## Self-actualization and Individuation in Political Leaders: A Jungian Perspective

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the transformative potential of archetypes among twenty seven (n=27) elected members of Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pearson-Marr Archetypal Indicator was used to measures degree of archetypal integration, self - awareness and psychological balance. Subjective-psychological Well - being Scale was supplemented to gauge the level of life satisfaction and emotional wellness. Result indicated that most leaders (59.3%) were found to be at individuated level, prioritizing collective well-being and higher ideals over personal gains, while 18.5% remained focus on ego-driven goals. There were indications in the leaders' archetypal profile that they were innately Warriors, Rulers, and Caregivers which fuel their leadership to be courageous, authoritative and nurturing. The results do not affirm the gender wise differences regarding archetypal identification of political leaders. Leaders demonstrated wellintegrated archetypes, contributing to psychological maturity, resilience, and high level of satisfaction. Although the pressure of leadership is severe, the leaders aimed at being driven by a purpose rather than factors of pleasure, thus proving the warmth of emotions and the presence of balanced self-concept are critical in promoting effective leadership.

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#### Introduction

Carl Gustav Jung holds an extraordinary place the field of modern depth psychology. The most dramatic contribution he made to analytical psychology was the idea of collective unconscious. Jung (1933) differentiated between the personal and collective unconscious. The personal unconscious consists of repressed contents that are unique to the individual while the collective unconscious represents the much deeper layer that is shared by all humanity. Within the collective unconscious are archetypes-universal symbols, and patterns inherited from ancestral experiences (Jung, 1959; Jacobi, 1973). The idea that irrespective of time and space, all humans are born with similar patterns of thought, emotion, and reaction has led Jung to propose the collective unconscious. Jung (1959) goes on to explain, "...our true personality arises from within as our collective unconscious comes forth into our personal unconscious and then our consciousness."

Among the most common archetypes are persona, the animus/anima, and the shadow (Jung, 1959; Jacobi, 1973). The anima and animus are complementary opposites that form a syzygy, a union of opposing forces (Jung 1971). Jung (1971) described the animus as the unconscious masculine side of a woman and the anima as the unconscious feminine side of a man, each

transcending the personal psyche. The goal is wholeness and psychological androgyny-an integration of the opposites. Failure to integrate these opposing forces leads to polarity in self. Polarity refers to identification with one archetype and repressing its complementary opposite. Schwartz (1992) explains that these archetypes compete with each other and are a potential source of psychic energy. Jung's idea of the psyche and libido is found in the nature of opposites. Just like a thermodynamic principle, the psyche strives to harmonize the opposing energies or pairs of emotions, such as love and hate (Jarvis, 2004; Jung, 1971). Jung (1961) calls the process of integrating and balancing of these opposing aspects of emotions, personality and self as "individuation". This integration involves facing and resolving the conflicting feelings and believes to be at peace with one's own self (Stevens, 2001).

Jungian analysis offers valuable insights for understanding leadership dynamics. Leaders who embark their political journey can ensure their own and collective wellbeing by recognizing archetypal patterns and their influence upon them and on the groups.

From Jungian perspective, leadership is the universal patterns as the desires to dominate and submit are both archetypal. Jung (1930) recognized, archetypes central to personal growth and healthy personality. Campbell (2004) stressed that understanding of these powerful inner dynamics is essential for achieving sustainable success in life.

There is sufficient consensus among researchers that recognizing archetypes is crucial for individuation and optimal human functioning. Numerous researchers (e.g., Ivtzan et al, 2011; Brenner & Gail. 2018; Loevinger, 1997; Westenberg & Block, 1993; Frankl, 1962) argue for much stronger conclusion: acknowledging certain archetypal energies cultivate effective leadership qualities. Archetypes possess transformative power and can encourage self-awareness, emotional wellbeing and resilience among leaders. Leaders can use transformative power like these for navigating their roles and inspire their followers toward collective success (Tekleab et al, 2008).

The common archetypes associated to leadership include: hero, sage, caregiver and ruler. The hero indicates courage and determination, while sage represents wisdom, vision and strategic thinking. The caregiver supports others well-being while the ruler demonstrate authority and thus maintains order. Effective leaders with these energies inspire others, provide guidance, assemble team and maintain stability.

One key concept found in Jungian psychology is "shadow" archetype, referring to the denial of archetypal energies of unconscious aspects of psyche Denying or repressing these aspects, however, can hinder the process of individuation and lead to ineffective leadership qualities (Dell, 1940). Pearson and Marr (2002) describe these aspects as "blind spots" or "shadows," consist of repressed traits, emotions, or desires that individuals avoid to protect the ego from discomfort or threat. Recognizing and addressing blind spots involves shadow work—engaging in deep self-reflection, paying attention to recurring dreams, symbols, and emotional triggers, and being open to unconscious material and external feedback. This process fosters persona growth but also enhances the capacity for authentic and meaningful relationship with self and others.

Since self-actualization is also based on leveraging one's abilities to reach their potential, is often equated with individuation. However, in Jungian psychology, the process of self-actualization is guided by personal aspirations and values and thus is related to personal goals, talents, and creativity. It primarily focuses on the conscious aspects of personality and external achievements for alignment with one's ideal self. Individuation on the other hand, focuses on conscious and unconscious aspects of self and represents a transformational process of integrating both psychological and personal realms. This process is archetypal in nature and aims for deeper psychological and spiritual synthesis. While they are distinct, self-actualization can be a step within individuation.

The term self-actualization, though mostly associated with Maslow, was coined by Kurt Goldstein who described it as the process of becoming one's true self. Goldstein (1993; 1934) viewed self-actualization as a holistic, motivational force that drives behavior not only in humans but also in plants and animals (Whitehead, 2017). Carl Rogers further developed this notion and described self-actualization as the fulfilling of personal potential and introduced the notion of

congruence which is when a self-image is closely aligned with an ideal self. This type of congruence was vital for optimal functioning, authentic living (Rogers 1980/1983; Rogers 1963). Likewise, Maslow (1943) placed self-actualization at the top of his hierarchy of needs, defining it as the most cultivated human desire—the realization of one's potential and the greatest self of one's self.

The value of self-actualization is especially important when it comes to leadership. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), leaders who self-actualize demonstrate a greater awareness of their own values, strengths, and purpose. They can function from a position of honesty and alignment and overcome an ego-driven motivation, which inspires and builds trust among people they lead. Self-actualized leaders fully embrace their true selves, allowing them to lead with integrity, resilience, and creativity.

Richard Barrett's model of human consciousness further enriches this understanding by positioning self-actualization at the center of psychological development, not as the ultimate goal but as turning point. In Barrett's framework, self-actualization reflects the transition from fulfilling basic survival and safety needs (deficiency needs) to focusing on growth needs, which center on purpose, personal development, and the ability to serve others. Leaders who reach this stage begin to shift from ego-consciousness, driven by self-preservation and recognition, to soul-consciousness, characterized by selfless service and contribution.

Barrett emphasizes that self-actualization-which he describes as serving self and others- is the cornerstone of achieving the greatest levels of psychological growth. At these points, leaders exhibit compassion, teamwork, and vision while putting the greater good ahead of their own selfish interests. As Barrett notes in Evolutionary Coaching, "We begin our psychological journey by learning to survive, and we complete the journey by learning to serve." For leaders, self-actualization is thus not only a personal milestone but also a gateway to transformative leadership—allowing them to inspire, empower, and serve others in meaningful ways.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The study explores self-actualization Jungian perspective. Jungian psychology also referred to as analytical psychology holds that unconscious largely determines our personality. The introduced the concept of collective unconscious that consists of pre-existent forms, primordial images or archetypes. Some examples of these archetypes include the Mother, the Hero, the Sage, the trickster, and so forth. Every archetype represents not unusual elements of human experience. The theory emphasizes the integration of these aspects of personality to achieve self-realization. Jung proposed that the goal of a person's psychological development is individuation — a process of becoming aware of oneself, integrating different aspects of personality, and realizing our inherent potential. Though individuation is a natural yet it requires conscious effort and active engagement with the unconscious.

#### **Objectives**

The study aims to investigate the transformative potential of archetypal identification on the self-actualization, personal growth and emotional wellness of political leaders.

### **Hypothesis**

- 1. Political leaders who achieve balance and integrate archetypal energies will exhibit higher self-actualization and emotional wellness.
- 2. Political leaders with more active archetypes report higher self-actualization due to their growth-oriented nature

# Methodology

#### Sample

Political leaders from the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were purposively selected using a non-probability sampling approach (Cochran, 1977). The final sample included 19 men and 8 women, with ages ranging from 35 to 70 years and a mean age of  $49.05 \pm 6.381$ . Access to the members was facilitated by the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly, who granted permission for the researcher to make contact. Questionnaires were distributed to 48 members during the Assembly's periodical sessions. However, 21 members provided incomplete responses and were subsequently

excluded from the study. Anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. All the researchers adhered to ethical guidelines for psychological and behavioral studies.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Pearson-Marr Archetypal Indicator (Pearson & Marr, 2002) is the world's first scientifically validated archetype assessment tool that measures and identifies the archetypal energies of unconscious. This 72-item scale attempts to assess the relative salience and influence of 12 different archetypes (Innocent, Orphan, Warrior, Caregiver, Seeker, Lover, Creator, Destroyer, Ruler, Magician, Sage, and Jester) potentially active in an individual. The test carries high reliability coefficient of .72 (Pearson & Marr, 2002). Subjective-Psychological Well-Being Scale by Diener, and Biswas-Diener (2008) was supplemented which measures both cognitive (life satisfaction) and affective (emotional) components of wellness (Diener et al., 2003). The SWLS is short 5-item usually requires only about one minute of a respondent's time. High reliability coefficient (r=.90) is reported by Diener et al.(2003).

### **Results**

**Table 1**Level of Psychological Maturity by Gender for N=27 Political Leaders

Individuation process	Women	Men	N	%
Ego level	2	3	5	18.5
Soul level	2	4	6	22.2
Spirit level	4	12	16	59.3
Total	8	19	27	100.0

Gender,  $x^2$ (2, n=27).462, p>.01.

The majority of the political leaders (59.3%) have undergone significant individuation, reaching a stage where their leadership is driven by a higher purpose. Only 18.5% identify at the ego-development level, where the primary focus is on their individual identity and personal goals that are often driven by self-interest or external validation. Approximately 22.2% of leaders in the data are at the soul level of psychological development, indicating a growing awareness of their purpose and the needs of others. The study supports no gender-wise variation in the personal growth, as the chi-square value does not exceed the critical value of 5.99 and fails to show a significant difference between the distribution of archetypal identification for the gender, x2 (2, n=27) .462, p < .01.

**Table 2** *Archetype Profile of Political Leaders* 

Stages of Individuation	Archetypes	Most Active	Open To	Not Noticed
Ego	Idealist	1(3.7%)	6(22%)	20(74%)
	Realist	0(0%)	8(29.6%)	19(70.37%)
	Warrior	12(44.4%)	5(18.5%)	10(37.0%)
	Caregiver	18(66.6%)	7(25.9%)	2(7.4%)
Soul	Seeker	10(37.0%)	14(51.9%)	3(11.1%)
	Lover	11(40.7%)	12(44.4%)	4(14.8%)
	Revolutionary	4(14.8%)	8(29.6%)	15(55.5%)
	Creator	9(33.3%)	13(48.1%)	5(18.5%)
Spirit	Ruler	14(51.9%)	10(37.0%)	3(11.1%)
	Magician	9(33.3%)	16(59.3%)	2(7.4%)
	Sage	7(25.9%)	19(70.37%)	1(3.7%)
	Jester	6(22.2%)	8(29.6%)	13(48.1%)
Most active	Caregiver, Ruler, Warrior			
Open to	Seeker, Lover, Creator, Magician, Sage			
Blind spot	Idealist			

Majority of the leaders identify with Caregiver (66.6%), Ruler (51.9%) and Warrior (44.4%) archetypes being most active archetypes in their lives, indicating love connection, and exploration of deeper truths. This combination emphasizes their nurturing and protective roles. Leaders are open to Seeker, Lover, Creator, Magician, Sage archetypes. Although, this suggests they are willing to explore and create new possibilities, but they are less integrated or utilized in their current

identities. The archetypes such as Idealist, is the most repressed or unnoticed by leaders, suggesting they avoid a state of dependence or vulnerability and prefer strength and caregiving.

**Table 3**Polarity Dynamics and Androgynous Self in Political Leaders

Masculine energies	Idealist	Seeker	Warrior	Revolutionary	Ruler	Sage
Leaders	15.41	22.81	23.33	17.52	24.41	22.96
Feminine Energies	Realist	Lover	Caregiver	Creator	Magician	Fool
(n=27)	17.00	23.26	25.70	21.33	22.74	19.33
Total	32.41	46.08*	48.04*	38.85	46.15*	42.30

<sup>\*</sup>Score exceeded 44 which shows high-level of development in pair

The table shows the PMAI profile of political leaders, highlighting the archetypes that shape their psychological consciousness. The most active archetypes identified are caregiver, ruler, and warrior, reflecting leader's strong orientation toward nurturing, authority, and courage. Since, the scores on Seeker, Magicians, Creator and Jester are found moderate, suggesting that leaders are open to these energies, though they are not prominently expressed. Idealist archetype emerges as blind spots. This energy is found most repressed and underutilized energies in these leaders. Despite this gap, all other archetypes are well-integrated in leaders which are a sign of psychological maturity. This integration is an indicative of a strong sense of authority and responsibility for protection and nurturance which has facilitated the emergence of leadership qualities. With this psychological landscape leaders can effectively guide and support others.

**Table 4**Pair wise Multiple Comparisons on Archetypal Identifications by Gender

Dep. Variable	(I) Gender	(J) Gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Idealist	Women	Men	2.441	1.534	.124
Realist	Women	Men	2.309	1.686	.183
Warrior	Women	Men	118	2.132	.956
Caregiver	Women	Men	2.553	1.684	.142
Seeker	Women	Men	2.039	1.848	.280
Lover	Women	Men	5.138*	2.288	.034
Revolutionary	Women	Men	3.171	2.469	.211
Creator	Women	Men	2.724	2.016	.189
Ruler	Women	Men	1.020	2.167	.642
Magician	Women	Men	3.743	1.948	.066
Sage	Women	Men	3.250	1.763	.077
Jester	Women	Men	3.967	2.335	.102

PMAI scores have not revealed identifiable distinctions between men and women as all of the archetypal identifications do not significantly differ by gender except for lover archetype. Women leaders identify more strongly with Lover archetype, characterized by empathy, connection, passion, and a focus on relationships. This may also reflect their greater emphasis on fostering interpersonal harmony and nurturing collaborative environments. Leaders irrespective of their gender showed true androgynous self as they are equally identifying with both feminine and masculine energies.

**Table 5**Difference between the Means on Subjective-Psychological Well-being

Dependent Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Life Satisfaction	26.11	6.05
Pleasant	27.96	4.69
Unpleasant	22.81	5.76
Hedonism	5.88	8.63
Flourishing	61.34	11.56

The results highlight the interplay between emotional experiences and a deep sense of purpose in political leaders' lives, driven by their archetypal identifications and life responsibilities. Leaders reported moderate level of life satisfaction with mean 26.11 and standard deviation of 6.05. The sores in this range reflect that leaders perceive their life as meaningful and fulfilling despite

challenges in their roles. They experience relatively high level of positive emotions, suggesting their resilience and ability to find joy amidst responsibilities. Low average hedonism score (M=5.88 & SD=8.63) indicate that leader's behavior are more purpose driven rather than pleasure driven. High flourishing scores indicate high degree of psychological wellbeing.

#### Discussion

At the core of this study is the Jungian concept of the archetypes and the connection between the process of individuation and political successes. The results confirm that the elected leaders demonstrated considerable personal growth as their archetype syzygies were well integrated. Well-integrated archetypes provide leaders the ability to lead with authority, purpose and precision in their political journey. A strong leader integrates multiple archetypal energies to inspire, guide, and transform their teams or communities. This makes their Ruler archetype more flexible and adoptable to roles that leaders can embody depending on their personality, goals, and the needs of their teams or communities. However, considerable ego strength is required to enable the leaders to balance the complexes associated to the power of Ruler archetype. In connection to this, the presents study advocates that in order to be an effective leader, one must recognize archetypes and check their influence on reality, their current requirements, internal dialogue, and the world's influence on them. The process will not only ensure their success in their political journey (Spira, 2017; Freeman, 2001 & 2006).

The most common archetypes that showed up in the lives of the leaders and who represented the better part of their Archetypes were the Caregiver, Ruler, and Warrior. Leadership requires a combination of these archetypes; the Caregiver gives compassion, the warrior provides the empowerment, and the Ruler gives the authority. Caregivers with strong nurturing and protecting instincts compliment the Warrior energy. The synthesis of these archetypes offers a balance of compassion, authority, and empowerment, which are crucial in leadership.

Caregiver archetype makes leaders naturally selfless, altruistic and caring about the welfare of others. This energy has the tendency to connect them with the emotional side of life. Poverty, injustice, suffering, and seeing people in hardships awaken this archetype in them. If active in them, the Warrior archetype gives leader courage and determination. This energy allows them to stand up for themselves and others and face challenge with skill and strength. Thus, leaders with strong Caregiver energies nurture and protect, while the Warrior archetype empowers them to express themselves confidently. The integration of these archetypes increases the capacity to fully experience life and provides a foundation for effective leadership (Kastrup, 2018).

The Ruler archetype plays a vital role alongside the caregiver and warrior energies as it symbolizes a self that is able to function autonomously. With this energy leaders claim the power when needed in the society. Political leaders with active Ruler are exceptional at organizing and driving systems, organizations and state in services to the people they manage. However, without sufficient ego strength supported by Caregiver and Warrior energies, leaders may succumb to cycles of chaos, suffering and redemption. Only those with developed Ruler archetypes and considerable ego strength can ensure their ideas are heard and their influence recognized (Schwartz & Robert, 2017).

The findings reveal that political leaders were open to Magician, Lover, Sage, Seeker, and Creator archetypes. Pearson and Marr (2003) believe that Magician archetype can trigger the activation of corresponding archetypes connect with them. It is a symbol of transformation, innovation, and creativity. A Magician-like leader uses his knowledge, skill, or power—whether intellectual, or psychological—to transform self and others. They are usually quite natural leaders who thrive at influencing and persuading others. The Magician transforms primitive emotions and thoughts into sophisticated behaviors. The Lover archetype represents their passion. The Sage offers wisdom, while Seeker and Creator archetypes can enable leaders to search for new experiences, tests their limits of what is possible and achieves goals (Schwartz & Martha, 2020; Spira, 2017). The fusion of these energies with the authoritative leadership of the Ruler archetype can create a broader impact in leaders and make their leadership style more unconventional. A powerful blend of these archetypes can offer profound knowledge and skill alongside authoritative guidance to these

leaders as this combination can equip them to inspire others, assemble effective teams, and maintain organizational stability.

Empathy is a critical enhancer of leadership effectiveness. It contributes to raising self-awareness, developing listening and mentoring skills, and fostering meaningful relationships. A leadership style characterized by passion for service, empathy, foster a culture of inclusivity within any organization. An empathetic leader introduces policies that support the well-being of others and form a partnership to build a strong nation. For followers, empathy in leadership is associated with improved well-being, empowerment, and emotional intelligence development. In political context, empathetic leaders believe in shared success and collaboration. They lead with compassion and spark a collective-collaborative effort towards sustainability, innovation and human connection, ultimately fostering a culture of growth within the country.

The study has also explored the influence of archetypal unconscious trait represented in shadow. Shadow is a blind spot that the leaders are likely not accessing it at lease not with ease. Since idealist archetype is most repressed therefore leaders are unable to take benefit associated to this archetype. The repressed idealist as reflected by their low scores on PAMI reveals a tendency in the leaders to be more pessimistic and lack trust and sense of safety. This blind spot makes their political journey more difficult, unpleasant and stressful, thus is preventing them to reach their full potential and enjoy the benefits this archetype can offer. It's important that the leaders should become aware of the negative qualities of their archetype profile as it can negatively impact their motivation, self-efficacy and political persona. Only then will they be able to activate their inner potential and enjoy receiving the gifts of this archetype.

# **Polarity Dynamics and Androgynous Self in Political Leaders**

The results reveal that androgyny—the integration of both masculine and feminine energies—profoundly shapes leadership style. Scores on the PMAI scale demonstrate that leadership effectiveness depends not on biological gender but on a spectrum of psychological traits. This study supports the idea that individuated leaders, who balance archetypes embodying both feminine and masculine energies, exhibit greater success. Notably, leaders who displayed less adherence to archetypes traditionally associated with their biological gender were found to achieve higher levels of political success.

The results reveal that, androgyny-the integration of both masculine and feminine energies-shapes leadership style. As reflected by the scores on PMAI scale, the leadership depends not on biological gender but on a range of psychological traits. The idea that individuated leaders have balanced archetypes that integrate both feminine and masculine energy is supported by this study. The findings show that leaders who showed less affinity for archetypes stereotypically associated with their biological gender were politically more successful. However, to create a psychologically androgynous leadership, anima (feminine) and animus (masculine) energies must be integrated (Prendergast, 2019; Block, 1973) because the leadership is a trait that is not limited to a specific gender (Duncan, 2010; Duncan, Peterson, & Zurbriggen, 2010). Both men and women can exhibit strong leadership qualities and be successful leaders. The qualities like compassion, authority, and empowerment are more predictive of leadership potential than gender. People must embrace an integrated these qualities in self and go past limited identities in order to lead successfully and lead satisfying lives (Anwar, Maroof, & Anwar, 2014; Duncan & Stewart, 2007; Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2005).

# **Conclusion**

In the present research, an argument is presented advocating the use of transpersonal techniques to understand leaders. The findings conclude that self-maturity significantly enhances life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Furthermore, psychological androgyny—the integration of feminine and masculine energies—emerges as a crucial marker of self-realization in the leadership process. In today's world, it is imperative for both men and women to transform themselves to lead more meaningful and productive lives.

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