

SCAPEGOATING



People learn what to desire from one another. That's how friends become rivals for the things they learn to value from their shared

**CULTURE
RELIGION
POLITICS**



**SOCIAL
COHESION**

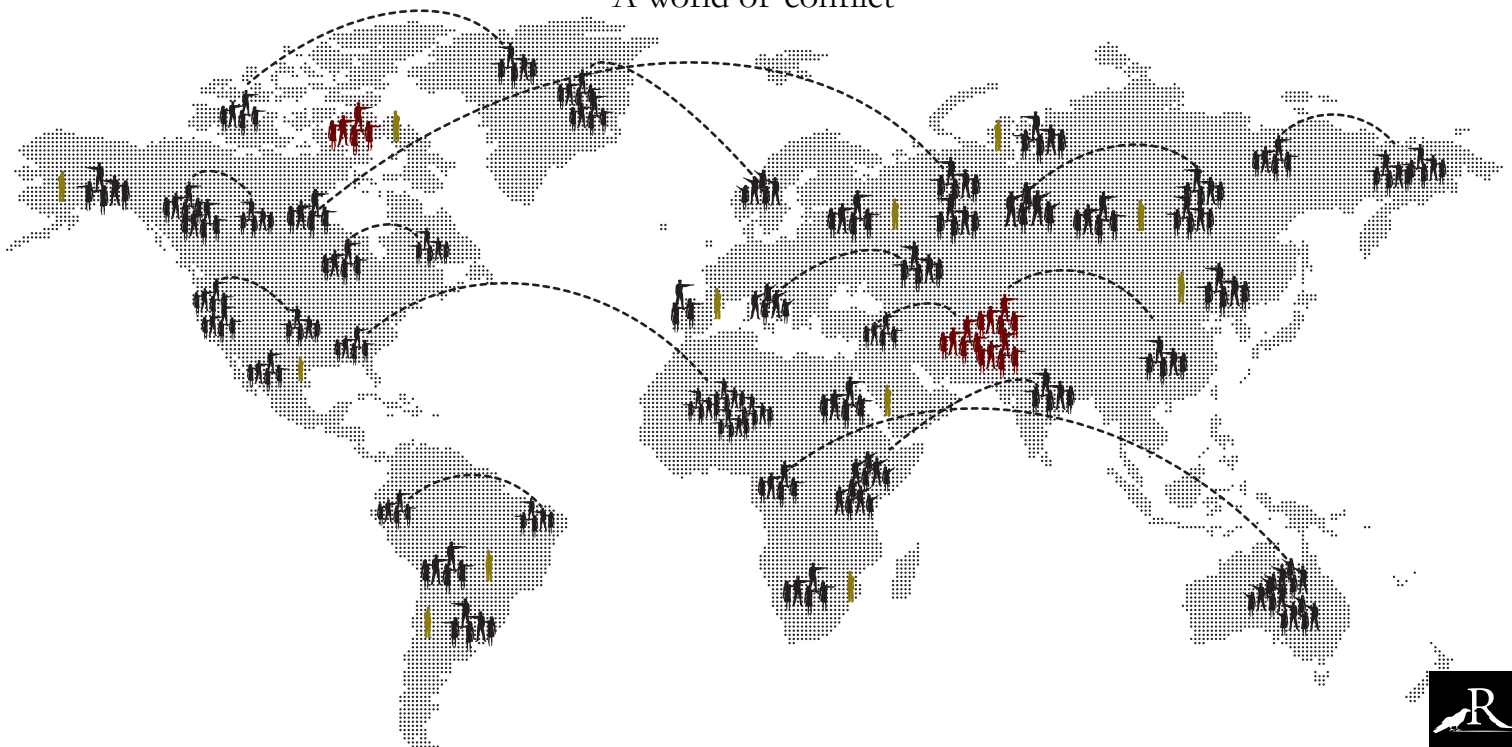


When rivalry threatens the community, harmony is restored by uniting against scapegoats.



HIDDEN COSTS OF SCAPEGOATING

A world of conflict



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THE HIDDEN COSTS OF SCAPEGOATING

Scapegoating has been used by human communities to restore harmony and achieve peace since the beginning of civilization. The problem with scapegoating is not the result – peace is a good thing – but with the method used to achieve it. The costs of that method are measured in endless cycles of human suffering.

Someone to Blame

How is the suffering hidden? For scapegoating to occur, a community must agree on a target who can be blamed for anything that goes wrong. That agreement allows the community to act against the scapegoat and feel justified. They can hate, abuse, ridicule, neglect, expel, wound or kill the scapegoat and actually experience feelings of joy and well-being afterward. Because the scapegoaters believe in the guilt of their scapegoat so completely, they are blind to the scapegoat's suffering.

Signs of Scapegoating

Here are some signs that you are scapegoating:

1. If you have a scapegoat, you don't know it. Your scapegoat looks instead like an evil villain especially when compared with your absolute goodness.
 2. You believe the "villain" is a liar and guilty of unjustifiable violence against you.
 3. When you defeat, expel, or kill the "villain", it is a cause for celebration.
 4. If someone did to you what you are justifying in the name of goodness, their actions would be undeniable proof of their wickedness.
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The Courage to End Scapegoating

To be sure you are not scapegoating, you must find the courage to honestly listen to the story of those whom you are convinced are guilty or evil. Their story may begin to sound like yours, filled with fear, suffering, and violence justified in the name of goodness. As the difference between you melts away, you awaken to the truth that *your* violence was unjustified and *your* goodness questionable. The courage to end scapegoating requires the courage to admit you were wrong about your enemy and yourself.