

Organizational Politics

Politics

at work is a fact of organizational life. But what is organizational politics? Is it backstabbing? Forming alliances? Flattering the boss? As a first response, most people probably would agree that each of these behaviors is "political". Further reflection, however, leads to another insight--what is flattering for one person might not be flattering for another. What one person considers an alliance might be considered a friendship by another person. In short, politics--like beauty--is in the eye of the beholder.

Most

academic research over the past 20 or so years has focused on this subjective nature of organizational politics. Articles in the popular press also recognize this point when they provide advice on how to "play the game." For example, a common suggestion is to learn the likes and dislikes, motivations, and so on of co-workers and managers. Such knowledge, of course, helps one to avoid negative interpersonal incidents and fosters the potential for positive experiences--all good "politics". The point, however, is that such endeavors recognize that subjective differences are important in office politics.

There

are numerous differences that influence individuals to see their workplace as political: hierarchical level, career opportunities, impact on one's department, personality and so on. These topics are discussed in other sections of Political | Types. Our primary focus, however, will be on the role of Jung's psychological types in office politics. Some questions we will consider are: Do different psychological types see organizational politics differently? If so, how so? Do one's psychological type preferences influence their political style at work? If so, in what ways?