



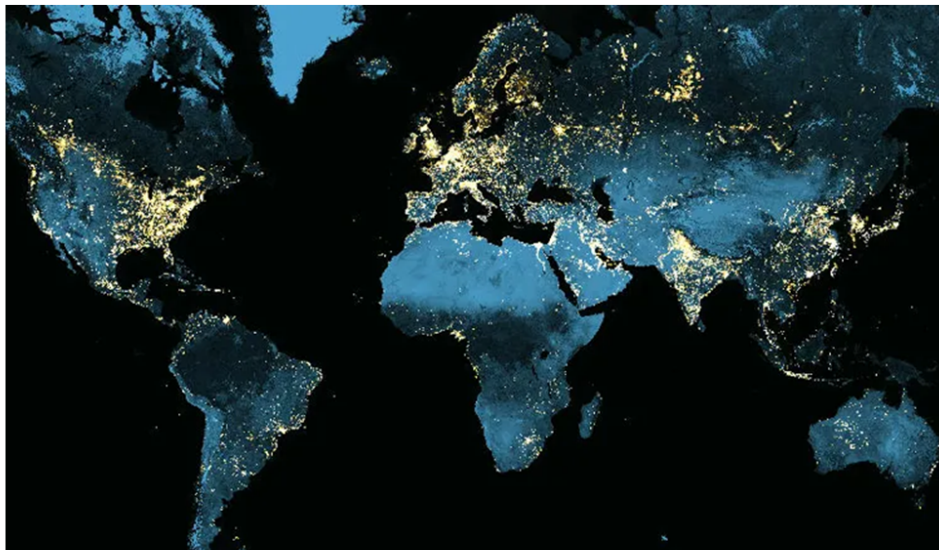
Harry's Take

August 9, 2022

Night Lights Show the Global Economy at a Glance: Affluence Accentuates Brightness

I have always loved the NASA images taken from space of global lights at night. In these photos, you can see the whole global economy very quickly and summarily. We all know where most of the population in the world lives, between India and China/East Asia, including Southeast Asia. But where do we see the brightest lights? North America and Western Europe... and increasingly now in Northern India and Northeastern China.

Global Night Lights: Accentuates Economic Affluence Over Population



Source: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/>

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Look at how dramatically brighter the eastern half of the U.S. is vs. the western half. And look at Scandinavia. Norway, Sweden, and Finland have small populations, but look how bright they are along the coasts. Note the power corridor in brightness between southern England and Northern Italy in Europe. And even Japan and South Korea shine brighter than most of China, which has a massively higher population, other than Northeast China right across from them.

This image shows at a glance what's most important for the economy: it's not the number of people that matters as much as the affluence level of those people. In India, with 1.4 billion people, the GDP per capita is a mere \$7,333 (and that's adjusted for purchasing power). Without the PPP adjustment it is about \$2,000 GDP per capita, vs. more like \$65,000 in the U.S. That comes out to only 40% of the average global GDP per capita, where emerging countries already dominate because of their much higher and faster-growing populations. People with more money burn a lot more energy, and that shows up not just as broader areas of light, but as much brighter lights on satellite photos like these.

It will be even more interesting for me to look at this map just before I die, likely in 20 years or so. India and Southeast Asia will grow brighter the fastest and China will grow less fast but still brighter relative to the Western world, which won't get much brighter as it matures. By 2065, India will have a larger GDP per capita than China and will be the most affluent large nation in the emerging world. It will become the brightest light shown on this map. The U.S. and Europe will change little in population or brightness...

And which area will light up the most, farther in the future, mostly long after I die? Africa! Look how dark it is now! India will be the largest and most powerful country by 2065, with the Middle East also advancing massively. Most of the growth after that will occur in Africa, which ultimately will have the greatest population of any major region, as we approach and move beyond the year 2100 and to the peak of the present mega-innovation 500-year financial cycle, which will be around 2140–2150.

Who says you can't see the future past the next election?

Not me!

Harry

Got a question or comment? You can contact us at info@hsdent.com.