

Non-POM and Property Crime

Having eliminated organized crime, what kinds of crime are left? One major category is what might loosely be called "property crime." Of course, in one sense all crimes are property crime but I don't think most people look upon assault or libel as property crimes. So let us confine ourselves in this case to crimes in which a person's property is taken by force, stealth, or deception or destroyed by vandalism. I will include intellectual property but exclude reputation.

I think we can agree that most property crimes as described above, are motivated by the desire to acquire money. Stolen articles are usually sold soon after being stolen. Now in a post-POM society money is not transferable so money cannot be stolen. But physical objects can be stolen from their rightful owners. But can they be sold after being taken illegally? They cannot. Only Payers can increase the thief's account balance and they are not in the market for luxury items. Anyone who wanted a stolen item could gain physical possession of the item from the thief but could not pay in money. And having gained possession of a stolen item, they would be holding the evidence of their own crime in receiving stolen goods. Therefore, there would be almost no market for stolen goods. The same argument applies to items taken by force or fraud as well. Property crime simply does not pay in a post-POM economy.

Since all property is owned by single private persons and the records of that ownership are maintained by the accounts computer system it is very easy for law enforcement agencies to confirm the ownership of items suspected of being stolen. This factor also reduces the motivation to commit property crimes.

That brings us to the theft of intangible items. These items are things like patents, or copyrighted materials. There has been considerable concern expressed by some about others stealing their written, art, musical or photographic works. But what about in a post-POM society? So far as money goes, the creator (writer, composer, or inventor) will be paid for the use their creation is put to. It does not matter who spreads the word or how the end user comes to have access to the product. No matter who publishes the book, the author is paid. The only question is who was the author. But that is easy to establish in today's society for those who post on the Internet or save their notes or drafts of chapters and such online. The accounts computer system can easily retain all copies of everything anybody writes or composes or invents. I won't say that there will *never* be any theft of an idea but I do say that it must be rare unless one goes out of one's way to prevent the computer system from having a record of one's efforts.

Since copyright and patents are to preserve the creator, author or inventor's ability to make money from their works, these features would not exist in a post-POM economy. The producers of such ideas would be rewarded so long as their works resulted in net benefits. They would not need the protection provided by such laws.

Finally we come to vandalism. It is hard to say what motivates vandals but one supposes that the predominant mood for all but small children is anger. The post-POM society does not have the POM zero-sum simulation making people feel like enemies. In the post-POM society, one has the impression that everyone else is a friend because they can all benefit from helping one another. Therefore one would expect less anger, especially from teenagers who would be able to do meaningful work and get paid for it. They would not need permission to work.

But there is another aspect of vandalism. In a post-POM society the only thing one pays money for is luxury goods and services. Destruction of any other item would have its cost to the people of the society spread over all of them in one way or another so that it would be only a trivial cost to the immediate victim in money though the inconvenience might be considerably more. In a post-POM society if a kid rides by on a bicycle and smashes your mailbox with a bat, you will have the inconvenience of replacing the mailbox but it won't cost you any money and someone else may replace it for you to earn some money. People are so nice in a post-POM economy.