



**COMMON  
SENSE  
REVISITED:  
AMERICA'S  
THIRD  
REVOLUTION**

by Maury Seldin LLC  
with John Lillibridge





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**Common Sense Revisited:  
America's Third Revolution**

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Charlotte, North Carolina

# COMMON SENSE REVISITED: AMERICA'S THIRD REVOLUTION



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# COMMON SENSE REVISITED: AMERICA'S THIRD REVOLUTION



## CHAPTER 1 BEYOND COMMON SENSE

### STAGE SETTING FOR THE DRAMA

#### *The Republican Tax Reform Leads to America's Third Revolution*

The internal threat to American Democracy is greater than any of the external threats. The decay in political structure and process triggered a rejection of *The Establishment* as represented by both of the two major political parties. The rejection of *The Establishment* was reflected in the 2016 election of a president representative of the decay that has occurred in the American culture, impinging upon the progress towards the ideals of political equality envisioned in the Declaration of Independence.

The Republican tax revision, accompanied by other changes in 2017 in the three branches of government, moves the American political structure towards a plutocracy. The outcomes of the provisions of the so-called tax reform will clearly move the wealth distribution curve to a greater concentration of wealth, handsomely rewarding the wealthy donors for their financial political support. It also will further increase the deficit, adding to the inability of the federal government to utilize substantial fiscal policy, in contrast to monetary policy, to stimulate growth after the next recession. This will be a déjà vu of the Great Recession that was preventable, but for wisdom-challenged decisions and greed.

**Common Sense Discarded.** Common sense was discarded by many in the 2016 election campaign for president and in the 2017 pursuit of tax reform when alternative facts, statements known to be false, were generated as a political maneuver in the quest for power and its continuation of use. Its spread was aided and abetted by people with shortfalls in critical thinking. In addition to sacrificing sound

practical judgment in what is believed to be true, those shortfalls to common sense undermine the rule of law and the institutional structure of a free society organized as a democracy.

This treatise is focused on going beyond common sense, using specialized knowledge, to better forecast outcomes. It was built upon an application of complexity economics and other nascent disciplines to better understand the malfunctioning of the operation of the complex adaptive system of mortgage finance that led to the Great Recession. As a result of that research, it became clear that the debacle was more of a societal issue of ethics and analytics that apparently were not used in attempts to avert and then to deal with the Great Recession.

**A Lesson from the Great Recession.** The impact of the Great Recession fell upon many people not directly involved in the processes that led to the Subprime Crisis and the Capital Market Freeze. That included Baby Boomers saving for retirement and retirees who found their retirement incomes cut by as much as one half or more because of unusually low interest rates. And of course, it included people who lost their jobs. Many Americans experienced a series of events that raised their levels of consciousness relevant to the impact of their environment on their well-being.

**Evolving Cultural Change.** To some extent, the cultural changes generated by the experiences from the occasion of events generating the Great Recession and its aftermath merged into other cultural changes that occurred during decades going back to the late twentieth century. The environmental changes put people's quality of life on the line to the point where for some people their civic engagement interests began rising to the fore.

That process emerged from time to time throughout American history. For Americans, it all started with what happened because King George III was not responsive to the grievances communicated by the colonists. The injustices generated a rebellion that with rising consciousness, fostered by Thomas Paine's pamphlet, led to the American Revolution.

The Republican tax reform enacted in late 2017, as it will be implemented on its way through the political economy in the coming years, will further raise the consciousness of a great many Americans.

That process will lead to an evolution of process and some sort of structural change in the American political economy. It is the nature of some of the changes that may emerge that is the subject of this treatise.

Although the Occupy Wall Street movement that began in 2011 may be considered an early signal of pressure for change, several books published in 2012 presented views of the divisiveness that plagued America. Here are the three leading quotes that I used (as an individual before the LLC) to open my 2013 essay titled *Divisiveness in America: The American Democracy on the Road to Dystopia*. (See Appendix 1A.)

“...America is coming apart at the seams — not seams of race or ethnicity, but of class.” [*Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*, Charles Murray, page 13.];<sup>i</sup>

“We are not skilled at balance anymore... ...we have lost our gift for reasoning together.” [*Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent*, E. J. Dionne Jr. page 5];<sup>ii</sup> and

“...the inequality is cause and consequence of the failure of the political system, and it contributes to the instability of our economic system, which in turn contributes to increased inequality...” [*The Price of Inequality: How Today’s Divided Society Endangers Our Future*, Joseph E. Stiglitz. page. xi.]<sup>iii</sup>.

The authors of those three books represent views from both sides of the aisle. My essay written seven years ago is provided as Appendix 1A - *Divisiveness in America: The American Democracy on the Road to Dystopia*.

The elections in 2016 and the events of 2017 sent a strong message about America’s dissatisfaction with the establishment and cultural conditions; especially noted is the special election of a Democratic senator from Alabama. Although there were many changes in 2017, the changes in tax legislation as well as the results of other events in all three branches of government will come into play. The focus of this treatise is on the evolutionary process associated with the

electorate becoming more conscious of what is happening to them and taking action. It is highly uncertain how that process will evolve and produce outcomes.

A Third American Revolution, or at least a substantial cultural evolution, is likely to emerge as more and more Americans, not among the wealthy, realize they have been had. The form of change is going to depend in some measure on how the dysfunctional Grand Old Party is going to resolve its internal differences and come forth with programs that hopefully will move toward the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. It will also depend on how the Democratic Party will restructure itself to be more responsive to the divergent interests of its historical constituency when they regain the leadership in the executive and legislative branches of the federal government.

**As Will Be Discussed.** As will be discussed, the first American Revolution was a rejection of tyranny. Its pursuit of justice formed a confederation of sovereign states in order to strengthen their power in the war for independence. The Second American Revolution converted a confederation into a federation as an organizational matter. It would not have been feasible to form a federation as the sovereign state in waging a war for independence.

The Third American Revolution might be a cultural evolution, restoring American Democracy to its form as a pluralistic society rather than a tribal society with a winner-take-all perspective, such as was illustrated in the case of Egypt, and seemingly so far as a result of the 2016 elections. Among the alternative outcomes is a socialistic state representing a swing of the pendulum from the power of the wealthy to the power of the masses. That may be feared by some because it could simply soak the rich, and by others because it would stifle incentives.

Also to be discussed is the extreme to which gerrymandering has gone in overriding democracy's basic proposition of majority rule (but with protection of the rights of minorities), and supplanting it with the winner-take-all approach. That will be in the context of signals and boundaries resulting from court action in cases in three states at the time of this writing.

Conservatives and liberals can govern together to get the best of both ideologies. Extremism in either or both can destroy democracy. A

balance can be achieved by a better understanding of the reality of process and structure for a democratic society with the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. However, it goes beyond knowledge. It goes to morality, which has apparently been eroded in many respects in recent times. But it is the environment of pluralism that facilitates compromise essential for a democratic government.

### *Understanding Reality in a Rapidly Changing Environment*

Understanding the process and structure of American Democracy as a complex adaptive system is far more difficult than understanding Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*. For Thomas Paine in January 1776, when the pamphlet was first published, the largely agrarian economy was small in scale, as were the local political structures within the thirteen colonies that became sovereign states. Thomas Paine was able, with his intelligible narratives, using examples from everyday life and building on moral principles emerging in the Enlightenment, to foster a rise in the level of consciousness of colonists, particularly regarding the rights of man. The call was to gain independence from the tyranny of King George III. It was a matter of justice. This treatise is about the pursuit of justice in a rapidly changing environment.

In Alabama's special election in 2017, voters elected a Democrat to the Senate. But for the morality issue of the Republican candidate, that seat would have remained Republican. Although Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer cited the precedent of delaying a critical vote until the newly elected senator was seated (the precedent was the 2010 election of Scott Brown, a Republican from Massachusetts), the Majority of Leader of the Senate, Mitch McConnell, would not follow that precedent. This was in the wake of Senator McConnell's decision to not even have the Senate consider President Barack Obama's nomination (on March 16, 2016) of Merrick Garland on for appointment to the Supreme Court, waiting ten months with a hope for change in administration. The culture has changed to tribal polemics leading to injustices that emerge from the lust for power at the expense of morality, with shortfalls in understandings of the essential nature of the system capable of producing progress towards the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. To some



extent, it is analogous to the level of knowledge of those chained in Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*.

The Plato *Cave* analogy is apt in the sense that understanding reality through delving deeper in pursuit of knowledge is in order, so as to understand that going beyond common sense is what this book is about. The opening paragraph of the second chapter of the second book of this series of books to which the reader is invited, is as follows:

Contemporary American counterparts to inhabitants of Plato's allegorical cave, seeing shadows on the wall and mistaking them for reality, would be well advised to consider some literature that is more enlightening than the shadows on the wall. The list is long, and so are many of the books. However, the discussion will focus on the salient aspects of the books that are relevant to the line of reasoning being developed in this chapter that is serving as a prolegomenon to a treatise and associated literature.

The endnote briefly discussing Plato's allegorical cave has been deleted from the quoted paragraph. However, the entire chapter is provided in the second book of this trilogy titled *American Democracy Endangered*. That book is titled *Perspectives for a Sense of Place: Voter Empowerment*.

The culture is changing, and the question is the nature of adjustment. The evolutionary process can be gradual. But it can also have major disruptions. This treatise explores some options as to what may unfold using a framework that includes blending nascent disciplines of the twenty-first century with mainstream disciplines which we became familiar with in the twentieth century.

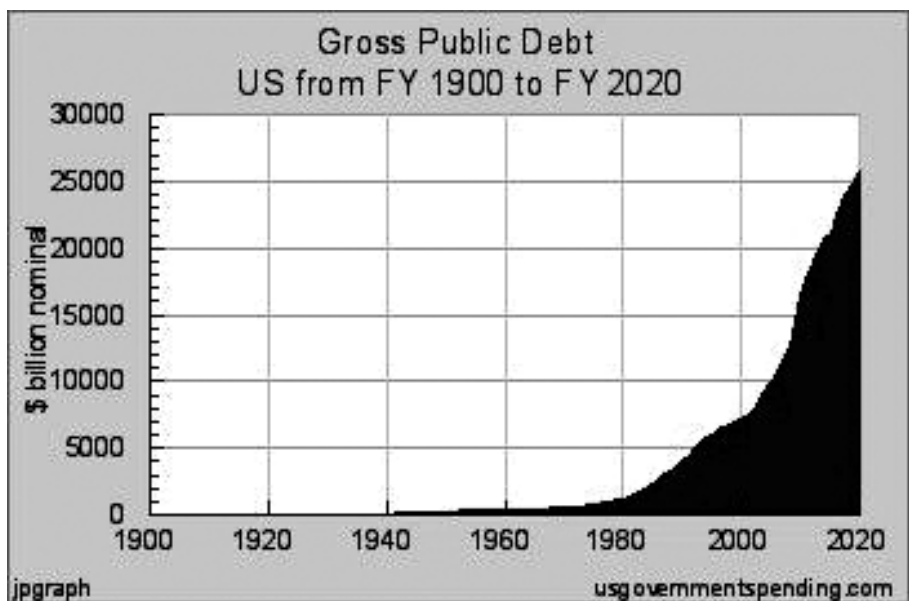
### *Some Risks Associated With the New Tax Law*

The greatest risk associated with the new tax law is the linearity of the analyses. That is to say, most decision-makers are still stuck in the twentieth-century mind set of cause and effect models; that is in contrast to understanding that the political economy as a complex adaptive system in which outcomes are heavily dependent upon how adaptation takes place to changing environments, and how contingencies

that may arise could result in dramatic shifts in outcomes. The risks discussed in this introductory section are presented as an illustration that what has been going on in America is a result of seriously wisdom-challenged decisions, accompanied by erosion of morality.

**Further Crippling Fiscal Policy.** The increases in federal debt over the next ten years by something well over one trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000,000) will further impede the ability to use fiscal policy to stimulate a recovery from the next recession. As a bit of background, consider the trend of the last half-century relationship with national debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For the first third of the half-century (1968-1984) national debt was about one third of GDP. Over the next six years (1985-1990) national debt ran to about one half of GDP. Then from 1991 through 2007 (the next third of the half-century) the national debt ran between one half and two thirds of GDP. Then with recovery from the Great Recession the national debt crept up to and then exceeded the GDP.<sup>iv</sup>

Here is a chart of gross public debt in billions of dollars as background for a starting point to stimulate a recovery from the next recession.

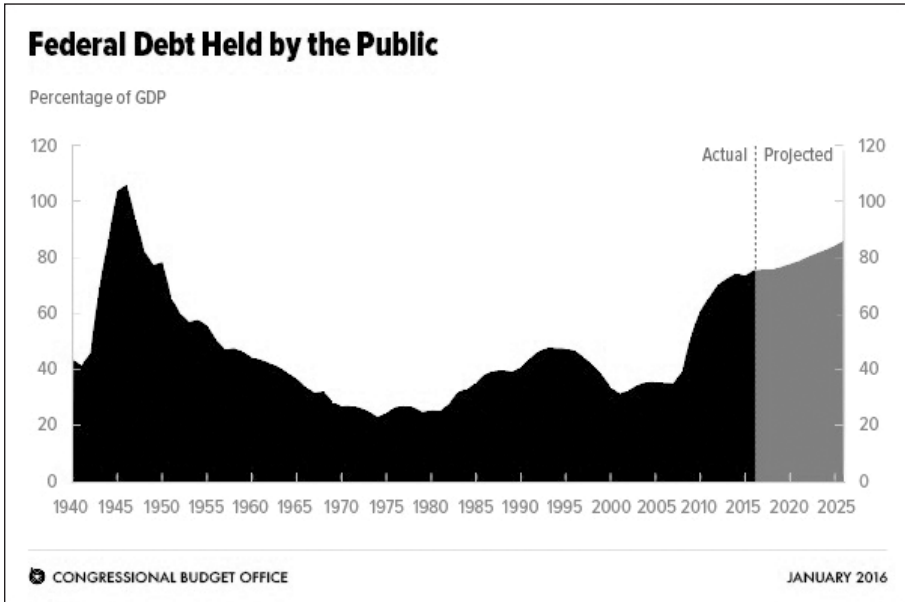


The United States is now over \$20 trillion in debt, largely because of tax cuts, wars, and spending to recover from recession. Over

the last half-century, the major start was with the Reagan tax bill in 1981. Two decades later, President George W. Bush and the 107th Congress provided the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA, pronounced “egg-terra”). Although many of the tax reductions were designed to be phased in over up to nine years, two years later many of the planned phase-ins were accelerated by the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003. The gross public debt chart just shown indicates the growth of US public debt, combining the impact of tax relief with the expenditures for the Afghan and Iraqi wars and then the sharper rise encompassing the beginning of the Great Recession and the fiscal impact of dealing with it.

The burden of the federal debt relative to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose greatly during World War II and declined substantially by the end of the third quarter of the twentieth century. Then during the Reagan era there were two major tax cuts; the economic recovery act of 1981 and the tax Reform Act of 1986.

The burden of the federal debt increased during the 1980s while Reagan was present and continued almost to the end of the century. It was low during the period of prosperity, up until the financial crisis morphed into the Great Recession.



The Great Recession was so great that the fiscal spending was not enough to prod recovery without the use of devastating monetary policy. Recovery from that recession using monetary policy has thrown the stock market and bond market out of balance. At the time this chapter was drafted, a structural adjustment had not started. However, my expectation is that there is a reasonable chance of a structural adjustment by the time this book reaches publication or by the time you are reading it.

There are numerous potential causes for the next recession. A stock market break is one. Dealing with uncontrollable inflation is another. The third is a backlash from America-first trade policy. Some tax cuts could well have been in order; but, the scale of the tax cut to transnational corporations is inviting retaliation that would dampen the desired impact. It appears that the motivation of benefiting financial supporters for the campaign may well have overruled adequate consideration of what was best for the country.

**Disrupting Home Ownership.** The new tax law may result in a disruption of home ownership and another jolt to home mortgage financing. As a good clue to an expected jolt to the home mortgage finance industry, consider that in December 2017 the U.S. Treasury agreed to let Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac each retain \$3 billion from their earnings to serve as a capital cushion. Each is exposed to loss from mortgages with high loan-to-value ratios. So why would one expect home values to decline?

The increase in the standard deduction and limitations on deductions for state and local taxes make homeownership less attractive from a financial perspective, especially after price rises resulting in reduced housing production since the onslaught of the Great Recession. That loss in attractiveness may reasonably be expected to adversely impact homeownership rates (the percentage of households that choose to own rather than rent). It may also affect second home ownership, and even convert some second homes from owner use to rentals. The net effect of all of this is likely to be a reduction in the demand for homeownership relative to supply once the current rising construction activity subsides, and a softening of prices that will impair the security of mortgage lenders with loans of high loan-to-value ratios.

Throw in a substantial stock market correction, and the wealth loss will further aggravate the decline in home values during the next economic adjustment. Consider that in the post-World-War-II era, homeownership turned out to be a great protection from inflation, and a source of wealth to fund retirement. The expiration of the reduction in tax rates for households will also erode the well-being of the middle class. It's a question of time as to when middle income families realize that they have been had by the so-called tax reform.

The sweet taste of the thousand-dollar bonuses being used by some companies as a sharing of their windfall tax reduction is a nice gesture; but it didn't work to influence the 2018 midterm elections. The Republicans lost big-time in House seats. Also, the slightly increased paychecks that started in February 2018 significantly reduced tax refunds paid out in 2019.

Discretionary household income for many people may be reduced by rising healthcare costs in the near term and later by the automatic expiration of the reduced tax rates. This is aside from any jolt to the economy from a recession which may be reasonably expected because public policy has not come to grips with an understanding of what it takes to deal with the rapidly changing global environment.

**The Repeal of Mandatory Health Insurance Coverage.** The repeal of the Affordable Care Act's penalty for not having health insurance coverage is going to raise rates for those who continue to buy health insurance. America's health insurance system is already dysfunctional, considering the costs. Furthermore, the various systems by which medical services are provided have changed; in many cases from physicians being in a professional practice with the primary focus on patients' interests to a culture of physicians and staff being employees of large-scale business enterprises driven by the profit motive.

It is reasonable to expect more vertical integration as healthcare organizations increase scale in order to capture share of market. However, I don't expect a change from automated responses when calling physicians who are part of large-scale corporate medical service providers. Common practice is to be informed by the automated system that if it is a real emergency, hang up and call 911.

Although not part of the new tax law, the administration's regulation and enforcement as relates to the opioid crisis is devastating to social

and economic welfare as well as health. The prescription drugs may be obtained illegally because of lax regulation and enforcement in the regulated distribution system. See the coverage on “60 Minutes,” *Washington Post* investigate DEA’s biggest opioid case... (<https://tinyurl.com/yk7a3>).<sup>v</sup> Also see “McKesson Responds to Recent 60 Minutes Story” | *Business Wire* (<https://tinyurl.com/yy9enjoy>) in which the main point is “a categorical denial of any criminal behavior or intent.” It would be interesting to compare the analytics used by McKesson for the broad range of stakeholders in opioid abuse issues with the analytics used for the stakeholders in the bottom line of profits derived from corporate policy. The corporations making exceptional profits, in part because of the high volume of illegal sales after legal sales to pharmacies in volumes that are well out of proportion to their markets, will now benefit by lowered tax rates. It’s hard to see how those profits will generate jobs, although off-the-books employment of criminals involved in the illegal distribution of opioids does create jobs.

## BEYOND COMMON SENSE IS THE UNCOMMON SENSE OF A COMPLEXITY PERSPECTIVE

“The most difficult subjects can be explained to the most slow witted man if he has not formed any idea of them already; but the simplest thing cannot be made clear to the most intelligent man if he is firmly persuaded that he knows already, without a shadow of doubt, what is laid before him.”

— Leo Tolstoy, 1897 [Repeated from the preface]

### *An Introduction to the Lens of Complexity*

The uncommon sense of the lens most appropriately used for complex adaptive systems is available through the understanding of a blending of nascent disciplines involved in the paradigm shift from the mainstream analytics of the twentieth century focused on linearity to an interdisciplinary perspective of the twenty-first century. It blends nascent disciplines with mainstream disciplines in order to more effectively understand the evolution of nonlinear systems. There are three books of particular interest as background for understanding the lens of complexity being used in this treatise.

The first book is *Making Things Work: Solving Complex Problems in a Complex World* (2004), by Yaneer Bar-Yam who also authored *Dynamics of Complex Systems*.<sup>vi</sup> Its first part devotes seven chapters to concepts, including a chapter on evolution. The second part focuses on solving problems. Education is among the seven topics.

The second book is *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, And Software* (2001).<sup>vii</sup> It is authored by Stephen Johnson, a culture historian. He explains how self-organization produces emergent properties in the four arenas noted in the subtitle.

The third book is *The Origin of Wealth: The Radical Remaking of Economics and What It Means for Business and Society* (2006), by Eric D. Beinhocker.<sup>viii</sup> He starts discussing the paradigm shift, and moves on to a discussion of complexity economics. On page 97 he has a table that distinguishes complexity economics from traditional economics.

The following is an adaptation from that table for the penultimate copy of an article published in 2011 authored by David Wyman, Maury Seldin, and Elaine Worzala, titled “A New Paradigm for Real Estate Valuation.”<sup>xi</sup>

Exhibit 1: The Five Distinguishing Ideas of Complexity Economics

	Traditional Economics	Complexity Economics
<b>Dynamics</b>	Static, linear, profit-maximizing equilibrium	Open, dynamic, non-linear, far from equilibrium
<b>Agents</b>	Modeled collectively — perfect information, no errors or biases, no learning or adaptation	Modeled individually — agents subject to errors and biases; they adapt and learn over time
<b>Networks</b>	Agents act indirectly through the market	Model interaction of agent; networks of relationships change over time
<b>Emergence</b>	Micro- and macroeconomics remain separate disciplines	No distinction between micro- and macroeconomics; macro patterns are emergent result of micro-level behaviors and interactions
<b>Evolution</b>	No mechanism for endogenously creating novelty, or growth in order and complexity	Evolutionary process of differentiation, selection, and amplification provides system with novelty and is responsible for its growth in order and complexity

Adapted from Beinhocker (2006, page 97)

A subsequent adaptation of the Beinhocker table and inputs from the work of Jay Forrester, the founder of system dynamics, appears in a follow-up article titled “Hidden complexity in housing markets: a case for alternative models and techniques,” co-authored by David Wyman, Elaine Worzala, and Maury Seldin, published in 2013 by the *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis*.<sup>x</sup> Both articles emerged from a study of the subprime crisis and the capital market freeze. (The study started in Fall 2007 (<https://tinyurl.com/y3rdljze>). Some background is provided in a Supplement — “Don’t Panic Yet...” (<https://tinyurl.com/y4wsf7vs>) to the newsletter that is linked as Fall 2007 (<https://tinyurl.com/y4wsf7vs>).) Here is a copy of the table as it appears in the 2013 article.

Table 1: Modeling Implications of Complexity Economics

	Meaning	Implications
<b>Agents</b>	Learning, adaptable and non-rational	Simulate alternative behavioral strategies by agent-based modeling
<b>Higher Order</b>	Multiplicity of equations describe the layers of networks and interactions	Open to disaggregation of data and granularity in analysis
<b>Emergence</b>	Micro-level behaviors lead to properties in macro patterns not in micro level	Model variety of emergent macro patterns
<b>Non-Linearity</b>	Lack of a consistent proportionality in relationships	Model all inputs – even small inputs can lead to discontinuities
<b>Feedback Loops</b>	Past signals influence future signals in time and space	Can amplify or dampen non-linearity effects in time and space
<b>Time Sensivity</b>	Short-term inputs can have adverse, non-predictive long-term impacts	Presumed corrective actions can be counter-intuitive over time and space
<b>Policy Insensitivity</b>	Insensitive to parameter changes as non-linear effects dominate system	Need to alter incentives and structure of the system
<b>Summary</b>	Open, dynamic, non-linear system	Markets can operate far from equilibrium and there are many layers/agents to consider

Source: Adapted from Beinhocker (2006), Forrester (1969) [Jay Wright Forrester, the founder of system dynamics]



What became clear to me was that the Great Recession was not only unnecessary, but that it was not just a real estate finance issue; it was a societal issue best understood through the lens of complexity science, especially complexity economics.

The focus on real estate finance and complexity economics is noted in an additional newsletter supplement linked as Fall 2011 (<https://tinyurl.com/y62gm84n>) — “*Homer Hoyt Institute Research Initiative...*”, especially in the endnotes. The background includes the work of Maury Seldin and others associated with the Homer Hoyt Institute. The HHI funded the project, along with industry support, including the Mortgage Bankers Association, National Association of Realtors, and Freddie Mac. It pioneered a research effort that began as noted in the previous link in Fall 2007 (<https://tinyurl.com/y3rdlzjc>). The opening program was A Research Roundtable co-sponsored by the Homer Hoyt Institute (HHI), the University of Pennsylvania Urban Research Institute, the Hudson Institute, and the Institute for Public Policy at George Washington University. It is discussed in the Fall 2007 newsletter (<https://tinyurl.com/y3rdlzjc>) and its Fall 2007 — “*Don’t Panic Yet...*” (<https://tinyurl.com/y4wsf7vs>).

### *A Historical Perception Using the Lens of Complexity*

American Democracy is not adapting well to the environmental changes being faced in the twenty-first century. The role of the state as representing the interests of the electorate has been significantly eroded by the rising power of its transnational and domestic business enterprises. Its rule of law has been compromised by the process of lawmaking and administration influence by many of those business enterprises and the people who have amassed great concentrations of wealth and utilize it for their personal interests at the expense of the other ninety-nine percent of the population. They have set the stage for the destruction of the democratic institutions that enabled them to reach their place in the concentration of the power. The manipulation of the rules in their favor is an amoral approach to the use of their power and breeds a disruption of the system, unless a more gentle transition occurs.

A disruption may evolve from the rising distrust of the institutional arrangements that has evolved under the stewardship of the political leadership with the collaboration of the business interests. The polarization in the political economy has rendered the controlling political party ineffective in its governance responsibilities. Its agenda of tax reform is really designed to increase the wealth of the wealthy at the expense of increasing public debt, and it would diminish services to the public. Its healthcare program would not help the populists who helped them get elected. Its easing of environmental and other regulations will harm the general public not only in health issues, but also in other aspects of quality of life.

The potential of a disruption beyond its early signs could be reduced through a cultural transition built upon a better understanding of the realities of the functioning of free markets, especially the understanding of the *invisible hand*. The nascent movements could through organizational efforts facilitate change in the power structure through restructuring of one or both of the major political parties. The rise of a moderate or centrist third party is not out of the question. The alternative of disruption may well have started with the Occupy Wall Street movement. But the protest of 2016 of some of the NFL players through kneeling while the national anthem is being played and sung may be viewed as a sign of disruption.

The potential of a disruption could also be mitigated by a better understanding of what it takes for a complex system such as American Democracy to successfully evolve in a rapidly changing environment. Given the complexity of the organic nature of a democratic system, and the space limitations of trying to make the core of this book comparable in size to the Thomas Paine pamphlet, *Common Sense*, this narrative has focused on providing a better understanding of Adam Smith's use of the concept of the *invisible hand*.

Substantial appendices have been included in this book, as well as in the other two books of the trilogy, so that leadership, as well as individuals in the electorate, can delve deeper in order to get a better understanding of reality. The point is that although what people don't know may get them in trouble, the really big source of problems is that what people think they know may not be so.

So the stage has now been set to learn more about the drama that has been unfolding, and will continue to unfold. However, the reader will now have a better opportunity to make an impact on what is unfolding. The narrative continues with a second chapter that discusses a paradigm using the lens of complexity in order to better understand the process of interactions impacting structure, and evolutionary outcomes from a continuation of the process. It does so by viewing some of the early history of the United States through the lens of complexity. Furthermore, it explains some key concepts helpful for understanding the evolution of American Democracy. In short, it provides the paradigm useful for understanding the process and structure of American Democracy as a complex adaptive system.

The third chapter, A Historical Perspective, continues the explanation focused starting in the twentieth century and moving on to the twenty-first century. It sets the stage for the fourth chapter that focuses on options Americans have for harnessing the complexity of the system in order to improve outcomes.

This book has been structured so that the four chapters could be extracted and abridged so as to serve as copy for a pamphlet comparable in size to the Thomas Paine pamphlet that inspired its theme.

A limited run of the paperback version of the pamphlet is planned for distribution as a promotional free good titled *Beyond Common Sense*. It will clearly note that it is an abridged version of the main narrative of the book, *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution* authored by the Maury Seldin LLC. The authorship of the pamphlet will also be identified as the Maury Seldin LLC; however, depending upon participations in the abridgment, notations will be made as to the names of contributors to the abridgment.

Although the book will be copyrighted with the author noted as *Maury Seldin LLC*, limited licenses for reproduction as a paperback and electronic form will be provided to individuals in constituencies desiring to use the literature for educational

purposes. A liberal view will be taken of usages that relate to platform development and policy advocacy designed to restore American Democracy back to the path of pursuing the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. The *liberal* view refers to the definition of education, not the side of the aisle of the platform. Indeed, both sides of the aisle are encouraged to utilize the pamphlet to raise the level of consciousness for the need to restore the *pluralism* in American Democracy as opposed to tribalism.

The publisher of the pamphlet will be identified as the *Emily E Press*. The Emily E Press is the publication part of the Motivated Learner Enterprise (MLE) division of the Maury Seldin LLC. That MLE division also contains the research and publication component. The publication component is the Motivated Learner Enterprise Education Press colloquially identified as Emily (MLE) E (educational) Press. The author of the pamphlet, and indeed all of the three books, for copyright and all other legal purposes is the Maury Seldin LLC.

The MLE, pronounced Emily, publishes under the imprint of Emily E Press; and it is amenable to being identified as an affiliate of traditional publishers or other publishing services companies who under contract provide marketing and fulfillment services for the books of the trilogy.

Recently developed is a pamphlet designed to serve as an overview of the trilogy. Additionally, in order to facilitate the distribution of information prior to all three books being published, a website is under construction. It will also be used for linking concepts as part of the innovative approach to education.

## Declaration Era Educational Press (DEEP)

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The Declaration Era Educational Press (DEEP), an affiliate of Emily E Press, is the website for the Motivated Learner Enterprise (MLE) division containing the research and publication components of the Maury Seldin LLC. The website publishes e-book versions of the trilogy of books collectively titled, *American Democracy Endangered*. An overview of the trilogy is summarized in a single essay, *Restructuring American Democracy*. It is hyperlinked as just indicated. Furthermore, it serves as the centerpiece for this website. It is available as a download for free, although all rights are reserved... that essay may be treated as copyleft ... by accredited institutions of higher learning by obtaining permission from the publisher, resulting in their freedom to modify content for educational purposes... The idea is that courses may be modified to enable motivated learners to probe deeper by following links among concepts so that a better understanding of ideas can lead to better choices and outcomes.

This website is intended to provide the platform for an ongoing development of an educational innovation facilitating the motivated learner to delve deeper for a better understanding of reality and improving choices that have a better opportunity for leading to desired outcomes. The demonstration case for this educational innovation is dealing with what is arguably the most critical issue for the survival of American Democracy, its current endangerment from its cancerous injustices resulting from regressions from the two centuries of progress made in pursuit of the ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence. That regression may be described as a plutocracy on the road to an autocracy.

The e-book versions of each of the three books will become accessible on this website, and will be linked to one another. Purchase of any one of the three books in the e-book form will provide access to selective content of the other two books as they

are added to the website. As an interim measure, components may be linked to content not yet published.

In order to supplement the overview of the essay titled *Restructuring American Democracy*, an overview of the content of the individual books is provided by excerpts from the front matter of each of the three books. The links to the excerpts from the front matter are, in part, identified as excerpts from: (1) *Common Sense Revisited: America's Third Revolution*; (2) *Perspectives for a Sense of Place: Voter Empowerment*; and (3) *American Democracy: The Declaration, Pursuit, and Endangerment*. Under consideration is the inclusion of the first chapter along with the front matter for those wish to consider the purchase of the particular book in the trilogy. These e-book versions purchased through the website will over time have links added. Purchase includes the update at no additional charge.

...When this website transitions from limited access to public access, this homepage will be revised. One or more additional links may be added during the time period for review and comment.

[The full draft of the initial RFP may be available upon request by email to the [MaurySeldinLLC@gmail.com](mailto:MaurySeldinLLC@gmail.com).]

## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> Charles Murray, *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010* (place of publication: Random House, 2012) 13.

<sup>ii</sup> E. J. Dione, Jr., *Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013) 5.

<sup>iii</sup> Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future* (London: Lane, 2012) xi.

<sup>iv</sup> For annual change in Gross National Debt see Kimberly Amadeo (<https://tinyurl.com/y4g9zqok>) data Updated November 28, 2018

### National Debt by Year Compared to GDP and Major [events]

1965	\$317	43%	LBJ's ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yx98qovj">https://tinyurl.com/yx98qovj</a> ) budgets. War on Poverty. Vietnam War. Fed raises rates.
1966	\$320	40%	
1967	\$326	38%	
1968	\$348	37%	
1969	\$354	35%	
1970	\$371	35%	Recession. Wage-price controls. OPEC ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/zqwbykv">https://tinyurl.com/zqwbykv</a> ) oil embargo ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yd9r5t3y">https://tinyurl.com/yd9r5t3y</a> ). Nixon ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yxbklqgn">https://tinyurl.com/yxbklqgn</a> ) ended gold standard. Fed coubled interest rates. Vietnam War ended.
1971	\$398	34%	
1972	\$427	34%	
1973	\$458	32%	
1974	\$475	31%	Stagflation ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y8ze3ndx">https://tinyurl.com/y8ze3ndx</a> ). Watergate. Ford budgets.
1975	\$533	32%	
1976*	\$620	33%	
1977	\$699	33%	
1978	\$722	32%	Carter budgets.

1979	\$827	31%	
1980	\$908	32%	Volcker ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y3rpx-dju">https://tinyurl.com/y3rpx-dju</a> ) raised rate to 20% Iran oil embargo. Recession.
1981	\$998	31%	
1982	\$1,142	34%	Reagan ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y85x-79aw">https://tinyurl.com/y85x-79aw</a> ) budgets from 1st term. Recession.
1983	\$1,377	37%	
1984	\$1,572	38%	
1985	\$1,823	42%	
1986	\$2,125	46%	Reagan lowered taxes. S&L Crisis ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/z34m7kt">https://tinyurl.com/z34m7kt</a> ).
1987	\$2,340	48%	
1988	\$2,602	49%	
1989	\$2,857	50%	
1990	\$3,233	54%	Bush 41 budgets. Desert Storm. Recession. Debt growth slowed.
1991	\$3,665	59%	
1992	\$4,065	62%	
1993	\$4,411	64%	
1994	\$4,693	64%	Clinton budgets ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/m42oquj">https://tinyurl.com/m42oquj</a> ).
1995	\$4,974	65%	
1996	\$5,225	64%	Budget Act ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yxr4r8jx">https://tinyurl.com/yxr4r8jx</a> ) reduced deficit spending <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y4l49xvg">https://tinyurl.com/y4l49xvg</a> ).
1997	\$5,413	62%	
1998	\$5,526	58%	Last Clinton budgets.
1999	\$5,656	58%	



2000	\$5,674	55%	
2001	\$5,807	55%	9/11 attacks ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yd9fagkg">https://tinyurl.com/yd9fagkg</a> ). Recession. Bush added \$22.9 billion to FY01 budget for War on Terror ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/h5fexf5">https://tinyurl.com/h5fexf5</a> ).
2002	\$6,228	57%	First George W. Bush budgets. War on Terror cost \$409.2 billion. Bank bailout ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/jdyztxn">https://tinyurl.com/jdyztxn</a> ) cost \$350 billion. Bush tax cuts ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y7oelzsf">https://tinyurl.com/y7oelzsf</a> ).
2003	\$6,783	59%	
2004	\$7,379	60%	
2005	\$7,933	60%	
2006 <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y39n8svf">https://tinyurl.com/y39n8svf</a>	\$8,507	61%	War cost \$752.2 billion. Katrina ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/h5dgzoa">https://tinyurl.com/h5dgzoa</a> ) cost \$24.7 billion. ARRA added \$241.9 billion to FY09 budget.
2007 <a href="https://tinyurl.com/4on9zv8">https://tinyurl.com/4on9zv8</a>	\$9,008	62%	
2008 <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y27hlswa">https://tinyurl.com/y27hlswa</a>	\$10,025	68%	
2009 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y2tvox9m">https://tinyurl.com/y2tvox9m</a> )	\$11,910 (\$11,000 on March 16 and \$12,000 on November 16)	83%	

2010 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/42x9xfn">https://tinyurl.com/42x9xfn</a> )	\$13,562 (\$13,000 on June 1 and \$14,000 on December 31)	90%	Obama Stimulus Act ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/jule7xw">https://tinyurl.com/jule7xw</a> ) cost \$400 billion. Payroll tax holiday ended. War cost \$512.6 billion. Great Recession ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y4hl8x7o">https://tinyurl.com/y4hl8x7o</a> ) and tax cuts ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y5hy425j">https://tinyurl.com/y5hy425j</a> ) reduced revenue
2011 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yxgae265">https://tinyurl.com/yxgae265</a> )	\$14,790 (\$15,000 on November 15)	95%	
2012 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y2uh7tje">https://tinyurl.com/y2uh7tje</a> )	\$16,066 (\$16,000 on August 31)	99%	
2013 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yyztrw55">https://tinyurl.com/yyztrw55</a> )	\$16,738 (\$17,000 on October 17)	99%	
2014 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y4st-96bu">https://tinyurl.com/y4st-96bu</a> )	\$17,824 (\$18,000 on December 15)	101%	War cost \$309 billion. QE ended. Strong dollar hurt exports.
2015 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yymb335g">https://tinyurl.com/yymb335g</a> )	\$18,151	99%	
2016 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y49kz2s4">https://tinyurl.com/y49kz2s4</a> )	\$19,573 (\$19,000 on January 29)	104%	
2017 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y3jhh3zc">https://tinyurl.com/y3jhh3zc</a> )	\$20,245 (\$20,000 on September 8)	103%	Congress raised debt ceiling.

2018 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/ya6g8rvy">https://tinyurl.com/ya6g8rvy</a> )	\$21,660 \$21,000 on (March 15)	104%	Trump tax cuts ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yao4l3hx">https://tinyurl.com/yao4l3hx</a> ) and spending above sequestration. Congress suspended the debt ceiling until 2019.
2019 ( <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yd9nudye">https://tinyurl.com/yd9nudye</a> )	\$22,703 (est.)	108%	
2020	\$23,901 (est.)	108%	
2021	\$25,020 (est.)	108%	

Source: US Economy National Debt (<https://tinyurl.com/y656vp75>) **National Debt by Year Compared to GDP and Major Events**

**U.S. Debt by Year Since 1929** By Kimberly Amadeo Updated November 28, 2018

The U.S. national debt (<https://tinyurl.com/zvbbgwg>) is more than \$21 trillion.

It (<https://tinyurl.com/y4g9zqok>) exceeded that amount on March 15, 2018.

It's greater than the economic output of the entire country. It occurred despite

Congressional (<https://tinyurl.com/y3jv6dhs>) attempts to cut government spending.

These included threats to not raise the debt ceiling (<https://tinyurl.com/ychlbl8l>) and

the U.S. debt crisis (<https://tinyurl.com/y5gvbt5k>) in 2011. That's when the U.S.

headed toward a debt default (<https://tinyurl.com/yxmsv2bn>). It continued with the

fiscal cliff (<https://tinyurl.com/y5t6ea6f>) crisis in 2012 and a government shutdown

(<https://tinyurl.com/y72aeu44>) in 2013.

<sup>v</sup> Bill Whitaker and Lenny Bernstein, "60 Minutes" *Washington Post Investigate DEA's biggest Opioid Case* YouTube, December 15, 2017, video, 5:54, <https://tinyurl.com/yykau7a3>.

<sup>vi</sup> Yaneer Bar-Yam, *Making Things Work: Solving Complex Problems in a Complex World* (Cambridge Press: Knowledge Press, 2004).

<sup>vii</sup> Steven Johnson, *Emergence: the Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software* (New York: Scribner, 2001).

<sup>viii</sup> Eric D Beinhocker, *The Origin of Wealth: the Radical Remaking of Economics and What It Means for Business and Society* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2006).

<sup>ix</sup> David Wyman, Maury Seldin and Elaine Worzala, "A New Paradigm for Real Estate Valuation," *Journal of Property Investment and Finance* 29 no. 4/5 (2011).

<sup>x</sup> David Wyman, Maury Seldin and Elaine Worzala, "Hidden Complexity in Housing Markets: a Case for Alternative Models and Techniques," *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis* 6 no. 4 (2013).