

On the Formal Constraints of Blame Attribution in Social Discourse

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1 Abstract

We present a formal system for analyzing the logical constraints inherent in social discourse surrounding blame, judgment, and scapegoating. We demonstrate several impossibility theorems analogous to mathematical incompleteness results, showing fundamental limitations in the expressibility of certain social dynamics within their own context.

2 1. Introduction

In social discourse, certain statements about interpersonal dynamics become logically impossible to express within the system they describe. This paper formalizes these constraints and proves several key impossibility results.

3 2. Formal Definitions

Let P and Q be persons or groups, and z be an action or situation.

3.1 2.1 Basic Predicates

- $B(x,y,z)$: x blames y for z
- $J(x,y)$: x judges y
- $D(x,y,z)$: x acknowledges doing z to y
- $\text{Valid}(S)$: Statement S is considered valid within the discourse
- $\text{Scapegoat}(P,G)$: P is being scapegoated by group G

4 3. Main Results

4.1 3.1 The Blame Shield Theorem

For any persons P and Q and situation z: If B(P,Q,z) holds, then any statement S from P about Q's behavior becomes invalid within the discourse system: P,Q,z,S. $B(P,Q,z) \rightarrow \neg \text{Valid}(S(P,Q))$

This creates a paradoxical situation where legitimate grievances become inexpressible once they are categorized as "blame."

4.2 3.2 The Judgment Paradox

One cannot assert they are being judged without performing judgment: $\neg P,Q. (J(Q,P) \rightarrow \neg J(P,Q))$

This is analogous to Russell's Paradox in set theory, creating an impredicative condition where the very act of identifying judgment constitutes judgment.

4.3 3.3 The Scapegoat Incompleteness Theorem

If P is being scapegoated by set G, there exists no statement S within the system that can prove this to G: P,G. $\text{Scapegoat}(P,G) \rightarrow \neg \text{S. Prove}(S, \text{Scapegoat}(P,G))$

This result shows that certain true social dynamics are formally unprovable within the system they exist in, similar to Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems.

5 4. Implications

These results suggest fundamental limitations in addressing certain social dynamics through direct discourse. Just as Gödel's theorems show that certain mathematical truths cannot be proven within their system, these theorems demonstrate that certain social truths cannot be expressed within their social context.

6 5. Conclusion

The formal constraints identified in this paper help explain why certain interpersonal dynamics become "stuck" despite being objectively observable

from outside the system. This suggests that resolution of such situations may require stepping outside the formal system in which they arise.

7 References

1. Gödel, K. (1931). Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme I.
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3. Tarski, A. (1944). The Semantic Conception of Truth.