

## **The Real Matrix**

Nic Tideman

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*The REAL Matrix into which we've all been born is the economic paradigm that rationalises the ownership and transfer of land as a free, fair, efficient and perfectly normal thing to do.*

*The writer, Prof. Nic Tideman, is a highly-qualified American Geolist academic, philosopher and ethicist (and a vego, of course!). Dare to break free of The Matrix, and read on.....*

The initial distribution of land - the origin of property in land - is military, legal, and political, not economic. The prime business of nations throughout history has been to gain and defend land. What was won by force has no higher sanction than *lex fortioris*, and must be kept and defended by force.

After land is appropriated by a nation the original distribution is political. The nature of societies, cultures and economies for centuries afterwards are moulded by that initial distribution, exemplified by the differences between Costa Rica (equal partition) and El Salvador with its fabled "Fourteen Families" (*Las Catorce*), or between Canada and Argentina.

Political redistribution also occurs within nations, as with the English enclosures and Scottish "clearances", when one part of the population in effect conquered the rest by political machinations, and took over their land, their source of livelihood. Reappropriation and new appropriation of tenures is not just an ancient or a sometime thing but an on-going process. This very day, proprietary claims to water sources, pollution rights, access to rights of way, radio spectrum, signal relay sites, landing rights, beach access, oil and gas, space on telephone and power poles (e.g. for cable TV), taxi licences, etc. are being created under our noses. In developing countries of unstable government the current strong man often grants concessions to imperialistic adventurers who can bolster his hold on power by supplying both cash up front, and help from various US and UN agencies from the IMF to the United States Marine Corps.

Ordinary economic thinking today would have it that a nation that distributes land among private parties by "selling to the highest bidder" is using an economic method of distribution. Such thinking guides World Bank and IMF economists as they advise nations emerging from communism on how to privatise land. The neutrality is specious, at best. Even selling to the highest bidder is a political decision, as 19th century American history makes clear.

The right to sell was won by force, is not universally honoured, and must be kept by continuous use of force. In practice, selling for cash up front reserves most land for a few with front-money advantage, inside information, good contacts,

corrupt aids, etc. The history of disposal of US public domain leaves no doubt about this and it is still going on with air rights, water, radio, landing rights, fishing licenses, etc. Choices being made currently are just as tainted as those of 19th century history.

Selling land in large blocks under frontier conditions is to sell at a time before it begins yielding much if any rent. It is bid in by those few who have large discretionary funds of patient money. Politicians, meantime, treat the proceeds as current revenues used to hold down other taxes today, leaving the nation with inadequate revenues in the future.

The ability to bid high does not necessarily come from legitimate savings. The early wealth of Liverpool came from the slave trade. High bidders for many properties today are middle eastern potentates who neither produced nor saved the wealth they control. Other high bidders are criminals, who find the "sanctity of property" a splendid route for laundering their gains, and a permanent shelter against further prosecution.

Ed: This is taken from pp 60 & 61 of Nic's "Land And Taxation" (Publ. Shephard-Walwyn) which can be bought from Proz Oz's office. Better still - support our Noble Cause, become a member for a lousy \$30 (including subscription to Progress), and borrow this and hundreds more books from our library.