

Ideological Propositions & Ideology Critique

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1. Introduction

- a. Explicit ideology: the propositional elements of ideology.
- b. An account of explicit ideology illuminates reasoned disagreement *and* other forms of resistance.

2. Case study: street harassment

- a. Propositions can enter the causal order via...
 - i. Propositional *attitudes* that take propositions as contents (through accepting, believing, entertaining, desiring, wishing).
 - ii. *Artifacts*, even if not held as an attitude.
- b. Propositions at play in the practice of street harassment:
 - i. “Courtship proposition”: instances of street harassment are sincere efforts at courtship.
 - ii. “Punishment proposition”: instances of street harassment are the infliction of a deserved punishment.
- c. Propositions offer various distinctive *advantages* to ideology (persuasion, deepening motivations, facilitating justification, disseminating efficiently).
 - i. ...But they also risk generating cognitive dissonance and decision conflict (as we see with the “courtship” and “punishment” propositions).
 - ii. How does ideology recruit these diverse propositions and manage potential tension between them?

3. Compartmentalization

- a. Ideologies manage the risks of contradiction with *compartmentalization*, which divides explicit ideology into consistent compartments for agents with high consistency demands.
- b. However, material conflict can be managed with the *common enemy effect*.
- c. Takeaway: the distinctive features of propositions offer an explanation for two important features of ideology: their high degree of compartmentalisation and their reliance on the common enemy effect.

4. Lessons for resistance

- a. Ideology is organized to avoid ideology critique, which leaves it vulnerable to other forms of resistance:
 - i. Compartments are unified by their function of concealing ideology’s *function* and *teleology*, so ideology remains susceptible to resistance that trafficks in propositions that refer to these elements.
 - ii. Example: the #MeToo movement has been extremely effective: it trafficks in simple propositions that token ordinary concepts to report individual experiences with gendered oppression.

5. Conclusion

- a. **Conclusion:** explicit ideology and ideology critique are both worth individuating because they explain (a) certain defense mechanisms for ideology (e.g., compartmentalisation, common enemy effect) and (b) the efficacy of other forms of resistance that target those defense mechanisms.
- b. **General takeaway:** narrowly individuating the components of ideology is indispensable for *mechanistic explanations* for the persistence and vulnerabilities of ideology.