



## **Guest Editor's Foreword**

### **Public Reactions to Leadership Crises: The Clinton/Lewinsky Affair**

This theme issue contains three Q studies that deal with public reactions to the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal of 1998-9. The scandal led to Bill Clinton becoming the first elected U.S. President to be impeached by the House of Representatives. As with the Watergate affair a generation ago, the events of the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal became a national obsession and the public became engaged in the Constitutional crisis.

The studies presented here explore public attitudes toward the Clinton/Lewinsky matter, and demonstrate the strength of Q methodology in revealing the subjectivity inherent in public discourse. For example, all three papers point to dynamics that were missed by pollsters during the scandal. Despite differences in Q samples, locale, and time (during the crisis), the similarity of the factor structures found in these studies illustrates what Thomas and Baas describe as "the power of Q in turning up 'reliable schematics' in independent studies undertaken under the rubric of the same concourse." Finally, the Brown paper illustrates how Q factors can be used to fashion questionnaires to be administered to large samples.

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Mrtek for his help and guidance on this project.

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