

# The Whole World as Marked Territory

by Jeff Davidson

If it hasn't always been the case, the world is now concerned with marking territory. Human beings, sensing both the swelling numbers of people populating the planet and the diminishing supply of land and resources, are busy marking territory, consciously or unconsciously. For some, the territory is office buildings. For others, it's intellectual property. For many, it's "positions in cyberspace," and for growing numbers it is political control and even thought control.

Why do people mark territory? Most people have unarticulated fears about their futures. Government and corporate rank-and-file begin thinking about retirement long before the rest of us, but, clearly, no one wants to miss out on "their share" of goods, services, benefits, influence, or control.

## **Finally, Economics**

The marking of territory is a direct result of our entering the economic age. As my Economics 101 professor explained, when resources are abundant economics does not come into play. If you are part of a small tribe living on a huge, isolated landmass, with all of the fruits, vegetables, seeds, berries, fish, and wild game you could ever want, you are not dwelling in an economic society.

Economics comes into play once goods are either scarce or in high demand. As the professor explained, economics is the allocation of scarce resources, to which I would add or "perceived to be" scarce resources.

Today, where every square inch of semantic space is in flux, people and the groups to which they belong are vying for control in ways we didn't imagine in previous generations. The airwaves, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, books, as well as physical territory, the skies, the seas, and everything in between is being contested.

Above all, perhaps, is ideology. The belief system to which you adhere, in many respects, defines not only your world view, but often your actions, your lifestyle, and your future.

### **Population, the Driving Force**

Accelerating ideological confrontation and the competition of scarce resources unfolds as a result of world population climbing

from three billion in 1960 to seven billion+ today, with billions more en route. The mean population, planet-wide, exceeded 100 people per square mile starting in the late 1990s and is edging up at what many people deem to be an alarming rate. Concurrently planetary resources are relatively finite. The landmasses are certainly finite.

*The World Values Survey is a network of social scientists from around the globe who study “changing values and their impact on social and political life.” Based in Stockholm and headed by international scholars, an aggregate of their findings essentially reveals that when resources are limited, and people dwell in subsistence economies, they tend to adhere to traditions. These traditions, be they religious or cultural, offer guidance and “meaning,” and help shape their values.*

*As economies grow and evolve, people look to established institutions such as education, business, and government, to shape their values. In economies of abundance, however, such as those in the West and along the Pacific rim, people decreasingly rely on legacy institutions, sometimes becoming dismissive or more suspicious of them, and instead turn inward to “self-expressive” type values.*

The quest for control on global, regional, national, and even personal levels has likely never been as acute an issue as it is today. Personal technologies, particularly the smart phone, give virtually everyone the ability to stay connected globally and to keep informed on pet issues – even if keeping pace invariably means visiting the same web sites and relying on the same information sources with their same parallaxed views.

It is beyond human capability to be entirely objective. Everyone is shaped by their upbringing, surroundings, peers, and predispositions, as well as influential leaders, media persuasion, and a host of other factors. The typical person or group likely does not even realize why they think and believe the way that they do, they simply know deep down that they are “right,” regardless of what any objective measures might otherwise indicate.

### **I’m Right. No, I’m Right**

Given that today we are all “right,” it is becoming increasingly difficult to find anyone who is willing to concede any ground even on the smallest of issues. As a case in point – and many, many other example exists around the globe – the current configuration of the United States has another 25 years, perhaps, before states with liberal enclaves on the east and west coast, and states with a more conservative base in the interior split into two or more nations.

So sad.

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