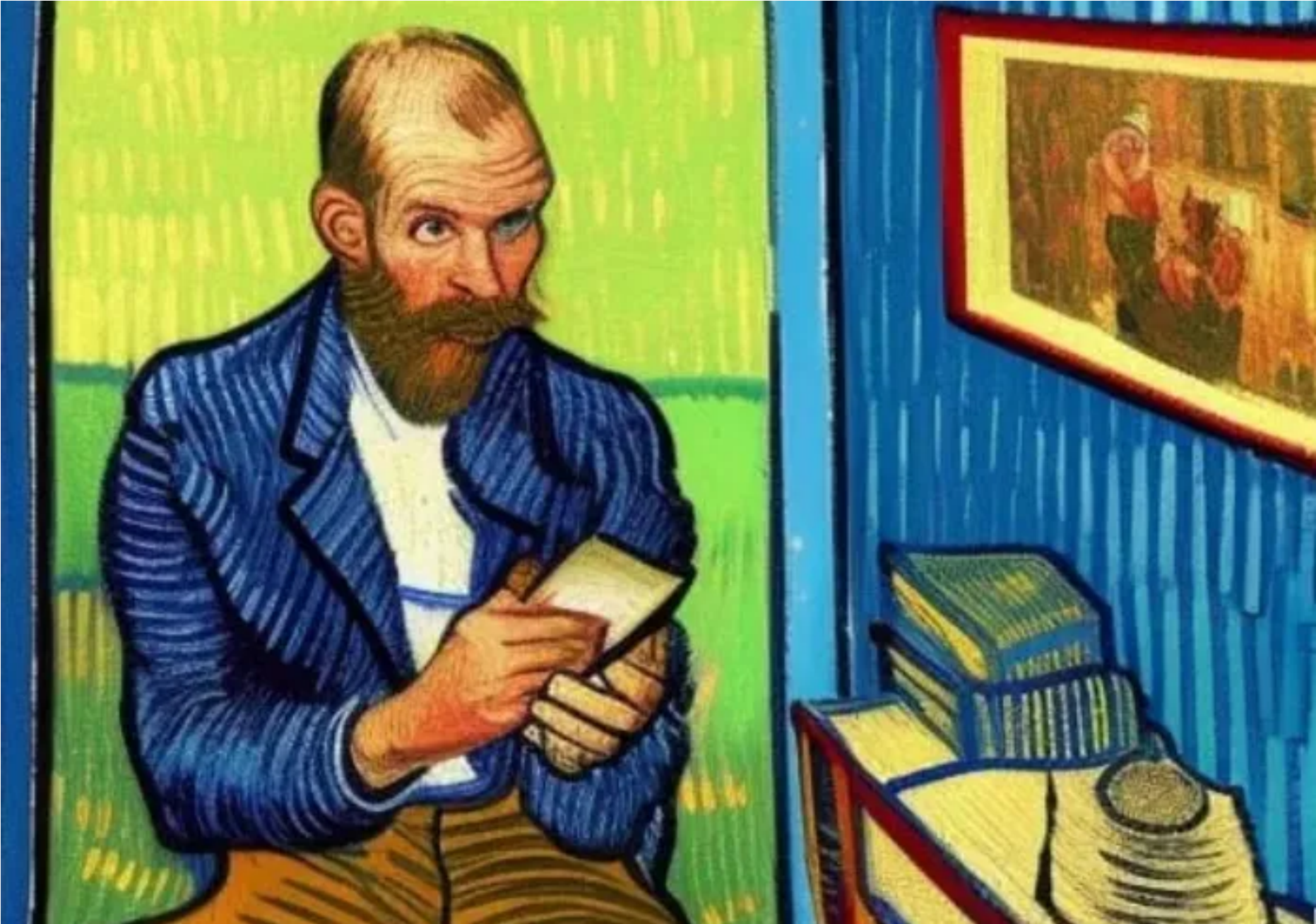


**FOCUS: It Is Harmful to My Psychological Health for Me to Read David Brooks:**



Seeking therapy after reading a column by David Brooks, by Stable Diffusion via NightCafe

David Brooks says: I did not do my job. I have not been doing my job for twenty years. Yet I do not apologize for drawing my paycheck and holding onto my job:

**David Brooks:** [The Party’s Over for Us. Where Do We Go Now?:](#) “By the early 2000s, I came to believe that the free market policies that were right to combat stagnation and sclerosis a few decades earlier were not right for an age of inequality and social breakdown. Then the congressional Republicans began to oppose almost every positive federal good, even George W. Bush’s compassionate conservatism...

Do you think that maybe *doing your job* required *telling your readers* back at the time, in the early 2000s, *that neoliberal supply-side conservatism was played out*? Do you think that maybe *doing your job* required *telling your readers* back at the time, in the early 2000s, *that “compassionate conservatism” was very weak and unsatisfactory tea*? What conception of “doing your job” do you have that does not include doing those two things in the early 2000s?

**David Brooks:** [The Party’s Over for Us. Where Do We Go Now?:](#) “In the 2000 Republican primaries I enthusiastically supported John McCain. I believed in his approach to governance and I admired him enormously. But by 2008, when he got the nomination, the party had shifted and McCain had shifted along with it. I walked into the polling booth that November genuinely not knowing if I would vote for McCain or Barack Obama. Then an optical illusion flashed across my brain. McCain and Obama’s names appeared to be written on the ballot in 12-point type. But Sarah Palin’s name looked like it was written in red in 24-point type. I don’t think I’ve ever said this publicly before, but I voted for Obama”

Do you think that maybe *doing your job* required *telling your readers* back at the time, in 2008, *that Sarah Palin was a dealbreaker for you, and that you had voted for Obama-Biden*? What conception of “doing your job” do you have?

**David Brooks:** [The Party’s Over for Us. Where Do We Go Now?:](#) “I wish we had taken that Buchanan victory [in the 1992 Republican New Hampshire primary] more seriously, since it was a precursor of what was to come. I wish we had pivoted our conservatism even faster away from (sorry) *Wall Street Journal* editorial page ideas and come up with conservative approaches to inequality, to deindustrialization, to racial disparities, etc. I wish, in other words, that our mentalities had shifted faster”

Do you think that maybe *doing your job* required *telling your readers* sometime beforfe now *that you wish you had, back in 1993, joined with the Rubin Wing of the Democratic Party rather than the Gingrich Wing of the Republican Party*? What conception of “doing your job” do you have that does not include doing those two things in the early 2000s?

In fact, why didn’t you join with the Rubin Wing of the Democratic Party back in 1993, when you had some influence? We certainly could have used your influence. As it was, we were able to do enough to give America its best decade since 1955-1965. But we could have given much more if we had only been a little bit stronger.

Why didn’t you join with and work alongside us? We had very strong technocratic, reality-based arguments. And it is not that you had made a strong commitment to play for Team Republican:

**David Brooks:** [The Party’s Over for Us. Where Do We Go Now?:](#) “Even in my red-hot youth! I didn’t see myself as a Republican, just a conservative”. It’s always wrong for a writer to align too closely to a party. Furthermore, I belong in the American tradition! Hamilton! the Whig Party and Lincoln! Theodore Roosevelt, parts of Reagan and McCain. I wasted years writing essays on how Republicans could maintain this tradition!. I think the Democrats are a better Hamiltonian home!

When you have spent your entire career working diligently to tear down the political power of Democrats and build up the political power of Republicans, to now say “My Bad!”, and to go on drinking cocktails and chatting as usual—rather than giving all you have to the poor, shutting up, and taking up a life of anonymous service to others! I won’t say that words fail me, but I am genuinely flummoxed.

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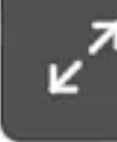
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ONE IMAGE: World Economic Hotspots:

# Microregions that account for half of the GDP generated globally from 2000 to 2019







Note: The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by McKinsey & Company. Regions ranked in descending order by level increase in GDP per km<sup>2</sup> (GDP per km<sup>2</sup> in 2019 minus GDP per km<sup>2</sup> in 2000). Growth is defined as the net increase in GDP produced by a given region from 2000 to 2019.

**McKinsey & Company**

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Very Briefly Noted:

- **Joe Weisenthal:** â€˜[There's not going](#) to be a debt ceiling negotiation because the GOP in Congress has zero leverage on the question. So they're gonna make Treasury switch from debt financing to coin financing? Big whoopâ€™!
- **Andrew Freedman:** â€˜[In essence, Exxon didnâ€™t just know](#), they knew precisely" how much the Earth would warm in the 20th and 21st centuries, decades ago. Interesting new study out todayâ€™!
- **Betony Jones:** â€˜[It's really happening](#). The U.S. is rapidly growing a battery industry from scratch. The future is brightâ€™!
- **Dan Shipper:** â€˜[GPT-3 is the best journal](#) I've ever used. It feels like a warm and supportive friend who can ask the right questions, and pull out patterns in your thinking you may have missed. The possibilities are endless. Here's how I use itâ€™!
- **Eric Gilliam:** [A Report on Scientific Branch-Creation](#): â€˜How the Rockefeller Foundation helped bootstrap the field of molecular biologyâ€™!
- **Dan Zak:** [The boring journey of Matthew Yglesias](#): â€˜The Washington ur-bloggerâ€™s lightly contrarian, mildly annoying, somewhat influential, very lucrative path toward the political center...
- **No Lie with Brian Tyler Cohen:** â€˜[Kevin McCarthy just said](#) George Santos shouldnâ€™t resign because â€œa lot ofâ€ his colleagues also lie. He really said the quiet part out loud.
- **Oliver Willis:** [Nothing The Right Freaks Out About Is Real](#): â€˜Pick a so-called controversy, any controversy. â€œObama phones.â€ Critical race theory. Drag queen story hour. Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The Green New Deal. Genderless potato head toys. Migrant caravans. Cities burned down by Antifa. M&Mâ€™s that arenâ€™t sexy enough. M&Mâ€™s in a lesbian relationship. Transgender M&Mâ€™s sâ€™!. None of it is real. Not a single, solitary moment of it. It is completely fake...
- **Betsey Stevenson:** â€˜[If we ever really get like North Korea](#) we'll be crying about how we let the Kari Lakes of America dismantle our democracy. You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone, despite this try your hardest worry now...
- **Lavie Tidhar:** â€˜[I think I'm really beginning](#) to lose the will to live with Twitter: â€œThe â€˜For youâ€™ and â€˜Followingâ€™ tabs replace â€˜Homeâ€™ and â€˜Latestâ€™ and will be pinned to the top of your timeline so you can easily switch between them. Swipe to switch timelines instead of tappingâ€™!

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Â¶s:

**Brad DeLong:** [Seneca vs. Posidonius on WheÃ¼er Technology Is Philosophy](#): â€˜Posidonius for, Seneca against; it is a pity that the monks erased all the surviving manuscripts of Posidonius: he sounds like somebody it would have been good to get to know, virtuallyâ€™an urban Greek polymath would almost surely have been better company than a Roman aristocratâ€™!

**Matt Yglesias:** [The most important 2016 "misinformation" came from the regular news media](#): “It wasnâ€™t the GRU that made The New York Times run [its] front page on the weekend before Election Day. Reasonable people can, to an extent, disagree about the appropriateness of the coverage of the Clinton email story in *The New York Times* and on network broadcast news during the 2016 campaign. But what I donâ€™t think can be seriously doubted is that this coverage was: High-profile and seen by more people than any information operation. Not â€œfake newsâ€œ in the original sense of being willfully made up. Damaging to Clintonâ€™s election prospectsâ€œ. After the election, the *Times* published a lot of great journalism about the Trump White House and also benefitted financially from a liberal subscriber base that saw the *Times* as a bastion of freedom and enlightenment in a dark timeâ€œ. But the fact remainsâ€œ blame for Trumpâ€™s narrow victory over Clintonâ€œ [from those shaping the] information environmentâ€œ [belongs on] the most influential mainstream news outlets in Americaâ€œ

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**Tyler Cowen:** [Dream Bureaucracy Jobs](#): “The [Aztec bureaucracy](#) before CortÃ©s arrivedâ€œ. It wasn't a very pleasant bureaucracy, but it must have done a lot of things very wellâ€œ. The Aztec Triple Allianceâ€œ canalsâ€œ biotechnologyâ€œ untutored (in the formal sense) farmers in central Mexico playing around with plant breeding led to achievements that no other civilization has come close to, including ours as far as I can tell. An extraordinarily impressive set of people and culture; the language, Nahuatl, is beautiful; the poetryâ€œ what we know about them; the quality of the foodâ€œ It all just seems incredibleâ€œ

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