Scapegoat Theory: Shifting Blame and Displacing Aggression

MAPY690 Social Psychology

To Juanita Ratner

From Sandra Enders

Regis University
Abstract

This writing looks at the social theory of scapegoating. It reviews the ancient origins of the behavior as well as the historical use in society of scapegoated groups, often the most marginalized or devalued in society, having little means of defending themselves. The writing researches the behavior from both a psychoanalytic perspective and also from a more rational analysis using the frustration-aggression hypothesis of shifting blame and displacing aggression. Related concepts and theories which are closely linked will also be discussed such as projective identification, projection, prejudice, self-fulfilling prophesy, justification-suppression model, cognitive dissonance and social impact theory. A look at the practice within certain social institutions, such as in the family and public arena will also be briefly discussed.
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The Ancient Origins of the Scapegoat

It is generally accepted that the need for a belief system in a deity or deities has existed in humanity since man evolved. With it came rules for adherence to the faith or worshipped God or Gods. The fear of the afterlife and of carrying of sin in oneself was not at all desirable and its presence was often blamed for illness, physical disabilities, social calamities, natural disasters, etc. The need for repentance of man’s sin was present in many religious beliefs in antiquities, regardless of the name or amount of deities worshiped. A lack of knowledge and literacy led to superstitious thinking that might sound absurd in today’s world, but often resulted in animal or even human sacrifices in honor of the worshipped. (World Book Encyclopedia, 1960)

The term scapegoat has traditionally been accepted as originating in Western studies as being one of the two goats which was received by the Jewish high priest in Jerusalem on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) in ancient Israel. One goat was used in a sacrificial offering for Jehovah, the Hebrew God, and the other was used as the scapegoat to carry the sins of the tribe out of the community. The priest would lay his hands on the animal in an attempt to transfer the tribe’s sins to it and by sending it into the wilderness it cleanse the people of them. The word atonement is often equated with reconciliation, in this sense it would be a reconciliation of the Hebrews to their God, Jehovah. (World Book Encyclopedia 1960 p145) Yom Kippur is a Jewish religious holiday, observed on the 10th day of the lunar month of Tishri (in late September or early October). It concludes the 10 days of repentance that begin with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, sometimes called the Day of Judgment or Day of Remembrance. It ushers in the 10-day period of self-examination and penitence that ends with Yom Kippur. The Rosh
Hashanah liturgy includes the blowing of the ram's horn, or shofar, a call for spiritual awakening associated with the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Discrepancies were found as to the origination of the word scapegoat. Wikipedia states that it may have been from a mistranslation of the word Azazel, which originated by William Tyndale in his 1530 biblical translation into English, later making its way into the King James version in 1611. He translated it as “the goat that departs” hence (e)scape goat. But according to the Talmud, a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law and customs, Azazel is a contraction of az, meaning harsh, and evil, meaning strong, which one might speculate that it refers to the mountains where the goat was sent. However, I found various other references which claim most modern scholars interpret Azazel as a fallen angel, demon, or spirit of evil. Whatever the origin of the term at the time, Tyndale is generally credited for today’s current translation. (Douglas, 1995) The rite was described in Leviticus 16:18 to 16:22:

And he shall go out unto the altar that [is] before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put [it] upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy [place], and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send [him] away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:
And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

But the Hebrews were not the only peoples practicing rites of atonement. The Hittites were another group of ancient people also mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as coming from the Children of Heth, and being the second of the eleven Canaanite nations in the area of western Asia. Their empire reached its height around the 14th century BC and maintained similar practices of driving out evil through a human along with an animal. Their Ritual of Ashella elaborates on the steps to rid the army camp of plague. A woman was used to herd the ram out of the camp to the enemy territory. In the Hittite culture a woman at a warrior’s camp would be the lowest possible status, although when she is sent away with the ram, she is adorned in finery, possibly as a substitute for the king. (Westbrook & Lewis, 2008)

In ancient Greece, the scapegoat was a person rather than an animal, and was often beaten or killed, and sometimes exiled, in order to transfer the guilt or sin of the community, or to ward off or end a famine or plague. Again, like the Hittites, the Greeks choose the most expendable or marginalized in society, usually a criminal or poor person, and also dressed them in finery for the event. The paradox of dressing a marginalized person in finery was that in theory averting the misfortune or devastation appealed to the sacrifice of a valuable person in society. However, the upper class refused to participate in such a manner and so the expendable person was dressed as such. For criminals, this was often a better fate than the alternative, as the scapegoat sometimes had a chance of escape. (Westbrook & Lewis, 2008)

It is worth mentioning here that Sir James George Frazier (1854–1941), considered one of the fathers of modern social anthropology, contributed greatly to the cultural studies of scapegoating, along with other various documented social behaviors from around the world. His
classic writing, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, is a lengthy comparative study of mythology, comparative folklore, superstition, as well as magic, and religion. Frazier was Scottish, although he studied, taught, was published, and died in Britain. The writing was considered scandalous at the time by the British public, because it included the Christian story of Jesus in its comparative study, having a secular tone, and as being a relic of a pagan religion. The text was first published in two volumes in 1890; the third edition, published 1906–15, comprised twelve volumes. Frazer was not widely traveled, with his prime sources of data being ancient histories and questionnaires mailed to missionaries and Imperial officials all over the globe. Below are the topics which were covered in his writing, which elaborated on many cultures through history and around the world, from both developed and undeveloped areas. The need to transfer evil or sin onto others has been practiced socially since antiquities from all walks of life. Due to time restraints I have listed his categorization only, which gives an idea of how in depth his study was.

Chapter 55 The Transference of Evil
- The Transference to Inanimate Objects
- The Transference to Animals
- The Transference to Men
- The Transference of Evil in Europe

Chapter 56 The Public Expulsion of Evils
- The Omnipresence of Demons
- The Occasional Expulsion of Evils
- The Periodic Expulsion of Evils

Chapter 57 Public Scapegoats
- The Expulsion of Embodied Evils
- The Occasional Expulsion of Evils in a Material Vehicle
- The Periodic Expulsion of Evils in a Material Vehicle
- On Scapegoats in General

Chapter 58 Human Scapegoats in Classical Antiquities
- The Human Scapegoat in Ancient Rome
• The Human Scapegoat in Ancient Greece
• The Roman Saturnalia
**Scapegoated Groups throughout History**

According to Douglas the process initially was of purification from contamination and three elements were present all while operating within a specific belief system. One element was the belief that a divine power could reward and punish at will, the second was the acknowledgement of human transgressions and the need for continuous repentance and forgiveness, and thirdly that evil existed and could be transferred to and from inanimate objects, animals, and humans. But no longer can we accept it as ritual or even symbolic. It now is accompanied by rational intent and objective strategies, sometimes to ensure survival sometimes to preserve the status quo, although the element of sacrifice still exists. When stemming out of frustration, an irrational form of scapegoating emerges, rather than a deliberate rational and calculated deflection of blame.

Similar behavior of ostracizing marginalized individuals or groups out of mainstream society has been witnessed throughout history and continues to this day. As religious thinking spread throughout the Western world during the Middle Ages, so did distorted twists on the Christian faith. Because of poor communications and a basic lack of literacy, ignorance maintained similar superstitious scapegoating practices. Sin-eaters and whipping boys were a common phenomenon through that period. Sin-eaters were individuals who acted as scapegoats and often made a living out of it. The act involved food, most often a loaf of bread, which was passed over a dead corpse and the sin-eater would then eat the bread to take on the sins of the deceased. Whipping boys were used in a little different manner. They would be the designated person to receive another’s punishment. Of course a marginalized low status in life would
determine who played the whipping boy’s role. With the increase of superstitious practices, 
witches were also often the scapegoats in society blamed for many social ills. (Douglas, 1995)

In Michael Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of 
Reason*, he begins in the middle ages with the disappearance of leprosy, which the lepers were 
the previously ostracized group in European society. He argues that the vacant leper colonies 
needed to be filled and so the mentally ill, who had previously been mainstreamed rather than 
segregated, and even thought of at times to be favored as fools, were forced into the vacant 
colonies for occupation. This exclusionary practice is apparent from the 15th century book Ship 
of Fools (1494) by Brant, which served as the inspiration for Bosch's famous painting by the 
same name. Many other marginalized groups were segregated into these houses at the time, the 
unemployed, orphaned children, the impoverished, and vagrants. (Foucault, 1988)

The Native Americans were the first scapegoated group after the Europeans began their 
migration to the new world. The White man exploited their lifestyle and treated them as inferior 
and even savage and subhuman as they did the Black slaves who began being transported against 
their will from Africa about the same time. The Jews in Germany during the 1930’s were 
blamed for the poor economic conditions in the country and used as scapegoats and treated as 
less than human with an attempt for genocide by Hitler’s Nazi regime. Many people view the 
Gays and lesbian group in America as the new scapegoated people and blamed for the decay of 
the American culture. And corporate America is another current scapegoat blamed for the 
country’s economic downturn and used as an excuse for moving toward a progressive socialist 
economic environment and totalitarian form of government. Pushing blame for a negative 
situation onto a weaker target makes the aggressor feel more powerful, less guilty, less sinful, 
and allows for frustration to be released. The specific practices or rituals and exact meanings
may have been changed through the years, but the process still continues. Next I will discuss the psychological process of scapegoating.
The Psychology of Scapegoating

The scapegoating process is a complex social phenomenon with various layers to it. I found two distinct strands for a psychological explanation, one along the lines of the psychoanalysis school of thought and the other being a more practical explanation and much less complex, which deals with frustration, aggression, and the displacement of them onto another, often of weaker character or lower social status. I will first look at the psychoanalytic first.

In Jungian psychology, the shadow is considered an archetype, which represents the dark side of the human psych, weaknesses, shortcomings, often sexual or aggressive urges, which are generally rejected by the conscious ego, and often projected onto others. Although the shadow was thought to be the human dark side, Jung also thought it to be the seat of human creativity. Archetypes, Jung considered are structural components of the mind emerged out of a collective societal unconscious, which is ancestral experience accumulated through history and shared by a society or all humankind. Archetypes are not known directly, but their energy emerges as images. In Jungian terms scapegoating denies the shadow of both man and God. The shadow can not conform to the ego ideal so it is rejected and made unconscious. An individual or group is chosen to blame for misfortune, illness, or social calamities, relieving the scapegoaters of their own responsibilities and unacceptable shadows. It also simultaneously strengthens their sense of power and righteousness, while alleviating blame, shame, and guilt. In modern scapegoat theory the energy fields from the collective unconscious have been severed due to societal secularism of the archetypal image, shifting away from sacred needs and atonement to God onto more deliberate and necessary acts of self preservation. With increased rational inquiry the ritualistic
and divine nature of the process has become much more individualistic and self-serving rather than for the good of the community. (Perera, 1986)

Gordon Allport (1897-1967) was a forerunner in the area of personality psychology and did much work specifically in the area of prejudice. His classic *On the Nature of Prejudice* (1958) still remains the standard for scholarly work on discrimination. He considered scapegoating to be an important theory of prejudice. Allport acknowledged both the psychodynamic approach previously discussed which argues that the theory was carried down traditionally from the biblical scriptures describing the sin of the tribe being cast out of by a goat. In this the negative traits that the self wishes not to adhere to can be projected onto others relieving the self of shame and guilt. However, he also approached the topic in a more practical and less complicated model in which general external frustrations, which blocks goals from being attained, lead to anger displacement onto innocent and weaker targets. The former is caused by innate drives where the later is caused by external forces. Both the psychodynamic view and the frustration-aggressive view argue that the projection of unwanted traits and the aggression gets displaced onto another target and both are irrationally and emotionally driven. Allport also argued that it is not always the weakest that get blamed and that the opposite is often true. Often envy determines the victim; and a perceived future threat can mean the need to scapegoat an individual or group. (Allport, 1958)

Prejudice is defined as a hostile or negative attitude toward a distinguishable group of people based on their group membership. It maintains three components, an affective (emotion), a cognitive (belief), and a behavioral component. Stereotyping is a cognitive generalization of a group of people based on traits or characteristics disregarding individual differences. Discrimination is unjustified negative behavior or harmful treatment toward a group of people
because of membership in a certain group. All three components are considered as being primarily learned behaviors, however certain personality traits can cause predisposition to them.

The justification-suppression model states that most people struggle between the urge to express prejudice and their need to maintain a positive self-concept of themselves. The best held way to minimize prejudice is by increasing contact and bringing in-group and out-group together. Six conditions must be met to have positive results; mutual interdependence, a common goal, equal status, informal and interpersonal contact, multiple contacts, and social norms of equality. (Aronson, 2007)

The theory of cognitive dissonance states that people experience discomfort (dissonance) when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with their own self image. This discomfort can be diffused in any of three ways; by changing behavior to inline it with their own self image, or by justifying their behavior by either changing their cognition or thoughts or by adding new cognitions about the situation. Because of human biases acquired from past experience rationalizing ones past behavior often is done in order to limit later dissonance even at the expense of behaving in an irrational manner. Normative conformity happens in an attempt to belong to a group in which public acceptance is more important than private assurance. When the importance of being accurate is high, people may go against the normative influence in favor of the correct action even though rejection may lead to ridicule, rejection, or ostracism from the group. Social impact theory argues that normative social influence is based on three things; immediacy or closeness to group in space and time, importance or strength of the group, and size of the group. Having support helps to resist normative influence. The key to a minority influencing a majority is consistency in the presentation of the viewpoint. The realistic conflict theory states that limited resources lead to social group conflict resulting in increased prejudice
and discrimination especially during economic downturns and high unemployment. (Aronson, 2007)

Aggressors in the scapegoating process often have distinct personalities and are predisposed to prejudice having specific authoritarian and controlling characteristics. They are often rigid, inflexible, intolerable of weakness, self-righteous and judgmental in themselves and others. They strongly believe in punishment for transgressions of the conventional social norm and they are suspicious of the unfamiliar and struggle greatly with any change in their life. They overindulge in allegiance to authority and obedience to its order. This type of personality often finds it difficult to deal with frustration and owning up to taking responsibility for it, and are very likely to place blame for difficulties onto others. (Douglas, 1995)

When choosing a victim literature points to one major distinction and that is difference, whether it be physical, attitude, morality, or group values, one person or one group will stand out as the chosen one. This difference is often provocative and includes characteristics which provoke hostility and aggression. The scapegoat is often of lower social power or influence, isolated socially, and accessible for the process. The scapegoat will sometimes willingly, although on a subconscious level, volunteer for the task in a self destructive manner seeking punishment, ridicule, and social rejection. The scapegoating process arises out of various factors and the reasons behind the choice of scapegoat, also varies considerably. However, the severity of desperation is always a main factor, as the need to survive often prompts otherwise civilized people to push others to act in uncivilized manners. It has also been suggested that over long periods of time as scapegoats, victims may acquire the qualities of a stimulus for aggression. (Douglas, 1995)
The shifting of the blame in the scapegoating process deals with three related concepts, projection, introjection, and projective identification. Projection, in a psychoanalytic sense, is unwanted thoughts and feelings about the self which can be unconsciously projected onto another. This concept can be extended to projection by groups on an individual, or projection by society onto a group. Projection is an especially commonly used defense mechanism in people with certain personality disorders and often used to justify prejudice or evade responsibility. Introjection is the process in which the individual unconsciously incorporates another’s qualities, values, or attitudes, or part of another’s personality into their own self. This process can be normal such as taking on parental values or attitudes, but can also be used as a defense mechanism in situations which arouse anxiety. Projective identification is the actual internalization of the projection process, through conscious or unconscious interpersonal pressure, the receiver of the projected qualities, actually believes them and internalizes them. This term was first used by Melanie Klein in 1946 in the object relations theory, by which the object of projection was used in order to control or harm it. Projective Identification is thought to be a fairly primitive psychological process and defense mechanism; however it is also known to be at the root of more advanced cognition such as empathy or intuition. So in a sense it can be used as a double-edged sword in a positive or negative light. Self-fulfilling prophecy is a very similar sociological theory coined by Robert Merton in his *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1949) classic which states that a declared prophecy can have the influence on the individual or others if it is believed to be true. It extends an expectation of what another person (or group) is like prematurely judging that person and that person acts in the manner consistent with the behavior. Similar theories exist in the field of education such as the pygmalion theory and the soft bigotry of low expectations. (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2007)
In 1939 John Dollard (and his associates Miller, Doob, and Mowrer), published a classic argument on aggression in *Frustration and Aggression*. This theory of frustration-aggression proposed that frustration always produces an aggressive urge and that aggression is always the result of frustration. This writing was the first major systematic study concerning human aggression in psychology and it was the first to speak of displacing aggression onto another. Miller later noted that the urge for aggression will increase as the thwarting of the goal continued and the more similar the provocateur and target. Frustration can be caused by the prevention of a goal with an individual or group. Internal forces of frustration can include motivational conflicts and inhibitions and external forces can include the actions of other individuals or by the rules of society. Leonard Berkowitz later proposed in 1989 that the frustration must be decidedly unpleasant in order to trigger an aggressive response. (APA Dictionary)

Although this thesis has since been challenged often since Dollard and his associates, it remains a highly studied area in social psychology. In 2000 the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* published a meta-analytic review of Dollard’s original work and the inclusion of his thesis in social psychology textbooks since his work was published. The study looked at 122 texts from 1939 to 2000 and found a decline through the years most likely due to challenges to the theory. However, the study found validity to the original work arguing that it is still a highly regarded area of study. Marcus-Newhall and her associates in the study found that the more negative the setting in which the participant and target interacted, the greater the magnitude of displaced aggression. In accordance with Miller, the higher similarity between the provocateur and target, the more displaced aggression. And consistent with Berkowitz, the intensity of initial provocation is inversely related to the magnitude of the displaced aggression. (Marcus-Newhall, 2000)
Russell Green (1990) defines frustration as being the blocking of a sequence of goal directed acts, and aggression as a response with the goal of injuring an organism or object. He argues that both biological makeup and learned behavior may make a person prone for disposition for aggression, but neither guarantees it. Some kind of provocation happens which trigger the potential aggressive response. Green states that it is “the strength of the aggressive response, relative to the strength of other possible responses, which determines whether it in fact occurs”. Even though aggression may arise from neural structures in the brain a specific stimuli must also be present to set off the brain activity. He thought that aggression can be triggered by more than just frustration, the blocking of a goal, and that interpersonal provocation or violence being experienced in the immediate social environment can also lead to aggression. Even though Dollars original thesis was a breakthrough in the study of human aggression, it has been greatly expanded since then to consider that frustration merely creates instigation for aggression. Others have argued that frustration may also lead to useless, maladaptive, or regressive behavior and much depends on the responses which are available within the acting individual’s knowledge base. Some may act with helplessness, fear, anxiety, or inward with retreat. (Green, 1990)

The two diagrams on the following pages are Dollard and associates work on the frustration-aggressive hypothesis, however it was taken from the Douglas writing. I did not have access to Dollard’s original work. The first shows the chain of events of frustration, aggression and displacement on a one to one basis and the second shows it in a group situation.
Individual A is angered by individual B

- A defends himself and retaliates.
  - A’s anger may or may not be totally discharged.
- A is afraid of the power of B and of the threat involved.
  - A does not defend or retaliate.
    - A’s anger is suppressed.
      - A withdraws from contact with B.
        - A experiences his anger as tension and psychic discomfort.
          - A’s suppressed anger and tension are vented on C and his discomfort relieved.

- A makes contact with another non-threatening and non-powerful person C.
  - C defends himself; experiences the attack as unwarranted.
  - C is afraid of the power of A ... and so on.
Group is aware of problem;
e.g. it is making no progress,

One or two of the members ask the question, “Why is it like this?”

Usually a realistic answer is not readily available.

Group tries various remedies and exhortations.
Carries on as usual hoping things will get better.
Seeks outside help.
Decides that certain members may be to blame.

Such members are selected on the basis of difference, resisting, provocation, dislike, non-conformity, powerlessness, or they volunteer.

Blame is laid on the members selected.

They accept because of fear and known lack of power.
They accept because such treatment is in accord with their expectations.
They resist – this may still serve the purpose of discharge of tension, or

These members become scapegoats.

The group is relieved of its tension and is freed to proceed with its purposes.

One of which may be to look at the process of discharge of group tension and to devise means of locating actual causes.
**The Family Scapegoat**

Most of the literature which was found on family scapegoating tended to focus on the process of a parent or both parents as the aggressors toward a selected child, however siblings could also choose the scapegoat. Often it is not only the weakest, but the least physically desirable. In Pillari’s book, *Scapegoating in Families: Intergenerational Patterns of Physical and Emotional Abuse*, many references were made to the idea that often physical disabilities or a lack of attractiveness would add to the likelihood, as well as gender and convenience and access. Often repetitive patterns of abuse would emerge. Although the process and selection is unconscious, certain characteristics of the child might label him or her for the role. For instance, if the mother is unhappy with the father’s ability to earn a living, the chosen child might be the one with the poorest grades in school or of least ambition. A parent’s frustration with their own shortcomings, or parental problems between two parents, was often the reason of one or both pushing the blame onto a chosen child. This in turn was a distraction and took the attention off of the real problem, which may be difficult to face. It diffuses the conflict by putting the burden onto the weaker child. Because the child’s personality is still forming, he or she can be molded into the family assigned roles. The scapegoated child’s behavior can vary from depressed and distressed to acting out behaviors as an attention getter. Often it will begin as the former, but once the role has been accepted by the child, the later will start. The feelings of the scapegoated child vary from feeling criticized, unloved, alienated, and ostracized. They deny themselves any assertive instinct and accept the abuse, often taking the problems of the whole family onto themselves, remaining dedicated long after adulthood, as if still trying to correct a wrong from their childhood, which they were not to blame initially. (Pillari, 1991)
Scapegoated children will often have distorted views of themselves with a self loathing and feelings of worthlessness. Although their thoughts, feelings, and intentions are ignored or disregarded, their behaviors and often evaluated, distorted, and used against them by the aggressors, whether parents or siblings. Projective identification is often used by the aggressor in a family setting, which removes unwanted characteristics from themselves, in an attempt to identify the traits in their own children as if to transfer the unwanted qualities from them.

In Yahav and Sharlin’s study on blame and family conflict the projective identification process was looked at in relation to externalized versus internalized symptoms. The study examined the connection between the two symptomatic areas and the subjective perceptions of the children in both groups as being unjustly blamed for family conflict. Two control groups were used, one without symptoms and another consisting of siblings closest in age to the research group. The hypothesis was that the children with externalized symptoms would feel more blame as their counterparts did showing internalized symptoms. This was conclusive in the research, which found that externalizing children reported greater subjection to parental blame than did the other children. (Yahav and Sharlin, 2001)

In Green’s writing on *Human Aggression*, he states that children learn aggressive behaviors as a result of their upbringing in the home. There are two factors which may promote aggressive behaviors in the family, one being that aggression is being observed or learned and the other is the functioning of environment itself. If there is a lack of love, inconsistent discipline, and dysfunction or discord children would be at much more risk than those who were raised in a well functioning family environment. (Green, 1990)
The Public Scapegoat

Aside from scapegoating in the family environment, public scapegoating is often seen in various social institutions, such as the workplace, school, and in the political arena. Bales and Slater developed a theory of leadership functions in 1955, which was termed *role differentiation* in an emerging group structure. Later Peter Burke expanded upon this theory in 1968. It proposed that individuals within groups and other social systems tend to naturally develop specializations over time, due to individual characteristics, personalities, skills, motivation levels, etc. A task leader often emerges out of this natural inequality of participation, who is often an individual who becomes highly active. This violates the norms of equality by limiting opportunities for other group members, and tension and hostility may arise. Because of this, often a co-leadership role can develop, the one focusing on structural needs or task orientation, and the other with a focus on relationships and interaction of the other group members, specifically out of the need to relieve the tensions and hostility due to the inequality of the tasks. This position is sometimes called a social-emotional specialist. Due to the fact that the group may need the self appointed task leader to get the job at hand completed, a scapegoat may also emerge in the group due to frustrations and conflicting needs of the group. The scapegoat takes on the frustrations which emerged from the inequality, which can not be directly targeted at the task leader. (Gallagher and Burke, 1974)

In 1974 Burke published further research with James Gallagher in *Social Forces* which found that either a social-emotional leader emerged, or a scapegoat, being a low-status member was targeted. It was found that the direction the group takes concerning the scapegoat depends on the task leader’s attitude toward that chosen low status member. If support was show by the
task leader the channel for scapegoating disappears and the social-emotional leader arises. If the hostility toward the scapegoat by the task leader is apparent, this in turn stimulates the scapegoating process. (Gallagher and Burke, 1974)

Sense of coherence is the perception of having clarity and comprehension of one’s life, expressing oneself in a clear and consistent manner, and having a global orientation which views the world in a confident and positive manner. There are differing degrees of SOC in each individual depending on life experiences and personal development. Physical and mental health and the ability to adapt to stress are highly correlated to the level of SOC. Those having a higher degree of SOC are more easily to adapt to changes and be healthier than those that do not, who tend to have limited coping mechanisms in place. A recent study published in the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology looked at the SOC as a protective mechanism against workplace bullying. Workplace bullying was defined as expression of ill treatment and hostility in the workplace setting and characterized by four criteria: the target is exposed to direct or indirect negative acts from the most subtle unconscious to the most blatant emotional abuse. They are repeated routinely and not isolated events (at least one a week), occur over a prolonged period of time (six months or longer), and that there is a perceived imbalance of power between the bully and the target. Typically bullying escalates over time. The study specifically looked at the relationship between repeated exposures to workplace bullying and to posttraumatic stress symptoms. A high SOC was beneficial to those with low levels of bullying, but it diminished as the bullying became more severe. (Nielsen, Mattiesen, & Einarsen, 2008)
The diagram on the following page is Allport’s schema on group or social scapegoating, which was found in Peter Glick’s writing on *Choosing the Scapegoat* in *On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years after Allport* (2005).
Commitment to social movement/ scapegoat ideology

Prior envious stereotypes that target group has the power and intent to have caused collective frustrations

Hostility toward and exaggerated conspiracy theories about the scapegoated group

Actions against scapegoat, both spontaneous (willing) and organized (conformity, obedience to movement)

Collective difficulties

Heightened frustration, needs, and anxieties

Collective search for plausible causes and solutions to shared difficulties

Perceived ability of movement to fulfill frustrated needs (e.g., security, esteem, hope)

Individual/cultural propensity toward prejudice (e.g., Social Dominance Orientation and Right-Wing Authoritarianism)

Perceived success of movement at lessening frustrations (e.g., improved economic conditions for the ingroup)

Collective difficulties
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