

Bounty: Let Times Square Celebrate a New High

By Jeffery J. Smith

Imagine the crowds in Time's Square celebrating not just a new year but a new number, a new high in the worth of Earth in America. It's the densest location in America and the most valuable; the former leads to the latter.

Since 2009, Times Square—the heart of Manhattan, which is the heart of New York City, which is the heart of urban America (proof: [the map gracing the cover of The New Yorker](#))—has become more like any other [world-class city, going car-free](#), setting up sidewalk cafes. Even with more shoppers (especially in the summer), the value of land there continued its recessionary slide a couple years. The bigger they are, the harder they fall.

In actuality prices were still sky-high. But since 2011, values there have gone ballistic. Indeed, throughout much of [the Big Apple, site values are in the stratosphere](#).

Because where the most people want to play—in city centers—that's where people pay the most to live and work. Densely populated New York, London, Tokyo, *et al*, all have the priceiest real estate on earth. Buyers are billionaires.

Their stratospheric values are all due to location, to being situated in a prosperous nation engaged in nonstop, vigorous trade. For these United States, we tallied all the metro, natural, spectral, etc values we could lay our hands on. Our project did collect, collate, and package stats in intelligible form.

Output

We announced the tally to: readers here, volunteers, and professional helpers, like cooperative sources (as within [the Fed itself](#)), and to all the agencies. We told interested parties like activists, foundations ([Schalkenbach](#) who pitched in), politicians (California's Congressman [Mike Thompson](#) speaks knowledgeably), and even visionary businesses ([Zillow](#)). Despite further concentrated media, we disseminated summaries to communicators: reporters, editors of print media and websites ([TruthOut](#) publishes some of ours), outlets in E media and old print like newspapers and magazines.

Along the way, we discovered the most searched relevant words and gathered visual memes—essential ingredients for a TED Talk. Let it become the next intellectual *tour de force* following on the heels of [Thomas Piketty's](#) *Capital in the 21st Century*. Ours would be more like *Land Rents in the 21st Century*, but too few would grasp the special meanings of those technical terms. *Counting Bounty* should work better.

Broadcasting the news may cause a groundswell that reaches a critical mass who'd call for an official calculation of the worth of Earth in America. Now we wait, watching as readers and visitors connect the dots. One may be like [the first one at a gathering to dance](#)—awkward. But those who know what's fun—or are affirming—go from the sidelines to gung-ho. Soon almost everyone is dancing, even if it's [an odd place to dance and all the participants are strangers](#).

Progress

As Mahatma Gandhi is supposed to have written, "*First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" However, although Gandhi wrote a similar version albeit longer (*Freedom's Battle*, 1922), a version that is shorter and more word-for-word was spoken in 1914 by labor leader Nicholas Klein in his

speech to a textile union. Whoever deserves the credit, the quote is one of the most widely cited.

The adage neatly expresses the stages of social change. Right now, phase one, those curious about the worth of Earth are being profoundly ignored. They can only hope soon will come the ridicule; then they'd be one major step closer to the figure becoming popular. After that, the elite and minions would oppose researchers fiercely—again good news. Right around the corner would await the statistic becoming official. And society would finally get this genomic show on the road.

Paradigms shift, but not of their own accord. First, somebody has a new view. As [Kuhn noted, that somebody must come from outside the relevant field](#) (as where we stand). The outsider's new analysis makes sense. It gets resisted. But it makes sense so it spreads and eventually wins. Why wait?

Questions? Comments? Ideas? Please get in touch. Let's have fun!

This article is Part 43 - Coda of a series highlighting the forthcoming book, "Bounty Hunter: a gadfly's quest to know the worth of Earth," by Jeffery J. Smith. To date, the experts have not risen to meet the challenge. Indeed, some have even stood in the way. Yet the payoff for knowing this datum is huge.