

## Non-POM and Power

Don't you wish you had power? You could get people to do pretty much what you wanted. The rich seem to have quite a lot of power. Presidents, popes, CEOs, and head coaches all seem to have a lot of power. Some power is open and considered to be legitimate while other power is hidden and may be considered illegal and/or immoral. Power and even authority can be used for good or for evil. Its exercise can make life better or worse for many people.

We probably all know quite a bit about power in the POM world we live in. Our physical object money (POM) is amoral so people can use it to do bad things which will gain them more money. Organized crime, white collar crime, political corruption, and just plain fraud are ways people have used to gain money and the power it makes available.

But what would power be like in a non-POM economy? How would people gain power, exercise power, and what would they do with the power they gain? Remember that in a non-POM economy, no person can give their *money* to anyone else. When one earns money it comes into existence in their account and when one spends money, that particular money ceases to exist. Also there is a special set of people who have volunteered to give up all their own money and all the things which money can buy (only luxuries, in a non-POM economy) in order to be able to create money in the accounts of others. These people are called Payers.

### Payers

So let's start with the Payers. After all, in our POM economy those who can give others money are very powerful indeed. Surely the Payers would also be powerful. And indeed, they are powerful. But as we pointed out above, not all power is the same and not all power is exercised in the same way.

Payers can reward but they cannot punish. The power of a POM is a power that can reward OR punish, but a non-POM can only reward. If one loses one's POM income one may starve or be homeless. If one loses one's usual non-POM income one may not be able to go on that fancy vacation for another month. Also, Payers are in a free market. Just like other buyers in free markets, they collectively have power but individually cannot exercise power over any particular seller since the sellers can always sell to another buyer. Therefore, though a payer can influence what gets accomplished, the payer has no power to require, force, coerce, or make any particular individual do anything. The closest a payer can come to controlling a given individual in any sense is to entice, lure, or tempt someone into doing something. If that individual does something that he knows the payer

wants done then the individual can expect to have a little more money before too long.

Thus, the power of Payers is great in terms of getting things done but is almost useless in getting any given person to do any particular thing.

Payers only pay after the fact. That is, only after the Payers know the consequences of some action do they pay for that action and they only pay for the net benefit of that action. This is not by regulation or some rule that needs to be enforced, it is a consequence of the situation in which Payers have placed themselves. They are completely vulnerable to the common people among whom they must live since they cannot have money or the luxury accommodations money can buy. The Payers have no way to avoid ordinary people. Thus, if the ordinary people are suffering they will know just whom to blame, the Payers. And the Payers must take the blame because they cannot escape. Therefore, the Payers are going to pay only for those actions which result in the ordinary people being at least content if not happy. This being the case, there is no need and no point in paying until they know the consequences.

Given all this, Payers will pay morally since that is the only way to be treated well by those among whom they live. Therefore, the Payers will use their power only for good actions. The more power the Payers have the better the consequences for the lives of others. Thus, no one tries to resist the Payers having power. They support and encourage the Payers to exercise their power.

So the power of a payer is safe both for those among whom the payer exercises that power and it is also safe in the sense that no one else is trying to take that power away from the Payers.

But there are other forms of power than that which stems from being able to see that other people get money. Let's examine how a non-POM economy affects the acquisition and exercise of those other forms of power.

### **Charisma**

Some people have charisma. Others are attracted to their personality and they willingly do what such people ask of them. One can easily imagine such a person causing terrible things to happen. Examples from POM history include preachers who led their followers to their deaths, political leaders who have led their nations into terrible, destructive wars, and popular celebrities whose example has led the foolish to harm themselves.

We really don't understand yet exactly what charisma is and how it comes to be. But we do know that such people are often motivated by a desire for money. Many of the destructive things such people have done have been an attempt to get money. With a non-POM they would have no such motivation. When it comes to political leaders, non-POM societies need not fear their despotism since their followers will not be willing to lose very much money and others would be paid to prevent and resist harmful actions by those followers who are willing to sacrifice their income. Finally, the media in a non-POM economy will not show self-destructive behavior in a flattering light. They will not make celebrities of those who would lead others astray. Thus, one is relatively safe from the consequences of the exercise of charismatic power.

### Property

According to Marx, the Capitalists were able to exploit the masses because the Capitalists owned the means of production. So what about the people in a non-POM economy who own the means of production? Do they have power? The simple answer is yes they do have power. They have lots of power.

In a non-POM economy, those who own property have considerable "property rights." They are completely free to do what they want with the property they own. Not only that, all property that is owned at all is owned by individuals. There is no public property. There is no group owned property. There is no "community property." For all practical purposes there are no laws or ordinances or other restrictions on what a property owner can do with their property.

In a POM economy this would result in considerable abuse and suffering as you can read about in history. Marx was responding to real suffering by millions of people in his day and property rights then were not as permissive as they will be in a non-POM economy. But the context for these complete property rights is not the same context that a POM society presents.

In a non-POM economy, there is no way to gain money by harming others. The only route to wealth is to produce a lot more benefits than harm for others. Thus, all of the things one is motivated to do by this sort of monetary system are all moral, ethical, beneficial actions. This concentration of power or "rights" is *safe* for the common person.

Next, because one *does* have these rights over one's property, one is held *completely responsible* for one's actions and inactions with respect to one's property. If one allows one's land to become a breeding ground for pests and disease (mosquitoes for example) then one will lose money one

might otherwise have earned. If one allows erosion runoff to pollute a stream one may lose income. (Note that once money is in one's account only the owner can *remove* that money by spending it. *No judge or payer can ever remove money from one's account.* It is only the net benefit in the present that is affecting what one earns for this time period.)

So let's say that Bob owns several trucks. These trucks can be used to distribute goods to people who need them. If they just sit in the parking lot they earn Bob nothing. So Bob wants them to be used. To earn money he will *\*give\** a truck to Sam with the understanding and agreement that Sam will return the truck to Bob after making some deliveries. Now Sam owns the truck. He drives it making deliveries and returns the truck to Bob and *\*gives\** it back to him. Bob gets paid some for his actions in helping Sam make those deliveries which generated net benefit. Bob will get income from that truck so long as he himself, Sam or some other person or persons to whom he or Sam gives the truck are generating net benefit by using it.

Note that unless one is personally using capital goods (like tools or materials) one gains income by *\*giving\** them to others to use. One gets income from that giving only if those who do use them produce net benefit. It is similar to a bank loaning money to someone and getting interest only if the person uses that money to make a profit so that the loan and interest can be repaid. In both cases the person giving will be rewarded only if the person they give to uses the resource well.

Therefore, the owner of capital (in the Marx sense) cannot use it to exploit others. In fact, one makes money on capital by giving it away. Thus, the literal ownership of capital tends to permeate the economy. Each person who is given capital has a vested interest in using it well and preserving its value. To do otherwise will result in others being reluctant to give one more capital and reduces one's income. Drivers take good care of their trucks. Land owners take care that their land is not damaged and does not damage others. Owning property is a responsibility. Those who assume that responsibility own that property.

#### Organizational power, the office holder.

In POM economies those who have high offices in large bureaucracies have power. This power exists because they can control the pay of others. This is both the power to reward and to punish. They also control the allocation of money with and outside the organization via their departmental budgets. In a non-POM organization, the pay is always controlled by Payers who are not a part of the organization. The organization must request the gifts of resources from others and must request the cooperation even of those who work within the organization.

Those who have high office have power only to the degree that those with whom they work choose to grant that power. They attained high office by helping others earn money. The more successful they have been in the past at helping produce net benefit, the more likely they are to be trusted to do so again. Naturally, their past successes and failures in producing benefits are public information. It must be public or the Payers would not know about it either. These office holders suggest what should be done by those beneath them in the organization and they provide coordination but they cannot command, coerce, or require anything of those who work with them. They are like a football quarterback who calls the signals but the others run the play called not because if they do not do so they will be punished: but because they believe that doing so will give the team the best chance of success.

In other words, high office gives power only when it is *granted* and only when the office holder is helping to provide benefits to others.

So, in summary, all the various forms and sources of power available to people in a non-POM society come from actions that benefit others. In no case will actions which cause harm to others gain someone power. Therefore, power can be safely concentrated when useful in the hands of a few but ceases to exist if the powerful attempt to abuse that power. Power benefits *all* in a non-POM society.