

Payson, Steven

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## The Urgent Need for an Economics of “Hategoatism”

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## The Urgent Need for an Economics of “Hategoatism”

Steven Payson

Association for Integrity and Responsible Leadership in Economics  
and Associated Professions (AIRLEAP.org)

[payson.steven@gmail.com](mailto:payson.steven@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The word “scapegoat” is defined as “a person made to bear the blame for others,” and similarly, “scapegoatism” refers to “the act or practice of assigning blame or failure to another, as to deflect attention or responsibility away from oneself” (Collins English Dictionary and Dictionary.com, respectively.) While these definitions do not mention economics specifically, in most cases the blame on the scapegoat is economic in nature. Scapegoatism also provides a convenient, though extremely inferior, substitute for valid analyses of economic problems. Scapegoatism, however, has a partner, dehumanization, which is the process of demonizing certain people as less than human and unworthy of humane treatment. Scapegoatism is not only accompanied by dehumanization, but it is often motivated by it. Thus, “scapegoatism” is a euphemism and it is understudied as a result, because there is no single term of art that combines scapegoatism and dehumanization. This paper offers a solution to this semantic dilemma by proposing the new term, “HATEGOATISM,” for the simultaneous existence of scapegoatism and dehumanization. Only one subfield of economics regularly embraces hategoatism, which is Libertarianism (where the “HATEGOAT” is government workers). Economists must lead by example by combating hategoatism, and that requires cleaning their own house first.

**Keywords:** scapegoat, Libertarianism, hate, discrimination, prejudice, government, ethics, economics, labor, blame, fairness, responsibility, economists, demonization, dehumanization.

**JEL Codes:** B25, B53, D72, D73, H11, H12, I18, I28, I38, J16, J17, J45, J71, P16, P17, Z13

**Note:** The views expressed in this paper reflect the views of the author alone, and they do not necessarily reflect the views of any organizations to which he belongs.

## The Urgent Need for an Economics of “Hategoatism”

Steven Payson, AIRLEAP.org

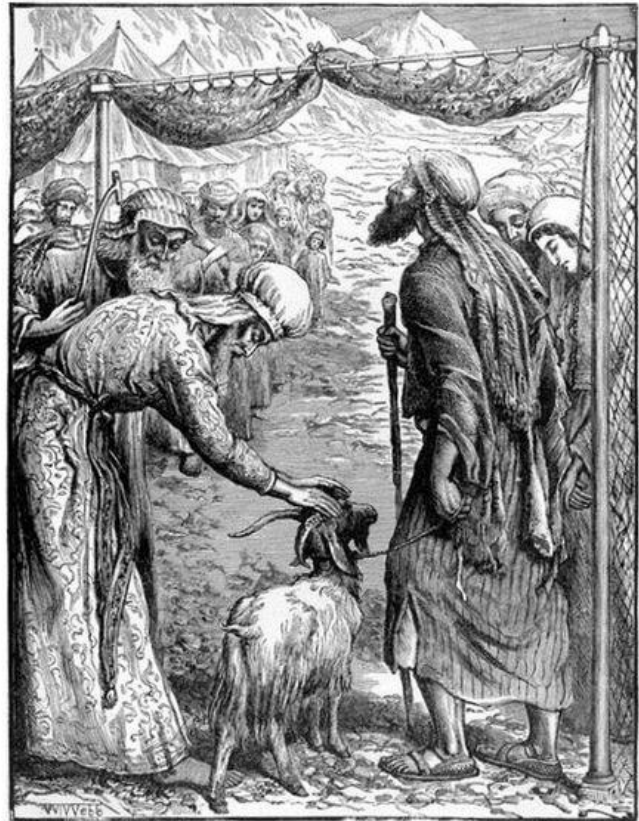
“Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat.”  
(Leviticus 16, New International Version)

### Introduction

Before we begin to have a discussion in the expository style that might normally be expected of an economics paper, I would first like to ask readers to indulge me in a broad-based thought experiment. The experiment is, admittedly, somewhat obscure, but unquestionably relevant in preparing readers for the topic of this paper:

Imagine, if you will, that there is a *single*, clearly identifiable phenomenon, that is widely recognized by economists and non-economists alike, as being extremely important with regard to the very future of humanity. Imagine that this factor, which exists throughout the world, has more influence than any other conceivable factor, over the full range of national policies regarding immigration, social assistance, the minimum wage and other labor standards, government support for medical services, public education, law enforcement, and even military defense strategy. In other words, it is a phenomenon that is widely recognized as greatly influencing nearly every aspect of government policy, regardless of whether the nation in question is a democracy or an autocracy. Imagine even further that this factor is, arguably the most discussed factor of any single factor to be covered daily by the news media throughout the world.

Actually, we are just getting started! Now, imagine that this one phenomenon exists only by virtue of an *unconscionable and morally reprehensible* aspect of human society. This horrific character of the phenomenon is recognized throughout the world, and it is recognized as such by a *consensus* of social scientists, including economists. Imagine, further, that there is no single word, nor even term of art (in the form of a phrase) to identify this single phenomenon, regardless of its incredible importance. Likewise, there is hardly ever any reference to this factor in formal economic discourse, in spite of its enormous economic relevance, and in spite of the fact that its effects are discussed quite frequently in public debates, especially in debates about a nation’s economy. In



“Sending Out the Scapegoat,” by William James Webb (1830-1904), U.S. Public Domain, <https://tinyurl.com/y4de2dad>

fact, it has discussed more frequency in the last two or three years than ever before (or at least since the 1940s).

Finally, as if all of this were not enough, imagine that this situation, of the phenomenon not being studied in economics, does not have to exist at all; that such a phenomenon can, in fact, be identified, named, and studied, especially within, and by, the economics community. In the end, the study of this factor, after it is finally named, could result in huge benefits, both countable and uncountable.

Now stop imagining, because none of this is imaginary. Rather, it is all true, and it is the topic of this paper.

When faced with new world circumstances, we often find ourselves sounding an alarm for new theories of economic behavior, and new datasets, to promote the advancement of economic thought and the betterment of economic policies. The more urgent the need for these new inputs, the louder the alarm sounds. It is in this context that I am writing a paper to sound an extremely loud alarm. However, it is not an alarm for new theories or new datasets *per se*, but for a much more modest endeavor—the creation of a new term of art in economics. This proposed term of art is “HATEGOATISM,” pronounced “hate-goat-ism” It is a deviation from the actual, rather-important word, “scapegoatism,” which will be discussed very shortly. As already implied by the above thought-experiment, this new term will clear the path toward new theories and new datasets, that would lead to substantial improvements in economic theory and policies.

As many of us already know, the noun “scapegoat” is defined as “a person made to bear the blame for others” (Collins English Dictionary). There is also the transitive verb, to scapegoat, which means to make someone (or some group), a scapegoat. Similarly, a “scapegoater” is one who scapegoats.

As just mentioned, we also have the useful, actual word: “**scapegoatism**,” though, unfortunately it is rarely used. The equivalent term “scapegoating” is often used instead as an awkward and ambiguous substitute for the clearer term “scapegoatism.” That is, the word “scapegoatism” is highly preferable over “scapegoating,” in view of the fact that “scapegoating” can be confused with its alternative use as the present participle of the verb “to scapegoat,” which in turn, could imply that the concept itself has less relevance. For example, consider the sentence “After his team lost the game, Joe, in his momentary frustration, began scapegoating one of his teammates, though, as a matter of principle, Joe has always been strongly opposed to scapegoatism, and so he shortly came to his senses.” “Scapegoatism,” in this sense, is more clearly seen as a continued and condoned practice by any individual or group, as opposed to an isolated event or circumstance.

Note that the precise meaning of “scapegoatism,” according to Dictionary.com, is “the act or practice of assigning blame or failure to another, as to deflect attention or responsibility away from oneself.” (The deflection aspect of this definition was not apparent in the above-mentioned definitions of “scapegoat.”) As suggested by the quotation offered at the top of this paper, the original concept of the “scapegoat” (and by extension “scapegoatism”) is historically traceable to the most important holiday in the Jewish religion, Yom Kippur. Of course, there is an incredible irony about this origin of the word, which anyone familiar with world history can easily recognize.

Notice, however, that the concepts of scapegoat and scapegoatism, as they are defined, says nothing, *per se*, about *economics*. Yet, in the vast majority of actual cases, especially cases involving public policy and public debate, it is immediately obvious that the blame that is being cast on the scapegoat is *economic* in nature. More generally, as we all know (or at least *should* know) scapegoatism has always given societies an incredibly convenient, but an extremely inferior, *substitute* for economic analysis. That is, throughout history many societies have effectively asked themselves: “Why go through all the trouble of trying to analyze existing economic problems, in search of analytical solutions, which may be difficult or impossible to find, when it is *so much easier simply to blame a group of people for those problems?*” Furthermore, the “solution” (or even the “final solution,” though we probably know better than to use that term) becomes so much easier as well—that solution being simply for the society to remove the power and influence of the scapegoats, if not eliminate their very existence. Such a policy would be based on a euphoric, cultist delusion that this will solve whatever problems had been identified..

Given the forum in which this paper is being presented, I feel safe in assuming that there is already widespread agreement, and probably a consensus, among the readers of this paper that scapegoatism is intellectually and ethically bankrupt. As a point of clarity, this paper is not written to elevate the concept to any higher ground than the bankruptcy (or worse) where it belongs. Scapegoatism is being explored here solely for its obvious importance with regard to its economic and policy effects, though in some nations much more than in others.

Thus far in this discussion I have still left out the most important aspect of scapegoatism! What we need to add to this discussion is the fact that scapegoatism, in being a driver or influencer of economic policy, is almost never alone. That is, it has a very important partner, which is **dehumanization**. Dehumanization is the psychological process of declaring, either explicitly or implicitly, that a particular group of people is an *enemy* of the community, thereby demonizing them, and accordingly describing them as evil, less than human, and not worthy of humane treatment. Dehumanization has existed throughout history at many levels and in many contexts. It has ranged in magnitude and effect from distasteful comedy (sometimes even promoted by the scapegoats themselves, for the sake of comedy), to, as we know, calls for bloodshed, and even genocide. Indeed, though I am not an historian, I am inclined to suspect that there is no case of genocide in human history that was *not* rooted in scapegoatism that was combined with dehumanization.

Moreover, in nearly all cases in which scapegoatism exists to any significant degree, it is not only *accompanied* by dehumanization, but it *relies upon* dehumanization as its central motivation, arguably even more than it relies on the convenience of having a simple solution to an economic problem. In light of this, the world should recognize that the term “scapegoatism” (or “scapegoating”) is, ultimately, a rather misleading *euphemism*. As such, it generally does not raise levels of concern that it would if the term also included the concept of dehumanization. Yet, there is no single word to combine the concepts of scapegoatism and its beloved bedfellow, dehumanization, to indicate when both are acting in unison. **The world therefore needs such a single word, and single associated concept, to mean the combination of scapegoatism and dehumanization.** As a matter of practicality as well, it is simply too awkward, inconvenient, and ambiguous for a social scientist to use a combined term like “scapegoatism/dehumanization” wherever it applies, which I felt compelled to do, myself, when writing about the topic a few years ago (as I will soon discuss).

I have a two-part proposal to resolve this semantic dilemma: Part 1. As already mentioned, we should establish a new term, which we should call: “HATEGOATISM,” defined as the simultaneous and combined existence of both scapegoatism and dehumanization. Part 2. We define this term as an *economic variable*, in the sense of it being a recognized factor that influences economic policy and has major economic consequences. With regard to Part 2, we go on to say that it influences economic policy by: (a) placing the blame for particular economic problems on a specific, dehumanized subgroup of the population: the “HATEGOAT” in contrast to the “scapegoat”, and (b) explicitly or implicitly conveying the simple, fictional solution that those economic problems will vanish simply through society’s elimination of that subgroup’s power and influence, or very existence.

As I already suggested, I will certainly not insult any readers’ intelligence or moral fortitude by arguing how wrong and disgusting hategoatism is; I will reasonably assume that we are all in agreement on such an assessment. Nevertheless, we have a moral obligation to address it, precisely because it is so wrong. Obviously, an important outcome of such efforts will be useful economic policies that will replace any policies that were based on hategoatism.

One of the main, obvious advantages of having the new term of art (hategoatism) is the clarity and transparency that is served by the term’s first syllable. This is the most relevant aspect of the phenomenon’s character, and thus, it is the most important aspect of the phenomenon that needs to be called out within the field of economics and within all other fields of study that relate in some relevant way to public policy.

### **The Only Hategoatism Consistently Found in Economic Discourse**

While hategoatism can easily be recognized, in its various degrees, in politics, the news media, entertainment, etc., it can also be found, believe it or not, *being promoted* in published, economic literature, even by prominent economists. Many people may find this claim to be quite surprising, thinking naively that the authors of economic literature must somehow be intellectually and ethically above such perspectives. Fortunately, it is rare in virtually all economic literature, except for one subfield in particular: Libertarianism, which overlaps greatly with the Public Choice subfield, and with nearly all other social science literature that touts a call for “liberty” (through minimized government), which is often espoused by its protagonists in a spiritual tone.

Many might argue that there is nothing inherent about Libertarianism (or similar doctrines) that requires a promotion of hategoatism, *per se*. However, as one might guess from the meaning of Libertarianism, the hategoat, in this particular case, is government workers.

It is very easy to find Libertarians, some of whom I have regarded as close colleagues in fact, amusing themselves by making disparaging remarks about government workers. Such remarks are often made in public, even when it is known that government workers are present in the room to hear those remarks. (To witness this, one need only attend a Libertarian-based session in an economic conference, which might be easily found if the session’s title contains the word “liberty.”)

In Payson (2017) for example, I tell the following story:

In 2008 I attended the annual meetings of the Southern Economic Association ... In the very first session ... a professor began ... with a joke: Upon traveling to Washington for the conference, he read some of the local news which said that, in the face of the cold weather ... the heating systems in government buildings were inadequate. The ... article ... recommended the replacement of the old heating systems in government buildings by new heating systems. ... [T]he professor said that he agreed with half of the article ... the idea of removing the existing heaters ... {but he} disagreed... that any new heating systems should be installed in their place. (His joke was implying, in other words, that he would like to see the federal employees freeze in the cold.) He then paused ... for laughter from the audience ... though none arrived. Perhaps he had not considered that, by the ... conference taking place in Washington, DC that year, many of the people in the audience would be ... federal employees, ... who might not have found his joke to be as amusing as he did.

In a recent book entitled, *Organized Crime: The Unvarnished Truth about Government*, written by Economics Professor Thomas DiLorenzo, one can find the following excerpts (with my own emphasis added):

1. "Government enterprises are notorious for being lazy, slothful, inefficient, and corrupt. The very notion that they should be in charge of business decision making ... is a farce that is destroying capitalism in America."
2. "[G]overnment bureaucrats, not individuals and their doctors, inevitably determine who will get medical treatment and who will not ... They assume totalitarian control over the industry, in other words."
3. "[L]owly government bureaucrats became powerful economic dictators."
4. "Politicians will only take the advice of ... advisors if the advice promises to increase the state's power, wealth, and influence even if the politicians know that the advice is bad for the rest of society."

In a similar piece, Economics Professor Daniel Klein wrote a paper entitled, "If Government is So Villainous, How Come Officials Don't Seem Like Villains?" In this paper he answers this question by arguing that government workers are sufficiently devious to hide their true villainous character, while the victimized public, in his view, is too gullible to see through the deception. Obviously, the character of his argument fits squarely within the realm of hategoatism.

Similarly, Klein wrote the article, "The People's Romance: Why People Love Government (as Much as They Do)," in *The Independent Review*, in 2005. The article asks why people "love" the government and, at the same time, presents a dual attack on both the government, and on the fictional people who, in Klein's account, "love" the government. The article lays out nothing short of a conspiracy theory, where Klein explains how government officials successfully capture the hearts and minds of the supposedly naïve public, through a phenomenon that he calls TPR – "the people's romance." For example, Klein writes the following words in his article (with my own emphasis in bold and italics):

Why are *government officials* and enthusiasts often *hostile* to leading corporations such as Microsoft, McDonald's, Wal-Mart, and *Martha Stewart*? Why are they often *hostile* to other bases for independent private cultural power such as *private builders, private schools,*



and *talk radio*? Part of the answer may be that they are *jealous* in *guarding their role as medium and focal point in TPR*. Why are they *hostile* to ... *private communities*, private shopping malls, *the private automobile*, ... Because these practices are means of withdrawing from TPR.

### **A Heated, Public Debate on This Topic**

In Payson (2017), after presenting the above quotation, I go on to describe how absurd, and of course, how completely counterfactual, Klein's remarks are, in their painting government workers as devious villains who are intentionally tricking the public into "loving them"! As indicated by the above quotation, which is obviously an act of fiction writing, Klein goes as far as claiming that government workers hideously disdain anything that people in our society happen to like, if it is something that had not been produced by the government, like "the private automobile." In sharp contrast to this episode in a science fiction movie about a different planet, government workers on the planet Earth actually own their own private cars, and actually like them, and all government-used, official vehicles on the planet Earth are produced in the private sector (even those in the military) since government officials on Earth have long preferred it this way. In Payson (2017) I offer some additional remarks about this literature:

Of all the thousands of economics professors in the United States, surely it should not be surprising to find some at the extreme end of the bell curve when it comes to expressing juvenile discrimination of others, ... Let us bear in mind, nevertheless, that Professor Klein is not a standup comedian, nor a patient in a psychiatric facility ... but ... a Full Professor at George Mason University, ... Furthermore, ... his text was not found in an unprepared speech he made to a group of friends at a lunch gathering, but part of a published journal article, supposedly peer reviewed and deemed to have been publishable, given its *scientific merit* by the journal's editors and advisory board.

Interestingly, this discussion caught the attention of the journal, *The Independent Review*, itself, which wrote a book review of Payson (2017) that rebutted these very comments. The rebuttal, by Professor Robert Waples (2019) at Wake Forest University, read as follows:

The chapter titled "Academic Economics at Its Dumbest and Ugliest" continues with a section on academic economists "dehumanizing" and "scapegoating." The examples focus on the denigration of the government and especially its bureaucrats, with a prime exhibit being Daniel Klein, "The People's Romance: Why People Love Government (as Much as They Do)" published in *The Independent Review* (2005). He questions how TIR could have published this article, which was "supposedly peer reviewed and deemed to have been publishable, given its *scientific merit*" (p. 225, emphasis in the original). (I wasn't co-editor of TIR when the paper was accepted, but am certain that I would have accepted it had I been editor at the time. I find it to be full of interesting insights.) Whether or not the article has merit, scientific or otherwise, is something that readers can decide for themselves—but at least TIR cannot be attacked for embodying the overly mathematical approach that has ruined the profession in Payson's estimation! Regardless of its merit, Payson again goes overboard when he complains that "the character of [Klein's] argument is quite disturbingly similar to the scapegoatism/dehumanization that characterized the changes experienced in German society during the 1930s" (p. 226).



Here we see that Waples is happy to admit, in writing no less, that, as a co-editor of the journal *The Independent Review*, he does not care “whether or not the article has merit,” as that is something “the readers can decide for themselves.” In his view the article should be published solely because he “find[s] it to be full of interesting insights.” That is an interesting stance to take in an article that is devoted to providing a negative, critical review of a book on the alleged grounds that the book lacks merit. In any case, his statements beg the question, if his journal publishes anything that is interesting, without regard to merit, then what ultimate function does that journal serve? Is its function simply to provide intellectual amusement (as opposed to scientific merit)? In any case, Waples says nothing to suggest that Klein did anything wrong in his “denigration of the government and especially its bureaucrats,” (as Waples put it) and snidely remarks that Klein’s work can at least not be accused of overusing mathematics, as if that has any relevance.

In this discussion on hategoatism we also observe the importance of word choice. In my own writing in this paper I have referred to “government workers,” thereby conveying the clear idea that the *hategoats* in this case are human beings who happened to have found employment in the government sector. Hategoaters generally take a different strategy in the naming of their hategoats, by dismissing, as much as possible, any connection their hategoats may have with other human beings. Thus, Waples speaks of “the denigration of the government and especially *its bureaucrats*,” as if “its bureaucrats” are a dehumanized, factor of input in the mechanistic production of government services, and where, unlike the word “workers,” they are not seen as people who are simply employed in one sector rather than another, even though this is all that they really are (as discussed further below).

### **Villains and Heroes Determined by Chance, As Absurd as This Should Sound**

As I had raised in Payson (2017), it is interesting to see how the *economists* in particular, who work in the government, are effectively demonized “bureaucrats” by Libertarian economics professors by virtue of the fact that government economists happened to have found government jobs after receiving their advanced degrees in economics. In countless cases, those graduating economics students who ended up with government jobs were simply looking for *any* professional job after receiving their advanced degree. For many of them, it was simply the luck-of-the-draw that they wound up with a government position, as opposed to a teaching position at a place like George Mason University, where they may have found themselves, instead, receiving grants by Libertarian-supporting foundations to perform research on “the denigration of the government and especially its bureaucrats.”

Likewise, as we all know, when the political pendulum swings far enough to the right, we will find Libertarian economics professors (and other Libertarian leaders), who made a career from “the denigration of the government and especially its bureaucrats,” to be appointed to high-ranking positions in the government itself by the Libertarian-backed, administration in power. When this happens, are such professors seen, from the Libertarian perspective, as having been “kidnapped by the Dark Side”? Or, are they seen as heroes who have merely “infiltrated the Dark Side” in order to defeat it from within? Of course, the more relevant question is whether there is any way for us to escape from *this realm of nonsense*?

We can start by realizing that the hategoaters of government workers have simply never carried the analysis very far; their approach is simply guttural, as opposed to cognitive. In particular, they

have not analyzed the various job positions that government workers have, like (as just mentioned) economists in government whose leading positions are actually filled by Libertarians themselves under certain administrations.

As another example, what, we might ask, would be villainous about the food-safety inspectors who might work, for example, for the United States', Food Safety and Inspection Service? Are those inspectors villains on the basis of the doctrine that private food companies should perform their own safety inspections, in the name of Liberty, perhaps, and suffer the market consequences if those inspections miss something (and people become very sick or die as a result)? Actually, food companies do have their own food safety inspectors already, and they do already suffer the market consequences of any poisonous food that escapes those inspections. Does that mean that government food safety inspections are unnecessary? Would those who describe government workers as villains prefer to have a few cents more in disposable income per year, from a reduction in taxes, made possible by the government eliminating its food safety inspectors? I doubt it.

What about the forest ranger who will warn people on the trail in a national park that there is bear with a cub, which they need to avoid further down the trail, or the same forest ranger who would rescue someone who got attacked by that bear because they did not avoid it? Is that forest ranger villainous because all national parks, by Libertarian doctrine, should be privatized? If the park were privatized, should the new company that now runs the park not hire a forest ranger to do the same work? If not, then how many people would pay money to hike in a park where no one is there to protect or rescue them?

What about military personal, who represent the largest population of government workers (including "bureaucrats" as most high-ranking military officials effectively are) in many countries such as the United States? Do Libertarian leaders call military personnel lowly, or do they, instead, praise them at public events, honoring them as heroes? Of course, it is the latter, but why? Is it because Libertarian leaders are generally men who admire tough, brave, soldiers, who are willing to kill and die for their country, and who, in this sense, like the image of the GI-Joe doll I used to play with as a child, could never be seen in their eyes as "lowly government bureaucrats"?

From these considerations, it is highly doubtful that the academic, economic hategoaters of government workers have never given much thought to the diversity of work that government employees actually perform, and how many of those workers, in those specific functions, should be deemed as villainous in the work that they perform. Rather, it appears that there are only three major types of workers Libertarians have in mind in their condemnation of government workers: those workers involved in social assistance to supplement the income of impoverished people in the society, regulators who impose costs on private industries for the purposes of environmental protection and worker safety, and internal-revenue agents who collect funds from others to support such transfers and regulation. Even then, if these are the particular *services* that the hategoaters of government workers find so objectionable, why should they condemn the individual workers themselves who have simply been hired to perform these jobs? Is it that their work in these positions is so horrific from a moral standpoint that these workers should be condemned, in any case, because it is not enough for them to say that they "*were just following orders*"? In this case, of course not.

## The Deep Roots of Hategoatism in Economic Discourse

To this day, the economics profession still suffers from a “Great Man Must Be Right Mentality,” whether it is associated with Marx on the left, or Ludwig Van Mises on the right, etc. What I mean by a “Great Man Must Be Right Mentality” is something I first learned about from a professor I had many years ago, where he explained that, people’s assessment of what is right or wrong in economics can be based on whether they heard it, or saw it written, from a “Great Man.” Of course, this is obviously a sexist comment; I am mentioning it here, not at all to advocate it in the least, but to merely recognize, and to criticize of course, its continued existence. The sexist aspect of this phenomenon is a reflection of the fact that in prior generations, those who were recognized as “great economists” (with few exceptions, like Joan Robinson) were all men, which was largely a result of inherent discrimination in society overall (such as women not being admitted to most universities, etc.).

In promoting his cause, Marx used hategoatism as a weapon when describing the bourgeoisie in outlets to masses, such as in the “Communist Manifesto.” Fortunately, this particular flavor of hategoatism cannot be found within economic discourse very much in modern times. Nevertheless, in its time, it was hategoatism based on the Great Man Must Be Right Mentality—that great man, in this case, being Marx in the eyes of the Marxist hategoaters.

In other words, we do not need any statistical findings, empirical analysis, or even a detailed reasoned argument to assert a definitive form of hategoatism—all we need is our Great Man to have said it, in the same way that a devout follower might exclaim “the Prophet has spoken, and so it shall be written!” It is saddening to see how the history of economic thought has more often reflected the character of religious beliefs based on the revelations of pronounced leaders, than the character of scientific inquiry based on observation and genuine discovery. In any case, this is simply how things have been; whether they must continue to be this way remains an open question.

Along these lines, Libertarians may be satisfied in thinking that Ludwig Von Mises was a “Great Man,” and therefore, if he said we should hategoat government workers, then we should, simple as that. Here, in particular, is something that Von Mises wrote in his book *Bureaucracy* (1944, Yale University Press, p. 9), (with my own emphasis to assist in the discussion):

It is quite correct, as the opponents of the trend toward totalitarianism say, that the bureaucrats are free to decide according to their own discretion questions of vital importance for the individual citizen's life. **It is true that the officeholders are no longer the servants of the citizenry but irresponsible and arbitrary masters and tyrants.** But this is not the fault of bureaucracy. It is the outcome of the new system of government which restricts the individual's freedom to manage his own affairs and assigns more and more tasks to the government. **The culprit is not the bureaucrat but the political system.** And the sovereign people is still free to discard this system.

It is further true that bureaucracy is imbued with an implacable hatred of private business and free enterprise. **But the supporters of the system consider precisely this the most laudable feature of their attitude. Far from being ashamed of their anti-business policies, they are proud of them. They aim at full control of business by the**

**government and see in every businessman who wants to evade this control a public enemy.**

In the first of these paragraphs, Von Mises' depiction of "officeholders" as "irresponsible and arbitrary masters and tyrants" sure sounds like hategoatism at first, but then he then "lets them off the hook" three sentences later in saying, "The culprit is not the bureaucrat but the political system." In the simplest of terms, he is saying here that the officeholders *are* the "bad guys" but it is *not their fault*; they are only forced to be bad guys because of the system that controls them. However, in the second paragraph, the "supporters of the system" are the next bad guys, and these bad guys are not let off the hook. They are indeed demonized as being proud of the shameful things that they do, and they are painted as being tyrants by their own choice.

We can be somewhat understanding of Von Mises' hategoatism here, in the sense that hategoatism was as big as ever in the 1940s. The Nazis were doing it of course (forcing Von Mises himself to leave Germany for this very reason), the Communists were doing it, and so in this same cultural, world environment, Von Mises probably felt that Capitalists had the right to do it too. In fact, we could well suspect that Von Mises, in his book, was probably not hategoating the bureaucrats of capitalists democracies *per se*, but simply expressing his angst against the Nazi and Communist bureaucrats of his day, while generalizing his remarks to include all bureaucrats.

In the early 1940s, at the time Von Mises was in the process of writing *Bureaucracy*, government scientists in the United States, in the Department of Agriculture, were following up on the great, recent discovery of penicillin, and were successfully developing the first processes for its mass production, which would soon save countless lives. Similarly, work on the atomic bomb was being performed by government scientists. For whatever one might think of the development of "the bomb" at that time, we might still ask, would the Libertarians, of all people, have preferred that the government scientists of the United States not produce the atomic bomb in the 1940s, leaving only the Communist nations to have it? That would not sound like a Libertarian position.

Yet, I am sure some would say that I have taken this discussion way out of context. That is, some might react to these remarks by saying that Von Mises' and others' hategoatism was only with regard to "bureaucrats," not with regard to scientists in laboratories. Sure, I think I understand: The hategoatism here is only in reference to, "you know - 'bureaucrats' - those ugly, pointy-headed, nerdy-looking, pencil-pushers that sit behind desks all day long," as some hategoaters might envision them. Have such hategoaters considered, however, how scientists, and military engineers, etc., would ever get their laboratory buildings, their equipment, and their salaries, without those pointy-headed bureaucrats, sitting behind their desks and working out the accounts to purchase all these things, and yes, collecting the internal revenue to pay for it all. Have the hategoaters of government "bureaucrats" ever realized that there would be no government scientists or engineers, or even soldiers, without them? In the same way, the hategoaters who preach their doctrine at universities would not be in a happy place were it not for the bureaucrats at their own institutions who make sure those professors have a place to do their preaching, an audience of students to hear it, and a salary to take home for their troubles. Economists, of all people, should already know all this regarding the need for bureaucrats, in spite of the fact that it distorts, or contradicts, the *hategoatism narrative*.

There is, indeed, a remarkable similarity between the implicit hategoatism in Von Mises' second paragraph (quoted above) toward the "supporters of the system" and the hategoatism expressed in the above quotations in work by DiLorenzo and Klein. They all discuss the problem as being caused by the ultimate, explanatory variable of bad intentions by bad people—the cornerstone of hategoatism. However, there is also a remarkable *contradiction* between what Von Mises was saying, and what DiLorenzo and by Klein were saying: they identify very different hategoats! To Von Mises, as shown in the first paragraph, the "bureaucrat" is not the hategoat, but is only "following orders," while the supporter of the system is the hategoat. For DiLorenzo and Klein, the "bureaucrat" is NOT following orders, but is, indeed, the hategoat themselves. But really, does anyone actually care, today, as to whether we have the "right" hategoat in the narrative? I doubt it, since all hategoatism is invalid. Nevertheless, DiLorenzo and Klein may, in some strange way, feel that Von Mises has vindicated them by simply having his own hategoat that is an arm's length from their own hategoat. Again, if it is good enough for Von Mises, who was "Great Man," then it must be good enough for all similar hategoaters who have admired him.

Given the degree of historical ties to hategoatism that the Libertarian community has had over several generations it remains an open question whether that community can expunge itself from hategoatism (or even whether it will want to bother). Like a drug addict who can only quit by first acknowledging they are an addict, the Libertarian community will only be able to remove their hategoatism when they recognize the powerful influence it continues to have in their discourse, and even the powerful influence it has in their way of thinking in general. As already argued, the term of art, itself, can help with this, especially its first syllable.

### **Reason and Humaneness**

As many of us know, Libertarians have named one of their leading magazines, *Reason*. At this writing, the latest issue of *Reason* (on June 27, 2019) had an article entitled, "Here's Every Single Time Someone **Scapegoated** Profit During the Dem Debates" (with my own wording emphasis). As previously discussed, every definition of the term "scapegoat" that I could find refers to a human being, with the one exception of the historical origin of the word, in which case the word refers to a goat. Thus, "profit" cannot be "scapegoated," because it is neither a human being nor a goat, but it is interesting to see how the article's author appears to assume implicitly, nevertheless, that a "scapegoat" is a *bad thing* where blame is placed on something that should not be blamed. It is also interesting to see how Libertarians have established an Institute for **Humane** Studies. The definition of "humane" (by Merriam-Webster in this case) is "marked by compassion, sympathy, or consideration of humans or animals," or "characterized by or tending to be broad humanistic culture." Is there a slight inconsistency here in the emphasis on "reason" and "humanness"? Is this a reflection, perhaps, of a debating or publicity technique in which one strategically presents one's greatest weaknesses as if they were one's greatest strengths? From most people's perspective, I would think, the embracement of hategoatism, whether it be against government workers or anyone else, epitomizes the exact opposite of "reason" and "humaneness."

There is surely no economic analysis that could legitimize the hategoatism against government workers that exists in certain circles, nor is there any economic analysis that could legitimize *any* hategoatism of any groups, whatsoever. (Needless to say, the "Great Man" argument is empty, pure and simple.) As already mentioned, hategoatism is not based on any analysis, but rather, it exists as a *substitute* for economic analysis, especially for those large groups of individuals in our

society who might get a headache from attempting to perform, or simply understand, any kind of economic analysis, and would prefer to understand something much simpler. Economists who presumably believe in, and support, economic analysis thus have the ethical responsibility to explain to the world that hategoatism is not an acceptable or legitimate substitute for economic analysis. This must be done even if hategoatism can, at times, be found within the economics community itself, and even if economists are not accustomed to speaking to those in our society who never perform economic analyses.

I would love to believe that the hategoatism against government workers that has so safely found sanctuary within Libertarian schools of thought, and has been voiced primarily in the context of pseudo-scholarship, is an isolated phenomenon. That is, I would love to assume that this particular variety of hategoatism has no connection to the street-level hategoatism against government workers that is often expressed by right-wing hate groups, and by others, in the popular media, social networks, and elsewhere. Unfortunately, the connections between the pseudo-scholarly, Libertarian diatribes and the street-level diatribes not only exist, but they are not hard to find. I will not build on this connection further, as this topic might be better for people to expand within the fields of psychology, sociology, or communication studies. In any case, I think this topic would make an interesting research paper in itself within any of these other fields.

Imagine if only 10 percent of the hategoatism that is expressed against government workers, by such well-established and well-funded Libertarian institutions, were expressed not against government workers, but against a racial minority group, such as Blacks or Hispanics? How many lawsuits, or even citations for violations of civil rights laws, would then ensue? Indeed, government workers make the perfect hategoat, as they are largely defenseless. They are certainly not allowed to use their own, supposedly “powerful” positions (according to the Libertarian perspective) to defend themselves against such attacks. In any case, government workers are generally dignified enough to ignore any stupidity that is directed against them, which is a rather admirable, common trait among “hardened bureaucrats”—a trait that many other professions should acknowledge and emulate.

### **Hategoatism Reversals**

In the United States, before Ronald Reagan became President, he gained enormous popularity among government hategoaters with statements like: “The most terrifying words in the English language are: I’m from the government and I’m here to help.” and “One of the key problems today is that politics is such a disgrace, good people don’t go into government.” In much more recent times one could still observe newly appointed government leaders repeating, before large audiences, in an apparent effort to humor the crowd, a statement like, “As Ronald Reagan once said, ‘The most terrifying words in the English language are: I’m from the government and I’m here to help.’ But now things are different, because I am different and I really am here to help you.” It can be amusing to see these new officials become confused by their own words, even as they are saying them. and then become even more confused when they go back to their offices to manage and rely upon the same career-level public employees whom they had just publicly disparaged. In any case, the confusion eventually subsides when they become aware of their own hypocrisy in such statements. In essence, the original hategoaters lose their original hategoatism, once they discover that they have now become their own hategoats!

Reversals can also happen in the other direction. Some immigrant groups might start off as hategoats, while their children or grandchildren, as first- or second-generation natives, may then convert to becoming hategoaters of new generations of immigrants. It is unfortunate that hypocrisy has never been a strong deterrent against hategoatism, though that may not be surprising in the sense that hypocrisy is only one of many moral and ethical principles that have all somehow failed to stop hategoatism, wherever hategoatism has occurred.

### **In Conclusion, Words Matter**

We are all fully aware that there is an entire subfield of economics that relates in various ways to these discussions: The Economics of Discrimination. This paper is not, by any means, meant to diminish or disregard all of the fine work that is done in that subfield. That being said, for all its good work, that subfield has not adequately addressed the incredibly important, *separate* issue, of hategoatism. Discrimination is not, by any means, an explanation for hategoatism, but rather a *consequence* of hategoatism. Discrimination may also exist without hategoatism, as a consequence of relatively less horrific factors, such as misinformation and simple, unintentional ignorance. As a practical matter, however, discrimination is a word and a concept that is too neutral, or too mild, relatively speaking, vis-à-vis the deplorable character of hategoatism. Discrimination in economic studies exists primarily in the context of verifying observations of its simple existence. For example, if there is an economic model in which race is variable, and it can be shown that race is a statistically significant explanatory variable in hiring, promotion, or salary level, all else being equal, then the model demonstrates the presence of discrimination. Such analyses do not necessarily suggest anything about dehumanization, the substitution of legitimate economic policy analysis by hategoatism, or the inspiration behind mass injustice or bloodshed on the basis of hate-mongering.

All forms of hategoatism encourage other forms of hategoatism, as people of different groups imitate the behavior of others. Economists, especially, are needed to help society identify and combat hategoatism from a neutral, and analytical perspective. If there is any hope for the economics community to help society in this way, then it is highly recommended that economists begin by leading by example, and that would require cleaning their own house first. Again, whether Libertarians are capable of expunging their personal disdain for, and demonization of, government workers, from their allegedly intellectual discourse, remains an open question. Nevertheless, as also already argued, perhaps the term of art's first syllable can help encourage such change for the better, by making everyone brutally aware of what is truly occurring underneath the words that are spoken and written.

As indicated in the outset of this paper, there is an enormous amount of work that needs to be done in this area, with implications that extend far beyond identifying discrimination—ultimately, implications that some argue will enable democratic nations to preserve their democracies, and autocratic nations to embrace change toward democracy.

Because hategoatism serves as a pathetic substitute for economic analysis itself, by blaming others for economic problems on the basis of demonization, it is, at best, an effrontery to economic discourse, and at worst, a direct enemy of it. Yet, we should not go as far as “hategoating the hategoaters,” as that would be a form of hategoating as well. **The line that cannot be crossed is the difference between condemning a belief system and condemning the people behind that**



**belief system.** If some people feel that it is their moral imperative to condemn all forms of government other than the provision of defense, then so be it; they have every right to argue their case, but that does not give them free license to condemn and blame government workers as the “bad people” who have allegedly caused of all economic problems. If one is adamant about opposing immigration into their nation, then so be it; they have every right to do so and to make their case on the basis of reason, but that does not give them free license to paint immigrants seeking sanctuary and a better life as, allegedly, rapists and terrorists whose only intension is to inflict harm on the natives. Likewise, if one has the world view that the worst economic problems are attributable to corporate profit seeking, and thus chooses to argue against the profit motive, then so be it; they have every right to do so, and it is not scapegoating, because profits are not people. If they choose, instead, to place blame on “evil corporate managers” then, of course, they have crossed the border into the land of hategoatism, in the same way that others have attributed economic problems to “villainous bureaucrats.”

Hategoatism should be recognized as well for the incredibly important role it plays in movements throughout the world today that are directed against democracy, in favor of autocracy. Autocrats obviously use hategoatism as one of their strongest weapons with which to assault democracy. To some, these considerations may seem to be outside the realm of economic discourse, but it should not be, because, as already argued, hategoatism nearly always involves the blaming of others for the *economic* problems of nations. It is then within economists’ wheelhouse to explain to the world that hategoatism is a completely unfounded, shameful, and ridiculous falsehood.

So, let us now begin the process of healing, by making use of this new term of art—HATEGOATISM—and see where it can take us. If, in the end, it does not help the situation as much as we had hoped, well then, at least we will know that we tried. For something as important as this—the future of humanity—we must, indeed, try, as best as we possibly can.

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In accordance with the classification of citations in Payson (2019), the Essential Citation for this paper was Payson 2017, and the additional Relevant Citation was Von Mises (1944).

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