

Non-POM and Divorce

Marriage is one of the most wonderful, delightful, satisfying and fulfilling of institutions known to humanity. (And I'm not just saying that because my wife told me to!) Over 90% of adults in the U.S. will be or have been married at some time during their lives.

But not all marriages are like that. For some marriages the only solution seems to be divorce. We all know about the kinds of things that happen in a POM economy. When the money is or represents a physical object, money can be taken from a person against their will. The State or corporation or a former spouse can take money against one's will.

The result is that many divorces take place in an atmosphere of enmity, competition, high-powered lawyers, and animosity. The lawyers get rich. The courts are overcrowded. The former couple has a bone of contention that will keep them hating each other for many years. The children just suffer. Unfortunately, some of the lawyers really *like* what our culture does with divorce.

The settlement of the divorce requires dividing up the jointly owned property. The division need not be fair or in any way equitable. There is also the matter of child support if the couple has children. Sometimes the one who is required to pay such support actually pays it and sometimes not. This situation often results in frequent returns to court. Finally, U.S. culture has the tradition that women cannot support themselves and carefully pays women less for equal work in the attempt to make sure that is true. This tradition has led the courts to require that the husband (and on some occasions the wife) pay to support the divorced woman until she remarries or dies. These payments also are sometimes not paid with resulting returns to court.

The non-POM economy is one in which money cannot be transferred from one person to another because money comes into existence when earned and ceases to exist when spent. Also, in a non-POM economy, there is no joint ownership of property, and especially money. What one person earns is theirs alone. No one else shares in that ownership. Therefore, child support and alimony are impossible and there is no jointly owned property to divide. All the court needs to settle is child custody, visitation rights, and whether the couple should be granted a divorce.

Divorce is quite simple and takes relatively little of a court's time so that the court can investigate more thoroughly which parent should retain primary custody.

As far as child support is concerned, anyone who provides care for a child or food or clothing or housing or education or medical care is paid for providing that benefit. So there is no need for a divorced parent to provide money for what doesn't require money anyway.

The same is true for alimony. It is both impossible in a non-POM economy and unnecessary since everything one needs is available without money.

But the best news for non-POM divorces is that they would be less likely. If one investigates the *motivations* for divorce one will find that the most commonly cited factor is money problems. As is pointed out in the article "POM: a Zero-sum Simulation" the nature of a POM is to simulate a zero-sum game in all money relationships. So if a family has a certain income, anything one person spends is no longer available for the other to spend. What *benefits* one *costs* the other. If he buys a new set of golf clubs, she cannot afford new drapes for the living room. If she gets that face-lift, he can't afford to go to Hawaii on vacation this year. But more than that, what one borrows the other is responsible for paying back if they share a credit card. All sorts of family decisions, to buy a house or a car or whatever, can put the family in very stressful circumstances as the current mortgage crisis illustrates. Such stress is a great source of problems between husband and wife. Such circumstances lead them to believe the other no longer loves them or they reveal that the other only claimed to love them for the money.

In a non-POM economy, there is no simulation of a zero-sum game relationship. It is obvious that what benefits one party benefits the other in the marriage. In a non-POM economy, there is no debt so one spouse cannot be expected to pay the debts of the other spouse. If one spouse spends money on something, that is not a problem for the other spouse because they cannot spend that same money for themselves under any circumstances. To allow one's spouse to enjoy things one has bought is to give them a present.

When it comes to buying things members of the family need like housing or food or medical treatment, again any person who provides the basic necessities will be paid for doing so whether they are a member of the family or not. The family will not suffer if one of its members stops working since those necessities will still be available. This avoids the need to replace a husband who doesn't earn much money with one who earns more. It is never necessary to divorce your spouse to get more money. Finally, since your spouse never stays with you because of financial dependency, they only stay because they love you.

Therefore there will be less need for divorce and fewer unhappy marriages in a non-POM society.