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# The Public and Private Selves of Political Leaders: Sex as Pipeline to the Political Soul

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Abstract. This article describes a consequence of linkages between sexual and political attributions.

One common approach to studying political attributions is the empirical, descriptive, statistical delineation of belief systems in population samples. Often a goal of this approach is to develop coherent, logical, and rational knowledge on the putative bearing of these belief systems on political behavior. And in achieving this goal, one often collects data on the putative belief systems of a political leader and the putative bearing of these belief systems on the leader's political behavior--all within the belief systems of population samples.

Through studying the studying of political attributions and their bearing on political behavior of population samples in the above manner, one can infer a breakdown of boundaries between the public and private selves of political leaders within the samples' phenomenologies. Here are but two examples. (1) Violating trust through committing adultery in a marital relationship makes a political leader more likely to violate the trust placed in that leader by voters. (2) Participating in sexual practices perceived by some samples as bizarre, threatening, or unusual precludes respect for and emulation of significant, positive political achievements. If there is significant linkage--e.g. positive correlation--between attribution and behavior, then both examples (1) and (2) can lead to less political support for the leader.

What has happened and often observed--irrespective of the empirical or reason-based ontological validities of attributions and behavioral linkages is the totalization of the sexual self--public and private--in political debate. All sexual aspects of the leader have become germane for political discourse. Less frequently observed is that the totalization of the sexual self for political leaders--and here political leader includes anyone with significant influence in any component of life with infinite need and finite resources, e.g., business, education, science, technology--has had, is having, and will have a private consequence. This is the case even though the very notion of the private versus public distinction in many political arenas has in our historical moment broken down.

What is this consequence? The rise of the nonadaptiveness of spontaneous behavior. The political leader--future, budding, neophyte, or "old pro"--needs to always be "on." All sexual behavior from a moment of eye contact through post-orgasmic interlude must be subject to a strategic-moral calculus surmised through one's social perceptions and, later, through one's pollsters and advisers.

Just as the nature of political campaigns may result in winning candidates who may not be winners in office, so, too, with the continually introspective sexual performer. Although Shakespeare is not referring primarily to sex when Hamlet states that "blest are those/Whose blood and judgment are so well commedled/That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger/To sound what stop she please" (Hamlet, Act, III, Scene II, ll. 68-71), the blessedness might not apply to all political behavior. If sex is a pipeline to the political soul, what psychological and political correlates would be concurrent or even epiphenomenal to a virtual reality of lifetime performance anxiety? (See Davies, M. F. (1996). Self-consciousness and the complexity of private and public aspects of identity. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 24, 133-118; Jovchelovitch, S. (1995). Social representations in and out of the public sphere:

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Towards a theoretical articulation. *Journal of the Theory of Social Behavior*, 25, 81-102; Nasby, W. (1996). Private and public self-consciousness and articulation of the ought self from private and public vantages. *Journal of Personality*, 64, 131-156; Reeves, R. (October 8, 1997). 13 days in October. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Shakespeare, W. (1994/c. 1600). *Hamlet*. NY: Routledge.) (Keywords: Attribution, Private Self, Public Self, Sex..)