

10-9-1998

# The Politics of Industrial/Organizational Psychology and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator: What is Jungian about a Jungian Approach?

Editor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp>

 Part of the [Industrial and Organizational Psychology Commons](#), [Other Political Science Commons](#), and the [Other Psychology Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Editor (1998) "The Politics of Industrial/Organizational Psychology and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator: What is Jungian about a Jungian Approach?," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 15 , Article 3.  
Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol5/iss15/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Bulletin of Political Psychology by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [commons@erau.edu](mailto:commons@erau.edu), [wolfe309@erau.edu](mailto:wolfe309@erau.edu).

## International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: The Politics of Industrial/Organizational Psychology and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator: What is Jungian about a Jungian Approach?

Author: Editor

Volume: 5

Issue: 15

Date: 1998-10-09

Keywords: Jung, MBTI, Myers-Briggs, Organizations, Typology

**Abstract.** This article analyzes the most common contribution stemming from a variant of analytic (Jungian) psychology as applied to prescriptions and proscriptions for industries and organizations. The contribution, viz., a personality typological theory, may have lost its "Jungness" through the application.

There are many cardinal features of Jungian psychological theories. One is that there are important constituents to psychological functioning that are somehow repositories or indices of timeless themes characterizing human and nonhuman history. Another is that only some of human psychology appears to be conscious--unconscious phenomena can significantly impact on conscious phenomena and on behavior. A third is that there are dynamic processes that affect an individual's degree of personality cohesiveness, complexity, and the like. A fourth is that trait and process opposites simultaneously exist within the psyche even if these opposites may differ in dominance at any point in time. A fifth among others is the importance of symbolization and levels of meaning between, within, and among various psychological and behavioral elements. Wafting through all these features are a spiritual ambience and descriptions and inferences about atypical phenomena that seem to both violate and transcend scientific reason.

There is still controversy over whether and how Jungian theory can be supported through empirical, rationalist, and/or other approaches. The richness of the theory is quite apparent--even if that richness may be viewed as a violation of the theoretical exemplar of parsimony. However, this richness has been largely avoided in industrial/organizational applications. Instead, four personality potentialities--extraversion-introversion (E-I), thinking-feeling (T-F), sensation-intuition (S-I), and a fourth dyad, judging-perceiving (J-P), that is Jungian-like but developed by another researcher, Isabel Myers--have been applied in an effort to identify interpersonal styles of individuals and to recommend and delineate functional attributes of groups within organizations towards the goal of adaptive management. The most common assessment device for identifying and then applying these potentialities is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

Unfortunately, there seem to be little data--at least based on empirical and rationalist variants of scientific method--supporting the purported applications of the MBTI in affecting the management of organizations and groups within it. (This conclusion does not ignore correlational research between the MBTI and other construct measures that seems to support the proposed referents and nomological networks of MBTI types.) Moreover, the MBTI seems to trivialize, oversimplify, and even misread the notion of Jungian personality potentialities.

However, the MBTI may still be very Jungian--even if not in the manner intended by the MBTI's creators. For example, some observers have noted that the marketing of MBTI programs and materials as well as the MBTI seminar process can at times border on the cult-like--as can seminars on Jungian psychology. As well, the MBTI's very failings when held to the accounts of scientific method may--as with Jungian psychology--be held by its supporters to be a problem of adversarial, inadequate, or irrelevant scientific paradigms. Moreover, the political notion of received wisdom to enlighten a population--and the failings

## International Bulletin of Political Psychology

of this wisdom-- may be characterized as timeless as anything arising from the depths of the collective unconscious.

So the MBTI as a Jungian approach may be Jungian and Non-Jungian concurrently. This may cast a shadow over the MBTI enterprise or merely typify an ironic and oxymoronic synchronicity (See Barbuto, J.E., Jr. (1997). A critique of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and its operationalization of Carl Jung's psychological types. *Psychological Reports*, 80, 611-625; Boyle, G.J. (1995). Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI): Some psychometric limitations. *Australian Psychologist*, 30, 71-74; Furnham, A. (1996). The big five versus the big four: The relationship between the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and NEO-PI five factor model of personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 21, 303-307; Jung, C.G. (1953). Two essays on analytical psychology. In *Collected works (Vol. 7)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Originally published in 1917.); Jung, C.G. (1971). Psychological types. In *Collected works (Vol. 6)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Originally published in 1921.)) (Keywords: Jung, MBTI, Myers-Briggs, Organizations, Typology.)