

Non-POM: May I see your License?

It used to be that if one wanted to drive a car one simply got in the car and gave it a try. If one wanted to hunt or fish one got the appropriate equipment and tested one's luck. If one wanted to have a dog one asked a neighbor for one of their pups. Of course that was back when cars could only go a few miles an hour and the roads were tracks with only a very few of them paved. And the woods and streams were full of game and unpolluted. Those were the "good old days" and I am very glad that I did not live then.

But today we have laws to protect the public (and to generate a little income for the county or state). Having someone driving at 70 miles an hour on the roads when they don't know what they are doing is very dangerous for all the other drivers. The supply of fish and some other game is precarious with many species in danger of following the passenger pigeon into extinction. And, of course, the number of dogs in an urban neighborhood must be curtailed and we must be sure that they don't contract dangerous diseases like rabies. We can't have stray dogs roaming the streets spreading danger and attacking horses, people, and other dogs.

But how would a non-[POM](#) society protect its drivers, fish and game, or dogs? Well, let's begin with the dogs. Dogs which are not owned are dangerous and therefore those who do something about them would be paid for doing so. If there are people who are willing to assume responsibility for them, they may do so by registering the dog as being their property. Naturally, I would expect each owned dog to be identified in some fashion. The collar and license tag is old technology so I would expect something like paw prints, retinal images, smell, or the sound of the bark would be used. Perhaps even some sort of chip imbedded in the skin of the animal would be employed. One can relocate or execute unowned dogs and be paid for that. One will not have to pay for a license nor ask the permission of anyone else to adopt a stray. However if one begins caring for a stray one might find it executed if one does not register the dog. If one wants a luxury dog such as some rare breed or show dog, one might have to pay for that, of course, but no license. Working dogs, like seeing eye dogs or guard dogs are capital goods or medical equipment (like glasses).

Hunting and fishing requires the permission of the owner of the game or fish. I would assume that wild deer and fish and such would be considered the property of the owner of the land or stream. As such, to kill or capture that game without permission could get one into serious trouble. (Just what that trouble would be is beyond the scope of this essay.) Since there are no public lands in a non-[POM](#) society, all the land is owned by individuals. Therefore, the state or federal [government](#) has no say in

whether the game is hunted or the fish are caught. But the owner does have complete [responsibility](#). Now this is not minor matter when the game or fish might be rare species. Such species are valuable and to allow their destruction is to reduce the pay one might receive for their preservation. So land owners whose land is the habitat of species in need of protection will have a considerable financial incentive for preserving those species. No one would be able to use money to bribe them to allow the killing of or the endangerment of such species. Other bribes are easily traceable. The reputation of both the land owner and the hunter or fisherman would also suffer.

Licenses to drive in a non-POM society would be, in effect, letters of recommendation from those who attest to the driving ability of the person attempting to purchase or rent a car (or truck or motorcycle or whatever). In as much as the person who provides the vehicle will share responsibility for any accidents the driver has (as will those who contributed to the vehicle falling into the driver's hands including the manufacturer and his/her suppliers) the vehicle provider will be very careful to sell or give the vehicle only to someone they have excellent reason to trust. Thus, drivers who seem likely to have accidents or to be irresponsible in their dealings with others will be unlikely to have much chance to gain access to vehicles. In short, the driver's license will no longer exist because it will no longer be needed.

But there is another meaning of the word "license" that has to do with permission to use an invention or process or to practice some profession. This meaning will also change in the non-POM society. One doesn't need a license to use an invention or a process developed by someone else. They will desire that one use it because that can increase their income. Their interests will coincide with the user's in the use of the invention. If the invention or process results in harm, others will attempt to prevent its use and repair the damage. Everyone will have a motive and incentive to prevent the damage by improving the process or ending its use.

The same applies to such things as a license to practice medicine. There will still be those who attest to the qualifications and character of persons who wish to practice medicine or law or any other profession. Their recommendations will be taken very seriously because they will profit or lose money based on the actual performance of those they recommend. If they are asked to recommend an incompetent and they do not describe that person as incompetent, they will lose money from the resulting harm. Therefore, a license is unnecessary because everyone will have a known reputation regardless of what they do. Finally, it is not the government's business in a non-POM society to tell people what they may and may not do. There simply will be no enforcement of any laws that would attempt to control the citizens.