

Psychological Type and U. S. Political Party Affiliation

Do your psychological type preferences relate to your political party affiliation? Your political ideology? This article suggests that psychological type preferences indeed do influence both of these political orientations.

Introduction

Does your psychological type influence your political orientation and party affiliation? We think so, but research on the topic is almost non-existent. One attempt to explore the question can be found at personalitypage.com. Unfortunately, the results presented there categorize responses for each MBTI type into Democrat, Republican, Liberal, Conservative, Other, and so on. Thus, party affiliation (Democrat, Republican, etc.) is included as a category separate from political ideology (liberal, conservative, moderate, etc.). Given that party affiliation and ideology tend to be strongly correlated, this separation makes it difficult to explore the influence of type preferences on affiliation and ideology together.

Probably the best source of information is provided by responses collected when Consulting Psychologists' Press revised the MBTI in 1998. The revision process involved a representative national sample of more than 3000 people in the United States. One of the questions asked concerned party affiliation.

Results from the survey are shown in the type table below. Take a moment to study the table and see if you can find any patterns.

Table 1: Psychological Type Preferences and Political Party Affiliation

<p>ISTJ</p> <p>Dem 30%</p> <p>Rep 42%</p> <p>Ind 28%</p>	<p>ISFJ</p> <p>Dem 34%</p> <p>Rep 36%</p> <p>Ind 30%</p>	<p>INFJ</p> <p>Dem 49%</p> <p>Rep 22%</p> <p>Ind 29%</p>	<p>INTJ</p> <p>Dem 19%</p> <p>Rep 40%</p> <p>Ind 41%</p>
<p>ISTP</p> <p>Dem 28%</p> <p>Rep 38%</p> <p>Ind 34%</p>	<p>ISFP</p> <p>Dem 33%</p> <p>Rep 26%</p> <p>Ind 41%</p>	<p>INFP</p> <p>Dem 38%</p> <p>Rep 22%</p> <p>Ind 40%</p>	<p>INTP</p> <p>Dem 17%</p> <p>Rep 34%</p> <p>Ind 49%</p>
<p>ESTP</p> <p>Dem 27%</p> <p>Rep 35%</p> <p>Ind 37%</p>	<p>ESFP</p> <p>Dem 39%</p> <p>Rep 31%</p> <p>Ind 31%</p>	<p>ENFP</p> <p>Dem 34%</p> <p>Rep 31%</p> <p>Ind 34%</p>	<p>ENTP</p> <p>Dem 26%</p> <p>Rep 28%</p> <p>Ind 45%</p>
<p>ESTJ</p> <p>Dem 32%</p> <p>Rep 46%</p> <p>Ind 22%</p>	<p>ESFJ</p> <p>Dem 33%</p> <p>Rep 37%</p> <p>Ind 30%</p>	<p>ENFJ</p> <p>Dem 35%</p> <p>Rep 35%</p> <p>Ind 30%</p>	<p>ENTJ</p> <p>Dem 26%</p> <p>Rep 40%</p> <p>Ind 34%</p>

This table was adapted from 3 different slides presented in: Peter B. Myers and Katherine D. Myers, *Snapshots of the 16 Types*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press. Copyright 2001.

One of the first things you might have noticed is that the distribution for party affiliation is fairly equal for many of the types, particularly for the ENFPs and ENFJs. In comparison to this pattern for the ENFs, however, the INFJ pattern shows a clear inclination for this type to report an affiliation for Democrat (49%) and away from Republican (22%). The mirror to this pattern can be seen in the responses of the ESTJs, who show a fairly clear preference for Republican (46%), although a respectable 32% of ESTJs indicate an affiliation with Democrats. Just as interesting, however, is the comparison of the INTs with the INFs in terms of Democratic vs Republican affiliation. So, one question that arises is "why do INFs differ from these Thinking types in terms of Democratic vs. Republican affiliation?" We'll present one possible answer below.

Another interesting pattern concerns the NTPs: ENTP and INTP. These two types appear inclined to declare a stronger affiliation with Independent than do most other types (49% and 45%, respectively). These results are mirrored by the results for the SJs and particularly the STJs. As can be seen, the STJs (ISTJ and ESTJ) report the lowest levels of affiliation with the Independent label (28% and 22%, respectively). Thus, another question that arises is "why do STJs differ from NTPs in party affiliation?"

Finally, at look at the four corners of the type table (the "hard edges") shows the TJs clearly affiliate with the Republican Party more so than most of the other types. As can be seen, at least 40% of each of the four TJ types (ESTJ, ENTJ, ISTJ, INTJ) indicate a Republican affiliation. Our third question thus is "why do TJs tend to affiliate with Republican?"

Context

Before answering these three questions, it might be helpful to provide some context regarding political affiliation and ideological self identification.

To start, let's look at trends in how people identify themselves with respect to ideology: liberal, moderate, and conservative. The graph below shows results from the biennial survey conducted by the American National Election Studies (ANES) at the University of Michigan. Participants in the survey are asked to indicate their liberal-conservative orientation using seven categories: extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, and extremely conservative. Participants may also indicate they "don't know". For the table below, all liberal responses are combined and all conservative responses are combined.

The results indicate at least four interesting trends. First, the percent of participants who self-identify as "liberal" has remained fairly constant, ranging from about 15% to 20%. (Recently, the percent has edged above 20%.) Second, the well-reported trend towards a more conservative orientation in the U.S. is evident in the increased number of self-identified conservatives. Approximately 30-35% of each sample have reported a conservative orientation since the mid-1980s. Third, the percent of moderates has remained consistently in the 25% neighborhood from about 1984. Finally, the percent responding "don't know" has been decreasing since 1990 from a high of 33% to a low of 20% in 2004.

Next, let's look at the relationship between party identification and ideological orientation. As mentioned in the introduction, these two factors tend to be significantly related. This relationship can be seen in the next table (below). The results for Republican Party affiliation strongly show the influence of a conservative political identity with about 75% of Republicans indicating some degree of conservative leaning. Similarly, Democratic Party affiliation tends toward a liberal orientation with 40-45% of Democrats indicating some degree of liberal leaning. Clearly, however, the association between party affiliation and ideological orientation is stronger for Republicans. Finally, Independents tend to mirror the national norms (especially for 2004) with Independents divided amongst ideological orientations in the following proportions: liberal (25%), moderate (45%) and conservative (30%).

[More Information](#)
[Are the Trends Changing?](#)

Liberal? Conservative? Moderate? Psychological Type?

The chart above shows the significant relationship between ideology and party affiliation (and the relationship is statistically significant). But, what does it mean to be conservative or liberal?

Probably the most studied indicator of liberal-conservative orientation has been issue opinions related to social and economic issues as well as opinions about the role of government in society. For example, in terms of social issues, conservatives tend to be pro-life, against gay-marriage, and for the death penalty. Liberals, on the other hand, tend to be pro-choice, tolerant of gay-marriage, and against the death penalty. (Note: [Some polls](#) indicate these patterns are not always consistent.)

Although such positions on issue opinions help define liberal or conservative orientation, there are more fundamental factors that appear to underly such opinions. Our position is that these more fundamental factors can be expressed as differences in psychological type preferences.

Sensing-Intuition. Sensing and intuition are the only psychological type preferences that show any consistent relationship to political ideology (in the few studies of which we are aware). In particular, clearer preferences for Sensing associate with conservative leanings whereas clearer preferences for Intuition associate with a more liberal orientation.

Consider the characteristics of Sensing and Intuition types. Sensing types routinely are characterized as practical, realistic, and concerned with the here-and-now. They trust experience and facts. On the other hand, Intuiting types are characterized as imaginative, abstract, and concerned with the future. They trust hunches and possibilities.

Now consider this definition of conservatism from [David Horowitz](#) "...conservatism [is] an attitude about the lessons of the actual past. By contrast, the attention of progressives [is] directed toward an imagined future." Also, consider these definitions from the [Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary](#) for Conservative and Liberal:

Conservative: "... tending or disposed to maintain existing views, conditions, or institutions: TRADITIONAL."
Liberal: "...not bound by authoritarianism, orthodoxy, or traditional forms."

Comparing these different perspectives clearly suggests the conservative's respect for the proven institutions and practices of the "actual past" seem quite similar to the Sensing type's respect for experience and tradition. The conservative's desire for constructive and incremental change--[Edmund Burke's](#) notion of organic change--seems similar to the Sensing type's desire for change that clearly has been established from the facts of the situation and tradition. On the other hand, the liberal's preference for envisioning a new future is quite consistent with the Intuiting type's preference for imagination and creativity. The liberal's inherent need to not be bound by tradition is the Intuiting type's preference for change and possibility.

This perspective seems further supported when we look at the critiques conservatives and liberals sometimes employ when discussing the other's psychology. For example, [the following conservative critique](#) of "leftism's" psychology clearly seems to involve S-N conflict about change:

The central proposal here may seem at first paradoxical but it is that attitude to the status quo characterizes Leftists rather than Rightists. It is proposed that it is not Rightists who are in favour of the status quo. They are in fact indifferent to it and may equally favour it or oppose it according to circumstances. Leftists, on the other hand, characteristically RESENT the status quo -- at least in the modern democracies. Whatever else the Leftist may be, the bedrock of Leftism is a strong dislike or even a hatred of the way the world is. They have a strong desire or even a need for political change, often extreme change.

The ideas expressed here, we suggest, reflect a clear example of S-N differences (and particularly SJ vs. NP differences) with respect to change. Those individuals with a preference for Intuiting indeed do have "a strong desire or even a need for" change. Does this need for change extrapolate to the political world? We think so. Consider the author's further comments about "Rightists":

The Rightist, by contrast, generally has no need either for change or its converse. If anything, Rightists favour progress -- both material and social. So most Rightists are conservatives (cautious) not because of their attitude to change *per se*. On some occasions they may even agree with the particular policy outcomes that the Leftist claims to desire. They resist change, then, mainly when it appears incautious.

As [those](#) who have worked with psychological type and organizational change will tell you, these sentiments look very much like the Sensing type's attitude toward change in organizational life. As the author notes, Rightists (or Sensing types) are not against change--if the change is incremental, pragmatic, "sensible."

The foregoing critique is, of course, just that: a critique. As such, the opposite political orientation (type preference) is portrayed in a somewhat less than flattering light. One of the contributions that psychological type knowledge can make in the study of politics--at least in our opinion--is to reframe what often seems as life-and-death political differences as typological differences that might be understood. For example, what might we gain if the Leftist (Intuiting type's) preference for change, variety, and the pursuit of possibilities is understood as just that rather than a "resentment" of the status quo?

On another note, one interesting possibility is that the Sensing-Intuition dichotomy is involved significantly in current politics to the extent that S-N preferences relate differently to religious politics. Is it possible that the "culture wars" that are so prevalent in the press reflect the S-N differences played out in religious differences? Consider some of the following [results from studies](#) relating psychological type preferences to a variety of religious factors:

A sample of 315 adult churchgoers completed an index of conservative Christian belief together with the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and the MBTI. Christians who prefer sensing and thinking are more inclined to hold traditional beliefs than Christians who prefer intuition and feeling.

A sample of 315 adult church-goers completed the MBTI questionnaire assessment of psychological type together with an index of Christian agnosticism. The data demonstrate that Christians who prefer intuition rather than sensing are more tolerant of religious uncertainty.

These results support more than 20 years of research suggesting that the S-N preferences play a significant role in one's religious affiliations--much as they appear to do with respect to political affiliations. That is, Sensing preferences tend to be associated with more conservative religious beliefs and practices whereas Intuiting preferences tend to be associated with more liberal religious beliefs and practices.

Thinking-Feeling. Read the following seemingly disparate quotes and see if you find a theme:

"Any man who is under 30, and is not a liberal, has no heart; and any man who is over 30, and is not a conservative, has no brains." - Sir Winston Churchill
"Conservatives saw the savagery of 9/11 in the attacks and prepared for war; liberals saw the savagery of the 9/11 attacks and wanted to prepare indictments and offer therapy and understanding for our attackers." - Karl Rove

From a psychological type perspective, both quotes seem to comment on type preferences for Thinking and Feeling. For example, Thinking types often are stereotyped as making decisions with their "head" and Feeling types are stereotyped as making decisions with their "heart". Consider the common characteristics of the Thinking type: rational, logical, impersonal, critical, analytical. Now consider the common characteristics of the Feeling type: personal, relationships oriented, seeks harmony, sympathetic.

Rove's comments, of course, represent partisan Republican comments targeted to a Republican audience and thus his statements about liberals is framed for his purposes. However, such framing is not unusual to the world of psychological type and tends to reflect "type bias" or the tendency to characterize the opposite preference in a less than flattering light. Regardless of intention, Rove's comments imply conservatives manifest Thinking characteristics in that they have made the rational, logical, critical ("tough") decision and have "prepared for war." Also by implication, liberals are characterized as providing therapy and understanding--both characteristics arguably being characteristics of a Feeling preference (and thus, stereotypically characterized as "soft").



Beyond type bias, the dynamics of sex-role stereotyping further camouflage the potential Thinking orientation of conservatives and the potential Feeling orientation of liberals. For example, CNBC commentator [Chris Matthews' characterization](#) of the Republican Party as the "daddy" party and the Democratic party as the "mommy" party illustrates this point. Along the same lines, University of California, Berkeley linguistics professor [George Lakoff](#) has provided an academic treatment of the topic that frames political ideology within the metaphor of the family. Within Lakoff's model conservatives envision the ideal government as one which is similar to conservative parenting practices referred to by Lakoff as the "strict father" model. In contrast, liberals envision the ideal government as one which is similar to liberal parenting practices termed "nurturing parent" by Lakoff. Recent empirical research provides some support for Lakoff's ideas. For example, the editor of *American Journal of Political Science* noted about [a recent article](#) :

In "Competing Visions of Parental Roles and Ideological Constraint," David C. Barker and James D. Tinnick III provide an intriguing account of how family values shape political behavior and constrain attitudes across issue areas. Using data from the 2000 American National Election Study, Barker and Tinnick find support for the idea that "nurturant" visions of parental roles engender egalitarian and humanitarian political values, while "disciplinarian" visions of proper parenting are associated with political individualism and traditionalism. Here, then, is a stimulating perspective on the red/blue "culture war" that in recent years has captivated the media and the popular imagination.

Here are some of [Lakoff's descriptions](#) of the "strict father model" that suggest a Thinking preference, particularly in terms of the impersonal, and critical approach to making judgements:

In addition to support and protection, the father's primary duty is tell his children what is right and wrong, punish them when they do wrong, and to bring them up to be self-disciplined and self-reliant. Through self-denial, the children can build strength against internal evils. In this way, he teaches his children to be self-disciplined, industrious, polite, trustworthy, and respectful of authority.

The strict father is restrained in showing affection and emotion overtly...

Life is seen as fundamentally difficult and the world as fundamentally dangerous.

Compare the above characteristics with Lakoff's description of the "nurturing parent model" that suggest a Feeling preference, particularly in terms of the more personal and sympathetic approach to making decisions:

The primal experience behind this model is one of being cared for and cared about, having one's desires for loving interactions met, living as happily as possible, and deriving meaning from one's community and from caring for and about others.

Children are taught self-discipline in the service of nurturance: to take care of themselves, to deal with existing hardships, to be responsible to others...

Through empathizing and interacting positively with their children, parents develop close bonds with children and teach them empathy and responsibility towards others and toward society.

Clearly the above descriptions imply a "masculine" vs. "feminine" framing. However, the possibility that sex-role stereotypes might obscure a relationship between T-F preferences and political ideology will not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the history and construction of the MBTI. In particular, the T-F index on the MBTI is the only index that consistently has been scored using separate scoring weights for Males and Females (although the most recent Form M version does not). As might be expected, males historically have been more likely to indicate a preference for Thinking whereas females have been more likely to indicate a preference for Feeling.

(Note: The video at the end of this article shows a presentation by Dr. Lakoff wherein he discusses his ideas in more depth. The video runs for approximately 50 minutes.)

Judging-Perceiving. The last letter in your "type formula" is a J or a P (e.g., ESFJ, ISTP). This last letter indicates how you prefer to deal with the outer world. More specifically, this last letter indicates which of your preferred mental functions you typically use in the outer world.

If you prefer Judging (i.e., you are a J type), then you use either T or F in the outer world, depending upon your mental functions preference. For example, an INTJ uses T in the outer world. An INFJ uses F in the outer world. Thinking and Feeling thus are mental functions of Judging.

If you prefer Perceiving (i.e., you are a P type), then you use either S or N in the outer world, depending upon your mental functions preference. For example, an INTP uses N in the outer world. An ISTP uses S in the outer world. Sensing and Intuiting thus are mental functions of Perceiving.

Because Js use a decision-making function (T or F) in the outer world, they prefer to have things decided, settled, and so on. Because Ps use a perceiving function (S or N) in the outer world, they prefer that things be more flexible, spontaneous, and dynamic.

Take a look at the pictures below. Which drawer is yours? If you are a "J" you probably prefer that your outer world be organized, planned, scheduled, ordered, somewhat predictable and so on--like the drawer on the left. If you are a "P" you probably prefer that your outer world be creatively chaotic, emergent, boundryless, and so on--like the drawer on the right.



Understanding which mental function a person uses in the outer world helps understand how that person prefers to exist in, and interact with, that outer world. Moreover, given that politics is usually considered as something that exists in the outer world, understanding J or P preferences should be helpful in understanding someone's orientation to politics.

Our hypothesis is that Js tend to be more conservative and Ps tend to be more liberal. Consider, e.g., the following quotes taken from [Russell Kirk's presentation on conservative principles](#):

First, the conservative believes that there exists an enduring moral order....This word order signifies harmony. There are two aspects or types of order: the inner order of the soul, and the outer order of the commonwealth.

Second, the conservative adheres to custom, convention, and continuity....Conservatives are champions of custom, convention, and continuity because they prefer the devil they know to the devil they don't know.

Fourth, conservatives are guided by their principle of prudence....Any public measure ought to be judged by its probable long-run consequences, not merely by temporary advantage or popularity. Liberals and radicals, the conservative says, are imprudent: for they dash at their objectives without giving much heed to the risk of new abuses worse than the evils they hope to sweep away.

This sampling of Kirk's words suggests J characteristics and preferences as seen in the emphasis on order, continuity, planning and so on. Moreover, the statement about liberals "dashing without...heed" might be restated in "P" language as being spontaneous.

The contrast in Judging and Perceiving orientations between conservatives and liberals may be evident when "Law and Order" issues are considered. In this situation, conservatives display their J tendencies when they emphasize the "Rule of Law," mandatory sentencing laws, limited appeals and so on in that these practices emphasize having things decided in a standard manner. On the other hand, liberals reflect their P tendencies when they seek judicial discretion in sentencing, extended appeals and other actions that keep the judicial process flexible and open to information to more fully inform decisions.

Conservative S, T, J vs. Liberal N, F, P?

The above discussion briefly suggests that conservatives may tend to prefer S, T, and J compared with liberals who may tend to prefer N, F, and P. How do these suggestions help us answer our original questions about type and party affiliation?

STJ vs NTP. First, let's consider the contrast between NTPs and STJs. As noted above, NTPs seem to affiliate with an Independent party identification whereas STJs tend to affiliate more with a Republican party identification. Moreover the STJs are more likely to be Democrat than Independent whereas the NTPs tend to be slightly more Republican than Democrat.

The STJ affiliation with the Republican party seems reasonable given that about 75% of Republicans self-identify as conservative and S, T, and J preferences clearly imply conservative traits: order, practicality, custom, tradition, stability and so on. But, why would STJs identify more with Democrats than Independents? We believe the SJ orientation to tradition and custom influences the STJs to choose a traditional party over something somewhat undefined such as "Independent". Though independence may be a trait that conservatives admire when it comes to liberty, freedom, small government and self-reliance, we propose the SJ orientation to tradition--and thus traditional political institutions--influences this type's choice to express their political identity within the traditional two-party system.

ISTJ			
			INTP
			ENTP
ESTJ			

Before looking at the NTP's Independent affiliation, let's look at something Isabell Myers & Mary McCauley wrote about the SJ types and the NP types in the 1985 version of the [MBTI Manual](#) :

SJs seek order in their environment. They are organized, dependable, and conservative. They tend to solve problems by reliance on past experiences, and they dislike ambiguity.

NPs constantly seek the challenge of the new. They adapt to new possibilities as they arise. They are unconventional, independent spirits who hate to be fenced in.

In contrast to the conservative, traditional, SJ is the unconventional and independent NP. Keep in mind our discussion above about J and P; in the case of the NP type, they prefer to experience and interact with the outer world with their Intuition. Thus, the NP attempts to enact in the outer world all manner of creative, changing possibilities. What is preferred is the new and original (and progressive?), not the conventional--and quite possibly not even the traditional, conventional two-party identification.

But, what about the results in our third table above which combines liberal-conservative orientation with party identification? Don't these results show that liberals and conservatives are about equally represented amongst those who self-identified as Independent in the ANES data? How can the NPs be our more liberal, non-traditionalist Independent when an almost equal number of conservative (and thus SJ types) also identify as Independent?

One possibility is that it is not SJ conservatives who self-identify as Independents; instead, the combination of Sensing and Perceiving preferences (SP types) may be the conservative Independent. The preference for Sensing again implies a trust in what is practical, realistic, and pragmatic. However, when combined with the preference for a Perceiving orientation to the outer world, we obtain a Sensing type who is likely to be more open to risking new things--to being a little more unconventional--than their SJ cousins.

One of the more interesting treatments of SJ and SP types in the political arena is provided by Dr. David Keirsey in [his work on Presidential Temperament](#). Although there are [distinct differences](#) between Psychological Type theory and Temperament theory, there are those who have worked to combine the insights from both models. Consider, for example, [Dr. Linda Berens'](#) perspective on the 4 temperaments:

As David Keirsey developed his theory of the four temperaments, he began to display them to show the aspects the four temperaments have in common. As Linda Berens expanded on his work, she began to consistently display the Idealist (the types with N and F in their type codes) and the Guardian (those with S and J in their codes) on the top of the matrix to show that these two temperaments have in common a social attitude--they tend to take more affiliative roles and focus on interdependence. The Rational temperament (with N and T in their codes) and the Artisan (with S and P in their codes) are on the bottom of the matrix to show that they have in common a more pragmatic, do-what-it-takes attitude that focuses on autonomy and independence.

The relevant comparison here is between the "autonomy and independence" of the SP Artisan with the SJ Guardian's "focus on interdependence." (For an interesting "mapping" of the four temperaments onto the Nolan chart, see [here](#).)

TJ Republicans. Our second observation about the Consulting Psychologists Press data is that the TJ types appear to identify themselves with a Republican party affiliation more so than do the other types. As can be seen in the type table presented here, the TJ preferences include the four types found in the corners of the traditional type table.

These four corners often are referred to as the "hard edges" of the type table. This nickname results from the fact that each of these four types uses the Thinking function in the outer world. Thus, these types tend to engage the outer world in such a way as to plan, organize, and control events in a "hard" way via the impersonal, critical, task-focused Thinking function. In contrast to the "hard edges" types are the four types in the center of the type table. These four FP types all use the Feeling function in the inner world and are referred to as the "soft center" of the type table.

ISTJ			INTJ
	ISFP	INFP	
	ESFP	ENFP	
ESTJ			ENTJ

The TJ types also are referred to as the "executive types" and are described in the 1985 MBTI Manual as "...tough-minded, executive, analytical, and instrumental leaders." To the extent that the Republican party is the party of business, then these results make some sense. Numerous studies of managerial populations suggest a clear preference for TJ amongst these individuals. The TJ types also share numerous characteristics with the "strict father" parenting role discussed

earlier, especially if we equate managerial style with parenting style. STJs in particular tend to prefer organizations that are conservatively designed with a clear emphasis on a chain of command, clear roles and responsibilities, discipline and so on.

But, what are we to do with the fact that we now have placed N preferences (ENTJ, INTJ) in the mostly conservative Republican category when earlier we noted that N preferences have been shown to relate to a more liberal political ideology? Three factors might help us understand this tendency. First, we need to keep in mind that there are different kinds of political conservatives, and that social and religious conservatives may be different from the business conservatives. Thus, it is possible that social conservatism may arise more from the SJ combination and business conservatism may arise more from the TJ combination. Second, the NTJs' liberal tendencies may be moderated by the fact that the NTJs use their intuiting function in the inner world. Third, the results from the ANES studies discussed above indicate about 5 to 10% of Republicans do self-identify as liberal and it may be the NTJs who contribute to this group.

INF Democrats. Our third observation about the data in Table 1 is that 49% of INFJs indicated an affiliation with Democrat. The INFPs are similar in that 38% of INFPs report an affiliation with Democrat. Moreover, both INFJs and INFPs report the lowest proportion of affiliation with Republican (22% for each type). These results contrast with the INTJs and INTPs (and TJs) who tend to affiliate with Republican but not Democrat.

The INFs tendency to affiliate with Democrat may be understood, in part, by examining the characteristics associated with their NF mental functions combination. In particular, this combination can be thought of in a shorthand way as N=possibilities and F=for people. The NF types thus frequently are found in occupations which involve helping people to develop in some way. Such occupations include counseling and the clergy. The NFs also are attracted to the arts, humanities, and other occupations which give expression to the human spirit.

When asked to "draw something which represents your ideal organization," NFs tend to present an organization that allows for human growth and development, that is decentralized, that has as a part of its mission to serve the greater good and so on. To the extent that one's preferences in the realm of organization also represent one's preference for a style of governing, then NFs clearly seem to express democracy in the sense of Mary [Parker Follett's](#) concept of democracy as self-creating coherence in that organization emerges from the interaction of the people who are involved. Other NF visions of how to govern can be found in [Harrison Owen's](#) work on open-space technology and [Peter Senge's](#) work on the Learning Organization.

Consider Senge's characterization of learning organizations as

...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

Such language--nature, collective aspiration, seeing the whole together--is the language of possibilities (N) for people (F). Such language is very different from that of the TJ--and STJ particularly--where ideal government is characterized as efficient, rationale, practical, and so on.

Comparing NF with ST mental functions presents fairly clear contrasts in that these mental functions groups are opposites. The more intriguing contrast in Table 1 is between the INFs and the INTs. As can be seen in the type table presented here, these types occupy the upper right quadrant of the type table. The four types share in common preferences for I and N. As described in the 1985 MBTI Manual, this group is referred to as the "thoughtful innovators" who "are introspective and scholarly. They are interested in knowledge for its own sake, as well as ideas, theory, and depth of understanding. They are the least practical of the types."

		INFJ	INTJ
		INFP	INTP

Does the term "pointy-headed liberal" come to mind? Such would seem a natural type biased statement about this group. But, then, what are we to make of the fact that the INTs self identify as Republican (and Independent)? Clearly, the T vs F difference plays out here in that the INFs associate with Democrat and INTs associate with Republican. Thus, the discussion contrasting T and F preferences presented above may explain the different party affiliations. Another possibility is that NTs see the Democratic Party as incompetent and thus would rather associate with a political self-concept that is Independent rather than incompetent Democrat. We raise this possibility given both the record of the Democratic Party over the past 20 or so years combined with the NT concern with competency. However, such a notion is only a hypothesis at this point.

Personality and Politics in Italy

Numerous factors influence one's political identity (parents, e.g.) but we are suggesting that one's normal personality preferences also influence one's politics. And, given the assumption that Jung's psychological types are universal, then we should expect that the relationships discussed above between MBTI preferences and political orientations should be evident in other cultures. Unfortunately, we are not familiar with any studies relating MBTI preferences to political orientations beyond the few mentioned previously.

Fortunately, relevant research has been conducted in Italy by political psychologists. Instead of using the MBTI, however, these researchers used the Italian version of the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality. The FFM involves five personality factors and is sometimes referred to as the OCEAN model of personality to reflect the five factors: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. (More about the FFM can be found [here](#).) Of significance for our investigation, research shows four of the FFM factors correlate with MBTI scores: higher scores on Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness correspond to E, N, F, and J scores on the MBTI.

Here is the abstract from [the Italian study](#) :

Abstract: Voters' political choices have presumably come to depend more on their personal preferences and less on their social characteristics in Western democracies. We examine two aspects of personality that may influence political choice, traits and personal values, using the Five Factor Model of personality traits and the Schwartz (1992) theory of basic personal values. Data from 3044 voters for the major coalitions in the Italian national election of 2001 showed that supporters of the two coalitions differed in traits and values, largely as hypothesized. Center-left voters were higher than center-right voters in the traits of friendliness and openness and lower in energy and conscientiousness.

Translating the above FFM results into our MBTI framework produces the following:

"Center-Left (Liberal) voters were higher than center-right (Conservative) voters in traits of friendliness (Feeling) and openness (Intuition) and lower in energy (Extraversion) and conscientiousness (Judging)." So, similar to our discussion above S, T, and J preferences related to more conservative political orientations whereas N, F, and P preferences related more to liberal political orientations.

A [more recent study](#) in the U.S. provides similar results:

Personality measures of more than 6000 US electors on the Big Five Factors have been collected on the Web through a Web site designed to assess their personality. By means of structural equation modeling the impact of personality factors as well as of demographic variables, such as age and sex, on voting intentions on the forthcoming US presidential elections was investigated. Personality variables accounted for 16% of variance of voting intentions, while gender and age accounted for no more than 3%. High Agreeableness and Openness were predictive of intention to vote for Kerry, while all high Energy, Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability were predictive of intention to vote for Bush. Results are consistent with previous research conducted in a different country, using a different language.

Once again, the suggestion is that preferences for N and F are associated with intentions to vote for a more liberal candidate (Kerry) whereas E and J preferences are associated with intentions to vote for a more conservative candidate (Bush). The results for Emotional Stability (Neuroticism) are not directly comparable with the MBTI Step I framework, but are interesting.

Personality and Politics in U.S. College Students

More recent [research](#) employing the FFM further supports a relationship between personality and political orientation. This research focused on college students across five different samples (total N = 19,248) who completed a FFM questionnaire and self-identified their political orientation. Results from these studies strongly supported a relationship between

Openness and Liberal self-identification, and moderately supported a relationship between Conscientiousness and Conservative self-identification. Translated into "type" terms, these results again suggest Liberals tend toward N and P preferences whereas Conservatives tend toward S and J preferences.

Limitation

Research shows that how one asks a question influences the answer one gets. And, this maxim is true for questions related to political party affiliation. In our case, we have been unable to determine the exact wording used in the 1998 study conducted by Consulting Psychologists Press to determine Party Affiliation. We have twice requested a copy of the wording used in their survey, but have not received a copy. Our discussion thus is based on the assumption that the wording is similar to what has been used in the ANES research. That said, if you have a copy of the wording of the question, please feel free to share it!

Concluding Comments

What we have tried to do here is outline some introductory ideas about how Jung's psychological types might relate to political orientations. As mentioned, the research in the area is sparse (at least there is little published research). We thus invite your comments, and will revise this page as ideas develop.

