



# WHO OWNS THE WORLD?

## THE BATTLE FOR OUR MOST PRECIOUS GOODS

Category: Current Affairs Length: 6x52'

### ➔ Logline

The world is limited – our most valuable resources even more so. In a globalized economy the struggle for precious goods has become global too. States and corporations, lawyers and activists, lobbyists and business people are fighting a worldwide battle for water, earth, food and everything that is important to us. Already much of what constitutes our livelihood belongs to a few powerful 'global players'. The outcome of these struggles will determine the world in which we will live in the future.

## Synopsis

### The Series

Every episode of WHO OWNS THE WORLD? shows the struggle for one of mankind's most precious commodities. The episodes of the first season deal with the battle for the earth's forests (episode 1), crops (episode 2), the sea (episode 3), our health (episode 4), our drinking water (episode 5) and money - because you could buy everything else with it (episode 6). Whether the battle for these resources is currently being fought in Brazil or Brussels, how it ends will determine what all our lives will be like in the near future.



Our most valuable goods are sometimes hidden deep in the ground, sometimes openly accessible (at least in theory). The fight for these goods is therefore always a little different in individual cases, sometimes it is about privatization, sometimes it is about abuse of market power, sometimes it is about exploiting loopholes in the law, sometimes it is about crystal-clear theft, but it also always has similarities. These similarities form the backbone of every episode.

## Episode Structure

**The human story:** In the end, the 'man (or woman) on the street' is the victim of the global distribution conflicts. Each episode tells the story of a someone who has become collateral damage in the conflict between global powers. This person represents the consequences of consolidated power and its abuse. Each episode begins with the story of a person suffering from the struggle for our most important resources. This could be a farmer in Canada fighting for his farm, or a fisherman in Senegal no longer catching enough fish to feed his family. Who owns the World is an international format, so this protagonist can be anywhere in the world.

**The owners:** Property is theft, as Proudhon once said - the only question is: who was robbed? Based on investigative research, each episode shows who actually has access to our most valuable goods - either through formal ownership or through the balance of power on site. For only those who know the 'players' can correctly classify the conflict over our resources. A brief historical outline also gives an overview of how this situation came about. In discussions with experts and using dynamic graphics, the situation is illustrated. The way from common property to the current situation is depicted in detail.

**The means of choice:** Politicians, bureaucrats, lobbyists, entrepreneurs, activists, indigenous people, etc.– they all struggle for control over our most important resources. We reveal the motives and methods of these conflict parties and follow them in their next steps. All parties involved use a variety of methods: they acquire their competitors; they threaten with job losses and send their lobbyists to parliament to assist in drafting legislation. In third world and emerging countries, they are supported by corrupt governments. And some also use illegal methods: They put people under pressure, bribe decision-makers and fake surveys. Civil society is trying to defend itself with unusual ideas. The course of this struggle will be investigated and reconstructed in detail.

**Prospects:** The final part of an episode develops possible future scenarios. On the one hand, we see the possible consequences for the world if things don't change. On the other hand, we also try to find solutions and consider ways to improve the situation.

## ✈ The First Season: Episodes

### 1. Who owns our forests?

The forest is the Earth's lung - it is irreplaceable in the fight against climate change and, incidentally, an oasis of biodiversity. In this sense, the destiny of humanity really depends on the primeval forests of the planet - most of which are owned by the state. Nevertheless, all over the world forests that have grown over centuries, are to be sacrificed in favor of short-term profits of corporations. Governments then consider wood and arable land to be more valuable than climate protection and biodiversity. Brazilian President Bolsonaro opened parts of the Amazon rainforest to deforestation at the beginning of the year and Donald Trump provides large areas of the northern rainforest in Alaska.

Is there a way to reconcile nature conservation and resource exploitation?



## 2. Who owns our crops?

70 percent of the world's trade in agricultural commodities is in the hands of only 4 corporations: the so-called ABCD corporations. This market concentration is highly dangerous because the dominance of these companies is absolute: they control every point in the supply chain. Due to the market power of the ABCD groups, producers in particular are exposed to intensive price pressure. This happens not only in the distant third world countries, but also in Europe.

The damage to the environment and human health is dramatic.

Can the victims defend themselves against the overwhelming influence of the agricultural companies?



### 3. Who owns the sea?

The sea is called the common heritage of mankind, the high sea belongs to all people equally, in theory. But the immense resources beneath the surface of the sea arouse the desire of states and international corporations. While nations are at odds over valuable areas, the principle devil may care prevails on the high seas.

Excessive fishing deprives small coastal villages of their livelihood. The extraction of raw materials such as oil can cause an ecological catastrophe in the event of accidents. The pollution of the sea, especially with plastic, has reached dramatic proportions.

Can organisations with money and influence continue to exploit the seas without thinking about tomorrow, or can an agreement be found that will secure the future?



## 4. Who owns our health?

Although there is a constitutional right to the best possible health in many countries, it is trampled underfoot in many places - also in Germany and the USA. 10 huge companies dominate the market for drugs. The lobbying work of the pharmaceutical giants often has consequences for the sick: research into the efficacy and side effects of drugs is suppressed or falsified, and the funds are to a large extent completely overpriced.

At the same time, necessary research does not take place: All major pharmaceutical companies have already abandoned antibiotics research because it is not profitable enough for them. This is despite the fact that new antibiotics are urgently needed because more and more bacteria are developing resistance. Soon another era could dawn in which people would die of comparatively harmless diseases.

Can profit take over our health?



## 5. Who owns our water?

Access to clean water is a human right, but in practice distribution struggles for the world's most vital resource have broken out all over the world. The privatisation of this vital commodity is progressing brutally and climate change will exacerbate the conflict. Nestlé, the Swiss industry giant, is already pumping large quantities of water out of many of the world's drier regions to sell on the world market, while many people were dying of thirst locally.

But these conflicts are not confined to the global South.

In Vittel, France, groundwater levels are falling because Nestlé Water pumps 750 million litres of water a year locally and fills two million water bottles a day. And these are just a few examples.

The struggle takes place at different levels: between corporations and citizens, rich and poor, industrialised and emerging countries. Who will win the conflict in the end?





## 6. Who owns the money?

There has never been so much capital concentrated in so few hands.

The financial market in particular has bloated over the decades: At least 270 trillion euros are in circulation, five times as much as in the real economy. The biggest players on this market are the so-called shadow banks, which are completely unregulated compared to traditional banks. Experts point out that the next major crisis will emanate from them. The financial market is a fragile construct that affects the entire world in the event of a crisis. The huge amounts of capital endanger the balance of the economy in the real markets. Can countermeasures be taken in good time before an economic crisis triggers a global catastrophe?





## Auf einen Blick

Doc Format

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