

# The Issue of Generalization in Q Methodology: "Reliable Schematics" Revisited

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*ABSTRACT: Research employing Q technique and its attendant methodology has long encountered criticism targeted on the allegedly specious, "non-generalizable" nature of such findings. Drawn typically from small-sample investigations of human subjectivity, wherein respondents supply data through Q sorts composed of items of unknown reliability, findings from Q studies are considered by many to fall far short of the minimal criteria for scientific measurement. Issues of generalization in Q methodology, it is argued, are amenable to examination in terms of the notion of "reliable schematics." Findings from two pairs of "tandem-study" explorations bear*

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This is a substantially abbreviated revision of a paper presented at a meeting of the Southern Political Science Association (Thomas & Baas, 1991). An expanded version of the studies on Ronald Reagan can be found in Thomas and Baas (1993) and an expanded version of the studies on George Bush can be found in Baas and Thomas (1991). A comparison of Reagan and Bush as well as more data on Bush can be found in Thomas and Baas (1992). The authors thank Terri Roose and Carol Lewis for their assistance with this project. Thomas also acknowledges support from the Wartburg College Faculty Development and Review Committee.

*strong witness to the schematically reliable character of Q-study results produced from differing probes of the same subjective phenomenon. Viewed against this backdrop, the frequently voiced concern over reliability issues stemming from the use of Q would appear quite exaggerated if not altogether unfounded.*

In this paper we focus on the issue of generalization as it pertains to Q methodology. How, and how reliably, can we generalize findings from one Q study to outcomes from others addressing the *same* phenomenon? This concern is by no means a novel one (Brouwer, 1991, 1993; Dennis, 1988; D'Agostino, 1984; Fairweather, 1981; Shontz, 1981), and the present paper extends this line of inquiry by reporting two "tandem-studies" of Ronald Reagan and George Bush in the public mind. Before turning to these studies, however, it is worth acknowledging a caveat that could conceivably render the entire project -- and the concern with scientific generalization that gives rise to it -- superfluous if not senseless.

### ***Does Generalization Really Matter?***

For most social scientists, reliability and generalization are the key criteria by which to evaluate the scientific status of a particular methodology.<sup>1</sup> However, Stephenson (1984) and Expositor (1987) have argued otherwise. Specifically, Stephenson holds that Q would hardly have been damaged had D'Agostino's (1984) examination of the effects of judgmental

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<sup>1</sup>Generalization, as used here, denotes a rather more general concern than does statistical reliability. At issue is either the product or process of generating a general principle, conception, proposition, or law from particulars. As will become clearer as we proceed, we are primarily interested here in appraising Q as a method qua generalizing process. However, we recognize that such assessments depend in great measure on the determined quality of the end result (i.e., product) of the processes.

rotation produced evidence (which it did not) of diminished reliability in the affected factor structures. This was so, according to Stephenson, because Q's fundamental interest is not with "statements of fact" but with "statements of problems." The latter, according to Expositor (1987), advance knowledge by extending and illuminating the *range of meanings* to which facts apply. Predictability, which lies at the center of the reliability criterion, pertains to statements of fact -- i.e., to matters of a normative, statistical kind. In Stephenson's view, predictability ought not be the first criterion of scientific/methodological virtue; indeed, it sometimes should give way to the goal of reaching new *understandings* as a litmus test of scientific acceptability. In consequence, reliability issues, as usually framed, are relegated to a tertiary, perhaps even trivial, role in appraising Q's epistemological assets. Studies such as those proposed here, therefore, may be interesting but not particularly valuable.

While we agree with what we understand to be Stephenson's perspective, we nevertheless have difficulty accepting, for two reasons, the conclusion that efforts aimed at demonstrating the durability of findings across P sets and Q samples in Q are utterly inconsequential. For one thing, despite Stephenson's position that such issues are irrelevant to Q's scientific status, there remains the (often implicit) assumption that, given certain conditions, the results of Q studies *are* replicable. In an explicit statement of this assumption in a study using political posters as "statements" in a Q sample, Brown (1980) notes, "...it is doubtless the case that the same factors would emerge anywhere else in the country even with another set of posters, provided that the new sample contained the breadth of concern represented in this one. In this sense do factors have generality" (p. 160). This assumption of replicability appears to derive from the dual notions that only a limited number of attitudes/images, etc., exist on a particular matter and that Q methodology provides a vehicle by which these audience segments can be revealed as operant factors. Similarly structured, yet different Q samples, when administered to different persons, should yield factors whose underly-

ing meanings convey "reliable schematics." That this is the case has been demonstrated to a limited extent, but the matter is hardly closed.

Second, we suspect that appreciation for Q's scientific standing might be embellished and possibly extended if more systematic data were compiled to demonstrate the replicability of Q studies. Increasing the stature of Q in the eyes of those who are not already avowed adherents would seem a worthy enough outcome. Beyond simple considerations of increasing Q's psychometric market share, such a consequence might allow those who are already practitioners to get on with more important matters without constantly tending to the time worn complaints targeted on "the dubious reliability of Q sort data."

For these reasons, the concern with generalization in Q methodology is, we believe, neither misplaced nor unwarranted. Granted, the quest for replicative rigor should not serve as the *sole* criterion for assessing methodological acuity; certainly, to the extent that such preoccupations preclude or interfere with the discovery of heretofore unimagined possibilities, such concerns may indeed impede scientific progress. On the other hand, there is little to be gained by dismissing such questions as simply inappropriate.

### **Generalization To vs. Generalization About**

To this point our discussion has employed a series of related terms (generalization, reliable schematics, reliability, replicability, and predictability) in virtually interchangeable, hence imprecise, fashion. Accordingly, a word is in order about our use of the term "generalization" -- under the rubric of "reliable schematics" -- in place of the more customary concept of reliability so central to the nomenclature of tests and measurements. While there is scant reason to reify the difference, we prefer the former over the latter, notwithstanding their close conceptual kinship, as a declaration of independence from the narrow test/retest conceptions of reliability implicit in "tests and measures discourse." As we shall see, we part

company with those whose examination of reliability and Q leads them to assessments that translate into a summary statistic on the order of a reliability coefficient (Brouwer, 1991, 1993; Dennis, 1988). But this, in turn, begs the question of ambiguity stemming from the concept of generalization itself.

We therefore close out our preliminary remarks by drawing a distinction between two kinds of generalization.<sup>2</sup> In the first sense, generalization appears as a narrowly technical matter pertaining to *statistical inference*: random samples are drawn and generalizations made to a larger population. As Q methodology is most frequently employed, generalization is used in a second, less common, and more "qualitative" sense: the concern is with *substantive inference* "about" a phenomenon. The importance of this distinction can be gleaned from a brief illustration.

Public opinion polls on abortion have been notorious for their inconsistency -- despite careful attention to the rules of survey sampling -- in generalizing as *to* the distribution of pro choice and pro life perspectives in the mass public (Thomas & Baas, 1991). The problem resides in the vagaries of question wording. Depending upon how questions are phrased, the proportion of pro choice to pro life proponents among American adults ranges from 2:1 to 1:1 with absolutely identical sampling procedures. Such confusion is not all that uncommon in the findings from opinion polls (see, e.g., Schuman & Presser, 1981). Evidence of such indeterminacy only serves to fortify what is taken as axiomatic in Q methodology: Issues of "substantive inference" (generalization *about*) warrant preferential treatment over matters of "statistical inference" (generalization *to*). Indeed, failure to address the former in an adequate way will virtually guarantee failure with respect to the latter.

Worth underscoring in this connection is the alternative approach to the abortion -- and hence generalization -- issue

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<sup>2</sup> The general principle, law, or proposition (i.e., product) aspect of generalization does not so much constitute a third meaning of the term as much as a variation of the "generalizing about" usage.

undertaken in the Q studies discussed in Expositor (1987) and noted above. Neither of those studies employed random samples of respondents, yet each turned up perspectives on abortion that were "schematically reliable." How many persons adhered to each such position was not of concern; what was of concern was the nature of the positions themselves. Hence the conclusion that "the replicability of results in Q method ... [does] not inhere primarily in statistical facts, but in the schematical nature of Q factors, which depends upon interpretation" (p. 81). Comparisons of the respective interpretations and the factor score composites on which they were based buttressed the claim that "reliable schematics" had been indicated in the separate Q studies on the abortion issue.

Hence the findings from one could be considered "generalizable" to findings from the other, and vice versa.

It is from the perspective of generalization as reliable schematics that we approach the issue of reliability in the studies of presidential images that follow. First we look at two studies of Ronald Reagan and then at two of George Bush.

### ***Reliable Schematics in Appraisals of Ronald Reagan***

#### ***Study 1***

The first pair of studies addresses popular appraisals of Ronald Reagan. Of the various accounts offered about Reagan's appeal we could have used to guide our research, we selected that advanced by C. Fred Alford (1988), arguably the most compelling and theoretically elaborate. Space precludes a thorough recapitulation, but the main propositional thrust of the Alford argument is that Reagan's appeal was anchored in primitive forms of identification by members of the mass public with the former president. At the base of this identification, Alford argued, was Reagan's capacity to perform an important political yet psychodynamic service for his admirers: to assuage anxieties about chronic powerlessness in the face of collective challenges by relabeling the "retreat" from

such problems a "victory" instead. In taking this tack, Reagan was able to fortify vast segments of the public's identification with him by virtue of what was, at bottom, a primitively *narcissistic* gratification.

The essentials of Alford's account can be reduced to a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  factorial design (with three "main effects," each with two levels) and used as a "sampling frame" to ensure representativeness among the wide variety of viewpoints expressed. The three levels include *frame of reference* (policy vs. personal), the *grounds of appraisal* (symbolic vs. instrumental), as well as *valence* (with equal numbers of "pro" and "con" assessments). Fitting each of the eight design cells with seven statements of that type, we can be reasonably sure that the resulting 56-item Q sample gives adequate coverage to the issues at hand.

In Study 1, 75 persons ranked ordered these 56 statements from +5 (most like my opinion) to -5 (most unlike my opinion) in standard Q-sort fashion (Stephenson, 1953; Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The results were correlated, factor analyzed (centroid method), and judgmentally rotated. Two rather antithetical factors finally emerged along with a third that was discarded as "non-meaningful."

## Study 2

In the second Reagan study, we altered the Q-sample design by incorporating a third level for the valence dimension. Specifically, we added a category for sentiments of a "mixed or null" sort vis-a-vis Reagan. The absence of such statements in the initial Q sample, or so one might argue, was possibly a factor in our failure to find a "third view" on the Reagan phenomenon and, by the same logic, may have contributed inadvertently to the polarized character of the resulting assessments which we will see shortly. In other respects, the same design features present in the first sample were used. Replicating each of the  $2 \times 2 \times 3 = 12$  statement/cell types 5 times, a 60-item Q sample resulted. This time, 47 different persons rank ordered the 60-item Reagan Q sort and the same

statistical procedures used in Study 1 were followed resulting in two judgmentally rotated factors. In both studies, factor scores were computed which provided the bases for interpreting the schematics at issue.

## **Results**

The results support two conclusions. First, there is abundant support in both studies for Alford's view of the Reagan appeal. Second, and more important, the results from the two studies are virtually indistinguishable in terms of the schematics they embody. In Table 1 we have arrayed several items from each factor to demonstrate this replicability.

Factor 1 in Study 1 (R1.1) was labeled "Illusory Leadership" and is clearly hostile to Ronald Reagan and the Reagan "legacy." The first factor from the second study (R2.1) is labelled "Dangerous Illusions Revisited" and echoes these sentiments precisely. Prominent in both of these factors is a portrayal of Reagan's policy record as "deplorable," "penalizing the poor," as "making the American dream impossible," and employing the cynical strategy of "deficit inflation," deliberately designed to asphyxiate social programs while claiming to champion the cause of ordinary Americans. To account for apparent public acquiescence in the face of this attack on liberal government, these persons possess a strong conviction that those enamored of Reagan were, in effect, "dupes" for having been "taken in" (Ducat, 1988) by hollow symbolism and oversimplified renditions of current as well as past realities in American society. They find in Reagan's rhetoric ample evidence of equally cynical -- largely illusory -- reconstructions of American history and the role played therein by heroic individualism and faithful adherence to the Protestant ethic. Again, what is especially troubling from this standpoint is the degree to which such a course actually *worked* in winning the hearts and minds of so many Americans. Hence, the indictment of Reagan's leadership encompasses an unflattering account of his followership as well. Indeed, the gullibility of those responding to Reagan's sym-



**Table 1**  
**Reagan Schematics Compared**

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*Reagan Factor 1: Study 1.* He was too concerned with military might. I thought his neglect of education and the social welfare system was deplorable (+5 -1).... His tax policies favored only the wealthy and his federal spending restraints penalized the poor (+4 -2).... It seems to me that everyone just fell asleep for eight years -- and maybe still are asleep: Poverty increased, infant mortality increased and the general position of women, children and the elderly worsened. It just makes me feel ill when I think of how gullible people were (+5 -4).

*Reagan Factor 1: Study 2.* Because of Reagan's policies, the American Dream is now an "impossible dream" for the average family in our country. It's going to be difficult to reach the same standard of living attained by one's parents now (+4 -2).... I feel very uncomfortable when I think about a man who apparently drove up our budget deficits as a tool to force cuts in social programs for needy persons (+3 -3).... "Reagan's America" is the stuff of which pure fiction and poor movies are made: individuals, acting alone, make their own destiny. It never was that way, and it never will be (+2 -4).

*Reagan Factor 2: Study 1.* He kept us out of war, improved relations with Russia, kept unemployment down, seemed to have decent Christian values and he was a master at handling the press. He was the right man for the job at the right time (-4 +5).... He was a father figure and a throw back to the days when things were seemingly simple (-1 +4).... The Reagan years gave me a feeling that safe, stable times had returned and that fundamental values were back in vogue and still unchangeable (-3 +4).... America was really made by people who worked hard, took care of themselves, and weren't always looking for help and handouts. That was Reagan's message and he was right (-3 +3).

*Reagan Factor 2: Study 2.* After the failed presidencies of Nixon, Ford, and Carter, he showed that the presidency was "do-able" again. As a result, he restored confidence in our nation's government (-1 +4).... He boldly articulated a conservative agenda and, despite opposition from a largely Democratic Congress, he was able to make good on many of his promises (0 +4).... Reagan's message was simple: America was made by people who worked hard and weren't always looking for a handout. It is a simple truth, but his critics didn't like it because it wasn't "easy" (-4 +3).... He stood for the old-fashioned values of family and hard work, and he deserves credit for a policy agenda aimed at restoring these values (-3 +2).

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bolic appeals is rendered even more shameful by Reagan's alleged (but largely ignored) personal hypocrisy in failing to meet the very standards of self-reliance and hard work given lip-service in his rhetoric.

The second factor in the first study (R1.2) was labeled "Authentic Leadership" and gives voice to precisely the kinds of affirmations of Reagan and his leadership that Alford's account anticipates. The second factor in Study 2 (R2.2), labeled "Authenticity in Action Revisited," seems a virtual reincarnation of the pro-Reagan factor R1.2. In both of these factors, policy considerations are conspicuous by their absence. In their place, one finds a mix of personal and symbolic themes centered on Reagan himself. Especially noteworthy are the sentiments of gratitude and relief (anxiety-reduction) that Reagan was, in effect, "a father figure and a throwback to the days when things were seemingly simple ...," a source of assurance "that safe, stable times had returned ...," and a person who had "restored confidence in government." Similarly, they echo a key refrain in Reagan's rhetoric -- namely, his construction of American history as the story of the triumph of individual initiative and private pursuits over and against present "realities" of collective indulgence and public sector incompetence.

Scanning the distinguishing statements for the second factor in both studies, one can find corroborating evidence for Alford's claim that primitive narcissism is implicated in the attachments to Reagan. The symbolic-mythological references are all historical and, as such, are arguably invoked as an escape from (or defense against) harsher realities of the present. For Alford, the responsive embrace of such symbolism is tantamount to narcissistic indulgence insofar as it relieves those so behaving of feelings of anxiety and/or guilt for having abandoned altogether the quest for mastery over collective concerns. That "things as they were" are understood as a "safer and more stable time," and that Reagan personifies a symbolic reincarnation of such assurances are in harmony with the motives served by Reagan's appeal as seen by Alford.

In sum, we find forceful evidence of replicability in the results of two Q studies of the Reagan legacy. Based on different Q samples and different P sets, the two sets of findings are virtually indistinguishable in terms of the schematics they embody. As "reliable schematics," therefore, these factors stand as operant testimony to subjective cleavages that were already apparent, albeit implicitly so, in the concourse of communication about Ronald Reagan and his presidency.

### ***Subjective Appraisals of Bush***

Though satisfied that reliable schematics were demonstrated in the Reagan studies, we wondered whether a similar "tandem-studies" approach would lead us to the same verdict were each investigator to proceed along much more dramatically "independent" lines. Accordingly, our second tandem-studies exploration was designed as more nearly "independent collaboration." Substantively, our interest centered on George Bush's place in the public mind. Methodologically, the Bush case appeared to enjoy certain advantages over the Reagan phenomenon as a "test" of reliable schematics claims in Q-based research. Unlike the Reagan case, we began our explorations of "George Bush in the public mind" with no common theoretical framework focusing our attention or governing Q-sample composition. We each amassed statements of opinion -- from newspapers, opinion forums, personal interviews and the like -- on what and how people thought of George Bush and his presidency as of mid-1991. Although we were drawing on the same concourse in doing so, the two studies were undertaken along totally independent lines with each of us purposely ignorant of how the other was proceeding.

#### ***Study 1***

In the first Bush study we employed a framework for Q sample composition that echoes themes and issues contained in the Reagan studies. Framed around components of presidential popularity identified by Alford in his essay on Reagan,

the design houses two main effects: (1) Dimensions of Evaluation, and (2) Valence. The first has four levels (personal, policy, instrumental, symbolic); the second has three (pro, mixed/null, con). The result, then, is a balanced factorial design with  $4 \times 3 = 12$  cells. Replicating each of the combinations 5 times, the final Q sample for the first study of Bush contained  $N = 60$  statements. This Q sample was administered to 47 respondents who rank-ordered the items from +5 to -5 in rendering their subjective appraisals of Bush's performance as president. Three centroid factors were extracted and, following rotation (varimax criteria), factor-score composites were calculated.<sup>3</sup>

## Study 2

An entirely different theoretical framework guided the second Bush study. The four components of presidential skill (strategic understanding, presentation of self, tactical skill, and management of authority) identified by Erwin Hargrove and Michael Nelson (1984) provided us with a framework for sampling subjective appraisals of Bush's leadership performance. Specifically, the skills inventory is treated as one of two main effects in a factorial design, with each of the four levels cross-classified with the three levels (pro/mixed/con) of *valence*, which serves as the second main effect. The result is a  $4 \times 3$  factorial design (four skills by three levels of valence) utilized to select statements broadly representative of the Hargrove-Nelson model. Each of the 12 cells in this design was fitted with four statements and two additional statements not suggested by the framework were "tacked on," yielding a Q sample of 50 items.<sup>4</sup> Following the same procedures as in

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<sup>3</sup> In the Reagan studies, Alford's theory supplied the principal rationale for rotating factors judgmentally. The absence of an equivalent abductive base in the Bush studies accounts for the resort to varimax rotation criteria in those cases. Additionally, numerous efforts at judgmental rotation were unable to "improve" upon the Bush data.

<sup>4</sup> The two items outside Hargrove and Nelson's framework pertained to (a) public affection for First Lady Barbara Bush, and (b)

Study 1, the 50 items were rank-ordered by each of 40 respondents with three centroid factors resulting. Following the pattern in Study 1 we settled on the varimax rotation of these factors from which factor scores were computed.

### Results

Both studies turned up three factors, with the strongest one (statistically) in each case being bipolar. While the second factor discovered by Study 1 was unipolar (unlike the bipolar second factor from Study 2), the positive end of the latter showed a similar magnitude of inverse correlation with the first factor in both studies. Likewise, the third factor in both instances displayed greater orthogonality vis-a-vis the first two, notwithstanding the fact that this factor in the second study showed greater bipolarity than in the first. Evidence of structural compatibility in the two factor matrices is thus quite substantial.

More difficult to appraise is the crucial matter of schematic reliability. To be sure, there are linguistic idiosyncracies in the respective interpretations advanced above for each of the viewpoints vis-a-vis Bush. Reliable schematics, however, are at issue not in the interpretations per se, but in what gives rise to them, i.e., the factor-score composites and the "feeling states" or "states of mind" that these make operant. And inasmuch as factor arrays represent *configurations* of meaning, there is no simple way to assay their "degree of fit" by means of a summary statistic on the order of a reliability coefficient. That being the case, we invite readers to draw their own conclusions based on the raw statement scores presented below (entire factor arrays from both studies are available upon request from the authors) quite apart from the interpretations that we have advanced. Having done so ourselves, we believe that the "four faces of George Bush" dis-

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Bush's electoral prospects for the 1992 election, at this time some 18 months away.

closed by *each* of these studies are neither "idiosyncratic" nor unique to that particular study alone.

Factor 1 in Study 1 (B1.1) was labeled "George Bush as Hero and Villain" and factor 1 in Study 2 (B2.1) was coined as "The Janusian George Bush." Both are defined at their opposing ends by partisan friends and foes of Mr. Bush. These mirror images are reflective, we would argue, of "general" polarization in the public toward the substance and style of the Bush presidency. Specifically, as shown in Table 2, in Study 1 the polarities revolve around matters of potency (his "awesome military exercise"), trust (too much or too little "apple pie") and empathy (his possession or not of a genetic basis for such a predisposition). In the second study, we also see discord on the issue of Bush's potency (he's no wimp); however, the greater debate is over his competence (a professional with solid credentials) and decisiveness (when the chips were down he acted). Also echoing Study 1, Bush's capacity to empathize with and/or show compassion toward ordinary Americans is a point of contention. Each factor, as selected statement rankings shown in Table 2 indicate, resonates to "dispositional" qualities that Bush has or lacks in attempting to exercise presidential leadership. Focusing on personal qualities, persons defining the first factor in each case seem to base their assessments of Bush on something akin to an "implicit personality theory" or "presidential prototype" that Bush either measures up to or falls miserably short of. The positive ends of both B1.1 and B2.1 see *strong leadership*; the negative end sees weakness.

The second factors B1.2 and B2.2, while not identical in linguistic respects, nonetheless bear schematic resemblance in their sentiments toward Bush. Factor B1.2 was labeled "Failed Domestic Policy and Inauthenticity," whereas B2.2 was labeled "A Duplicitous Duality: Kinder and Gentler Hypocrite." The common subjective denominator appears to be doubts about Bush's authenticity. B1.2 is more perturbed by Bush's dismal record of performance in domestic affairs than is B2.2 (although there are hints of such disappointments therein as well). Nonetheless, as seen in Table 3, there are

**Table 2**  
**Bush Factor 1 Compared**

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*Factor 1, Study 1.* George was there during the Gulf War. He was commander in chief and launched the world's most awesome military exercise ever. The war allowed his special qualities to emerge (+5 -3 -3).... I don't trust him. Every time he speaks he tries to butter the country up with talk of patriotism, apple pie, baseball, grandkids, white picket fences, etc. (-5 +2 +1).... I feel very frustrated. It's as if he "isn't aware" of what goes on out there in the real world (-5 +5 -2).... Something is missing in George Bush. An empathy gene, if there is such a thing, an instinctive response to the pain of other human beings. An internal monitor that tells him when political calculation has to stop, yielding to concerns for decency (-3 +1 +2).

*Factor 1, Study 2.* When the chips were down, as in the Gulf crisis, Bush has shown that he's no wimp. In crisis situations, he's handled himself very well and shown he's a man of convictions who is willing to fight and defend them (+5 +1 +4).... Bush has solid credentials as a professional in public service. Not only does this give him experience in making decisions; it also means he has the respect of other professionals with whom he must work (+4 -2 +2).... The real problems, like poverty, poor education and unemployment are being ignored by Bush. Even while his popularity soars, the country as a whole is in a tailspin (-5 +5 -3).... I don't think George Bush has any idea what kinds of problems and challenges average working men and women are facing in this country (-5 +3 -3).

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striking affinities in the skepticism towards Bush's authenticity in both cases. For example, Bush is characterized as a man with no principle who only wants to survive, as well as a man lacking in empathy. Indeed, so inauthentic is Mr. Bush to proponents of B1.2 that they even pity him for his lack of self awareness (e.g., "the saddest thing about Bush is that he really believes he cares"). In the mind of B2.2, Bush is seen as neither weak nor indecisive by nature, yet "the face of George Bush" that it finds most compelling is hardly the raw material for genuinely strong leadership. In fact, it is a "two-faced" face of George Bush that is salient from this vantage point: while he may not be weak, he cannot be said to be genuinely strong either. In truth, he cannot be said to be genuine at all, and it is this perceived duplicity that permeates doubts about

**Bush.** Thus B2.2 laments that Bush expended inordinant energy trying to convince us that he was a bowling alley type guy, when he was really a rich man pulling for the rich. And for B1.2, Bush is simply "phoney." Semantic specificity aside, each of the second factors finds in George Bush an absence of candor and authenticity that is compelling and disturbing.

**Table 3**  
**Bush Factor 2 Compared**

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*Factor 2, Study 1.* The education plan of the self-styled education president is mostly wind. Ditto the housing plan. And even his commitment to the most important domestic achievement of his tenure, the clean air act, was in doubt almost until the moment he signed it (-2 + 4 -3).... So far, Mr. Bush projects only ambiguity; clever and energetic in foreign policy, clumsy at politics, irresolute about domestic needs. The result has been success abroad and stasis at home ( 0 + 4 -5).... Bush's presidency resembles a hang glider: born on thermal air currents of approval, it shows less a sense of destination than an imperative to remain aloft (-2 + 4 -1).... The saddest thing about Bush is that he really believes he cares. His actions, however, show him to be anything but a person who cares for the less fortunate (-4 + 2 -1).

*Factor 2, Study 2.* Time magazine had it right: There are two George Bushes—a highly capable captain of U.S. foreign policy, and a dawdling, disengaged caretaker of domestic affairs (-2 + 5 + 1).... I'd like to see him show the same sense of indignation at poverty, poor education, and other domestic injustices that he showed toward Saddam Hussein and Manuel Noriega when he went after them! (-2 + 5 + 4).... Bush once said he's a "bowling alley kind'a guy." Well, who's he kidding? He may pitch horse shoes and eat pork rinds, but that can't change the fact that he's a rich man, from a rich family, whose politics are good for rich folks (-1 + 4 -1).... Like most politicians, Bush is not totally deserving of our trust. He said he wanted to be the education and environmental president and that he wouldn't raise taxes. Why trust him when he kept none of these promises? (-2 + 4 -1).

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Though statistically small, the third factors from both studies contain easily discerned common elements as listed in Table 4: applauding his international achievements lavishly, each is reluctant to be too critical of Bush's performance in addressing domestic issues. Though modest by comparison with foreign policy credits, what Bush has done (or not done) on the domestic side is chalked up to constraining political



realities over which he has little control. Given the constraints, Bush has functioned quite well as a "prudent" or "competent" politician at home at the same time that he's assumed the mantle of a "statesman" for his achievements abroad. Accordingly, factor B1.3 was labeled "Competent Statesman/Competent Politician" and B2.3, "A Skillful Duality: Global Statesman/Prudent Politician."

**Table 4**  
**Bush Factor 3 Compared**

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*Factor 3, Study 1.* Bush's policies have created a much kinder and gentler nation (+3 -4 +5).... Give Bush his due for helping to fashion the Reagan-Bush program of national security in the 1980s--a policy that *enabled* the heralded reforms in Eastern Europe and the worldwide repudiation of socialism (+1 +1 +4).... Bush's performance has been absolutely A+ (+3 -1 +5).... Sometimes I almost wish that he would just get out of office. But then I think about how well he had handled some things, and I think we really couldn't have had a better president at those times (0 0 +3).... Bush is a highly capable captain of foreign policy, and a dawdling disengaged caretaker of domestic affairs (+1 -1 -4).

*Factor 3, Study 2.* There's definitely a resurgence of patriotism across the country, and Bush deserves a lot of credit for that. He's made us proud to be Americans again (+4 -2 +5).... If Reagan was the "Great Communicator," Bush is the "Great Conciliator." There doesn't seem to be *anything* in the political universe of George Bush that is too important to compromise! (+1 -1 +3).... He's obviously respected by world leaders, and the few who have made the mistake of not respecting him (like Noriega and Hussein) have learned the hard way that he's a man whose words are backed by deeds (+3 +2 +5).... He'd make a great Secretary of State or Secretary General of the United Nations. As president, however, his considerable diplomatic talents don't fully equip him for the job (-1 -1 -5).

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## Conclusions

Taken together, then, we find in the above results grounds for confidence on the part of Q methodologists as they confront commonplace questions and skepticism from critics of Q on the matter of substantive or schematic generalizability.

Clearly, the modest scope of this effort -- when judged against the magnitude of the task of "generalizing about generalization in Q" -- will not put to rest the tiresome litany of doubts expressed by scholars uncongenial to Q's "model of science." Yet there are no doubt many for whom skepticism vis-a-vis Q is very much a provisional condition that may well respond, quickly and affirmatively, to the light of evidence. Beyond seeking to quiet some personal concerns of our own, the foregoing exercises were undertaken in hopes of addressing such an audience. Whether the latter will occur we cannot be sure; however, we can speak to the former with clear authority. For our part, our concerns have been laid to rest -- happily so and none too soon, as we contemplate a future free of tandem studies and ripe for scientific imagination.

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