What This System Actually Feels Like to Live In

Barak Water

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Foundations of a Post-Currency Socioeconomic System — Human-Centered, Applied, Narrative

Barak Water

This is the narrative version. For the full mathematical framework, see the rigorous version.

1. What This System Actually Feels Like to Live In

Imagine waking up and needing something — a meal, medical care, tools, transportation.

You don't check your bank balance.

You don't calculate cost.

You don't decide whether you can "afford" it.

Instead:

- You express the need
- The system already understands patterns of demand
- Supply adjusts dynamically

> **Example: Food**
>
> **In today's system:**
>
> - Food is produced for profit
> - Surplus is wasted
> - Access depends on money
>
> **In this system:**
>
> - Production follows actual consumption patterns
> - Shortages trigger increased supply
> - Surplus is redistributed or reduced
>
> This mirrors how the San operate: food is shared, no one accumulates excess, needs are met collectively.

2. This Is Not Without Precedent

This system is not a thought experiment. Societies with exactly these properties have existed for thousands of years.

The San of Southern Africa, the Mbendjele of the Congo Basin, and the Agta of the Philippines all operate (or operated) systems where:

- Resources are shared without pricing
- Production tracks need, not profit

- Accumulation is actively suppressed
- No one becomes permanently dominant

> What we are describing is not a new invention. It is a technologically mediated extension of systems that humans have lived in successfully for far longer than they have lived in market economies.

The difference is scale. In a small group, everyone can see everything — who needs what, who is contributing, who is taking too much. In a large society, that visibility requires technology. That is what the system architecture provides: digital transparency replacing social transparency.

3. Work and Participation

Instead of: *"I work to earn money"*

People experience: **"I contribute to systems that directly sustain life"**

Example: A Mechanic

- Sees demand for repair tasks
- Selects tasks based on skill and interest
- Contributes without negotiating price

Motivation comes from usefulness, recognition, and reduced coercion.

4. Scaling Up — What Changes

At small scale (like the San): everyone sees everything.

At large scale: visibility becomes data-driven.

Example: Regional Shortage

A region shows a shortage of medical supplies.

The system:

- Identifies surplus elsewhere
- Coordinates redistribution
- Adjusts production

No negotiation, no bidding, no pricing.

5. The New World Web in Daily Life

The NWW acts like a living map of reality.

You can:

- See what is needed
- See where you can help

- See decisions being made

Examples

A teacher logs in, sees demand for math tutoring, joins sessions where needed.

A researcher sees an open problem, contributes findings.

6. Governance Experience

Instead of distant institutions:

- Decisions are visible
- Reasoning is visible
- Participation is possible

Example: Policy Proposal

A policy is proposed. People can:

- See the arguments
- See the data
- Contribute feedback

Governance becomes transparent, participatory, and accountable.

7. Failure — What Happens When Things Go Wrong

This is critical.

Example: Sudden Shortage

A storm disrupts supply.

System response:

1. Shortage detected immediately
2. Allocation becomes conservative
3. Nearby regions supply support
4. Production shifts

People experience temporary limits — but not collapse.

Example: Someone Tries to Hoard

System detects an abnormal access pattern.

Response: limits applied, redistribution occurs.

Example: System Outage

If the New World Web fails:

- Local systems continue operating
- Fallback coordination is used

8. Living Next to Today's Economy

This system doesn't require the entire world to change overnight. It can coexist with currency-based economies through controlled interfaces.

Example: Trading with a Neighboring Country

A post-currency region produces solar panels. A currency-based country wants them.

Instead of setting a price, the system evaluates:

- What physical goods does the other side offer in return?
- What is the resource cost of producing the panels?
- Can internal needs still be met after the exchange?

Currency is used only at the interface — it never enters internal allocation. Think of it like a membrane: things pass through, but the internal environment stays distinct.

Example: A Business That Operates in Both Systems

A workshop serves both the local post-currency community and external currency-based clients.

- Internally: work is allocated by need, skill, and interest
- Externally: currency transactions fund material imports
- Firewall: currency revenue never determines who gets access internally

9. Why This Doesn't Collapse into Chaos

Because:

- Behavior is reinforced toward cooperation
- Accumulation is structurally limited
- Failures are corrected early

10. What Changes Most in People's Lives

- Reduced anxiety
- Removal of survival pressure
- Increased collaboration
- Less isolation

11. What Stays the Same

- People still build
- People still innovate
- People still solve problems

12. What We Don't Know Yet

Honest assessment requires acknowledging open questions:

- Can the mechanisms that keep small communities equal be scaled through technology without losing their effectiveness?
- How long does it take people to shift from scarcity-driven behavior to abundance-oriented participation?
- What happens when a post-currency system and a currency-based system coexist for a long time — does one eventually absorb the other?

These questions have no definitive answers yet. What we do know is that the core mechanisms work at small scale, the architecture for scaling them is structurally definable, and the failure modes are identifiable and addressable.

13. Final Human Insight

This system doesn't require people to become perfect. It requires a structure that makes cooperative behavior the stable outcome.

Continue Reading

Rigorous Version The full mathematical framework behind this system. **Oligarchic and Egalitarian Attractors** Why both oligarchic and egalitarian states are stable — and what determines which one a society converges toward. **Before and After Scenarios** Concrete side-by-side comparisons of daily life across ten domains.