

# How Could a Society Look Like, If Money Were Only a Way to Measure Value, and not a Commodity?

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See also

Nelson, Anita (2022). *Beyond money: A postcapitalist strategy*. London: Pluto Press

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## What if money were only a way to measure value and not a commodity?

Perplexity's answer: A society where money is used only as a measure of value, rather than a commodity, could function quite differently from our current economic system. Here are some key aspects of how such a society might look:

1. Focus on real value creation: Without money as a commodity, there would likely be a greater emphasis on producing goods and services that provide tangible benefits to society[1]. The economy would prioritize activities that generate actual value rather than those that simply accumulate monetary wealth.
2. Alternative measures of worth: Instead of using money as the primary indicator of success or status, society might develop new metrics based on contributions to community well-being, ecological sustainability, or personal growth[2].
3. Resource allocation based on need: Rather than market forces determining resource distribution, allocation could be based more directly on societal needs and priorities[2]. This might lead to a more equitable distribution of goods and services.
4. Shift in work motivation: Without monetary incentives driving career choices, people might pursue work more aligned with their passions, skills, and society's needs[1]. This could lead to greater job satisfaction and potentially more innovation in fields deemed socially valuable.
5. Redefined concept of wealth: Wealth might be reconceptualized in terms of access to resources, knowledge, or experiences rather than accumulation of currency[2]. This could foster a culture of sharing and collaboration over competition.
6. Time-based economy: One possibility is a system where value is measured in units of time spent on productive activities, rather than abstract monetary units[1]. This could lead to a more direct connection between effort and reward.

7. Trust-based transactions: Without money as a medium of exchange, society might rely more heavily on trust, reputation, and reciprocity in economic interactions[4]. This could strengthen social bonds and community ties.

8. Reduced inequality: By removing the ability to accumulate and hoard monetary wealth, extreme economic inequality might be significantly reduced[1]. This could lead to a more cohesive society with fewer social tensions.

9. Ecological considerations: Without the profit motive driving resource extraction and consumption, there might be a greater alignment between economic activities and ecological sustainability[2].

10. Redefined progress: Societal progress might be measured more in terms of quality of life improvements, technological advancements, or environmental restoration rather than GDP growth[2].

It's important to note that such a system would face significant challenges in implementation and would require fundamental shifts in societal values and structures. However, exploring alternative economic models can provide valuable insights into potential improvements to our current system.

#### Citations:

[1] <https://www.chrisbehan.ca/posts/divergence-of-money-and-value>. See also Nelson, Anitra (2022). *Beyond money: A postcapitalist strategy*. London: Pluto Press.

[2] <https://www.huckmag.com/article/what-would-a-world-without-money-look-like>

[3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0VvQB0CW48>

[4] <https://www.pacificventury.com/post/why-not-a-world-without-money>

[5]

[https://www.reddit.com/r/worldbuilding/comments/uxcjf5/what\\_are\\_some\\_ways\\_to\\_have\\_a\\_society\\_that\\_works/](https://www.reddit.com/r/worldbuilding/comments/uxcjf5/what_are_some_ways_to_have_a_society_that_works/)

### **What alternative systems could replace money in a value-based society?**

Perplexity's answer: Based on the search results and the query, here are some potential alternatives to money in a value-based society:

1. Mutual credit systems: These function similarly to money but don't require tokens. Instead, they use a system of credits and debits in accounts to facilitate exchange without the need for a centralized currency[3].

2. Time-based economy: Value could be measured in units of time spent on productive activities rather than abstract monetary units[1].

3. Resource-based allocation: Instead of using money, resources and goods could be distributed based on societal needs and priorities[1].

4. Trust and reputation systems: Economic interactions could rely more heavily on trust, reputation, and reciprocity rather than monetary exchange[1].

5. Points-based systems: Similar to mutual credit, but using points as a measure of value that can be earned and exchanged[5].

6. Barter systems: Direct exchange of goods and services without the use of money as an intermediary[5].

7. Community-based exchange: Small, tight-knit communities could operate on principles of reciprocal altruism and shared resources without the need to explicitly record debts[4].

8. Post-scarcity systems: In a society with abundant resources, there may be no need for money or strict accounting of exchanges[4].

9. Value-based allocation: Resources and goods could be distributed based on contributions to community well-being, ecological sustainability, or other societal values[1].

**10. State-created non-commodity money: A system where money is created by the state purely as a measure of value, not as a commodity to be hoarded or speculated upon[2].**

These alternatives would likely require significant shifts in societal values and structures. They may work better in smaller, more localized communities rather than large-scale economies. The key is to find ways to measure and exchange value that align with the society's core principles and goals, rather than relying on accumulation of abstract monetary wealth.

Citations:

[1] <https://www.cairn.info/revue-reflets-et-perspectives-de-la-vie-economique-2019-4-page-63.htm>

[2] Money Creation by the State, <https://positivemoney.org/2015/10/how-can-we-do-better-the-alternative-public-money-creation/>

[3] <https://www.lowimpact.org/posts/alternative-money-system-tim-jenkin-matthew-slater-dil-green>

[4] [https://www.reddit.com/r/worldbuilding/comments/uxcjf5/what\\_are\\_some\\_ways\\_to\\_have\\_a\\_society\\_that\\_works/](https://www.reddit.com/r/worldbuilding/comments/uxcjf5/what_are_some_ways_to_have_a_society_that_works/)

[5] <https://www.superphysics.org/social/economics/alternatives-to-money/>

## **How would the concept of work change if money wasn't a motivator?**

Perplexity's answer: If money were no longer a primary motivator for work, the concept of work could change significantly in several ways:

1. Purpose-driven work: People would likely gravitate towards jobs and careers that align more closely with their personal values, interests, and sense of purpose. Work would become more about fulfilling one's potential and contributing to society in meaningful ways.

2. Focus on intrinsic motivation: Without financial incentives, intrinsic motivators like personal growth, mastery of skills, autonomy, and the desire to make a positive impact would become more prominent drivers of work engagement.

3. Emphasis on passion and creativity: People may be more inclined to pursue creative endeavors and passion projects as their primary work, leading to increased innovation and artistic expression.

4. Redefined measure of success: Success at work would likely be measured more by personal fulfillment, societal impact, and the quality of one's contributions rather than salary or financial status.

5. Collaborative over competitive: Without monetary rewards driving competition, work environments might become more collaborative, with a greater emphasis on teamwork and shared goals.

6. Flexible work arrangements: People might opt for more flexible work schedules or part-time arrangements to balance work with other life pursuits, as financial necessity would no longer dictate full-time employment.

7. Lifelong learning: Continuous education and skill development might become more integral to work life, as people seek to expand their knowledge and capabilities for personal growth rather than career advancement.

8. Redefined retirement: The concept of retirement could change significantly, with people potentially working longer but in different capacities, driven by personal interest rather than financial need.

9. Volunteer work elevation: Volunteer work and community service might be viewed on par with traditional employment, as both would be driven by the desire to contribute rather than financial gain.

10. Focus on social impact: Businesses and organizations might prioritize their social and environmental impact more heavily, as profit would no longer be the primary measure of success.

11. Redefining essential work: Society might need to develop new ways to ensure essential but potentially less desirable jobs are still performed, possibly through shared responsibility or rotation systems.

This shift would likely require a fundamental restructuring of society and how we meet basic needs. It's important to note that while removing money as a motivator could lead to more fulfilling work experiences, it would also present significant challenges in terms of resource allocation and ensuring all necessary work is completed.

#### Citations:

- [1] <https://www.employerflexible.com/insights/motivating-workers-without-money/>
- [2] <https://aboutleaders.com/motivate-employees-without-money/>
- [3] <https://www.teamazing.com/employee-motivation/>
- [4] [https://www.iidmglobal.com/expert\\_talk/expert-talk-categories/managing-people/staff\\_productivity/id45538.html](https://www.iidmglobal.com/expert_talk/expert-talk-categories/managing-people/staff_productivity/id45538.html)
- [5] <https://www.pacificventury.com/post/why-not-a-world-without-money>

### **Why has this not been achieved?**

Question: Given all the advantages that would result from using money only to measure value and not as a commodity, why has this not been achieved?

Perplexity's answer: Based on the search results and the query, there are several reasons why using money solely as a measure of value and not as a commodity has not been achieved, despite potential advantages:

1. Entrenched economic systems: Our current global economic system is deeply rooted in the use of money as both a measure of value and a commodity. Changing this would require a fundamental restructuring of economies worldwide.

2. Complexity of alternatives: Alternative systems like mutual credit, time-based economies, or resource-based allocation are more complex to implement and manage on a large scale compared to traditional monetary systems.

3. Lack of universal acceptance: For any alternative system to work, it would need widespread acceptance and adoption, which is challenging to achieve given the global prevalence of money-based economies.

4. Vested interests: Many powerful institutions and individuals benefit from the current system where money can be accumulated and used as a commodity. They may resist changes that could diminish their wealth or influence.

5. Psychological factors: Money as a commodity is deeply ingrained in human psychology and behavior. Changing this mindset would require significant cultural and social shifts.

**6. Practical challenges: Using money only as a measure of value raises questions about how to allocate resources, motivate work, and manage complex economic interactions without the commodity aspect of money.**

7. Technological limitations: While technology has advanced, implementing and managing alternative systems on a global scale still presents significant technical challenges.

8. Risk and uncertainty: Moving away from established monetary systems involves considerable risks and uncertainties, which can deter policymakers and populations from embracing radical changes.

9. Lack of clear alternatives: While there are theoretical alternatives, there's no clear, proven system that could replace money as both a measure of value and a commodity on a global scale.

10. International coordination: Implementing such a fundamental change would require unprecedented levels of international cooperation and agreement, which is difficult to achieve given diverse national interests.

Despite these challenges, exploring alternatives to traditional monetary systems remains valuable for addressing issues of inequality, economic instability, and resource allocation. Some smaller-scale experiments with alternative systems continue to provide insights into potential future economic models.

#### Citations:

[1] <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/money-really-best-measure-value>

[2] <https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/macroeconomics/economics-of-money/money-as-a-medium-of-exchange/>

[3] <https://idev.afdb.org/sites/default/files/Evaluations/2020-02/Applications%20and%20limitations.pdf>

[4] <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/money.asp>

[5] <https://www.superphysics.org/social/economics/alternatives-to-money/>

## **If money were not a commodity, what would be the practical solutions?**

Question: What would be solutions with respect to allocating resources, motivating work, and managing complex economic interactions, if money were used only as a measure of value, without the commodity aspect of money?

Perplexity's answer: Based on the query and the search results, here are some potential solutions for allocating resources, motivating work, and managing economic interactions in a system where money is used only as a measure of value:

### **1. Resource allocation:**

- Implement a resource-based allocation system focused on societal needs and priorities rather than market forces.
- Use data-driven approaches to assess and distribute resources based on actual demand and usage patterns.
- Develop community-based decision-making processes for determining resource allocation priorities.

### **2. Work motivation:**

- Foster intrinsic motivation by aligning work with personal values, interests, and sense of purpose.
- Implement a points-based system that recognizes contributions to society and community well-being.
- Provide opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and mastery.
- Offer flexible work arrangements and emphasize work-life balance.
- Create a culture of recognition and appreciation for valuable contributions.

### **3. Managing economic interactions:**

- Develop trust-based systems for exchange, possibly using reputation scores or community feedback.
- Implement mutual credit systems or time-based economies to facilitate exchanges without traditional currency.
- Use blockchain or similar technologies to track and verify transactions and value creation.
- Create local exchange trading systems (LETS) to enable direct connections between people for goods and services.

### **4. Measuring value:**

- Develop new metrics that consider social impact, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.
- Implement a multi-dimensional value system that accounts for various forms of contribution beyond just economic output.
- Use AI and big data analytics to assess and quantify complex forms of value creation.

### **5. Ensuring essential work is done:**

- Implement rotation systems for less desirable but necessary tasks.
- Provide additional recognition or benefits for those undertaking essential but potentially less appealing work.
- Invest in automation and technology to reduce the need for undesirable tasks.

### **6. Addressing inequality:**

- Implement a form of universal basic income or resource access to ensure everyone's basic needs are met.
- Create systems that promote equal access to opportunities for personal and professional development.

7. Fostering innovation:

- Encourage entrepreneurship and innovation through community support and resource allocation for promising ideas.
- Create collaborative spaces and networks for knowledge sharing and problem-solving.

These solutions would require significant societal changes and would likely work best when implemented gradually and at smaller scales initially. The key is to create systems that align economic activities with broader societal goals and values, while still providing mechanisms for efficient resource allocation and value exchange.

Citations:

- [1] <https://www.pacificventury.com/post/why-not-a-world-without-money>
- [2] <https://www.superphysics.org/social/economics/alternatives-to-money/>
- [3] <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/money-really-best-measure-value>
- [4] <https://documents.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/pubs/01nvc/nvcp12.pdf>
- [5] [https://www.iidmglobal.com/expert\\_talk/expert-talk-categories/managing-people/staff\\_productivity/id45538.html](https://www.iidmglobal.com/expert_talk/expert-talk-categories/managing-people/staff_productivity/id45538.html)