

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE THOUGHTS FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Raymond Cheng,
Irene Macapagal

ABSTRACT

Administrative thought is always in a state of continuous change, evolution and adaptation as it has to 'grow' to 'catch up' with the society together with its ever-changing challenges. Dwight Waldo, the prominent American academic figure in public administration, argued in 1947 that the then current administrative theories and thoughts actually grew and evolved since the industrial revolution from the nineteenth-century (McCurdy & Rosenbloom, 2006, p.207). As the society developed from one that was generally moral-based which depended heavily on farming, that is, an agrarian society, to an industrialized nation, productivity of human beings were reorganized and a wide range of resources was redistributed on such an enormous scale never seen before and therefore corresponding updates and changes of organizational bureaucracy in the management of people and production was therefore required. But did these really contributed solely to the evolution of administrative thoughts? This review paper aims to provide an alternative historical review of the core administrative thoughts since the time of Woodrow Wilson to the heterodoxy (circa 1970) of public administration from the feminine and the media cultural perspective – perspectives that most literature review on the subject seems to have ignored.

Keyword: administrative thoughts, women suffrage, feminism, mass media culture

Woodrow Wilson's Dichotomy in 1887 and Women Suffrage

Just as the concept of 'being polite' did not appear until the invention of the deterring firearm, or the gun, in 1528 (Cheng, 2015a, p.27), the need to clarify the nature between political leaders and government administrators did not really appear in the United States of America until government scale was forced to grow quickly (and more American women were as to serve in the government) in the 1800s as population skyrocketed due to massive influx of European immigrants, especially in big cities like New York, Boston and New Orleans (see Figure 1a below). Changes were hence brought about and accelerated with the corresponding and rapid growth of production scale, trade volume, communications capabilities and technical advancement (Stillman, 2005, p.5). It was also during this period when the call and discussion for 'universal suffrage' was overtaken for the first time by 'women suffrage' (see Figure 1b below). And with a more and more complex society, the call for reform in bureaucracy intensified and was eventually reflected and recognized in the U.S. Civil Service Act of 1883. Just as advocated by Woodrow Wilson¹ in his writing, *The Study of Administration* (1887), he anticipated that there would be louder and louder calls, not just from feminists who were fighting for their rights to vote, but for relating overall governance and the lives of the American people. Wilson described (1887) that public administration's collective duty should be one that could 'supply the best possible life to a federal organization and to systems within systems' while on the other side, to also 'make town, city, county, state, and federal governments live with a like strength and an equally assured healthfulness' by 'keeping each unquestionably its own master and yet making all interdependent and cooperative.' To put it simply, what Wilson envisioned was, similar to what Stillman (1973) had later elaborated, a unique federal structure of the U. S. government in which various levels of the state, county, city, town and municipal governments are joined and are cooperating with one another 'for the pursuit of a common purposes'. In fact, Wilson's ideal government hierarchy is one that emphasizes for a clear separation of power and responsibility between the political and the administrative side of governance so that there would be adequate control, democratic, of course, over the administration of government policy. In other words, Wilson believed that the purpose or goal of public administration is to effectively implement policies and decisions, be it political or not, as put forward by any democratically elected government, and hence leading to his politics-administration dichotomy (Martin, 1988, p.632), or, in Wilson's own words, to put public administration 'outside the proper sphere of politics' (Wilson, 1887, p.210) – analogous to the traditional belief back in the 1800s that only men should work (in politics) and women should serve as housewives (in administration) and that the hegemonic ideology should only be patriarchal, i.e. politics leading administration. Yet, brought up during the times when women suffragists were fighting their 40-year-long journey toward full women suffrage², seeing the first female mayor³ elected

¹ Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), a Democrat, was the 28th President of the United States of America, in office from 1913 to 1921. President Wilson led the United States through World War I (1914-1918).

² The fight for women suffrage in the U.S. intensified starting from the high profile arrest case of Susan B. Anthony who tried to vote during the presidential election in 1872 (when Woodrow Wilson was 15). The fight continued for the next 41 years until the original amendment Senator Aaron A. Sargent introduced into the U.S. Congress in 1878 became part of the Ninth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1919. Woodrow Wilson, who was then already 63 and had assumed office as the President of the United States for 6 years, eventually made women suffrage possible and the 1920 election was to become the first United States presidential election in which women were legally allowed to vote in all American states.

in 1887 in Argonia, Kansas, and believing in the notion that delays in improving public administration was due to a flawed constitution (Wilson, 1887, p.207), Wilson was the American President who, at the age of 63, made women suffrage possible in 1920⁴ after overcoming a number of setbacks in the Senate and the Congress (Cullen-DuPont, 2000), effectively taking the political issue of women suffrage away from daily government administration where the female workforce had proven to be essential for the U.S. during World War I while men had to be deployed to the frontline and jobs had to be taken over by the women.

Figure 1a. Immigrants entering American ports⁵

IMMIGRANTS ENTERING AMERICAN PORTS						
	<i>Total</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Phila- delphia</i>	<i>Baltimore</i>	<i>New Orleans</i>
1846	158,000	98,000	13,000	7,000	9,000	22,000
1851	408,000	294,000	25,000	18,000	8,000	52,000
1855	230,000	161,000	17,000	7,000	6,000	20,000

New York City percentage of total immigrants:
1846—62%
1851—72%
1855—70%

Figure 1b. N-gram⁶ plot on universal suffrage vs. women suffrage



Even though Wilson's politics-administration dichotomy theory was later challenged by its contenders, e.g. Simon's (1946) fact-value dichotomy and the 'seamless web of discretion and interaction' Gulick advocated (Fry, 1989, p.80; Gulick, 1933a, p.56; Gulick, 1933b;), Wilson's theory still managed to remain as the center for study and criticism over time (Musav & Tahmasebi, 2011; Svava & Overeem, 2006, p.121). Other scholars, too, like Frank Goodnow (1900), have pointed out that politics and administration can never be completely, let alone distinctively, separated – just as the two genders could not survive on their own. As Goodnow argued (1900, p.16), 'while the two primary functions of government are susceptible of differentiation, the organs of government to which the discharge of these functions is intrusted' and so 'cannot be clearly defined.' A statement that

³ Susanna Medora Salter was the first female to be elected mayor of a town in the U.S. in 1887.

⁴ In the UK, women's right to vote was granted in 1928 (British Library, n.d.)

⁵ See 19th Century U.S. Immigration Statistics. Last accessed November 1, 2016 from <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/immigration-statistics.htm>

⁶ Adapted from the field of computational linguistics, an n-gram plot is the occurrence of a certain word or phrase (of n phonemes, syllables, letters, words or base pairs) in books over a period of time. By studying the relative number of occurrence of a certain phrase, researchers can tell by the popularity of the phrase how concepts related to the phrase were being received during the period. See <http://ng-ram>

seems to be remotely echoing with the functions of the two genders – ‘susceptible of differentiation’, but ‘cannot be clearly defined.’

POSDCoRB Orthodoxy 1926-1946 and the Rise of Women Status

It took approximately forty years after Woodrow Wilson’s 1887 essay was first published before the contribution of the women workforce in supporting the American economy (and also that in the UK) during and after the First World War was finally made aware to the male political leaders. As more and more men were enlisted during WWI, women suffragette leaders strategically volunteered (BBC, 2014) to take the men’s places and helped with work not only at ammunitions and weapons factories, but also as conductors on the public transport, as workers on farms, as nurses in hospitals and as secretaries and assistants in offices. The contribution of the women could no longer be taken for granted and some said the fact that women were eventually allowed to vote in the early 1920s was, actually, a ‘token of gratitude’ to them for their ‘mature political response’ (ibid.) during the First World War. It was also this period when the first-wave of feminism⁷ won its battle in terms of women’s legal rights to equality and ownership of property (Henry, 2004) and the public, hence, then started to discuss and talk about ‘equality’ in all aspects of life. It was also, around the same time, in 1926, when Leonard White⁸ published his essay, *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration*. The essay, which was the first one to stress on the use of equal and scientific methods, later became the theoretical foundation for other second-generation scholars like Luther Gulick to re-formulate and re-develop into a set of comprehensive, generic theories of administration of public organization (Stillman, 2005, p.20).

Gulick’s theory stressed not only on the use of equal and scientific method, but also the importance of efficiency, professionalism, structural reform, and executive control – regardless of gender. He summarized the basic duties of administrators with concepts largely drawn from French industrialist Henri Fayol’s (1918) POSDCoRB, the acronym which stands for planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. The main conceptual framework of POSDCoRB originates from an objective, logical and rational perspective of public administration as a series of sequential functions of the government. It was thought to be revolutionary because it was the first time that the government was looked at in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and also from the perspective of governance. Even though the concept was heavily criticized by Herbert Simon (1946) as merely a ‘span of control’ and ‘unity of command’, the model was promptly adopted as an immediate result of the Great Depression (1929-1939) and World War II (1939-1945), which both called for the urgent need of a ‘military-like government’ that is both responsive and effective in nature. In fact, it was also during this period of the Second World War when concepts related to massive production and rational domination were quickly spread among the American society (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944) and women workforce were first asked⁹ to join the labor market, especially working for the government, at an enormous speed (see Table 1 below). Even government posters were designed to reflect government effectiveness and efficiency in terms of the deployment of the female workforce during this period (see Figure 2 below).

Table 1. Female working population in the U.S. during WWII. Source: Chafe (1990)

	End of 1939: WWII	18 months later after WWII broke out in 1942
Airplanes	Only 143 women employees working at seven airplane factories.	65,000 women workers were hired by the same airplane factories
Ships and vessels	36 women were hired	160,000 female workers

Figure 2. U.S. government propaganda posters during Second World War

⁷ The term ‘first-wave feminism’ and ‘second-wave feminism’ were coined by Martin Luther King in his writings in the New York Times Magazine in 1968 (Henry, 2004, p.58).

⁸ Having served in the Roosevelt administration, Leonard White (1891-1958) was a historian of public administration who studied public administration in the context of grouped U.S. presidential periods.

⁹ In 1938, just right before the Second World War, four out of five Americans believed that married women should not work if their husbands were employed. Yet during WWII, 60 percent of the Americans thought that wives should be working and 71 percent agreed the married women should help shoulder up more responsibilities and should therefore get a job (Chafe, 1990).



Although POSDCoRB was later replaced by other newer management ideas and concepts, the quest for a more effective, responsive, equal government was justified because of the dire need to involve both genders equally for the first time – especially when women had won their voting rights just recently in 1920. But while the percentage of female working for the U.S. government today is still lower than that of male¹⁰, standing at a mere 37% as of 2000 (Moss, 2015), the boost in number¹¹ back during WWII was definitely large enough to effect public policy changes for the entire U.S. federal government, be it to help overturn laws that discriminate against men¹² (ibid.) or even made the FBI¹³ to change the old definition of rape to include men in recent years in 2011¹⁴. And in the course of this, they helped shaped a new, more balanced view toward new public administration concepts as well.

Post-WWII to 1970s: Heterodoxy 1947-1967 and the Domino Effect

The POSDCoRB advocacy, though still being debated, did not manage to withstand public criticism when public expectations rose substantially after the Second World War and people expected the government to take on much greater responsibilities in terms of education, science, military, and public works (Simon, 1946; Stillman, 2005). This is especially true when classical orthodox and theories that are generally based on logical reasoning and systematic generalization of human behavior like Taylorism and scientific management (Taylor, 1911), Fayol's POSDCoRB (1918), Gulick's 'seamless web of discretion and interaction' (Fry, 1989, p.80; Gulick, 1933a, p.56; Gulick, 1933b;) and Urwick's management theory (1944) were all becoming to lose their support because of the uprising new world order after WWII. Heterodox researchers like Dwight Waldo, who questioned the concept of scientific management and advocated that a mere scientific way of understanding the dichotomy was no longer adequate (Overeem, 2008), began to take their foothold in mainstream academia. Herbert Simon, whose radical work deviated totally away from the classical theories (Katsamunsk, 2012, p.77), became the iconic figure representing the new heterodoxy.

It was also this period when the commercial television broadcasting first appeared in American history. In 1948, four television networks, namely, NBC, CBS, ABC, and DuMont, started broadcasting over 128 stations on a full prime-time schedule (8 to 11pm, Eastern Time), seven days a week (Wild, 2016). It was during this period when American advertisers, including the government, first used the TV to advertise and conveyed their political messages to the general public (see Figure 3 below).

¹⁰ Of all the 19 main U.S. federal agencies, the highest percentage of female workers is hired by the Social Security Administration, currently standing at 67.2% (Moss, 2015).

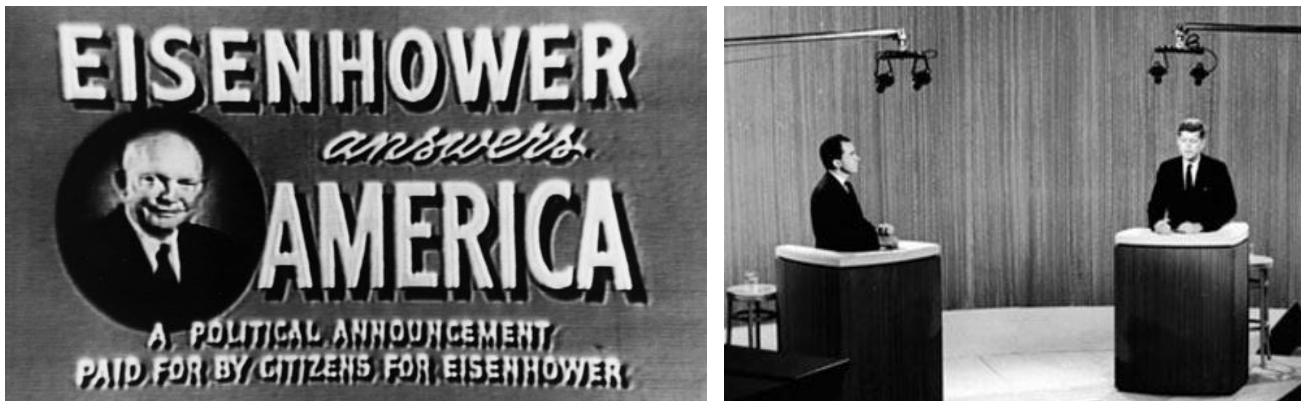
¹¹ It was reported that before and after the Second World War, there was an increase of the female workforce by over six million, together with women's wage and women union (Chafe, 1990).

¹² In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that men above 18, and not 21, should also be allowed to drink like women. See <http://www.casebriefsummary.com/craig-v-boren/>

¹³ FBI, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S.

¹⁴ See the article, 'Feminist Majority Foundation celebrates FBI approval of new rape definition - FBI Director's action follows extensive campaign by women's rights supporters', dated January 6, 2012 at <http://www.feminist.org/news/presstory.asp?id=13402>

Figure 3. Political advertisement in American in 1952¹⁵ and the 1960 presidential debate¹⁶



Renowned scholars on media culture like Adorno & Horkheimer (1944) described the period as ‘empty and meaningless’. Others (Campbell, Martin, Fabos, 2008, p.27) pointed out that the key social values have changed before and after 1950s, from anti-traditional rationalism to one that is anti-hierarchical, skeptical, diversified and ironical and paradoxical (see Table 2 below), hence favoring the heterodoxy to slowly replace the traditional belief in the orthodoxy.

Table 2. Trends of communications (Campbell, Martin, Fabos, 2008, p.27)

Trend	Modern industrial revolution (1800s-1950s)	Postmodern (1950s-present)
Communication transmission	Print	Electronic / digital
Communication channels	Books / newspapers / magazines / radio	Television / cable / Internet / multimedia
Communication reach	National	Global
Key social values	Anti-traditional rationalism / efficiency / individualism	Anti-hierarchy / skepticism / diversity / multiculturalism / iron and paradox

Meanwhile, with the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, or alternatively, with the ‘fall of China’ into the hands of the communists, U.S. government’s belief in the ‘domino effect’ strengthened and hence, among various other reasons, led to its ‘participation’ or ‘intervention’ in the Korea War and the Vietnam War in the early 1950s and the 1960s, trying to keep the ‘Asian dominos’ from falling (see Figure 4 below). However, such intervention, together with the beginning of the Cold War, the massive military buildup, and the space program against the Soviet Union, all triggered the call for a more responsible and transparent government toward the then skeptical and inquisitive public, especially after the Second World War when the U.S. had gradually become a world superpower and as the leader of the capitalist free-market model (Stillman, 2005, p.21). TV programs and the popular culture, during this particular period, helped fuel the fear and featured extensively spy movies and TV dramas about conspiracies and espionage activities. Ian Fleming’s *James Bond* novels and its subsequent movie series, for instance, was a perfect example of how the media has helped strengthened the skepticism of the West against the Soviet Union. Novels like, *The President’s Plane is Missing* (a 1960 best-seller), *Seven Days in May* (a 1962 novel by Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey, Jr.), *Missing!* (a 1969 novel by Michael Avallone), and *Dr. Strangelove* (a 1964 Hollywood blockbuster), were all examples of how the popular culture was twisting and re-shaping the understanding of American politics among the

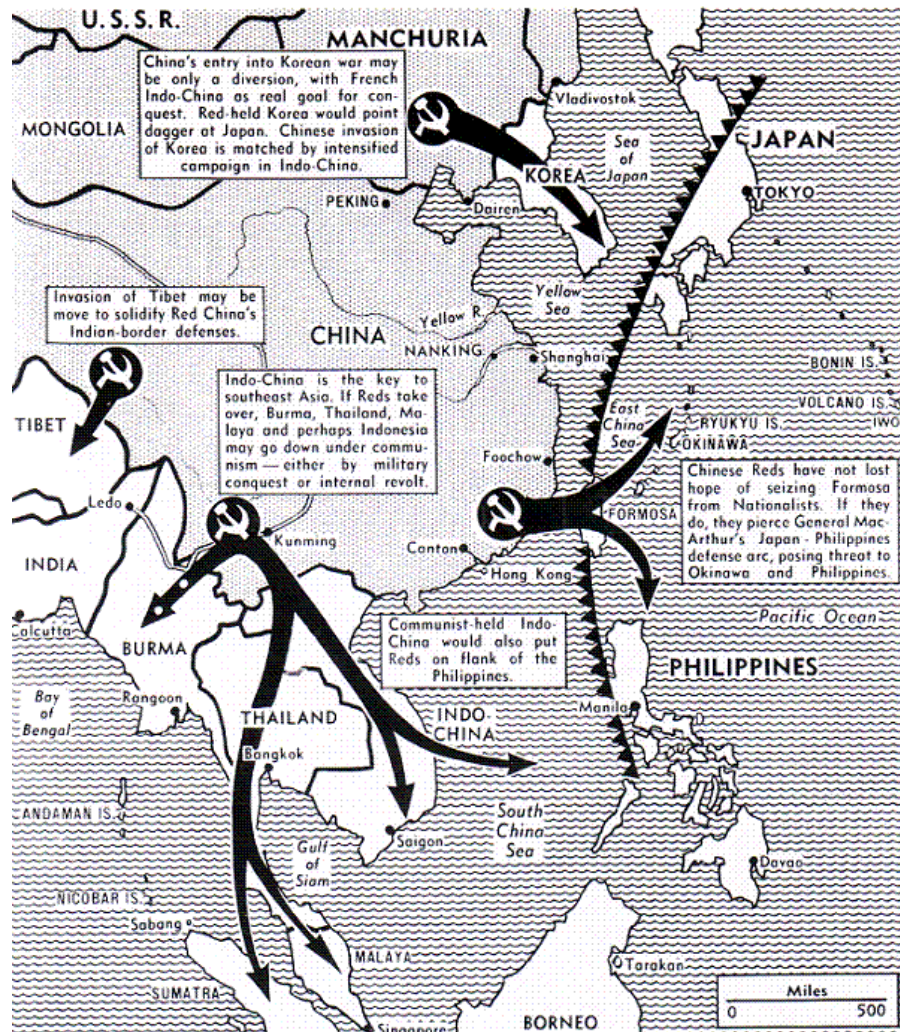
¹⁵ See ‘Eisenhower answers America: The first political advertisements on American TV (1952)’ dated Sept 28, 2012 at http://www.openculture.com/2012/09/the_first_political_advertisements_on_tv_1952.html

¹⁶ See ‘How did the advent of television impact politics?’ by Matt Sailor. In How Stuff Works at <http://people.howstuffworks.com/culture-traditions/tv-and-culture/advent-of-television-impact-politics.htm>

public, domestic and foreign. The general public, hence, was subconsciously taught and brainwashed to see the political world, especially on how Republicans differ from Democrats, as put forward by these political discourse (in the form of movies and novels) when they are not at all genuinely true (Cheng, 2015b).

Such reshaping not only changed how Americans understood politics but also brought about fear against the Soviet Union as well as the communist China. In fact, this was the time when the domino effect seemed to have emerged and the U. S. Government had to send its troops to 'intervene' into other countries' businesses. The effect, known as The Domino Theory, was an alleged idea promoted at times by the U. S. Government, claiming that if one country in a region falls under the hands of the communists, then the surrounding countries would follow sooner or later, in a domino fashion, as artistically described as in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Illustration of the Domino Theory in Asia



Conclusion

People are affected by the place and environment in which they live and there is no exception even for a great man, or the president of a nation. In this paper, we looked briefly at how influencers of major thoughts of public administration, say, Woodrow Wilson, could have been affected by the societies they lived in and hence shaped the theories they advocated (see Table 3 below). We looked also at how scientific theories, like POSDCoRB, which was once believed to be an effective theory for public administration, was considered insufficient to cope with the needs of the time and was eventually challenged by a flourishing congregation of new ideas in the form of cultural changes, say, the rise of feminism. The new alternatives in the expanded field of public administration were hence developed to fuse and be in line with multiple directions of development in various other emerging fields like social sciences, political sciences, psychology, cultural studies, business, and economics, etc. and such a post-war period, seemingly characterized by the departure from the accepted old school of beliefs, standards, or the status quo like POSDCoRB and Wilson's 1887 essay, was later known by other public administration scholars as the 'Social Science Heterodoxy'. In fact, some scholars, like Robert Dahl, who emphasized the values of 'realism, behaviorism, and

science' as a 'realignment of governance' (Stillman, 2005, p.21), challenged the dichotomy of public administration and politics and questioned the value of public administration as its own science. The post-war period did not just bring about profound changes in our culture, be it American or not, but it also marked a new era in the studies of public administration because culture does affect people as well as their thoughts.

Table 3. Historical and social background of the development of administrative thought before 1970

	Time Period	Characteristics of Period	Historical Background	Social Background
Woodrow Wilson's 1887 Essay	1887	Probably the first one to call for the study of public administration; politic-administration dichotomy.	Industrial Revolution, Telegraph Bubbles ¹⁷ in 1840s and 1850s, Railway Bubbles in 1880s and 1890s; World War I broke out.	Susan Anthony was arrested for voting (1872); first female major elected (1887); women suffrage movement (1870-1920).
POSDCoRB	1926-1946	A "military-like" model attempting to produce ideal systems of economy via a rational process with a logical sequence of steps; orthodox prevailed.	Great Depression (stocks and credit bubbles in 1920s) and WWII – need to cope with industrial production for WWII and first expansion of government	Men went to war, leading to enormous increased in female workforce in the country. Change of perspective for women to share social responsibilities.
Social Science Heterodoxy	1947-1967	POSDCoRB considered insufficient, government was inefficient and ineffective; public administration expanded into various other emerging fields like social sciences, political sciences, psychology, cultural studies, business, and economics	Post WWII, beginning of the Cold War, the U.S. assumed the role of world's superpower, rapid increase in the size of government, Domino Theory followed by U.S. intervention in Korean and Vietnam War	Media and TV culture appeared; fear spread throughout novels, movies, television, radios – effect of mass media surfaced; key social values changed to become anti-traditional rationalism to one that is anti-hierarchical, skeptical, diversified and ironical and paradoxical – hence benefitting the rise of the heterodoxy.

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¹⁷ Excluding the dot-com bubble in 2000, six major bubbles (or over-investment) occurred in the history of the U.S. over the last 200 years. They are the telegraph bubbles in the 1840s and 1850s, the railroad bubbles in the 1880s and 1890s, and the stocks and credit bubble in the 1920s during the period of the Great Depression, for further details, refer to: http://money.cnn.com/2007/05/13/news/economy/bubbles_gross/

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Raymond Cheng
Reader, Industrial Doctorate (IndD) Programme,
Asia e University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Email: raymond.cheng@kellogg.oxon.org

Irene Macapagal
Senior Member, The Royal Institution, Singapore.
Email: irene@wyith.edu