DEAR FRIEND......

Trickle-down economics is the greatest broken promise of our lifetime
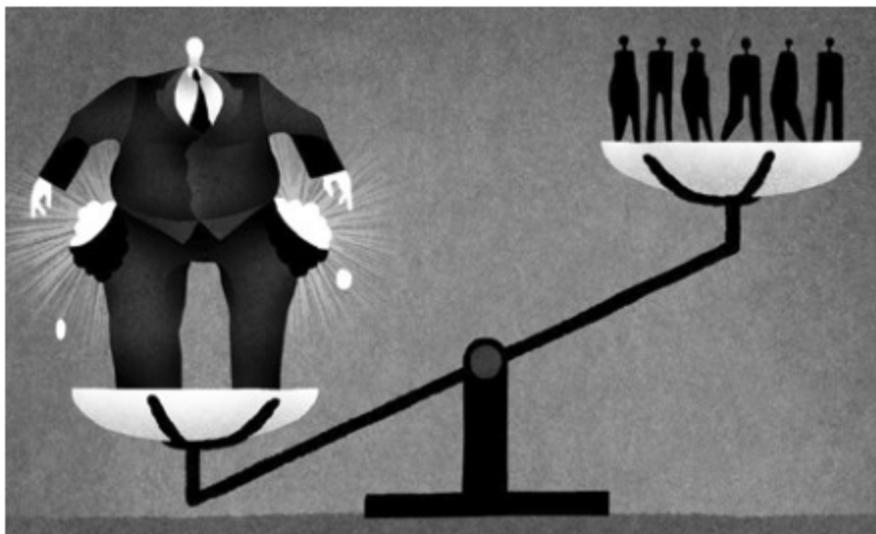
The richest 85 people in the world have as much wealth as the poorest 3.5 billion – or half the world's entire population – put together. This is the stark headline of a report from Oxfam ahead of the World Economic Forum at Davos. Is there a reason why the world's powerful, gathering at the exclusive resort to sip cognac and eat blinis, should care? Well, yes.

If one subscribes to the charitable view that neoliberal philosophy was simply naive or misguided in thinking that "trickle down" would work infinitely, then evidence that it doesn't, should be cause for concern. It is a fundamental building block of supply-side economic theory – the tool of choice these past few decades for those in charge to make adjustments. The realisation that governments have been pulling at economic levers which, for some time, have been attached to nothing, should be a wake-up call to the deepest sleepers.

Even if one subscribes to the cynical view that the elite knew what they were doing all along, observing that the "rising tide" is lifting fewer and fewer boats and leaving more and more to rot in the sediment – both at a personal and national level – must make most wonder "am I in the right boat and is it big enough?" Concentration is rampant. Credit Suisse estimates that the world will have 11 trillionaires within two generations.

It is not so much that the supply-side principle "if you build it, they will come" is no longer true. It is more that we appear to have passed a tipping point, where so much wealth has been concentrated at the top, they no longer need bother to "build" anything. In short, it has become more economically efficient to buy countries' economic policy than to create value in order to sell it on. If one can control government to favour the richest, while raising barriers for new entrants, thus increasing their share of the pie exponentially, what is the incentive to grow the pie?

This applies to both companies and individuals. Small business gets clobbered by taxes and business rates, while big business turns around and says to the state: "This is how much tax I fancy paying this year, take it or leave it". The rich no longer create jobs, through a process of consolidation, takeover and merger, they actually destroy them. Zero-hours contracts are the way of the future; in a society that is hungry, desperate and devoid of political engagement or unionism, why would anyone offer terms and conditions that give individual workers any standing?
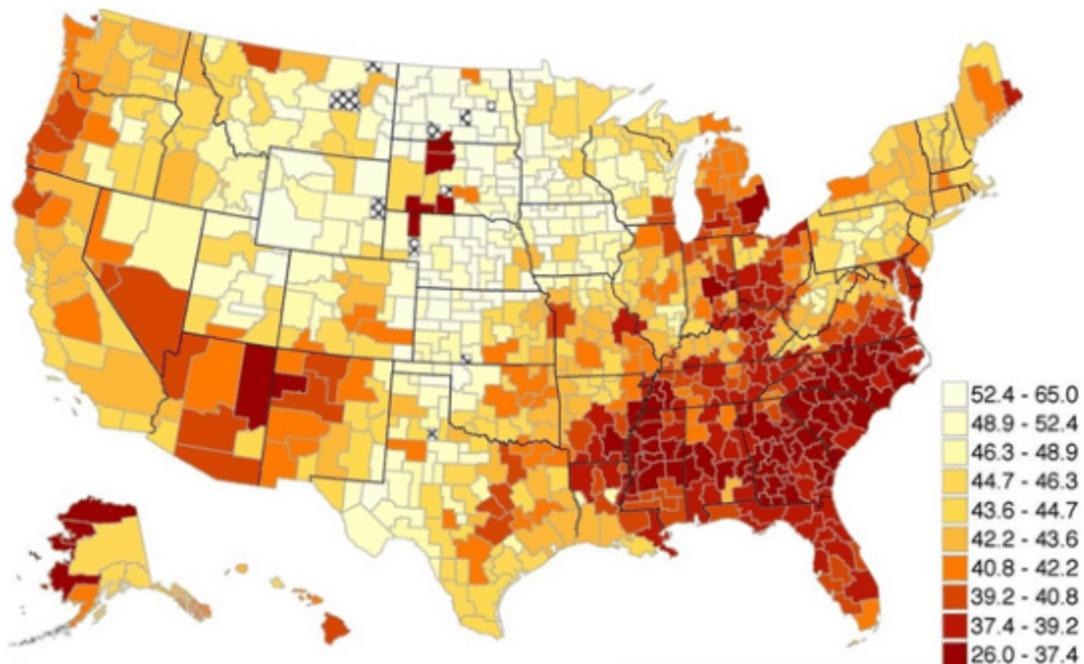
And yet, the realisation must dawn soon – one hopes – that this model is unsustainable because its effects are uncontrollable. The more unequal we become as a society, the faster the top's earnings diverge from the bottom's. "When so much of the purchasing power, so much of the economic gain, goes to the very top," Bill Clinton's former labour secretary Robert Reich explains in the film Inequality For All. "There's simply not enough purchasing power in the rest of the economy." At the same time, there is far too much loose cash sloshing around at the top, leading to unwise risks and toxic investments. Wealth inequality in the US was at its highest levels, historically, in 1928 and 2007, one year before its two biggest financial crises, notes Reich. The base of the pyramid atrophies and begins to crumble.

Then why are most governments continuing to fiddle with supply-side levers in order to revive the economy, when it is abundantly clear it does not work? The simple answer is in two parts. First part: habit. The second was perfectly expressed by the creator of The Wire, David Simon: "That may be the ultimate tragedy of capitalism in our time, that it has achieved its dominance without regard to a social compact, without being connected to any other metric for human progress."

We have come to measure, to an increasing extent, individuals' success by their wealth, spending power and other assorted trappings. We do the same with the economic success of governments; measure it by an aggregated data set that fails to take into account wealth distribution, educational achievement, innovation, or even the welfare and health of the population they claim to represent. We must shift this perspective. It will be the hardest, simplest thing we have ever had to do as a species.

This week **The Huffington Post** did a piece – ***Where The American Dream Is Dead And Buried*** – Suggesting that the days of one pulling themselves up by the bootstraps to become the next Bill Gates, a new study suggests that there are some places in America where it's somewhat easier to do that than others. Cities in the South and the Rust Belt have extremely low levels of economic mobility -- a wonky term that essentially measures one's ability to go from being poor to rich -- according to a study from economists at **Harvard University** and the **University of California-Berkeley**. To put that into more concrete terms: Someone born in the bottom fifth of the income ladder in Atlanta, Georgia, where economic mobility is low, has a 4.5 percent chance of reaching the top fifth of the income ladder, the study found. Meanwhile in Washington, D.C., a city with high economic mobility, the chance of moving up the income ladder is about 11 percent. In the map below, red indicates low economic mobility while pale yellow represents places with higher economic mobility:

	52.4 - 65.0
	48.9 - 52.4
	46.3 - 48.9
	44.7 - 46.3
	43.6 - 44.7
	42.2 - 43.6
	40.8 - 42.2
	39.2 - 40.8
	37.4 - 39.2
	26.0 - 37.4

So what is it that stifles economic mobility? The researchers found that areas with higher levels of segregation, income inequality and more single parents tend to have worse prospects for mobility. In addition, regions with fewer social networks and poorer school systems are typically worse off. The one not-so-depressing finding from the report is that economic mobility hasn't slowed over the past few decades, instead it's pretty much stayed the same. That said, while a child's chance of moving up the income ladder hasn't fallen, the rungs on the ladder have grown farther apart (read: income inequality has gotten a lot worse). That means kids today are more affected than ever by their parents' economic status. This chart shows just how bad it's gotten:

Changes in the Income Ladder in the United States

The rungs of the income ladder have grown further apart (income inequality has increased)

...but children's chances of climbing from lower to higher rungs have not changed.

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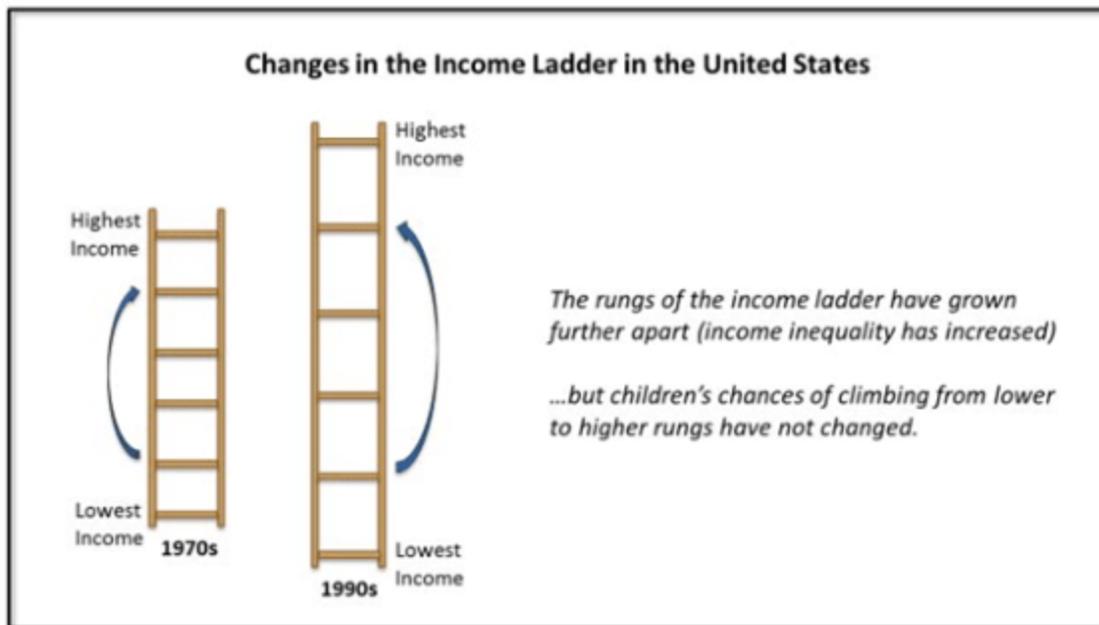
Top 10 States With The Worst Income Inequality

1. New York

Gini Coefficient: 0.502

Median Income: $50,216 (22nd Highest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 6.15% (5th Highest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 14.20% (25th Highest)

New York is a relatively wealthy state. It has the fifth-largest percentage of households earning $200,000 or more a year and has the 25th fewest people living below the poverty line. Regardless, the state has the most severe income inequality among all the states. According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, the top 1% of earners in New York State make about 35% of the state's total income. This is up from 17% in 1990. The bottom 50% of earners, in comparison, make just 9.1% of total income, down from 13.9% in 1990. Inequality is even worse in New York City. According to the FPI report, "if New York City were a nation, it would rank 15th worst among 134 countries with respect to income concentration, between Chile and Honduras. Wall Street, with its stratospheric profits and bonuses, sits within 15 miles of the Bronx," one of the nation's poorest counties.

2. Connecticut

Gini Coefficient: 0.480

Median Income: $63,851 (Highest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 7.87% (Highest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 9.40% (4th Lowest)

Connecticut is one of the wealthiest states in the country, with the greatest percentage of households earning $200,000 or more a year (7.87%). The disparity between the poor and wealthy is getting worse. According to a 2008 study from the Economic Policy Institute and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, income in Connecticut increased by $52,439, or 45%, to $169,378 for the top fifth of Connecticut households, while the bottom fifth's income decreased $4,437, or 17%, to $21,133, from 1989 to 2006. The state has made efforts to begin correcting this issue by increasing the top income tax rate from 4.5% to 6.5%.

3. Texas

Gini Coefficient: 0.474

Median Income: $47,475 (22nd Lowest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 3.83% (16th Highest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 17.20% (8th Highest)

Texas has the largest percentage of its population falling either below the poverty line or making more than $200,000 a year, relative to the other states. Just over 21% of the state's population falls into one of these two camps, although most fall into the former group. According to an article from the St. Petersburg Times' PolitiFact.com, Texas had a GINI index of 0.37 in 1970, which increased to 0.42 in 1990, and is now 0.474, implying increasing long-term income inequality.

4. Louisiana

Gini Coefficient: 0.473

Median Income: $45,433 (14th Lowest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 2.54% (24th Lowest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 17.30% (7th Highest)

Louisiana has the seventh-largest percentage of residents both making less than $30,000 a year and living below the poverty line. The bottom 25% of earners make only 4% of the state's income. In comparison, the top 25% of earners enjoy 63% of the income, according to the Louisiana state government. The top 5% make 29% of the income. The good news is that personal income rose 3.1% in Louisiana in 2010, according to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis. This is slightly more than the national average of 3%, and raises Louisiana earnings above 2008 pre-recession levels.

5. Alabama

Gini Coefficient: 0.471

Median Income: $39,980 (3rd Lowest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 2.13% (9th Lowest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 17.50% (6th Highest)

Alabama has the 5th largest percentage of households making less than $30,000 a year, and the tenth-highest percentage of households making above $100,000 a year. It also has the sixth-highest percentage of people living below the poverty line: 17.5%. From 2008 to 2009, the number of households making $200,000 or more a year fell from 2.3% to 2.1%. The number of households receiving food stamps, however, increased 26% from 2008 to 2009. "We're seeing record numbers on food stamps and insurance programs, and there really is a direct correlation," said Jim Carnes, spokesman for the anti-poverty advocacy group Alabama Arise, in The Birmingham News. "As the poverty rate increases, government services have a greater demand."

6. Mississippi

Gini Coefficient: 0.470

Median Income: $35,078 (Lowest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 1.54% (Lowest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 21.90% (Highest)

Mississippi has the greatest percentage of poor people in the nation, 21.9%. The state has the greatest percentage of households making below $30,000 a year, 42.53%, and the smallest percentage of households making $200,000 or more, 1.54%. Suffice it to say, poverty is a major issue in Mississippi and it is getting worse. From 2007 to 2009, the state's poverty rate increased from 20.6% to 21.9%.

7. Florida

Gini Coefficient: 0.469

Median Income: $45,631 (15th Lowest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 3.08% (20th Highest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 14.90% (18th Highest)

Although Florida has only the 18th-largest percentage of its population living in poverty in the country, that share is growing quickly. From 2007 to 2009, the poverty rate increased from 12.1% to 14.9%, a growth of 550,000 people. In comparison, the national rate increased from 12.5% to 14.3% over the same period. Additionally, almost 1.2 million of the 2.7 million impoverished Florida residents live in "deep poverty," defined by the US Census Bureau as households with incomes of 50% or less of the federal poverty level. That amounts to $5,478 a year for an individual. Recent tax breaks have been aimed at the wealthy, however. In 2007, both the state's annual intangibles tax and the estate tax were eliminated. "Florida is a low tax state, but not for those living in poverty," reports the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

8. Georgia

Gini Coefficient: 0.469

Median Income: $43,340 (10th Lowest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 3.43% (19th Highest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 16.50% (12th Highest)

According to the non-profit research organization Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), Georgia's tax system is regressive. This means that low-income families pay more of their income in state and local taxes than upper-income families do. The poorest 20% of Georgians have 3.2% of statewide personal income before taxes, but their share of after-tax income is just 3.1%. The best-off 1% of residents enjoys 16.7% of pretax Georgia income, and 17.2% of after-tax income. More than 20% of Georgians are living below the poverty line.

9. Illinois

Gini Coefficient: 0.469

Median Income: $52,870 (14th Highest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 4.47% (10th Highest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 13.30% (24th Lowest)

Illinois has a relatively large percentage of households earning $200,000 or more each year, 4.47% - the tenth greatest amount in the country. The state has the 24th smallest percentage of residents living below the poverty line, in comparison, with 13.3%. This may be due to the state's policies which may be seen as giving preference to the wealthy. This year the state increased its flat income tax from 3% to 5%. According to John Tillman, chief executive of the Illinois Policy Institute, quoted in the State-Journal Register, the tax increase is "especially going to hurt lower-income folks -- those who are just starting out in careers or are struggling for whatever reason, who have incomes in the $20,000-$40,000 range." Worst still, average personal income has decreased 3.2% for the bottom 60% of Illinois wage earners over the past 40 years, according to the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

10. Massachusetts

Gini Coefficient: 0.468

Median Income: $59,373 (8th Highest)

Households Earning $200,000+: 6.56% (4th Highest)

Population Living Below Poverty Line: 10.30% (7th Lowest)

Massachusetts has the fourth-greatest percentage of wealthy residents among all the states and the seventh-lowest percentage of people living below the poverty line. However, according to The Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, "incomes for the highest income families in Massachusetts have

grown almost five times as fast as those for low-income families and nearly twice as fast as those for middle-income families," over the past two decades. According to the organization, the inequality gap has increased more during this time in Massachusetts than in 47 of the other states.

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 Jamie Dimon, chairman and chief executive of JPMorgan Chase, was awarded $20 million in compensation for 2013.

How can you explain to your children that crime doesn't pay and that big business and financial markets can police themselves when Jamie Dimon, CEO of JP Morgan Chase was given a 74% pay raise ($20 million in compensation) up from 2013, despite a series of bruising legal setbacks. In November, JPMorgan agreed to pay the government $13 billion to resolve allegations that the bank knowingly sold faulty mortgage securities that contributed to the financial crisis. The settlement, and the slew of others that proceeded it, brought JPMorgan closer to putting to rest its mountain of legal woes. And for that, the board said it was grateful. One of the factors the board took into account in determining Dimon's compensation was the "steps the company has taken to resolve" the "regulatory issues the company has faced," according to the filing. Obviously in the eyes of JP Morgan Chase's board – Jamie Dimon can do no wrong. But think about it what kind of message does this sends to working people who have put in their 40 to 60 hours a week as teachers, firefighters, police, civil servants, account executives, sales associates, etc. and were told that they would only receive a 3% pay raise if any. And to make matters worse it that Dimon's compensation is structured as $1.5 million based pay and $18.5 million in stock which he then only pays 20% taxes on. As both the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street believe, the game is rigged. And this is just the latest slap in the face of the average worker and working poor in America.

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When President Obama told David Remnick last week that he *"would not let [his] son play pro football,"* conservatives jumped at the chance to fit that reluctance to let children play violent sports into their narrative that Obama is a weak president and a weak man afraid to engage in the kind of messy, violent acts men should take part in. On Friday's "**Real Time**," Bill Maher found this whole idea very odd. *"I don't know where Republicans get the weird delusion that they're the party of manliness,"* he said. He pointed out that Republicans, who count their own fair share of *"non-serving chickenhawks,"* are often more likely to push for war, and often silence critics by painting them as ineffectual and feminine.

But he did not let Democrats off the hook for buying into Republicans' tactics. "Democrats have to start being the party that redefines toughness into restraint," he said. *"It's not toughness Republicans love, it's bullying,"* he continued. The governor of New Jersey was one example of such a Republican, according to Maher. *"Somehow we've gone from Teddy Roosevelt's 'speak softly and carry a big stick,' to Chris Christie's 'speak loudly and be a big dick.'"*   As for Obama, Maher did not understand why his less

hawkish stances on war than his predecessors was painted as negative in the new memoir by former defense secretary Robert Gates. *"Gates said George W. Bush was a good president, because he had no second thoughts about Iraq,"* Maher said. *"That's because to have second thoughts, you have to have first thoughts."*

Somehow in America the idea of manhood has become bullying and it is no longer about how you play the game but only who prevails. Financial Review said, "that if the president thanks that the NFL is too dangerous for his fictitious son, what about the military?" As if defending one's country and kickoff returns are the same thing. We have to ask where Republicans gets the idea that they are the party of Manliness. And that somehow conservatives see themselves as the tough guys. And that Obama should man up and bomb Iran. We have to redefine toughness as restraint and stop responding to Republican taunts, that have go to Michael Dukakis into a tank, John Kerry into a duck hunting outfit and Hillary Clinton into Iraq. This isn't masculinity or prudent foreign policy, its bullying and ignorance and should no long be tolerated.

Why in today's enlighten world bullying is still considered a masculine virtue. In an enlighten world, standing up to bullies is. Ignoring society's least able people is not masculine, whereas taking care of them is. These same bullies like to think of themselves as real men because they are willing to send our young people into wars of choice while Democrats are some sort of *Nancy boys* who will only go to war as last resort. They believe that engagement and other pansies' concessions for could lead to dialogue and worse peace. What is wrong with this novel concept? Again: The former Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates published his memoirs, criticizing Obama for not being enthusiastic about the war in Afghanistan, because for him it was all about getting out. Whereas Gates described George Bush as a good President because "he had no second thoughts about Iraq." In a world where we don't even want our warriors to win at all cost, we definitely don't want our leaders to be bullies. As such masculinity in the form of bullying should not be tolerated.

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FINDLAND (revisited)

Being inspired by a chance meeting on a flight to Europe last month I did several pieces on Finland, one of the few countries that I have never traveled to and thus knew little about. And to my surprise, the articles generated a lot of response. Below are a few responses as well as a note from my original travel mate to thank me and provide a few additional thoughts. And for those of you who skipped the sections last week, attached is a summary of the articles for your consideration.

Dear Gregory,

I have been to Finland over 20 times and love the country. Helsinki is a fantastic city. The countryside is beautiful. But a role model for the US and Europe? Absolutely not. Finland is the third most sparsely populated in the world, which makes it easy to manage in comparison to the US, Britain, France and China, which have big, densely-populated cities. The population of Finland is 91% native-born Finns and 5% is Finnish-born Swedes (most Finns speak Swedish). Only 4% are foreign born minorities and immigration is heavily restricted. Having almost no minorities makes it easy for Finland's political elite to oversee a placid native-born population.

Finland has the highest alcoholism rate in the world. Many people, especially men, literally drink themselves to death. The lack of diversity in Finland - and its high tax rate - holds back progress and innovation, which companies need to thrive. In 2003, Nokia had 35% of the world's cell phone market. By 2013, it's share had declined to only 10% and some people believe the country is heading to extinction, like the Canadian company Blackberry. Why? Too much of the same at the top management levels of the company. Few professionals are willing to emigrate to Finland to live there, and this includes minorities (like Indian scientists and engineers, for example) who could make a contribution to Finnish companies.

A 42% tax rate is totally unacceptable. Many of Finland's most brilliant young people - in technology, the arts - are leaving that country to avoid this rate. They don't want the state taking away half of their incomes. Many want to come to New York and London to live and work. New York and London are the two top destination cities for the Finnish young. One observer recently wrote, "It seems that there are no young people in Finland. Anyone under the age of 40 is either drunk, depressed or mentally insane. Where have all the young, bright, smart Finnish people gone? I know they must be out there, somewhere, just not in Finland." This is an exaggeration, of course, but it tells you something.

Best, Paul

Greg –

Great write-up on Finland! You really did your research! Either that or you have a memory like a steel trap and remembered everything I said when we talked. J Or both! One of the things that really holds Americans back from fully appreciating what Finland has done is the label of "socialism". For most Americans, socialism = communism, and that's just a no-go zone even for many people on the left. It's better to, as you've done, not focus on the label but instead focus on the result – a government that makes its decisions based on the result to society as a whole, not based on the driving needs/desires of one small group or another, which can so often disadvantage another group. I thought you captured that quite well below. Thanks for listening – and remembering! – everything that is so near and dear to my heart.

--Leslie

Greg –

Great read this weekend - Did you also know that by some account Finland has the highest suicide rate - all that good stuff and yet people take their own lives - in my mind it has to do with either the constant dark (white nights) and the ugly women - pick one...

Imre

Greg –

You're absolutely right about the high suicide rates – and don't forget the rampant alcoholism, either! But those two negative aspects of life in Finland are very much due to the weather and dark winters, as you note, and I think they're part of the drivers for the government working hard to make life good for people. My personal, unsubstantiated-by-data theory is that the northern countries are the ones who lead the way with governmental social responsibility precisely because the weather is so hard here. If people don't work together and help each other, especially the weak, then the weak won't make it through the winter. There are still a lot of depressed people and alcoholics, but far fewer, I think, than there would be if the social safety net were missing here the way it is in the US. Anyway, that's my two cents. Again! ;-)

--Leslie

==WEEK's READINGS==

Fadi Chehadé: If We Fragment The Internet, 'It Will Not Be The Internet As We Know It'

Fadi Chehadé, CEO of **ICANN**, told **HuffPost Live** at **Davos** he thinks the *"biggest threat"* to innovation is a fragmented Internet. *"The biggest threat is to start building walls that create frictions. Frictionless Internet, where innovation is permissionless... is critical,"* he said. *"If we cannot find a way to govern the Internet in an equal footing, in an open transparent way this year, we might descend into a fragmented version of the Internet,"* Chehadé said. *"The moment we fragment the Internet it is possible there will be tariffs between borders, there will be rules... it will not be the internet as we know it."* Chehadé said an open Internet is vital because it *"globalizes every local industry and every local service."* Chehadé took over ICANN in October 2012. As CEO he is guiding the largest expansion of the Internet address system since its creation in the 1980s, according to the AP. Watch Chehadé's interview below, and see more from Davos below:

Web site: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/24/fadi-chehade-davos_n_4635949.html?utm_hp_ref=business&ir=Business

As countries are looking for ways to monitor and control the control of information there is a real fear that countries will try to create their own Internet which will curtail the free flow of information around the world. This is not something that we think about today but in the world of *"Big Brother"* maybe we should. Mr. Chehadé is signaling this potential problem/challenge.

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13 Words You Probably Didn't Know Were Invented By Shakespeare

Like Precalculus and Newton's laws, Shakespeare's plays are among the most groaned-about high school topics, begetting the complaint: "When will I *ever* need to know about this in *real life*?" Turns out, pretty often. Shakespeare can be credited for the invention of thousands of words that are now an everyday part of the English language (including, but not limited to, *"eyeball," "fashionable,"* and *"manager."*) In addition to his being a particularly clever wordsmith, Shakespeare's word invention can be credited to the fact that the English

language as a whole was in a major state of flux during the time that he was writing. Colonization and wars meant that English speakers were borrowing more and more words from other languages. It's hard to say whether or not Shakespeare was the first to *use* many of these words, but in most cases he has long been believed to be the first to write them (although the widespread digitization of books has lead to a few interesting discoveries from earlier sources.) So before you dismiss Shakespeare as a stodgy, boring alternative to more contemporary writers, remember that you have *him* to thank for the popularization following words...and around 1,700 in total!

Gloomy
Definition: Somewhat dark: not bright or sunny
Origin: "*To gloom*" was a verb that existed before Shakespeare converted the word into an adjective in a number of his plays.
Quote: "Forced in the ruthless, vast, and gloomy woods?" - *Titus Andronicus*

Laughable
Definition: Bad in a way that seems foolish or silly
Origin: Derived from the verb *"laugh."*
Quote: "Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable." - *The Merchant of Venice*

Majestic
Definition: Large and impressively beautiful
Origin: From *"majesty,"* which appeared in the 1300s, meaning "greatness." "Majestical" was first used in the 1570s.
Quote: "This is a most majestic vision" - *The Tempest*

Lonely
Definition: Sad from being apart from other people
Origin: "*Alone*" was first shortened to "lone" in the 1400s.
Quote: "Believe't not lightly – though I go alone / Like to a lonely dragon that his fen –*Coriolanus*

Radiance
Definition: A quality of brightness and happiness that can be seen on a person's face
Origin: Derived from the Latin "*radiantem*," meaning "beaming."
Quote: "For by the sacred radiance of the sun" - *King Lear*

Hurry
Definition: Move or act with haste; rush
Origin: Likely derived from the verb "*harry*"
Quote: "Lives, honors, lands, and all hurry to loss." - *Henry VI Part 1*

Generous
Definition: Freely giving or sharing money and other valuable things
Origin: From the Latin "*generosus,*" meaning "of noble birth."
Quote: "Free me so far in your most generous thoughts / That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house / And hurt my brother." – *Hamlet*

Frugal
Definition: Careful about spending money or using things when you do not need to
Origin: From the Latin *"frugi,"* meaning "useful, proper, worthy, honest."
Quote: "Chid I for that at frugal Nature's frame?" - *Much Ado About Nothing*

Critical
Definition: Expressing criticism or disapproval
Origin: From the Latin *"criticus,"* which referred specifically to a literary critic.
Quote: "For I am nothing if not critical" – *Othello*

Courtship
Definition: The activities that occur when people are developing a romantic relationship that could lead to marriage or the period of time when such activities occur
Origin: *"Court"* was first used to mean "woo" in the 1570s; prior, it was used to mean "king's court, princely residence," derived from the French "cort."
Quote: "To courtship and such fair ostents of love" - *The Merchant of Venice*

Zany
Definition: Amusingly unconventional and idiosyncratic
Origin: Derived from the Italian *"zani,"* which came from "Zanni," a version of the name "Giovanni."
Quote: "Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany" - *Love's Labour's Lost*

Undress

Definition: To take your clothes off

Origin: *"Dress"* comes from the Old French "dresser," meaning "prepare, arrange, straighten, put right." Shakespeare was the first to add the prefix "un-."

Quote: "Madam, undress you and come now to bed." - *The Taming of the Shrew*

Rant

Definition: To talk loudly and in a way that shows anger: to complain in a way that is unreasonable

Origin: Derived from the Dutch *"randten,"* meaning "talk foolishly."

Quote: "I'll rant as well as thou." - *Hamlet*

Definitions are from Merriam-Webster. Origin information is from Online Etymology Dictionary

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Last week in **The Huffington Post** journalist Mark Gongloff wrote – ***The Mortgage Market Just Cratered And The Fed Should Be Worried*** – As it appears that a jump in interest rates has had a big impact on the housing market. That's a warning sign for a Federal Reserve seemingly bound and determined to withdraw stimulus from a still-shaky economy. The mortgage market cratered in the fourth quarter of 2013, Wells Fargo and JPMorgan Chase reported on January 14, 2014, as higher interest rates all but murdered demand for mortgage refinancing.

The nation's biggest mortgage lender, Wells Fargo, said its mortgage volume tumbled to $50 billion in the quarter, down 60 percent from $125 billion a year ago. The second-biggest lender, JPMorgan Chase, said its mortgage originations, that includes new home purchases and refinancings, fell 54 percent to $23.3 billion from $51.2 billion a year ago. (Story continues after chart of ugliness.)

Mortgage Originations, Billions Of $

Legend: Wells Fargo (blue), JPMorgan Chase (red)
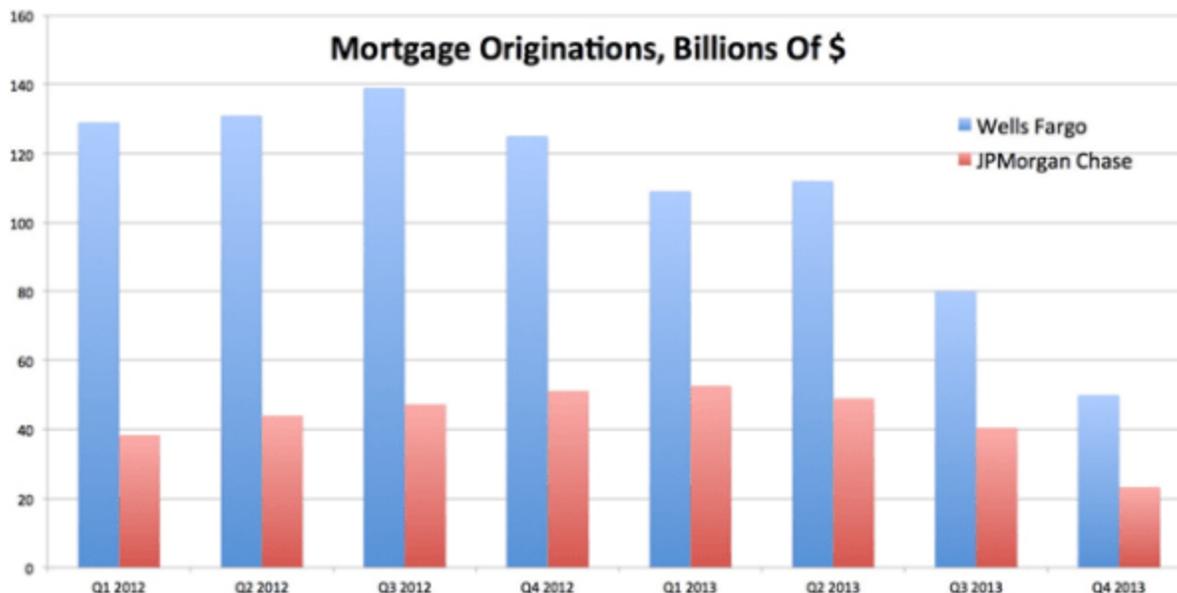
These two banks are key indicators for the state of the housing market. Wells Fargo issued nearly 23 percent of all U.S. home loans last year, to JPMorgan Chase's 11 percent, according to industry tracker Inside Mortgage Finance. And the story they're telling is stark: Higher rates have hurt demand. The average interest rate for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage has jumped to 4.5 percent from a record low of 3.3 percent in early 2013, according to government-backed mortgage giant Freddie Mac.

This has happened mostly because of the Fed. Central bankers last year repeatedly declared a desire to pare back, or taper, their program to buy $85 billion in mortgage-backed securities and Treasury bonds each month to keep interest rates low. They made good on that promise last month, trimming $10 billion from the program. Despite a still-anemic job market, most economists think the Fed will trim another $10 billion at its next policy meeting, later this month. Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and others argued they weren't kicking the props out from under the bond market, but that's sort of what happened: Bond prices fell, and interest rates jumped. Of course, rates are still relatively low, and the housing market is not exactly in a panic, though sales have dipped. The Fed seems to believe it can slowly remove support from the housing market without causing too much trouble. We're about to find out.

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The 20 most populous metro areas in the United States, in 1 amazing chart

Graph of Metro Area Population Rank over Time

The top 20 Metro Areas in the United States, 1790-2010

There are few things worse in this world than listening to New Yorkers refer to *"The City"* -- with the implicit assumption that you know of which metropolis they speak. But, according to this amazing chart, these Empire Staters have a point: New York City is the boss of American cities. Here's the chart, which tracks the 20 largest U.S. metro areas from 1790 through 2010.

Historical Metropolitan Area Populations

Follow Detroit's rise and fall and you follow the rise and fall of the manufacturing industry in America. The Motor City broke into the top 20 in 1840 and within 100 years was one of the five largest metro areas in the country. The last three decades have seen a population free fall in Detroit, however, all the way to the number 12 in 2010. St. Louis is now barely on the list after peaking at the fourth most populous metro area in the late 1800s. Baltimore has fallen from top five to barely top twenty. (Tommy Carcetti weeps.)

And what about the metros that briefly broke into the top 20? Rochester (N.Y) had a brief run in the mid-1800s. Seattle spent 20 years in the top 20 in the early 20th century before returning in the 1970s and now standing as the 14th largest metropolis. Heck, New Haven (Conn.) got a little run in the top 20 for two decades in the early 1800s.

Random Notes and Comments

- The urban hierarchy of the U.S. was dominated by the Northeast and Midwest until relatively recently. Between 1840 and 1900, 18 out of the top 20 metro areas were in the northeastern quadrant of the current USA, with just New Orleans, plus either Charleston or San Francisco, as the only cities in the South or West. As late as 1960, 15 out of 20 were still outside the "sunbelt".
- For 80 years, from 1860 to 1930 inclusive, New Orleans was the only southern city in the top 20. Before that, Charleston, SC was the dominant city of the south, falling off the list in 1850. In 1940, Houston, Dallas, and Miami began their rises, and Atlanta didn't crack the top 20 until 1970.
- Cincinnati was the first major city of the Midwest, making the top 20 list in 1820. By 1890 there were 9 midwestern cities in the top 20.
- San Francisco was the only western city in the top 20 for 50 years, from 1860 to 1900 inclusive. By 1910 Los Angeles cracked the the top 20, soon overtaking its northern rival. In 2010, the West had more cities on the list (6) than any other region.
- In 1850, 5 of the top 20 cities were in New York State: New York City (1), Albany (7), Buffalo (10), Rochester (16), and Syracuse (18). The nickname "Empire State" was very apt in the heyday of the Erie Canal.
- Four northeastern cities (New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore) have been in the top 20 since the first census in 1790. Washington, DC didn't really exist in 1790, but Alexandria, VA was on the list then, and DC itself afterwards, so one could argue that the Washington metro area also has been in the top 20 since independence.
- By 1930 Washington, DC was ranked #17, down from #5 in 1820. But the expansion of the federal government during the New Deal era and World War II propelled it up to #8 by 1970. It is the only metro area with a U-shaped curve, with a steady decline in rank followed by a steady rise.

Tables: Top 20 U.S. Metropolitan Areas by Population, 1790-2010
(with top 4 Metropolitan Areas 1680-1775)

Approximate Populations in Thousands

1680			1700			1720			1740			1760			1775		
Rank	City	Pop	Rank	City	Pop	Rank	City	Pop	Rank	City	Pop	Rank	City	Pop	Rank	City	Pop
1.	Boston	4.5	1.	Boston	6.7	1.	Boston	12	1.	Boston	16.4	1.	Philadelphia	23.8	1.	Philadelphia	40

1790

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	Philadelphia	44.1
2.	New York	33.1
3.	Boston	18.3
4.	Charleston	16.4
5.	Salem, MA	13.6
6.	Baltimore	13.5
7.	Newport, RI	6.7
8.	Providence	6.4
9.	Gloucester, MA	5.3
10.	Newburyport, MA	4.8
11.	Portsmouth, NH	4.7
12.	Nantucket	4.6
13.	Middleborough, MA	4.5
14.	New Haven	4.5
15.	Richmond	3.8
16.	Albany	3.5
17.	Norfolk	3.0
18.	Petersburg, VA	2.8
19.	Alexandria, VA	2.8
20.	Hartford	2.7

1800

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	Philadelphia	61.6
2.	New York	60.5
3.	Baltimore	26.5
4.	Boston	24.9
5.	Charleston	18.8
6.	Salem, MA	14.7
7.	Washington	11.2
8.	Providence	7.6
9.	Norfolk	6.9
10.	Newport, RI	6.7
11.	Newburyport, MA	6.0
12.	Richmond	5.7
13.	Nantucket	5.6
14.	Portsmouth, NH	5.3
15.	Gloucester, MA	5.3
16.	Schenectady, NY	5.3
17.	Albany	5.3
18.	New London, CT	5.2
19.	Savannah	5.2
20.	Middleborough, MA	4.5

1810

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	101
2.	Philadelphia	87.3
3.	Baltimore	46.6
4.	Boston	38.7
5.	Charleston	24.7
6.	Salem, MA	23.1
7.	Washington	20.4
8.	New Orleans	17.2
9.	Albany	10.8
10.	Providence	10.1
11.	Richmond	9.7
12.	Norfolk	9.2
13.	Newport, RI	7.9
14.	Newburyport, MA	7.6
15.	Portland, ME	7.2
16.	Portsmouth, NH	6.9
17.	Nantucket	6.8
18.	Gloucester, MA	5.9
19.	Schenectady, NY	5.9
20.	New Haven	5.8

1820

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	131
2.	Philadelphia	109
3.	Baltimore	62.7
4.	Boston	54.0
5.	Washington	28.8
6.	New Orleans	27.2
7.	Charleston	24.8
8.	Salem, MA	22.6
9.	Albany	17.9
10.	Richmond	12.1
11.	Providence	11.8
12.	Cincinnati	9.6
13.	Portland, ME	8.6
14.	Norfolk	8.5
15.	Savannah	7.5
16.	Portsmouth, NH	7.3
17.	Newport, RI	7.3
18.	Nantucket	7.3
19.	Pittsburgh	7.3
20.	New Haven	7.2

1830

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	215
2.	Philadelphia	161
3.	Boston	85.6
4.	Baltimore	80.6
5.	New Orleans	46.1
6.	Albany	35.8
7.	Washington	35.5
8.	Charleston	30.3
9.	Salem, MA	27.3
10.	Cincinnati	24.8
11.	Providence	22.4
12.	Richmond	16.1
13.	Pittsburgh	15.4
14.	Newark	14.4
15.	Portland, ME	12.6
16.	Louisville	10.3
17.	New Haven	10.2
18.	Norfolk	9.8
19.	Rochester	9.2
20.	Buffalo	8.7

1840

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	374
2.	Philadelphia	259
3.	Boston	183
4.	Baltimore	110
5.	New Orleans	105
6.	Albany	72.0
7.	Cincinnati	54.8
8.	Washington	50.2
9.	Pittsburgh	43.7
10.	Charleston	42.6
11.	Providence	40.9
12.	Louisville	34.2
13.	Rochester	31.4
14.	Newark	29.8
15.	Buffalo	29.3
16.	Portland, ME	28.6
17.	St. Louis	28.4
18.	New Bedford	24.1
19.	New Haven	21.9
20.	Detroit	21.2

1850

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	650
2.	Philadelphia	405
3.	Boston	308
4.	Baltimore	179
5.	Cincinnati	133
6.	New Orleans	123
7.	Albany	107
8.	St. Louis	95
9.	Pittsburgh	86
10.	Buffalo	80
11.	Washington	67
12.	Providence	65
13.	Louisville	61
14.	Newark	57
15.	Charleston	50
16.	Rochester	49
17.	Chicago	40
18.	Syracuse	38
19.	Detroit	38
20.	Portland, ME	36

1860

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	1143
2.	Philadelphia	608
3.	Boston	374
4.	Baltimore	221
5.	Cincinnati	192
6.	St. Louis	176
7.	New Orleans	172
8.	Chicago	123
9.	Albany	116
10.	Newark	103
11.	Pittsburgh	93
12.	Buffalo	90
13.	Louisville	88
14.	Washington	80
15.	Providence	69
16.	Detroit	59
17.	San Francisco	57
18.	Rochester	56
19.	Cleveland	49
20.	Milwaukee	48

1870

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	1687
2.	Philadelphia	747
3.	Boston	501
4.	St. Louis	345
5.	Chicago	324
6.	Baltimore	283
7.	Cincinnati	257
8.	New Orleans	196
9.	Pittsburgh	170
10.	Albany	157
11.	San Francisco	151
12.	Buffalo	133
13.	Louisville	129
14.	Washington	123
15.	Providence	101
16.	Detroit	101
17.	Cleveland	101
18.	Milwaukee	75
19.	Rochester	73
20.	New Haven	65

1880

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	2234
2.	Philadelphia	949
3.	Boston	658
4.	Chicago	543
5.	St. Louis	386
6.	Baltimore	353
7.	Cincinnati	307
8.	Pittsburgh	265
9.	San Francisco	236
10.	New Orleans	219
11.	Albany	178
12.	Buffalo	171
13.	Cleveland	169
14.	Washington	164
15.	Detroit	147
16.	Louisville	143
17.	Providence	128
18.	Milwaukee	121
19.	Rochester	103
20.	Minneapolis	94

1890

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	2977
2.	Philadelphia	1180
3.	Chicago	1141
4.	Boston	818
5.	St. Louis	490
6.	Baltimore	453
7.	Pittsburgh	396
8.	Cincinnati	344
9.	Minneapolis	305
10.	San Francisco	302
11.	Cleveland	274
12.	Buffalo	272
13.	Washington	253
14.	New Orleans	245
15.	Detroit	237
16.	Milwaukee	212
17.	Albany	189
18.	Louisville	183
19.	Kansas City	165
20.	Providence	163

1900

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	4266
2.	Chicago	1759
3.	Philadelphia	1454
4.	Boston	1009
5.	St. Louis	626
6.	Pittsburgh	532
7.	Baltimore	532
8.	Cleveland	396
9.	Cincinnati	379
10.	San Francisco	375
11.	Minneapolis	374
12.	Buffalo	373
13.	Detroit	321
14.	Washington	302
15.	Milwaukee	296
16.	New Orleans	291
17.	Providence	243
18.	Kansas City	242
19.	Louisville	227
20.	Albany	188

1910

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	6021
2.	Chicago	2283
3.	Philadelphia	1746
4.	Boston	1213
5.	St. Louis	760
6.	Pittsburgh	655
7.	San Francisco	604
8.	Baltimore	589
9.	Cleveland	580
10.	Minneapolis	526
11.	Detroit	503
12.	Cincinnati	425

1920

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	7041
2.	Chicago	2859
3.	Philadelphia	2072
4.	Boston	1366
5.	Detroit	1071
6.	St. Louis	859
7.	Cleveland	834
8.	Pittsburgh	775
9.	San Francisco	771
10.	Baltimore	753
11.	Los Angeles	682
12.	Minneapolis	626

1930

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	8667
2.	Chicago	3718
3.	Philadelphia	2264
4.	Detroit	1721
5.	Los Angeles	1617
6.	Boston	1479
7.	San Francisco	996
8.	Cleveland	976
9.	Pittsburgh	960
10.	St. Louis	950
11.	Baltimore	836

1940

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	10135
2.	Chicago	4210
3.	Philadelphia	2538
4.	Los Angeles	2268
5.	Detroit	2041
6.	Boston	1746
7.	San Francisco	1156
8.	Pittsburgh	1134
9.	St. Louis	1102
10.	Cleveland	1079
11.	Baltimore	992

1950

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	12604
2.	Chicago	5208
3.	Los Angeles	4250
4.	Philadelphia	3297
5.	Detroit	2884
6.	Boston	2301
7.	San Francisco	2131
8.	St. Louis	1541
9.	Cleveland	1425
10.	Pittsburgh	1400
11.	Washington	1287

1960

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	14437
2.	Los Angeles	6805
3.	Chicago	6377
4.	Philadelphia	3989
5.	Detroit	3750
6.	San Francisco	2607
7.	Boston	2501
8.	Pittsburgh	2105
9.	Washington	1905
10.	St. Louis	1864
11.	Cleveland	1785

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
13.	Buffalo	420
14.	Milwaukee	389
15.	Los Angeles	374
16.	Kansas City	357
17.	Washington	357
18.	New Orleans	344
19.	Albany	283
20.	Providence	274

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
13.	Buffalo	539
14.	Milwaukee	478
15.	Cincinnati	470
16.	Washington	467
17.	Kansas City	455
18.	New Orleans	393
19.	Seattle	334
20.	Indianapolis	323

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
12.	Minneapolis	753
13.	Buffalo	620
14.	Milwaukee	615
15.	Cincinnati	580
16.	Kansas City	561
17.	Washington	527
18.	New Orleans	469
19.	Seattle	390
20.	Indianapolis	379

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
12.	Minneapolis	886
13.	Washington	800
14.	Buffalo	708
15.	Milwaukee	705
16.	Kansas City	632
17.	Cincinnati	559
18.	New Orleans	557
19.	Houston	471
20.	Seattle	451

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
12.	Baltimore	1162
13.	Minneapolis	987
14.	Buffalo	895
15.	Dallas	855
16.	Milwaukee	829
17.	Cincinnati	813
18.	Houston	701
19.	Kansas City	698
20.	New Orleans	660

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
12.	Dallas	1435
13.	Baltimore	1419
14.	Minneapolis	1377
15.	Miami	1173
16.	Milwaukee	1150
17.	Houston	1140
18.	Buffalo	1054
19.	Cincinnati	994
20.	Kansas City	921

1970

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	16193
2.	Los Angeles	7984
3.	Chicago	7164
4.	Philadelphia	4419
5.	Detroit	4085
6.	San Francisco	3049
7.	Boston	2703
8.	Washington	2671
9.	Pittsburgh	2124
10.	St. Louis	2123
11.	Dallas	2016
12.	Cleveland	1960
13.	Miami	1834
14.	Minneapolis	1701
15.	Houston	1678
16.	Baltimore	1580
17.	Milwaukee	1252
18.	Seattle	1238
19.	San Diego	1198
20.	Atlanta	1172

1980

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	16500
2.	Los Angeles	10841
3.	Chicago	7325
4.	Philadelphia	4830
5.	Detroit	4214
6.	San Francisco	4185
7.	Boston	3064
8.	Washington	2912
9.	Houston	2757
10.	Dallas	2713
11.	Miami	2616
12.	St. Louis	1849
13.	Pittsburgh	1810
14.	Minneapolis	1788
15.	Baltimore	1755
16.	Cleveland	1752
17.	San Diego	1704
18.	Atlanta	1613
19.	Phoenix	1409
20.	Seattle	1392

1990

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	16754
2.	Los Angeles	13522
3.	Chicago	7373
4.	San Francisco	5386
5.	Philadelphia	4970
6.	Miami	3948
7.	Detroit	3698
8.	Washington	3363
9.	Boston	3355
10.	Dallas	3265
11.	Houston	3088
12.	Seattle	2354
13.	San Diego	2348
14.	Atlanta	2158
15.	Minneapolis	2080
16.	Phoenix	2006
17.	St. Louis	1947
18.	Baltimore	1890
19.	Pittsburgh	1744
20.	Tampa	1709

2000

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	18689
2.	Los Angeles	14661
3.	Chicago	8419
4.	San Francisco	5973
5.	Philadelphia	5418
6.	Miami	4919
7.	Dallas	4445
8.	Houston	4063
9.	Boston	4032
10.	Washington	3934
11.	Detroit	3903
12.	Atlanta	3500
13.	Seattle	3018
14.	Phoenix	2975
15.	San Diego	2674
16.	Minneapolis	2389
17.	Baltimore	2251
18.	Denver	2231
19.	St. Louis	2078
20.	Tampa	2062

2010

Rank	Metro Area	Pop
1.	New York	20009
2.	Los Angeles	15750
3.	Chicago	9023
4.	San Francisco	6828
5.	Philadelphia	6003
6.	Dallas	5685
7.	Miami	5513
8.	Houston	5382
9.	Atlanta	4743
10.	Washington	4697
11.	Boston	4407
12.	Detroit	4160
13.	Phoenix	3863
14.	Seattle	3446
15.	San Diego	2985
16.	Denver	2716
17.	Minneapolis	2651
18.	Baltimore	2497
19.	Tampa	2442
20.	St. Louis	2246

Peak Years for Cities that have Declined in Rank

The following table of metro areas shows ones that have declined in rank and are not likely to ever reach their past high ranking again. If a metro area had its high ranking for more than one year, then the latest year is selected.

Metro Area	High Rank Year	High Rank
Boston	1740	1
Charleston	1790	4
Philadelphia	1800	1
Providence	1800	8
Norfolk	1800	9
Baltimore	1820	3
Richmond	1820	10
Portland, ME	1820	13
New Haven	1830	17
New Orleans	1840	5
Albany	1840	6

Metro Area	High Rank Year	High Rank
Louisville	1840	12
Rochester	1840	13
Buffalo	1850	10
Cincinnati	1860	5
St. Louis	1870	4
Minneapolis	1890	9
Pittsburgh	1910	6
Cleveland	1920	7
Detroit	1930	4
Milwaukee	1930	14
Chicago	1950	2

If you live in any of these metro areas, it might be interesting to see when your home town was at it's peak--for example, if you now live in St. Louis, you can imagine a time (1870) when your city was the 4th most-populous urban center in the country. Of course, "not likely to reach past high ranking" does not mean impossbile, but I think most would agree that no one expects to see Charleston, SC as the 4th largest metro area in the US anytime soon.

This list is sorted chronologically, and note that the first part of the list is dominated by East Coast cities, and the last part by metro areas in the Midwest. No cities in the West are on the list. Sunbelt metro areas have all been growing quickly in recent decades and at this point I don't think we can say that any have clearly peaked in their ranking.

Methodology and Sources

There is no consistent, long-standing, precise standard for metropolitan area definition in the United States. Prior to 1950, the U.S. census bureau didn't even have the concept. Since then, various kinds of metro areas (SMSAs, MSAs, CMSAs, etc.) have been defined by the federal OMB, but they are mostly based on entire counties and their definitions have fluctuated. More useful is the Urbanized Area, defined as contiguous land above a certain population density, but they, too, have only been tracked in the past few decades.

Complicating matters is determining exactly where the metro area boundaries fall and what cities should be included. For example, I list Newark as the 10th largest city in the US in 1860, but in 1870 it is (somewhat arbitraily) included as part of the New York metro area, so it falls off the chart. Salem and Boston have a simliar pattern. In general, though, I have lumped together cities like Minneapolis-St. Paul, Dallas-Fort Worth, Miami-Fort Lauderdale, San Francisco-Oakland, and others. A large rise in population over a ten-year period could be attributed to a city "capturing" the urban are of a neighboring city during that time.

Six main sources for population data were used:

- • #1: Census Bureau: Population of the 100 Largest Cities in the United States 1790-1990
- • #2: Urbanized Area Populations 1950-2000 from Demographia.com
- • #3: County-by-County U.S. Census data 1790-2000
- • #4: Metropolitan Area and Urbanized Area U.S. Census data from 1950-2010
- • #5: Colonial Port City Populations (Burrows, City Univeristy of New York-Booklyn--website no longer available) for populations 1680-1775
- • #6: In about 1984 I found a book in the University of Pennsylvania library that had top 20 metro area rankings for the 1860-1980 period. I wrote down the rankings from that book, but was never able to find it again, and to this day I still have no idea of its title, author, source, or methodology. All I have is the notes I wrote down. Indeed, my search for this information led directly to the research I did here, in an attempt to replicate the data from the book.

I first took all the city population data from source #1 and assigned suburban places to central cities, for example, Oakland to San Francisco or Newark to New York (as appropriate by year). Then I was able to get a total population of all cities (in the national top 100) for a metro area for a given year. For 1790 to 1830,

there were fewer than 100 total cities in the nation, so these totals were used exclusively for those years in the charts above.

For 1840 to 1940, I used the county data from source #3 and assigned counties to central cities (again, as appropriate by year), and to get a metro area population, I took the total of the cities listed in the top 100 and added a portion of the population in the surrounding counties. I used a figure ranging from about 25% in 1840 up to about 50% in 1940. This means that the 1900 population of the Cleveland metro area was obtained by taking the population of Cleveland and adding to it a percentage of the population of Cuyahoga County.

For 1950-2010 I generally used urbanized area populations (source #2) as much as possible, doing some combinations of urbanized areas that the census bureau did not do (for example, San Jose added to the San Francisco-Oakland urbanized area). I checked this again source #4, the metro area populations, for a sanity check.

Once I had all this, I went through and "smoothed out" the numbers a bit to avoid jarring ups and downs in rank for certain cities. I also compared my rankings against source #6 noted above, and made sure my numbers were within 2 ranking spots of theirs, and, if not, adjusting accordingly.

The Colonial Era top 4 lists were mainly from source #5 above, but cross-checked for sanity with other writings about early American cities. There are some population numbers that are widely quoted for New York, Boston, and Philadelphia that are clearly at odds with most sources, and they have been ignored. No attempt was made to add any suburban populations for the 1680-1775 period, so, for example, the 2000 people in Brooklyn in 1720 are not included in the New York population. At that time, the concept of a metropolitan area was simply not applicable, so simple city populations were used.

The end results are, at best, educated wild guesses. This is not a serious academic research project and my methodology would not hold up to peer-review scrutiny. This means that no number above should be considered 100% accurate, and most city rankings are within plus or minus 2 slots, at best. There are simply too many judgment calls that went into the methodology--which cities were part of which metro areas, what percentage of a county's population was urban, what counties are part of which metro areas, and so on. But I think it does give a reasonably accurate big-picture view of the changing fortunes in America's urban landscape.

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Web site: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yQwpVFC6yc

You might have heard that earlier this week a pregnant nun, from the Italian town of Rieti, gave birth to a baby after stating that she didn't know she was pregnant. She said, after entering hospital that she was having severe abdominal pains, which she assumed were stomach cramps. When the stomach cramps turned out to be a baby boy, the nun, Roxana Rodriguez – and most other people – was shocked. The 31-year-old nun, originally from El Salvador, who belonged to a convent in Rieti, said she had absolutely no idea whatsoever that she was pregnant, suggesting that, perhaps, it was an *'immaculate conception.'* Just to make sure she covered that base, the naughty nun decided to name the baby boy Francis, after the current Pope,- a good move, we think. Soon after the controversial news broke in Italy, the mayor of Rieti, Simone Petrangi, appealed to local residents to respect the nun's privacy. However, a number of local residents clubbed together, and sent clothes and donations to the hospital where the nun gave birth. She said, following the birth of her son Francis: *"I did not know I was pregnant. I only felt a stomach pain."* The question is: Are we buying it, people?

It was reported that the other nuns at the convent expressed their complete shock at the strange pregnancy of their holy sister. A local pastor, Don Fabrizio Borrelio, said that to his mind the nun was telling the truth. and had no idea she was pregnant. So you may want to ask the pertinent question here: What do they put in the water in Rieti? But before you do, you may be surprised to learn that, in fact, a British Medical Journal revealed that, according to a study, one in 200 woman in America claim to have given birth without having had intercourse. Either way, the controversy surrounding the nun birth has caused a lot of commotion in Catholic circles in Italy. The best part about it is that, even though the nun gave birth *'in sin'*, her local community, after the fact, rushed to aid and support her.

But if you believe in science the real scandal is that there is talk that the pregnant nun Roxana Rodriguez may have been raped. And raped by Catholic clergy.

In a related story from **The Inquisitr,** while some were horrified at the nun birth, Rodriguez called the baby boy a *"gift from God"* and named him Francesco in honor of Pope Francis. While the 31-year-old El

Salvador nun thought the pregnancy was due to an ongoing gastric and bladder infection, and believed the swelling in her abdomen was related to poor digestion. Others doubt this story and claim the pregnant nun knew what she was doing, thus breaking her vows of chastity she made as a nun in September of 2012. Things took a dark twist when Massimo Casciani, spokesman for the local bishop of the convent where Rodriguez was staying, hints that the formerly pregnant nun may have been raped:

"At some point the bishop will visit the nun but at the moment he has not yet seen here. We shall be investigating the circumstances behind – the child could be the fruit of a consensual rapport but it could also have been as a result of violence. That's why we need to investigate properly."

Unfortunately, the rape of nuns is an ongoing problem the Catholic Church has fighting for years: *"Confidential Vatican reports… revealed that members of the Catholic clergy have been exploiting their financial and spiritual authority to gain sexual favors from nuns, particularly those from the Third World who are more likely to be culturally conditioned to be subservient to men. The reports… said that such priests had demanded sex in exchange for favors, such as certification to work in a given diocese. In extreme instances, the priests had made nuns pregnant and then encouraged them to have abortions."* Even the situation hasn't been investigated, the convent also announced Rodriguez was expelled from the convent to "lead a secular life with her baby, away from religious institutions." Allegations over a potential rape also were not part of the story told by Father Benedetto Falcetti, head of the regional branch of the Catholic charity Caritas, who claimed the nun became pregnant in 2013 when she returned to El Salvador for a short visit and ended up "rekindling a childhood flame."

Whatever the truth may be, Roxana Rodriguez says she's just focusing on moving on with her life: *"How do I feel? More like a mum than a nun…. I will definitely take care of my baby because he is a gift of God…. However I am very worried about the commotion that this has stirred up. They are talking about this, not only in Italy but in my own country and I am afraid to return there."* Hospital director Pasquale Carducci says baby Francesco and the mother are doing well and will be discharged by tomorrow. But her identity as the pregnant nun who gave birth made her something of a celebrity: *"We have had to put extra security on the maternity wing because of all the interest. Like any new mum she is delighted but obviously this has created a great deal of clamor because she is a nun. There have been calls and gifts from dozens of well-wishers and she has passed on her thanks to all these people."* If Roxana Rodriguez was indeed raped do you think the Catholic Church should apologize to the nun and allow her to stay at the convent, baby and all? And if she was raped by a member of the clergy, is this another scandal that the Catholic Church is facing.

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I know that in Silicon Valley, Bitcoin is seen as the future but this month T-Mobile announced a new service that may change the landscape much sooner as its renegade CEO John Legere new idea should shake up the telecom industry. His company's latest offering is a low-cost alternative for millions of Americans who don't have a bank account or rely on expensive checking-cashing and payday-loan services. From their Mobile Money accounts, users will be able to direct-deposit paychecks, deposit checks via smartphone camera, make purchases, pay bills and withdraw cash from 42,000 ATMs across the country, T-Mobile said.

T-Mobile is fond of saying that it's redefining the mobile carrier world with its *"uncarrier"* initiatives. And its latest announcement, on Wednesday, adds a new angle to the definition of "mobile banking": The company is now getting into the check-cashing business. The service, called Mobile Money, is timed for a February launch and will be available at T-Mobile retail locations and participating Safeway stores around the country, the company says. The big promise from T-Mobile is that the service will allow users to cash their checks without *"excessive fees"* that traditional check-cashing companies require.

Customers don't have to be T-Mobile wireless subscribers to be Mobile Money subscribers — or vice versa — but being both has its perks. The company will automatically waive monthly fees for its wireless customers. *"Millions of Americans pay outrageous fees to check cashers, payday lenders and other predatory businesses – just for the right to use their own money,"* said T-Mobile chief executive John Legere in a press release. *"Mobile Money shifts the balance of power for T-Mobile customers and keeps more money in their pockets."*

So, how will it work? T-Mobile customers will get a T-Mobile prepaid Visa Card that can be loaded and reloaded through the Mobile Money app. The company did not give specifics but said it will offer the services at a *"reduced fee or $0 cost"* for its registered wireless customers. The service will require no minimum balance and also promises no overdraft fees. On an information page, T-Mobile said there will be fees for *"non-typical use,"* such as overnight card shipments, using an out-of-network ATM and putting rush demands on checks to be cashed. From their Mobile Money accounts, users will be able to direct-

deposit paychecks, deposit checks via smartphone camera, make purchases, pay bills and withdraw cash from 42,000 ATMs across the country, T-Mobile said.

The service sounds similar to a program Walmart and American Express began offering in 2012 called Bluebird, which gives users a prepaid card aimed at the *"non-banked"* or *"underbanked"* sections of the population who do not have traditional bank accounts. As The Washington Post's Danielle Douglas reported, banks are bracing for the possibility that the federal government may begin imposing new rules on such consumer products, including prepaid cards. But T-Mobileappears eager to step into the space. *"Mobile Money builds on T-Mobile's financing experience to provide a sensible and affordable alternative to checking fees for the roughly 68 million U.S. adults who do not have traditional accounts and have to rely on alternative financial services,"* the company said in a statement.

The move makes a certain amount of sense , given that T-Mobile has aggressively gone after the lower end of the smartphone market and the prepaid market — moves that make them particularly popular with young customers and those in urban areas. Those demographics match pretty well with the FDIC's profile of American's unbanked from a 2012 report. Those interested can sign up for the service starting Wednesday, T-Mobile said.

THIS WEEK's QUOTE

…..also good news, it looks like the economic recovery that we've been waiting for so long is finally in full swing and Congress has finally agreed to a budget and the Obamacare web site is working now and the stock market is through the roof or as Republicans term it the doomsday scenario.

Bill Maher

VIDEO OF THE WEEK

A great rebuttal to the Naturopaths and other pseudo health nuts

Web site: https://showyou.com/v/y-lhk7-5eBCrs/penn-teller-kill-the-antivaccination-argument-in-just-over?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=timeline

GREAT DANCE ACT

Kenichi Ebina performs an epic Matrix -- Style Martial Arts Dance on America's Got Talent

Web site: http://safeshare.tv/w/NhTuprICfT

THIS WEEK's MUSIC

This week I am feeling the music of one of my all-time favorite musicians, **Ms. Nina Simone** who lived in my hometown of Mt. Vernon, New York when I was growing up and was the cousin of my friend's Sonny Gordon's father. In addition, I was privileged to witness one of the greatest concerts of all time in the late 1960s at the Village Gate in Greenwich Village New York, when feeling the love of the audience, Nina Simone played until sunrise, even though the club's management turned off the electricity and audio system in an attempt to get her off the stage and empty the house. Nina Simone was an original and before and since there has no one like her. But more important she epitomized the spirit and time in search of equality, fairness and celebration of us all.

Nina Simone (*born Eunice Kathleen Waymon; February 21, 1933 – April 21, 2003*) was an American singer, songwriter, pianist, arranger, and civil rights activist widely associated with jazz music. Simone aspired to become a classical pianist while working in a broad range of styles including classical, jazz, blues, folk, R&B, gospel, and pop.

Born the sixth child of a preacher's family in North Carolina, Simone aspired to be a concert pianist. Her musical path changed direction after she was denied a scholarship to the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, despite a well-received audition. Simone was later told by someone working at Curtis that she was rejected because she was black. When she began playing in a small club in Philadelphia to fund her continuing musical education and become a classical pianist she was required to sing as well. She was approached for a recording by Bethlehem Records, and her rendering of "I Loves You, Porgy" was a hit in the United States in 1958. Over the length of her career Simone recorded more than 40 albums, mostly between 1958—when she made her debut with Little Girl Blue—and 1974.

Her musical style arose from a fusion of gospel and pop songs with classical music, in particular with influences from her first inspiration, Johann Sebastian Bach, and accompanied with her expressive jazz-like singing in her characteristic contralto. She injected as much of her classical background into her music as possible to give it more depth and quality, as she felt that pop music was inferior to classical. Her intuitive grasp on the audience–performer relationship was gained from a unique background of playing piano accompaniment for church revivals and sermons regularly from the early age of six years old.

In the early 1960s, she became involved in the civil rights movement and the direction of her life shifted once again. Simone's music was highly influential in the fight for equal rights in the United States. In later years, she lived abroad, finally settling in France in 1992. She received a Grammy Hall of Fame Award in 2000 and was a fifteen-time Grammy Award nominee over the course of her career. With this, I invite everyone to enjoy the music of **Ms. Nina Simone.**

Nina Simone – ***FEELING GOOD*** -- http://youtu.be/OfJRX-8SXOs

Nina Simone – ***I Loves You Porgy*** -- http://youtu.be/ewNw78TpRPk

Nina Simone – ***Four Woman*** -- http://youtu.be/WRmzQ39sXTQ and http://youtu.be/Nf9Bj1CXPH8

Nina Simone – ***To Be Young, Gifted and Black*** -- http://youtu.be/_hdVFiANBTk

Nina Simone – ***Born Under a Bad Sign*** -- http://youtu.be/yxhUk4foXIg

Nina Simone – ***Mississippi Goddam*** -- http://youtu.be/fVQjGGJVSXc

Nina Simone – ***The Ballad of Hollis Brown*** -- http://youtu.be/bm-g0p2yTaU

Nina Simone – ***The Other Woman*** -- http://youtu.be/2pYkayadazY

Nina Simone – ***To Love Somebody*** -- http://youtu.be/7jgHOcXTr50

Nina Simone – *Black Is The Color Of My True Love's Hair* -- http://youtu.be/NWmCbEbMmeU

Nina Simone – ***Suzanne*** -- http://youtu.be/3pscDRqkFro

Nina Simone – ***The Look of Love*** -- http://youtu.be/ln-Xo2RMnY4

Nina Simone – ***Turn! Turn! Turn!*** -- http://youtu.be/CZv-RNdmYoI

Nina Simone – ***Sinnerman*** -- http://youtu.be/QH3Fx41Jpl4

Nina Simone – ***Just in Time*** -- http://youtu.be/CgXUeRbel3c

I hope that you have enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you and yours a great week.....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC