is apparent that any selection of statements purporting to be about the interface of diversity and policy can only be a meagre collection: how can a person possibly model all she has in mind with 55 statements that touch on everything from the structures and institutions of a society to policy outcomes?

The answer, well known by Q methodologists, is that the person is in no way limited to *judging* 55 statements. Statements are mere artifacts. What stands behind each statement, and what is created in the juxtaposition or alignment of two statements, is a *whole* of lived subjectivity. That proof is in the *bones* (sense two) of the factor interpretations offered above, and is wonderfully captured in the reflection of a Q sorter:

> *I think there is actually no way to do this as such, but I think there probably is a pattern.*

In the diversity and policy study, the factors are highly correlated, and thus the researcher is interested in both the common ground and the possibilities that open out from distinctions among the factors. Where in the concourse do the factors come together and diverge? And what is the *feeling* there? In particular, in what sense did this study put bones (sense three) *in*to the concourse? (The conclusions of an article reporting a Q study on sustainable development centre on suggested avenues for dialogue between points of view, based on hints of common ground; Clarke (2002). Such continuing dialogue is directed to the objective of bettering public policy, but equally shows that some conversational possibilities are more likely than others.)

Brown (1989, 91), citing Kohut, notes that interpretation is a matter of putting oneself in the shoes of the individual whose sorts are being interpreted, to "grasp the lived experiences" of the factors from the inside out. Stephenson (1983, 81) reminds us that "each factor must have its own distinct feeling

running throughout, from one end of the Q sort to another, and it is this we try to grasp as understanding." Guided by Menand's analogy, it seems that Q methodology can also supply an answer to those who wish to know not only what is grasped of lived experience, as meaning and understanding, but what may be appreciated at the meta level of understanding, that is, the understanding of the flow of communicability, its possibilities. Put differently, it should be possible to *gain insight* into the understandings gleaned through the factor interpretations of Q methodology. Such insights could go some way toward *explaining* the understandings abduced in factor interpretations.

The diversity and policy study is an example in which the concourse of interest is the interface between an abstract concept (diversity) and an abstract system (policy). The flow of communicability is *owned* by strategic policy thinkers, including the researcher and her assistant, who conducted the sorts and interviews with the participants. In conceiving, conducting, and reflecting on the factor interpretations, it was very much the researcher's journey into the concourse. The understandings the researcher has abduced about the concourse are the bones shown by the subjectivity of the sorters made operant through Q methodology. Meanwhile, the participants have not been passive. They, too, journeyed. Articulate Q sorters *explained* their extreme choices, and in so doing re-entered the flow of communicability via the researchers:

> *My positive ones [statements] were ones I imagine one might build off the concept of diversity. So that sorting process was the very kind of rough beginnings of a framework of thinking for me. So that was really useful; thank you.*

Some participants reveal in their comments a sense of their active participation in the concourse. A Factor 1 definer who "looked for policy ideas, not truisms" is likely identifying a general disposition, not an *ad hoc* reaction to statement cards.

Q methodology can take the understandings revealed in the factor interpretations further down the road to explanation. This contrasts with a more conventional scientific method, in which an effect might be *explained* by reference to its cause prior to understanding the meaning of that causal connection. Thus, the phenomenon of frost-bitten toes can be explained by extreme exposure to cold without understanding the physiology involved. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in contrast, was comfortable with *understanding* first and explaining later. In Q methodology, factor interpretations are understandings that can be explained by reference to something *solid* in the concourse — its *bones* (sense 3). For example, Factor 3 was understood in terms of a passion for diversity. As Holmes might have done, Q sorter number 10 *explains* the passion in terms of government being more than the glue or lubricant for a society to work coherently.

There are no ground rules or constraints on how to proceed in *returning* to the concourse. It will happen as naturally as ever: just as soon as one insight is absorbed into the everyday *habits* of one's thinking, it loosens new questions that demand their own understandings to resolve (Lonergan 1958, 174). Q sorting may be a particularly sharp instrument for this purpose. For example, after more than a year a simple demonstration of Q methodology using a child's set of "Go Fish" cards is, apparently, still subject to conversation among the co-workers who took part in the demonstration.

The researcher, too, can think abductively about the bones in the concourse. As a start, the researcher notes that the diversity and policy factors share common ground. There are no strong polarities, but subtle variations on a theme. The study participants are *in* their concourse regularly and professionally. What is observed in the factors is more like mood than attitude. A comparison of Factor 1 and 3 shows that a number of sorts had both a practical and a passionate orientation to the interface of diversity and policy. This might suggest that these orientations are ones that strategic policy thinkers might move between, much as guest at a party might flit back and forth between groups gathered in the kitchen and on the deck (depending on one's shifts in mood).

In an early version (1989) of a popular policy text now in its 3rd edition, Weimer and Vining cite a policy attributed to the ancient Goths (1989, 181). It was their practice, apparently, to debate important matters twice, once when they were sober, and once when they were drunk: "Drunk — that their councils might not want vigor; and sober — that they might not want discretion." The modern version of this practice is explicit attention to the mix of linear and lateral thinkers on a policy team.

It is striking that among the *strategic thinkers* in this study, the practical minded Factor 1 reveals an interest in the process of reaching policy decisions, and an associated or consequent attention to power and social (Maori) relationships, whereas what comes through clearly in Factor 3 is the sense of the potency of diversity. The tone of language across the interviews is markedly colourful. Factor 3, meanwhile, puts Crown-Maori relations in the background. Importantly, this factor is not *neutral* on the topic; rather it is taken as given, and so not a matter for subjective views. This interpretation reinforces the theme that a factor arises from a view*point*, and is not wholly a matter of a disconnected *subjectivity*. Factor 2, while neither impractical nor cold, is more analytic and conceptual. (Unfortunately, not all the participants were asked to consent to allowing their demographic characteristics to be associated with their Q sorts; however, it happens that the two academics did consent, and both define Factor 2. It also happens that at least 2 statistically significant sorts on this factor were done by Americans living in New Zealand.)

Both the Goths and the New Zealand strategic policy community show that people don't so much *have* views as respond to the "felt necessities of the times" by evoking their views from a view*point*, or perspective, in the flow of communicability. As Stephenson (1953) knew, this makes all the difference in a theory of communication based on conversational possibilities. In the act of Q sorting and in the ensuing abductive thinking of the participant and researcher, a point of view is claimed in the concourse.

Abduction back to the concourse is the everyday nature of communicability. A final, extended quotation from an interview with a Factor 1 sorter shows that Q methodology reveals a self-referential awareness of the place of a view in a concourse:

> *I thought, gosh, we really are quite diverse in our opinions as a public service as well. So that was really interesting. I mean I knew it, but looking at the statements laid out, and where I kind of fell in the 'agrees/disagrees' and the neutral ones, I think, gosh this is really interesting. To pause and actually see that's how, every time I do policy or look at policy, or look at service delivery, that's actually how I do it - with this framework. I didn't know that was quite so pronounced. Yeah, I did. I have very strong opinions about those ends of the spectrum...yeah, but I also hadn't realised I had strong opinions about the ones in between, everything from plus four to four negative to the neutral. It was very interesting. It's very interesting. For insight, it was very interesting.*

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Appendix

Each statement is coded according to the following scheme (see also p. 151).

Dimensions of Policy System	(1) Aspirations or ideals	(2) Assertions of fact
(A) Structures and institutions of a policy making system	5, 12, 24, 36, 53	20, 26, 31, 44, 54
(B) Process of decision making and problem solving	8, 21, 50, 51, 52	2, 10, 15, 19, 32, 39
(C) Policy decision	1, 17, 18, 33, 43, 48	11, 14, 28, 35, 49
(D) Implementation variables	3, 9, 29, 30, 38, 42, 47	4, 7, 16, 25, 27, 34
(E) Outcomes	6, 22, 37, 40, 41, 55	13, 23, 45, 46

Statements with factor scores for Factors 1, 2, and 3

No.	Statement	Code	1	2	3
1	Need to be clear that "best practice" on diversity issues is likely to be very context-specific and hard to generalise across policy fields.	C1	2	5	1
2	A lot of "diversity work" is motivated by a desire to be fair as long as things don't get too out of hand.	B2	-2	0	0
3	Minimal commonalities of civic life should trump the claims of diverse particularism.	D1	-1	3	-3
4	People just do not like diversity, so in effect they recognise it but don't value it.	D2	0	-1	-3
5	Diversity cannot be so pronounced that it makes unity impossible.	A1	-1	2	0
6	Let it be. What will happen will happen. We ought to be wary of social engineering.	E1	-4	-2	-2
7	Public expectations, fuelled by the media, lead to demands for less diversity in service delivery irrespective of diversity of effect.	D2	3	-2	0
8	We need an increased understanding of the limits of government, because government homogenises and is generally inept at dealing with diversity.	B1	1	0	-1
9	Concepts of difference and diversity are hollow if disconnected from specific social and historical contexts in which power relations create and perpetuate disadvantage.	D1	5	0	2
10	Increasing pluralism of society will present a challenge for society to give everybody a say and a place while still providing for coherent governance.	B2	2	2	1
11	The characteristics we currently routinely see as elements of diversity (e.g. demographics), will themselves become more diverse, but will become more multiple and intersecting. This might drive policy, service delivery, interactions, etc in a more personalised and individual way.	C2	0	1	1
12	It is indispensable for the functioning of the state that it be legitimate for all communities.	A1	-1	-1	3
13	We may be actually decreasing well-being by placing too much of an emphasis on diversity between recognised population groups.	E2	-2	3	-3
14	The presumption of government is that it is intended to produce an agreed outcome, or an agreed range of outcomes, and it is important therefore, to set rules which will discourage too diverse a range of outcomes.	C2	-2	-4	-4
15	The public policy process exists in a world where we increasingly accept the reality of diversity in the community while government itself inevitably behaves as if their "mandate" overrides such diversity.	B2	-1	-3	-2
16	Our well-meaning desire for diversity entails a culture of equal opportunity for everything, except excellence.	D2	-4	-3	-5
17	Because there are conflicting interpretations of diversity, the general idea of diversity settles nothing. The claim that diversity should be "maximally accommodated" has no determinate meaning for policy.	C1	-2	1	-1

No.	Statement	Code	1	2	3
18	Understanding of impact of inter-relationships may be more important than the polar ends of diversity.	C1	1	2	0
19	The more diverse your table is, the better the quality of decisions you make.	B2	0	-2	0
20	Diversity is profoundly anti-individualist and at odds with ideals of liberty and equality.	A2	-3	-5	-3
21	We need to listen to the wide range of voices that represent diversity and then discuss possible solutions/problems with those voices, not just a select few that constitute a definition of diversity that the current public service is comfortable with.	B1	4	1	2
22	Public policy should undermine group-based oppression by affirming rather than suppressing social group difference.	E1	1	-4	-1
23	Positive engagement with cultural practice, artistic pursuits and respect for cultural diversity are important aspects of a healthy society.	E2	3	1	4
24	We need to recognise the place of the Crown and Maori in discussion of diversity.	A1	5	1	1
25	Agents of the state can shape social differentiation through their actions.	D2	2	0	1
26	We no longer have a single public and a single nation, but have many different values in contention.	A2	-1	-1	2
27	Although a national frame of racial and ethnic relations remains important, much of the negotiation of difference occurs at the very local level.	D2	3	3	2
28	Appropriate responses to diversity will often be found at the point of delivery, which forces more general and principle-based underlying policy.	C2	2	2	0
29	The recognition of diversity, particularly diverse identities is an essential component of well-being. Thus, it is important that society allows individuals to develop and express their individual identities.	D1	4	5	4
30	Government must recognise the diversity of the community sector and the strong likelihood that organisational behaviour will be specific to the organisation and/or sector. The principle of 'horses for courses' needs to be applied to Government's interactions with the community sector.	D1	1	0	3
31	Greater attention to diversity will erode nationhood.	A2	-5	-3	-4
32	There is a collective power and wisdom locked inside our divided diversity which is released when we create deep dialogues and synergies among our diverse perspectives.	B2	2	-1	2
33	Need an idea of underlying universal, not one size fits all plus extras.	C1	0	2	-1
34	Understanding the diversity within a system allows one to intervene in that system more effectively.	D2	3	4	3
35	The very essence of "diversity" could be anathema to a culture of rules.	C2	-3	-1	0
36	If we want a civil society and polity in which private groups can sustain their meaning – giving value and function effectively, the state must keep its distance.	A1	-3	0	-1

No.	Statement	Code	1	2	3
37	The "successful" response to diversity may lead to less diversity, not more.	E1	-1	-2	-2
38	Government will have a key role in changing attitudes and building understanding amongst the people they govern.	D1	1	-2	3
39	The alleged advantages of preferential treatment are illusory.	C2	-2	0	-4
40	Diversity and inequality are often mistakenly construed as two independent fault lines.	E1	1	-2	-2
41	In a pluralistic society such as New Zealand, social cohesion needs to include tolerance for diversity in cultural values, religious beliefs, tastes, and preferences.	E1	4	4	4
42	Coherent government that recognises plurality will require enhancing the ability of all people to accept and negotiate social differences and to build alliances, which they accept will be provisional.	D1	0	-1	2
43	A common legal framework should underpin policies and regulation. We should strive to avoid different rules of the game for different groups.	C1	-4	3	-1
44	Diversity is the very condition of democracy.	A2	-1	-3	3
45	Diversity has many positive aspects and can enrich our society.	E2	3	4	5
46	I see diversity as creating the potential for economic, social, cultural and political disruption.	E2	-5	0	-2
47	We should accommodate differences to a greater degree within common settings.	D1	-2	2	0
48	Typically, the problem is not diversity, but diverse impacts on how government responds to problems and opportunities that present themselves. I am all for listening to a range of voices, but listen in the context of particular issues – like how can we as a society respond better to domestic violence.	C1	0	1	1
49	Diversity exists in society – it is not a case of government either promoting or not promoting it – unless you want a police state.	C2	0	3	-3
50	We need to adopt a fresh policy paradigm likely to produce new prospects affecting life chances.	B1	2	-5	-1
51	No active change is required to any system in order to enable people to live with diversity. Diversity is a fact that societies have been dealing with since they evolved.	B1	-3	-1	-2
52	Governments make choices about when to intervene, what to do, and how. Diversity is one of the filters through which governments need to view the world when deciding these things.	B1	1	1	5
53	Liberalism is about the protection of diversity, not the valorisation of choice.	A1	0	-3	0
54	New Zealand will be: "a birthplace of world-changing people and ideas", a land where diversity is valued and reflected in our national identity.	A2	0	0	1
55	There is no "common good" anymore. We (Government) can't prescribe for *a* public anymore.	E1	-3	-4	-5