

The Group Valency Constitution, the Dominant Basic Assumption, and the Scapegoating Phenomenon*

Mohamed HAFSI

Nara University, Faculty of Social Research

ABSTRACT

The present study constitutes an attempt to investigate experimentally the conditions leading to the phenomenon of scapegoating. Applying Bion's concepts of basic assumptions, and valency, it was hypothesized that 1) scapegoating was more likely to occur in groups operating under the *basic assumption of fight* as defined in the present study, 2) that the scapegoated members display a negative attitude towards the group that predisposes them to the scapegoat role. Based on their valencies as measured by the Reaction to Group Situation Test Nara University (RGST-Nu), the subjects (N=100) were divided into 20 homogeneous (having a same valency) groups of 5 members each. There were thus 4 fight groups, 4 pairing groups, 4 dependency groups, and 4 cooperation tendency groups (groups not characterized by any type of valency). The results supported the first hypothesis that fight groups were more likely to resort to scapegoating than other groups. Moreover, the results revealed also that, as hypothesized, the scapegoated member displayed in fact the most negative attitude towards the group. One of the implications of the present study was that scapegoating is not a unilateral aggressive relationship (one person oppressing another passive and innocent person), but an interactional group phenomenon. Therefore, for a preventive intervention to be effective, it should take into consideration both the scapegoating group and its culture, and the scapegoat and his/her latent hostility towards the group.

The title of the present paper comprises three fundamental concepts that should be defined first before discussing the present study. These concepts are: scapegoating, basic assumption, and valency. I will attempt to define first the concept of scapegoating.

According to the *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*, the term *scapegoat* designates 1) "a goat led let loose in the wilderness on Yom Kippur after the high priest symbolically laid the sins of the people on its head", 2) the person who is "made to bear the blame for others or suffer in their place". Scapegoatism or scapegoating corresponds thus to "the act or practice of assigning blame or failure to someone else" (a person, a group, or subgroup).

As a social phenomenon scapegoating is as old as human society itself. Although

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the terms of scapegoat and scapegoating have become common words, only a small number of studies have dealt with this phenomenon. One of the earliest studies is the one by Frazer (1922) who investigated scapegoating at different levels of human gatherings (society, tribe, village, town etc.). He conceived of scapegoating as a process in which "...the evil influences are embodied in a visible form or are at least supposed to be loaded upon a material medium, which acts as a vehicle to draw them off from the people" (pp. 159, 170).

The prevailing psycho-sociological literature on this subject is characterized by a split between researchers who emphasize the psychodynamic aspect, and those who rather resort to sociologic interpretations of the scapegoat phenomenon (Eagle & Newton, 1981). Scapegoating has been used by the formers (Allport, 1954; Bell & Vogel, 1964; Cornwell, 1967; Szasz, 1970; Schick, 1971; Bermann, 1973) as an explanatory concept for "family disturbance, prejudice, the treatment of criminals, and the development and treatment of mental illness" (Eagle & Newton, *ibid.*). Most of these authors who favor the psychodynamic approach share the interpretation that the scapegoat plays the role of a recipient for the projected and unwanted aspects (impulses, feelings, actions, impressions, etc.) of the group to which he/she belongs. Its presence allows the group to direct its aggressivity towards it, reduces its tension, fear and anxiety level, and consequently helps the group to avoid the painful reality that the real cause of its anxiety and fear resides within and not outside the group (Bion, 1968; De Board, 1978). In this sense, the scapegoat constitutes one of the "nonrational role specialists" (Dunphy, 1968; Mann, 1967; Ringwald, 1974) which emerges from within the group as indicator of and remedy for the group's intrapsychic conflicts.

Those researchers emphasizing the psychodynamics when apprehending the group life were criticized by some sociologically-oriented researchers for neglecting or minimizing the importance of social structural factors (Eagle & Newton, 1981). Some of the latter researchers (Tumin, 1950; Dentler & Erikson, 1959; Durkheim, 1960; Erikson, 1966) argue that scapegoats, as deviant group members, "are created and then maintained in a deviant role" (Eagle & Newton, *ibid.*). The existence of a deviant member allows the group to (re)define and clarify its norms and values, enhancing thus the group cohesion and strengthening its identity.

As pointed out by Shulman (1967), and Eagle & Newton (1981), scapegoating phenomenon is perceived as a unilateral process, namely as a group behavior displayed towards the individual scapegoat. In other words, the scapegoat is often described as an innocent, weak, and (especially) passive victim of its aggressors (the group). However, the results of Sulman's experience with youth groups revealed that the scapegoat is not always the passive victim of the group. According to Shulman, the scapegoat is very often provocative, which, consequently, leads him/her to participate actively in his/her own scapegoating. Similarly, Eagle & Newton (*Ibid.*) argued that the scapegoats play the role of recipients of collective projective identifications (Klein, 1946), but found also that these scapegoats tended

to contribute to their scapegoating by behaving "in ways that invited targeting for projective identification (p. 299)". This confirms Jaques's (1955) idea that there is a collusion between the scapegoat (persecuted) and its persecutor(s). That is, the persecuted individual (or group) share the same strong hatred of the persecutor. Describing the relationship between the scapegoated minority and scapegoating majority, Jaques writes:

"In view of the selective factor in choice of persecuted minorities, we must consider the possibility that one of the operative factors in this selection is the consensus in the minority group, at the phantasy level, to seek contempt and suffering in order to alleviate unconscious guilt" (p.486) which is the result of the minority group's latent negative feeling towards the majority group.

As a review of the literature on scapegoating can reveal, most of the prevailing studies are devoted to the explanation of the role of and psychodynamic and psycho-social function fulfilled by the scapegoat. A little attention has been paid to the question of how the scapegoat manages to actively participate in his/her scapegoating, and to the psycho-social climate, or group culture leading to scapegoating.

In the present study, scapegoating term is defined in a loose manner, meaning the fact of displaying negative attitude towards other group members, or the fact of being perceived negatively, by other members. In other words, the scapegoating definition proposed here includes both scapegoating other, or Acted Scapegoating (AS) and being scapegoated by others, or Experienced Scapegoating (ES). Scapegoating includes also bullying others and being bullied by others; for "bullying" is conceived of as a manifest expression of scapegoating phenomenon.

Based on the work of Wilfred Bion, the present study is an attempt to investigate the conditions under which scapegoating is more likely to emerge. The principal hypothesis is that scapegoating is more likely to be observed when the group is operating under the basic assumption group. However, before discussing in details this hypothesis, it is indispensable first to present an outline of some of Bion's concepts mentioned above (basic assumption group, work group, valency and cooperation) which constitute the core of his group theory.

Bion's Basic Concepts

Like his predecessors Freud (1921) and Lewin (1951), Bion (1968), based on his experience with groups at the Tavistock Clinic in London, developed one of the most unique group theory that has had a considerable influence on the study of group behavior, and of individual behavior within the group.

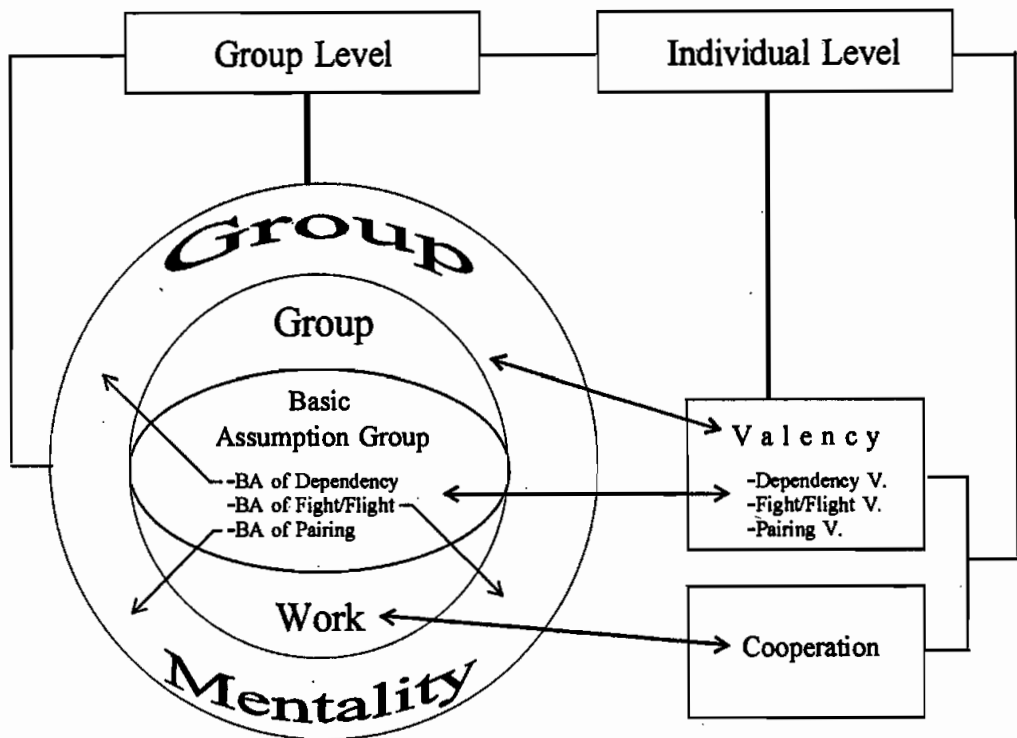


Figure 1. Schematic Representation of Bion's Group Theory

Central to this theory are the concepts of *basic assumption group*, *work group*, and *valency*. According to Bion (1968), whenever a group is born it has only two alternatives: to function as a *work group* or as a *basic assumption group* (see Figure 1).

Work Group: When functioning as a work group, its members appear to be united around a real or "basic task". In other words, the group is characterized by a high interest in the group task, cooperation between the members, recognition of one's own and others' individuality, and responsibility in accomplishing the task, and therefore, by growth, and high achievements. All these positive characteristics are the result of the fact that, unlike in the basic assumption group, a group functioning as a work group is in permanent and real touch with reality.

Basic Assumption Group: Based on his observations of groups, Bion (1968) argued that whenever a group is involved in its basic task, that is operating on work group, it is always, to some extent, prevented from performing it by certain emotional states. Displayed by the whole group, these emotional states, which Bion called "basic assumptions" (ba), are instinctual, and beyond conscious. Bion argued that these group basic assumptions influence every aspect of the group's activity. Although these assumptions are very often fantasies, the group behaves "as if" they are real, rational, and agreed upon by every group member. As indicated in Figure 1, Bion described 3 different basic assumptions, namely, the basic assumptions of

dependency (baD), fight/flight (baF), and pairing (baP). However, only one basic assumption is dominant at one time; and the group can switch from one to another basic assumption at any given time. Other researchers have added new basic assumptions (see, Anzieu, 1984, Turquet, 1985, Lion & Gruenfeld, 1993), but they will not be discussed in the present study.

Describing in details the behavioral content of each basic assumption is far beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, only a brief description of the behavioral and psychological content of each basic assumption will be made.

The Basic Assumption of Dependency (baD) is expressed in the form of 1) a tendency to rely or depend on other persons (group members, authority, especially the leader), on rules, directions, instructions, and traditions, and 2) a tendency to behave "as if" the group is immature, weak, helpless, incapable of making decisions and fearful of taking initiatives and trying things out.

The Basic Assumption of Fight/flight (BaF) includes fighting with others, drawing others (especially the leader) into fights, direct and indirect hostility, criticism, boredom, avoidance of conflict, withdrawal from the group activity, making contextually inappropriate statements and acting outs, dealing with trivial matters, etc. (Hafsi, 1996, 1997). Bion did not separate "fight" (baF) from "flight" (baFl), considering the two aspects as having the same common emotional aim. However, these aspects will be dealt with here as two distinct basic assumptions, following the example of Stock & Thelen (1958), and Armelius & Armelius (1982).

As to the Basic Assumption of Pairing, its most frequent expression is a tendency of inviting and appealing, and at the same time, conveying and encouraging intimate and friendly interactions. Another feature of pairing is a strong hope for a better group life, a strong expectation, and a futuristic and idyllic look at the here-and-now of the group.

According to Bion (1968), the group experience leads the group members to a massive regression to early phases of mental development which Melanie Klein (1946, 1959) called "paranoid-schizoid", and "depressive" positions. Bion argued that the group uses these basic assumptions as defense mechanisms against early fears and anxieties characteristic of these positions.

Discussing the individual contribution to the group's basic assumption, Bion (1968) argued all what a member needs to participate in the group basic assumption is having a *valency* corresponding to the basic assumption which dominates the group activity at a certain period of its history. Initially a word borrowed from physics, valency is used by Bion (1968) as expressing "a capacity for instantaneous involuntary combination of one individual with another for sharing and acting on a basic assumption" (p. 153). The word "combination" does not imply here that the members consciously co-operate with each other, but implies rather that members unconsciously aim at the same emotional goal, namely dependency, fight/flight, or pairing. According to Bion (1968), "a group acting on basic assumption would need neither organization nor a capacity for co-operation" (p. 170). He considers

co-operation as the counterpart of valency, and regards it as a pre-requisite for the work group functioning.

As put by Bion (1968), a person "can have... no valency only by ceasing to be, as far as mental function is concerned, human" (p. 116). That is, each person has a dominant valency of a given nature. As indicated in Figure 1, he described 3 kinds of valencies, with each corresponding to a basic assumption. The 3 valencies are thus the **dependency** valency (Dv), the **fight/flight** valency (Fv), and the **pairing** valency (Pv). Moreover, a person can have a *high* or *low* valency, and a person with a relatively low valency is considered here as being work-oriented, or as having a "**co-operative**" tendency (Ct). The psychological and behavioral content of a given valency is similar to the content of its corresponding basic assumption.

Combining the concepts of basic assumption, work group, and valency, Bion developed a unique and comprehensive group theory which provided a basis for the study of "the group as an organism" (Stock & Thelen, 1958), and influenced the group research trend to a point that the early 1950s was the heyday of small group research in the United States (Hare, 1976).

After reviewing the literature concerning scapegoating phenomenon, and describing briefly Bion's basic concepts, I will now turn to the hypothesis of the present paper. As mentioned above, the purpose of the present paper is 1) to determine the group conditions under which scapegoating phenomenon is more likely to emerge, and 2) the role played by the scapegoat in his/her own scapegoating. The hypotheses tested in the present study are:

Hypothesis 1: As theoretically discussed by Bion, there is a positive correlation between the group's valency constitution and the actual behavior displayed by the group or the dominant basic assumption, during task performance.

Hypothesis 2: The scapegoating phenomenon is more likely to emerge when the group is functioning as a basic assumption group (baG), or, more precisely, when the group's valency constitution is of a fight type (Fv).

Hypothesis 3: The individual selected as a scapegoat corresponds to the group member who has the strongest negative attitude towards the group and its members.

To test these hypotheses, the study described below was conducted.

METHOD

Subjects:

Two hundred twenty male undergraduate students participated as subjects in the present study as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of an introductory course on clinical psychology. However, only one hundred of them (45.5%)— those who displayed clearly one dominant valency— were selected to take part in the experiment.

To recall it, the purpose of the study was to compare groups with different valency constitution, and see whether, as hypothesized, there were differences in terms of emergence of scapegoating phenomenon. Therefore, it was necessary first

to determine the group's valency type. All the subjects were thus collectively administered the Japanese version of the Reaction to Group Situation Test (Stock & Thelen, 1958), referred to as the RGST-Nu (Hafsi, 1996, 1997). The experimenter read the stimuli-situations (items) one-by-one, allowing an interval of 20 seconds between two stimuli. The subjects were instructed to fill the blank, writing down the response as soon as possible, after the experimenter has finished reading the item. Moreover, the subjects were also asked to write the response in a free-association way, without thinking deeply about what they should write. The test lasted 25 minutes.

All the RGST-Nu protocols were scored using the scoring manual and procedure developed by the author (Hafsi, 1996, 1997), and only the subjects displaying one dominant valency and cooperation tendency were selected. Then, based on their valency the subjects were grouped so that to obtain twenty 5-member-groups, with all the members of a group having the same valency. The valency and cooperation constitution of the groups was thus as follows: 4 groups with Dv, 4 groups with Fv, 4 groups with Pv, 4 groups with flight (Flv), and 4 groups with Ct. Only the subjects who were assigned to these groups (N=100) participated in the present experiment.

Procedure:

The group members were asked to be at the laboratory at the scheduled time. When all the 5 members were present, the experimenter's assistant led them in the experiment room, asked them to sit down around a table, and wait for the instructions which were transmitted to them by the experimenter through an interphone.

Observers: Besides the 5 group members, two trained observers were also present in the experiment room. They were informed about the general aspects of the experiment, but neither about the hypotheses nor about the groups' valency constitution. Their role consisted in evaluating the subjects' behavior during the task performance, using a check list. The list comprises the principal behaviors characterizing each basic assumption (baF, baFl, baD, baP) and work (W). For although the subjects of a group have the same valency (Fv, Dv, Flv, Pv) or cooperation tendency (Ct), this does not necessary imply that the group's behavior will reflect the group's valency in a form of basic assumption. Although it is theoretically assumed that valency is the means by which a group member contribute to the formation of basic assumption group mentality (Bion, 1968). Therefore, the data collected by the observers about the group was used to check whether the basic assumption which has been dominating the group reflects or corresponds to the group members' common valency or not.

After introducing the two observers to the group, the assistant asked the subject to introduce themselves to each other in not more than three minutes (because they did not know each other), and wait for further instructions.

Task: After the self-introduction, the subjects were given explanations and instructions about the task they were expected to perform. The task consists in choosing from a list of 10 group situations (e.g., a hold-up, prisoners escaping from prison, idle conversation, etc.), 2 situations and then acting them. The task which presents like a psychodrama was introduced to the subjects as a role playing game, without providing them with any specific scenario. They were told that they were free to decide of the role distribution and scenario, and that they have 30 minutes to perform the task. However, as revealed by the results of previous pilot-studies using this method, the subjects had difficulty understanding and starting the task. Therefore, to help them overcome their inhibition, a role playing demonstration of 3 minutes was performed in front of the subjects by 4 trained assistants. It is noteworthy that the situation played in the demonstration was not included in the situation list handled to the subjects. Moreover, before starting the task, the subjects were asked to select a leader whose role was defined to the group as a facilitator of the group's task performance.

Feedback: The subjects were also led to believe that their role playing game will be evaluated by the two observers who were introduced also as experts in role playing games and drama. Therefore, upon completion of the task, the two observers left the room under the pretext that they were going to discuss about the group performance, evaluate it, and then communicate the results to the group. Regardless of the performance quality, the groups were given a negative feedback in terms of low scores for role distribution, scenario, and content. The purpose here was to create a failure situation, and stimulate the group to think about the causes of the failure, and find a scapegoat to be blamed for it.

Sociometric choice measurement: After the negative feedback, a short post experiment questionnaire measuring sociometric choice was administered to all the group members. The questionnaire comprises 6 items. Each subject was asked to evaluate the other group members on each item using a 6-point scale (point-1=highest score, and point-6 the lowest score). The items were used to measure co-members' participation (item-1), satisfaction with each co-member's company during the experiment (item-2), possibility of becoming friend with each co-member (item-3), willingness to participate again in the experiment in the company of each co-member (item-4), blaming each co-member (item-5), going along with each co-member (item-6). The subject has to evaluate each co-member on these items. It is noteworthy that the subject could also attribute a same point to all the members. For instance, the subject can attribute point-1 to all the members if he thinks that they all have equally participated in the task (item-1).

The aim of the questionnaire was to determine the scapegoated group members, that is, the members who were made responsible for the group's poor performance and the members most disliked in the group. The other aim of this questionnaire is also to test the third hypothesis of the present study, by comparing the scapegoats and other group members in terms of their negative attitudes towards the group.

To test the third hypothesis of the present study, the level to which the subject feels he dislikes the group was measured using the item "I don't feel that I like this group". The subject was asked to evaluate his disliking of the group on a 6-point scale, with point-1 representing the highest level of agreement, and point-6 the highest level of disagreement with the statement described by the item.

Upon completion of the post experiment questionnaire, the experimenter, who was monitoring the groups progress through a one-way mirror, entered the room, thanked the subjects for their participation, asked them not to reveal the content of the experiment to other students, and arranged a time for answering the subjects' questions about the experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, the RGST-Nu was tested for internal consistency reliability, using Cronbach alphas. The results yielded an alpha coefficient of .86, supporting other findings (Hafsi, 1987), and reconfirming the validity of the RGST-Nu as a test for measuring valency as defined previously.

The next analysis performed was to compare the group's valency constitution with the actual displayed behavior (basic assumption) as recorded by the two observers, and test thus the first hypothesis of the present study. The purpose here was thus to see whether, there is a correlation, as hypothesized, between the group's valency constitution and the group's actual behavior (as recorded by the two observers), or basic assumption type (baT) (fight, flight, pairing, dependency). Pearson correlation coefficients were thus computed for the different valency constitution types (Fv, Dv, Flv, Pv), for the cooperation tendency (Ct), and the different basic assumption types (baF, baFl, baD, baP) and work (W).

Table 1. The Correlation (Pearson) Between the Group's Observed Behavior and the Group's Valency Constitution

Observed Behavior	Valency Constitution				
	Pairing	Fight	Dependency	Flight	Cooperation ¹
Pairing	-.15				
Fight		-.35***			
Dependency			-.61****		
Flight				-.32**	
Work					-.23*

Note: ¹From the Bionian point of view, cooperation is not a valency, it is a principal characteristic of the work group.

* $p < .07$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .005$; **** $p < .0001$

As indicated in Table 1, the results revealed, significant correlations between the observed behavior and the valency constitution in the case of fight, flight, and dependency ($p < .001$, .01, .0001, respectively). The correlations in the case of

pairing constitution and cooperation tendency were not significant. This may be due to the fact that the experiment is designed so that a task is performed by the whole group (5 members); any pairing behavior would be experienced as a withdrawal from the task. Therefore, members tend to refrain from displaying this kind of behavior.

Table 2. The Results (ANOVA) of a Comparison Between the Different Observed Behaviors in the Case of the Cooperation Valency Constitution

Score	Observed Basic Assumption				
	Pairing	Fight	Dependency	Flight	Cooperation ¹
Mean	5.8	2.7	1.7	6.2	4.6*
SD	4.9	3.3	1.8	4.1	4.2

Note: * $p < .0001$

The lack of significant correlation between cooperation tendency and the observed cooperation behavior may have a different explanation. As discussed above, cooperation is a prerequisite for work group functioning, however this does not mean that when the group members are willing to show cooperation or have a cooperation tendency the work group will be dominant all the time. For, as discussed by Bion (1968), work group is often inhibited by the basic assumptions. Based on this hypothesis, data concerning the different baT displayed by the Ct groups and recorded by the two observers were analyzed, using ANOVA. As indicated in Table 2, the results showed that the cooperations groups displayed more basic assumption related behaviors than work related behaviors ($F(4,95)=5.2$, $p < .0001$). That is, the baP has the highest mean score, followed by the baF, and the Ct respectively.

As mentioned before, the aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the group's basic assumption type (baT), cooperation tendency (Ct), and the emergence of scapegoating phenomenon. The second hypothesis to be tested states that scapegoating phenomenon is more likely to emerge when the group is displaying the baF. To test this hypothesis, first the Total Scapegoating Index (TSI) was computed for each group, based on the results of the sociometric test described above. The group's TSI corresponds to the sum of all the group members' Scapegoating Index (SI). A group member's SI corresponds here to the sum of the number of times this member was scapegoated, or his Experienced Scapegoating Index (ESI), and the number of times he scapegoated other group members, or his Acted Scapegoating Index (ASI). After computing the TSI for each group, the grand mean ($M=13.2$, $SD=6.4$) of all the groups was also computed. Then, based on this means, the Scapegoating Level (SL) of each group was determined. The groups were thus divided into 2 groups, namely, High Scapegoating Level (HSL), and Low Scapegoating Level (LSL).

Table 3. The results of *Chi* Comparing Basic Assumption Types and Cooperation Tendency Regarding Scapegoating Level

Scapegoating Level	Basic Assumption Types				
	Pairing	Fight	Dependency	Flight	Cooperation
HSL	00 (0)	75 (15)	50 (10)	25 (5)	25* (5)
LSL	100 (20)	25 (5)	50 (10)	75 (15)	75 (15)

Note: Values represent percentage and Frequency (in parentheses).

* $p < .00001$

As indicated in Table 3, the results of a cross analysis of the group's baT by SL yielded significant statistical differences between the different baT, and Ct ($\chi^2(4) = 28.6, p < .00001$). That is, the baF groups were found, as hypothesized, to include more members with HSL (75%) than other groups. The Ct groups and baFl groups had the lowest percentage of HSL (25%). However, this equal relative low percentage of scapegoating can not be interpreted in the same way. For, while this low scapegoating percentage may be the result of the Ct group's concentration on the task more than on interpersonal interaction, the same low percentage may be a result of what constitutes one of the characteristics of the baFl group, namely, the tendency which consists in avoiding the group task and interpersonal interactions themselves. Therefore, scapegoating is not necessary in this case.

Table 4. The results of ANOVA Comparing Basic Assumption Types and Cooperation Regarding Scapegoating Index

Scapegoating Index	Basic Assumption Types				
	Pairing	Fight	Dependency	Flight	Cooperation
Mean	9.8	17.1	13.8	14.8	10.7*
SD	4.6	7.1	6.7	5.4	5.4

Note: * $p < .001$

Testing further the second hypothesis, ANOVA was conducted, comparing the different baT, and Ct groups. The results revealed statistically significant differences ($F(4) = 5.1, p < .0001$). As indicated in Table 4, it was found that, as hypothesized, the baF groups were more likely to resort to scapegoating than groups with other baT, and Ct. However, unlike what it was expected, the Ct groups did not have the lowest, but the second lowest SI following the baP groups. This relative low amount of scapegoating in the latter baT group may be explained by the fact that the group, under the influence of the baP encourages and promotes, as discussed above, intimate and friendly dyadic relationships, and optimism, and, as a matter of fact, discourages scapegoating which may be perceived as inhibiting and negatively influencing these relationships. The relative presence of scapegoating even in the Ct groups, may be interpreted as a result of the task characteristic which requires that

all members contribute to it. As mentioned above, one of the characteristics of the work group is the group contact with reality and the emphasis put on the task. Any possible withdrawal from the task attracts the group's attention, severe criticism, and scapegoating as defined in the present study. Of course, the difference between scapegoating observed in the case of the Ct groups and scapegoating displayed by other ba groups (baF, baFl, baD, baP) is not merely a quantitative difference, but is also a qualitative difference. For scapegoating in the former groups is, unlike in the latter groups, based on reality.

Table 5. Comparison of High Scapegoating Groups (HSG) and Low Scapegoating Groups (LSG) Regarding Group Disliking Score

Group Disliking Score	Scapegoating Level	
	HSG ¹	LSG
Mean	3.48	4.74*
SD	1.04	1.01

Note: HSL=High Scapegoating Level;

LSH=Low Scapegoating Level

* $p < .0001$

As described above, the third hypothesis of the present study postulates that the scapegoat, or the scapegoated member, is not, as usually believed, always a passive victim of the group. The selected scapegoat plays a role in his/her scapegoating by displaying or having a negative attitude towards those who scapegoat him/her, the group. To test this hypothesis, all the groups' members were divided, based on the mean TSI, into High Scapegoating Group (HSG, $N=44$), and Low Scapegoating Groups (LSG, $N=56$). Then the two groups were compared in terms of their negative attitude (disliking) towards their respective groups as measured by the item previously described. The results of a t -test revealed a highly significant difference between the two groups ($t(87.1)=-5.9$, $p < .0001$). As indicated in Table 5, the HSG displayed a stronger negative attitude, or disliking, towards their respective groups. The findings supported thus the third hypothesis of the present study, pointing out the effect the scapegoat's negative attitude towards the group has on the scapegoat selection.

There are two main conclusions that may be drawn from the results of the present study. First, the scapegoating phenomenon is a group phenomenon which is likely to emerge when the group is inhibited by the basic assumption group, or, more precisely, by the baF. For as mentioned above, when functioning under this basic assumption, the group's principal preoccupation is, as discussed by Bion (1968), with looking for and fighting with phantastic (in-group or/and out-group) enemies represented here by the scapegoats. The role of the scapegoat is, thanks to his/her psychological readiness, to serve as a recipient of the group's "bad" and unacceptable impulses and blames. The group gets ride of these impulses, resorting to such primitive defense mechanisms, such as collective splitting and projective

identification (Klein, 1946, Bion, 1968). The aim of scapegoating is to protect the group (from out-group enemies, and in-group fighting), making of it a close system where any kind of manifestation of individuality is feared and banned. The scapegoat, by consciously or unconsciously displaying his/her difference and individuality, releases the group's fear and aggression towards him/herself. The group's fear is a fear of the work group and the "catastrophic change" (Bion, *ibid.*) it may cause within the group.

The second conclusion suggested by the results of the present study is that the widely held belief that the scapegoat is a passive innocent victim does not correspond to reality. For the scapegoat displays a negative attitude towards his/her oppressor, the group. The group may become aware of the scapegoat's negative attitude, selecting him/her as target for scapegoating (in other words, as a recipient of the group's "bad" impulses) and persecute him/her. In this sense, the scapegoat is not passive, his/her passivity is rather manifest only in his/her acceptance of playing his role of scapegoat. Jaques (1955)'s hypothesis of the minority group's seeking of "contempt and suffering in order to alleviate unconscious guilt" (p.486) from negative feelings towards the majority group may apply also to the relation between the group and the scapegoat.

In conclusion, the results of the present study show, as discussed above, that scapegoating is not an individual and unilateral phenomenon, but a collective interactional phenomenon. Therefore, any intervention to prevent the incidence of scapegoating will fail if it does not take into consideration this fact. Dealing with scapegoating (*e.g.*, in the case of bullying), as an individual phenomenon, *viz* a problem of the scapegoated or the one who scapegoats, will merely prevent one person from being scapegoated, without affecting the group culture (Bion, 1968) that gives rise to it. Therefore, for a preventive intervention to be really effective it should be made at the group or the collectivity level (Eagle & Newton, 1981). However, the paradox here is that this kind of intervention is a difficult (if not an impossible) task, so difficult to carry out that scapegoating phenomenon has been always present in human society, and will probably end only with it.

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