

Discussion of Chen, Michaux and Roussanov  
(2014)  
Houses as ATMs?  
Mortgage Refinancing and Macroeconomic  
Uncertainty

Paul Willen, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

Macro Finance Society, May 31, 2014

The statements and opinions in these notes are those of the authors and are neither the official positions of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta or Boston nor of the Federal Reserve System.

# Disclaimer

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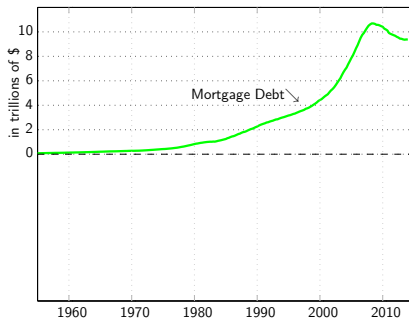
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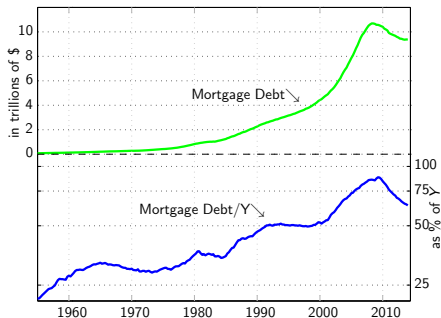


# Where did the money go?



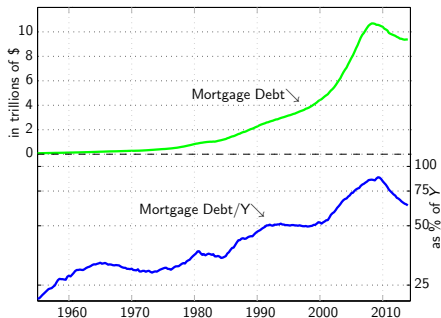
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- Mortgage debt went from about half of national income
- To 90 percent
- Where did that money go?

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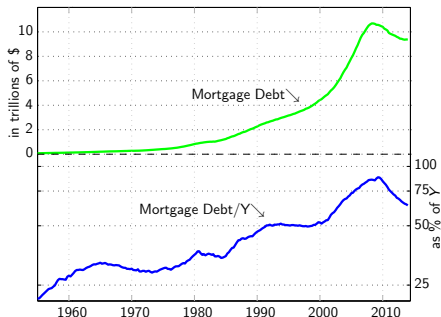
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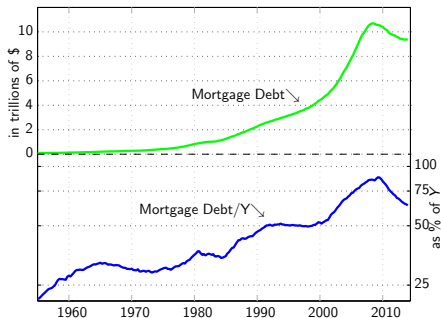
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# Where did the money go?



- Cash flowed to three places
  - 1 To pay builders of new homes
  - 2 To pay sellers of existing homes
  - 3 Onto the balance sheets of the borrower

# Theory 1 of Consumer Credit: Hedonism

- Households went on a “debt fueled consumption binge.”
  - New Clothes, Dinners out
  - Luxury Sport Utility Vehicles
- Old/new PIMCO Chief Economist Paul McCulley

- “There is room for the Fed to create a bubble in housing prices, if necessary, to sustain American hedonism.” (2001)

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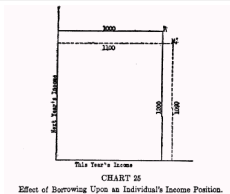
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## Theory 2: Consumption Smoothing



- Irving Fisher (1930) invented indifference curves
- Different combinations of present and future consumption
- Consumption frontier
- Borrowing moves you down and to the right

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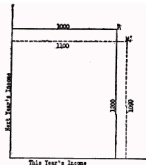


CHART 25  
Effect of Borrowing Upon an Individual's Income Position.

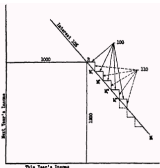


CHART 26  
Successive Changes in an Individual's Income Position Produced by Successive Borrowings at the Market Rate of Interest.

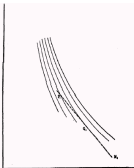


CHART 24  
The Final Income Position (Q) of Individual i Fixed by Frequency of the W, Loan to the W, Loan to Q.

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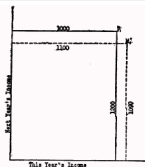


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- Gross borrowing (what we saw in 2000s)
- Reflects people with low current income
- Increasing consumption today at the expense of future consumption

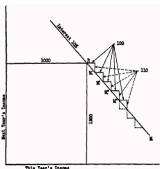


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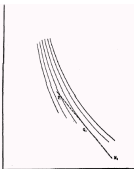


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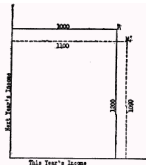


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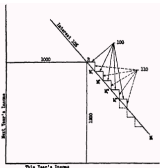


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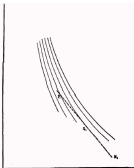


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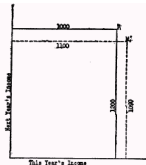


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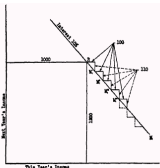


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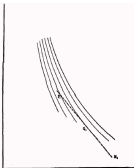


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The Final Income Position (Q) of Individual *i* Fixed by the Loss of the \$1,000 Loan at Q.

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# Where does CMR fit in?

- CMR take Fisher's model and add
  - Risky labor income
  - Collateral constraints
  - An infinite number of periods
  - Long-term fixed rate loans
  - Refinancing
  - Default
- And that makes it impossible to solve graphically ;-)
- But this intuition is the same as Fisher (1930)
- What do they find?

*We show that a rational model of home equity-based borrowing by liquidity constrained households can quantitatively account for the empirical patterns in household leverage and consumption over the last decade.*  
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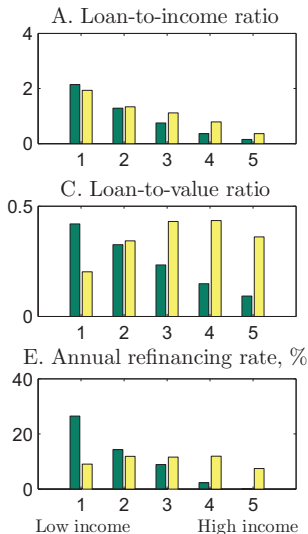
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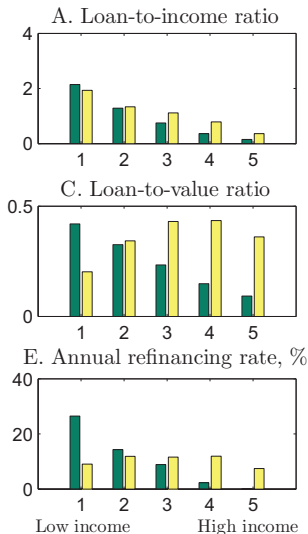
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# Debt and Income



- Borrowers suffering from transitory income shocks.
- An implication of standard PIH – transitory negative shock leads to positive borrowing.
- Generates a negative correlation between debt growth and income growth (see Mian and Sufi (2009))

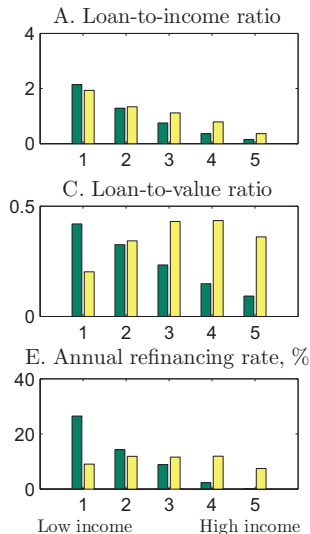
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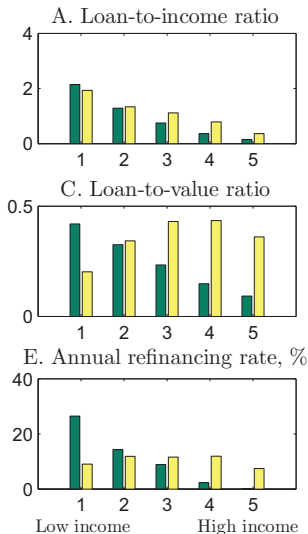


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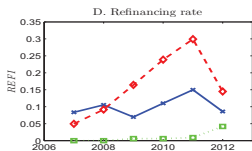
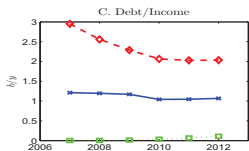
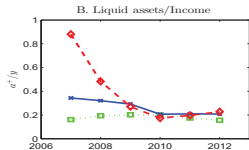
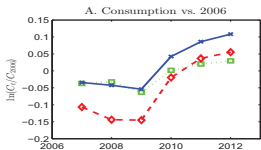
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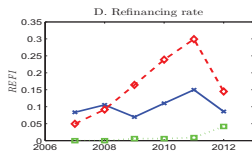
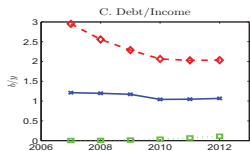
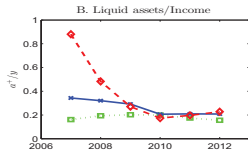
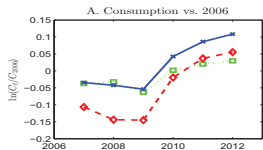
# The recession

- Households suffering bad shocks borrow more
- And set it aside for a worse shock
- High leverage results from bad shocks not the other way around.



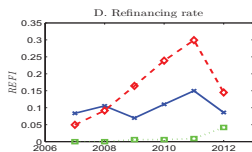
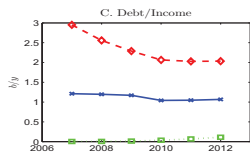
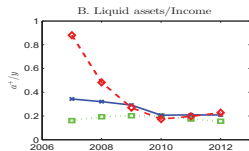
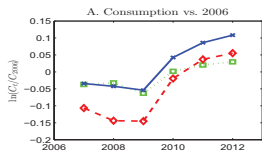
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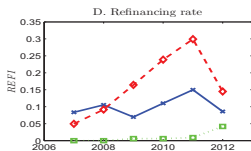
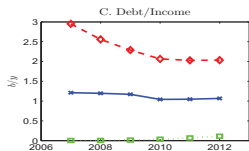
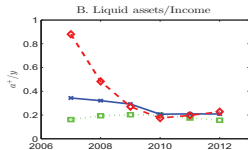
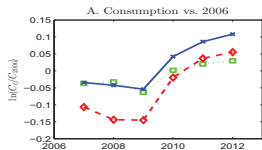
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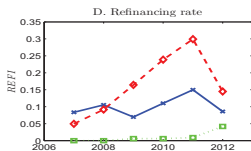
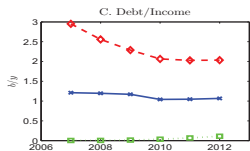
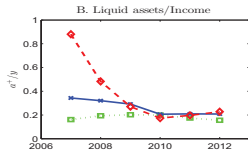
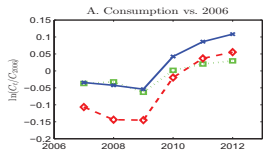
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- Borrow and dissave
- And pay it back later.



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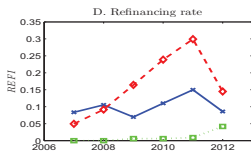
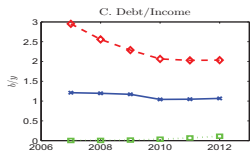
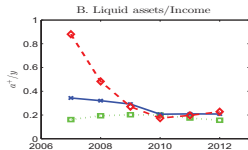
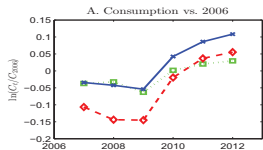
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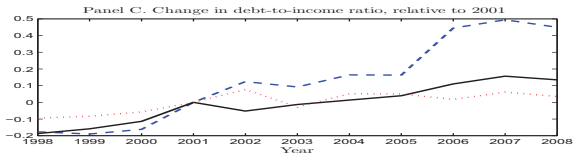
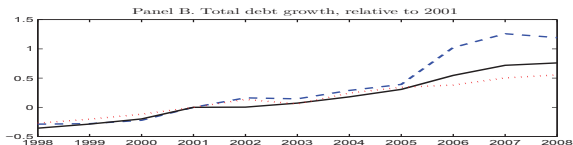




"...the 'consumption boom' of the mid-2000s,..."

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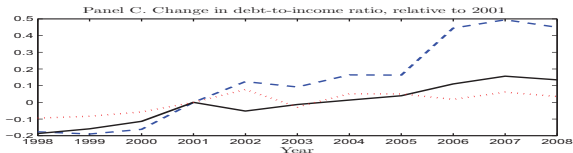
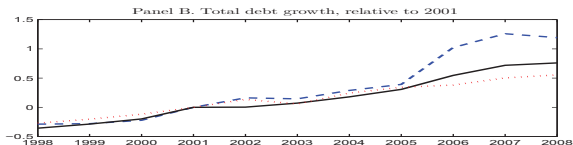
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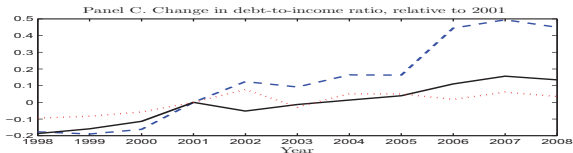
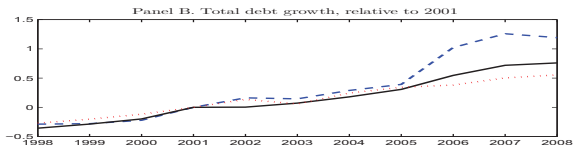
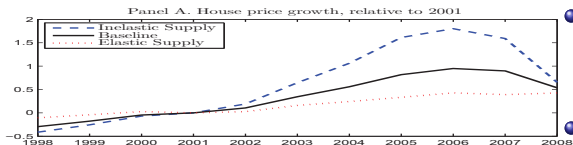
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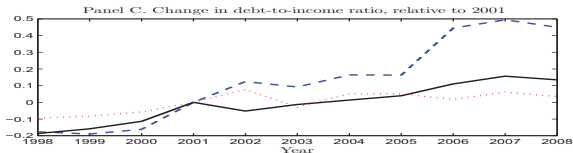
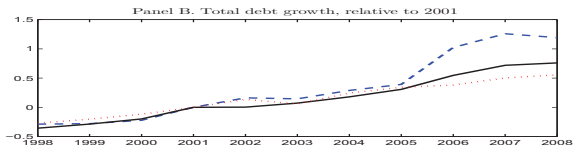
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# The role of debt

- Table 7 of the paper.
- Relaxing the LTV and DTI constraints
  - Does not increase overall consumption
- But it has to increase utility
  - Because this is partial equilibrium
- All these features of the recent economy
  - high leverage
  - defaults
  - slow consumption after the recession
- Welfare is still higher!

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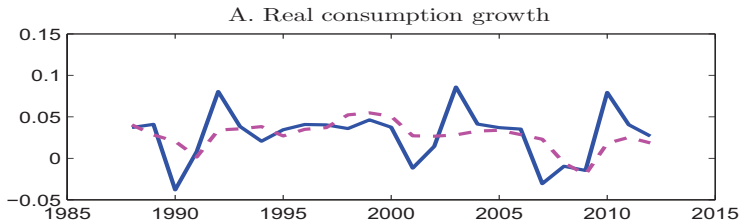
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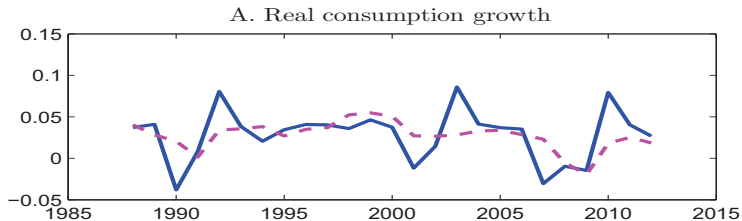
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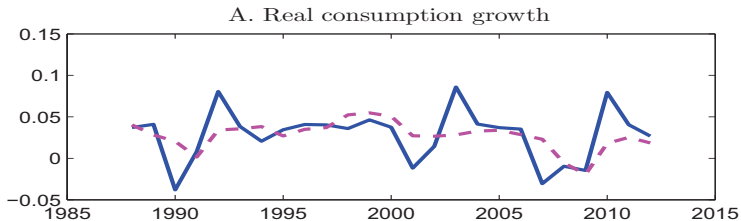
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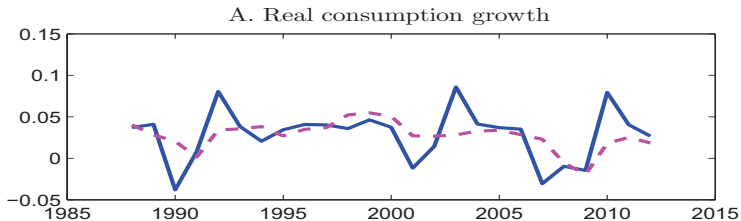
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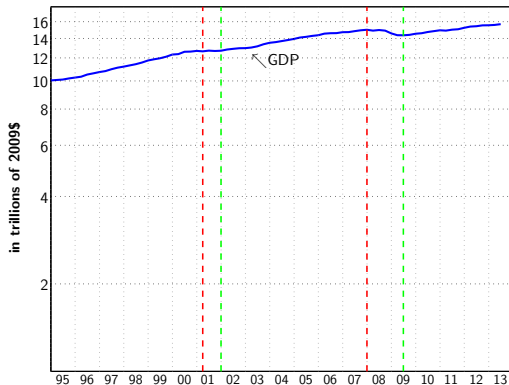


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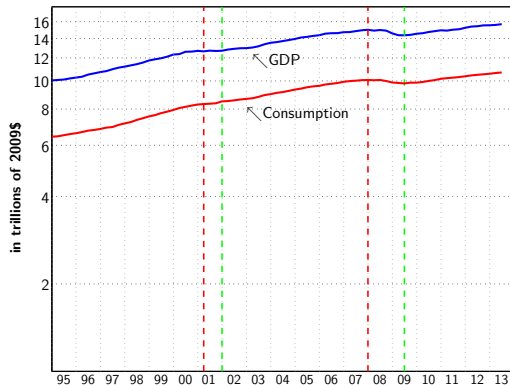


# Components of growth



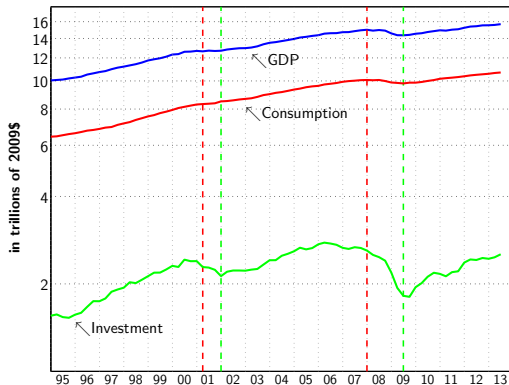
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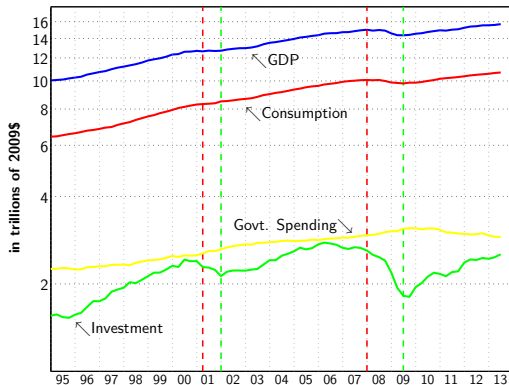
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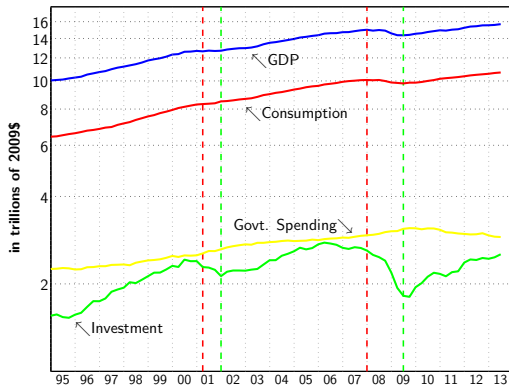
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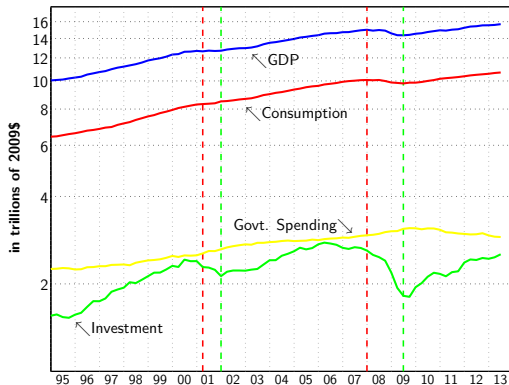
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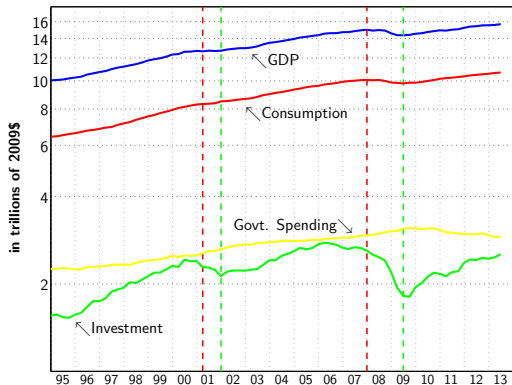
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- In the recession, consumption
  - fell less than income...
  - returned to peak by 2010
  - 12% above previous peak today
- Investment
  - fell 40%
  - returned to peak...
- Can you come up with a theory in which consumption plays a starring role here?
- But if you just saw this

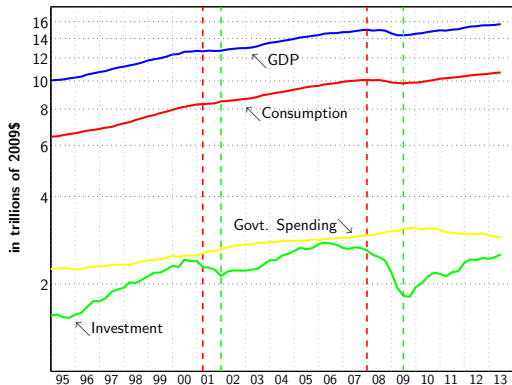


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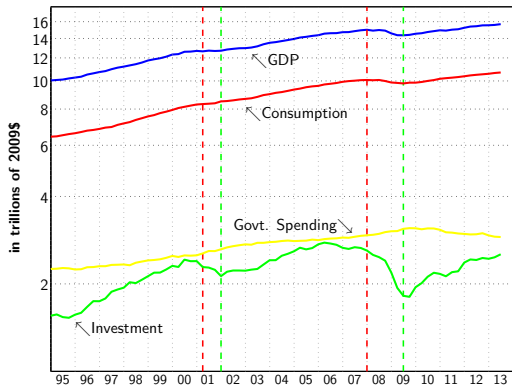
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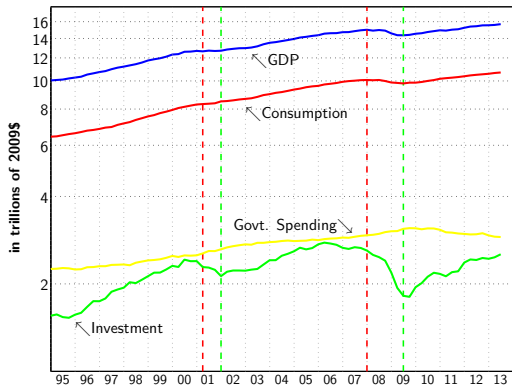
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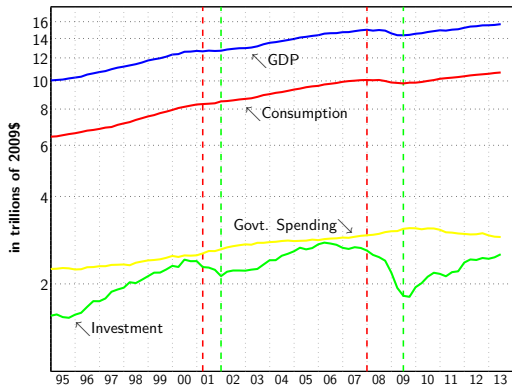
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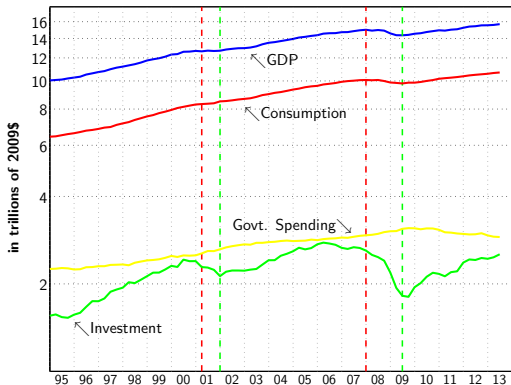
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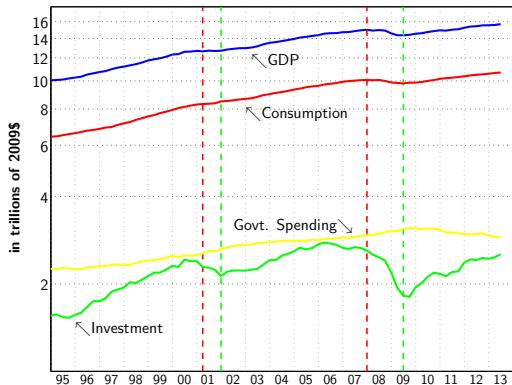
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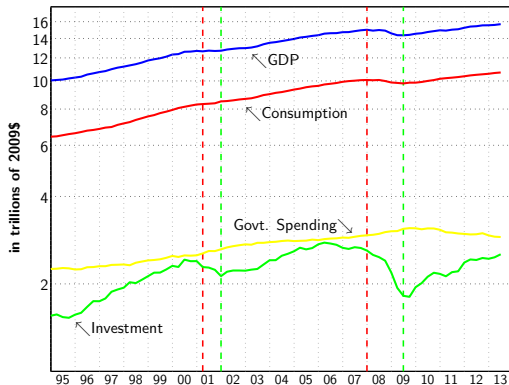
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# The Housing Boom, 2001-2006

From: Q4/2001 To: Q1/2006

| Variable           | Growth | ×Share | =Contribution | Share of Growth |
|--------------------|--------|--------|---------------|-----------------|
| <i>C</i>           | 14.4   | 66.9   | 9.6           | 66.4            |
| <i>I</i>           | 30.4   | 16.7   | 5.1           | 35.1            |
| <i>Residential</i> | 35.1   | 5.1    | 1.8           | 12.3            |
| <i>Non – Res</i>   | 28.4   | 11.7   | 3.3           | 22.8            |
| <i>G</i>           | 8.4    | 20.7   | 1.7           | 12.0            |
| <i>NX</i>          | 51.7   | -4.1   | -2.1          | -14.7           |
| <i>Y</i>           | 14.5   | 100.0  | 14.5          | 100.0           |

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| <i>C</i>           | 3.6    | 66.8   | 2.4           | 82.9            |
| <i>I</i>           | -10.9  | 19.1   | -2.1          | -71.2           |
| <i>Residential</i> | -40.8  | 6.0    | -2.4          | -84.1           |
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| <i>C</i>           | -1.9   | 67.1   | -1.3          | 35.7            |
| <i>I</i>           | -24.3  | 16.1   | -3.9          | 108.4           |
| <i>Residential</i> | -23.2  | 3.3    | -0.8          | 21.2            |
| <i>Non – Res</i>   | -24.5  | 12.8   | -3.2          | 87.2            |
| <i>G</i>           | 2.6    | 20.2   | 0.5           | -14.8           |
| <i>NX</i>          | -29.7  | -3.4   | 1.0           | -28.3           |
| <i>Y</i>           | -3.6   | 100.0  | -3.6          | 100.0           |

- After Lehman bankruptcy.
- Consumption fell but less than output.
- Consumption share of collapse was small.
- Big driver of fall was non-res investment.

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| <i>Residential</i> | -23.2  | 3.3    | -0.8          | 21.2            |
| <i>Non – Res</i>   | -24.5  | 12.8   | -3.2          | 87.2            |
| <i>G</i>           | 2.6    | 20.2   | 0.5           | -14.8           |
| <i>NX</i>          | -29.7  | -3.4   | 1.0           | -28.3           |
| <i>Y</i>           | -3.6   | 100.0  | -3.6          | 100.0           |

- After Lehman bankruptcy.
- Consumption fell but less than output.
- Consumption share of collapse was small.
- Big driver of fall was non-res investment.

# The Collapse, 2008-2009

From: Q3/2008 To: Q2/2009

| Variable           | Growth | ×Share | =Contribution | Share of Growth |
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# The Expansion, 2009-Present

From: Q2/2009 To: Q2/2013

| Variable           | Growth | ×Share | =Contribution | Share of Growth |
|--------------------|--------|--------|---------------|-----------------|
| <i>C</i>           | 9.1    | 68.3   | 6.2           | 67.1            |
| <i>I</i>           | 38.9   | 12.7   | 4.9           | 53.5            |
| <i>Residential</i> | 28.8   | 2.6    | 0.8           | 8.2             |
| <i>Non – Res</i>   | 41.6   | 10.1   | 4.2           | 45.3            |
| <i>G</i>           | -6.3   | 21.6   | -1.4          | -14.8           |
| <i>NX</i>          | 17.2   | -2.5   | -0.4          | -4.7            |
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From: Q2/2009 To: Q2/2013

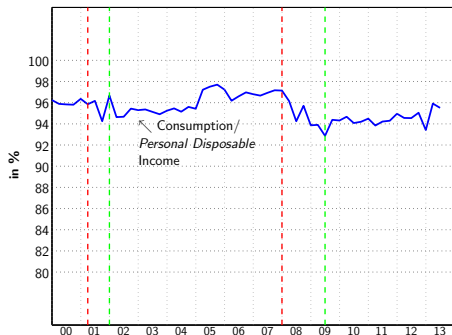
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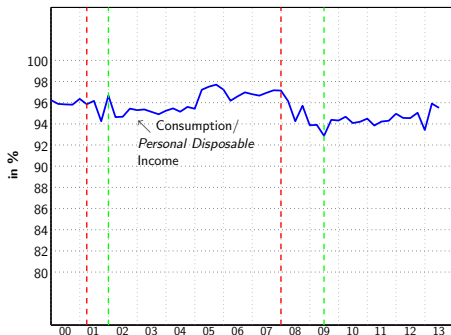
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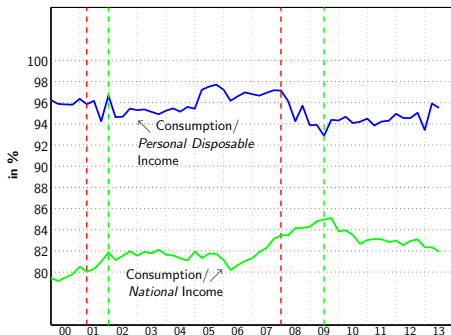
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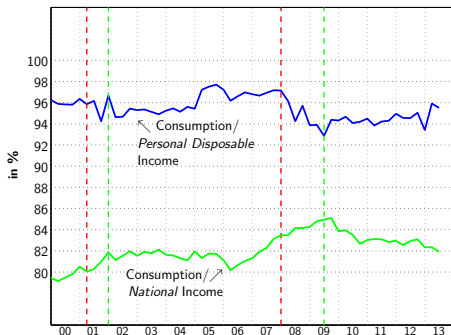
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- If we define income as “National Income”: income earned
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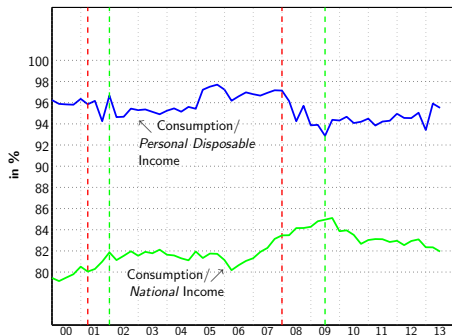
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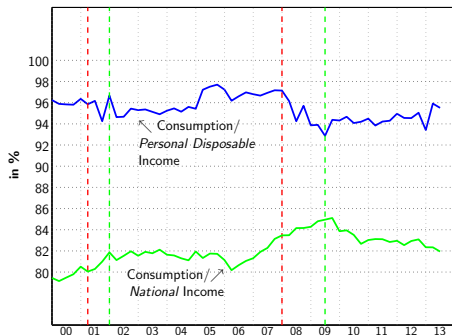
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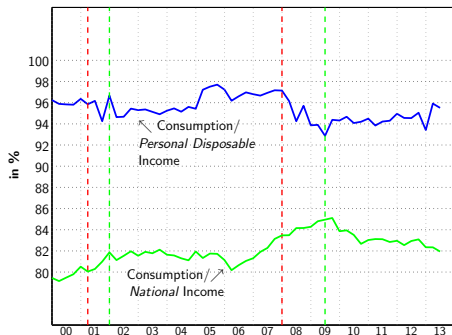
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# The slide you've all been waiting for...

- The end.

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