

David brooks bobos in paradise

The BoBo's Paradise: A Look at David Brooks' Vision and How We Can Adapt

In 2000, David Brooks, a prominent journalist and author, published "Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There," a book that sparked a national conversation about the changing landscape of American society. Brooks coined the term "BoBo" – a blend of "bohemian" and "bourgeois" – to describe a new elite, a rising class of individuals who embraced both cultural and economic success. But are the BoBos truly living in paradise? And more importantly, can we learn from their experiences to create a more fulfilling and meaningful life, regardless of our social standing? This post explores the world of BoBos, analyzing their values, lifestyles, and potential pitfalls, while offering practical advice for navigating the complexities of modern life. *The BoBo Ethos: A Blend of Counterculture and Capitalism* Brooks argues that the BoBos represent a unique cultural phenomenon, a fusion of counterculture values with the materialistic aspirations of the bourgeois. They are driven by a desire for both social and economic advancement, seeking out careers in creative industries like technology, media, and the arts. They value education, community, and social

consciousness, yet simultaneously embrace luxury goods, fine dining, and a taste for the finer things in life. *BoBo Characteristics:* • Highly educated and well-paid: BoBos often hold advanced degrees and work in high-demand fields, earning a comfortable living. •

Socially conscious: They are passionate about social justice, environmental issues, and humanitarian causes. • **Culturally**

sophisticated: They value art, music, literature, and enjoy attending cultural events. • **Health-conscious:** BoBos prioritize fitness,

nutrition, and wellness, often engaging in activities like yoga, cycling, and organic eating. • **Tech-savvy:** They are adept at using technology and are often early adopters of new gadgets and trends.

• **Family-oriented:** They believe in strong family connections and often raise their children with a focus on education and personal development.

The Rise of the BoBo: Brooks attributes the rise of the BoBos to several factors, including: • The changing economy:

The rise of the knowledge economy has created a demand for highly skilled professionals, favoring those with advanced education and specialized skills. • **The decline of traditional values:** The decline

of traditional social structures and the rise of individualism have allowed for a more diverse range of lifestyles and values. • The

influence of technology: The internet and social media have fostered a sense of interconnectedness and cultural exchange, allowing for the emergence of new trends and communities. **BoBo Paradise: A**

Reality Check While the BoBo lifestyle appears idyllic, Brooks argues that it is not without its flaws. He points to a potential

disconnect between their values and their actions, questioning whether their social consciousness translates into real-world

change. He also highlights the competitive and demanding nature of

their world, which can lead to stress, anxiety, and a sense of constant striving. **Practical Tips for Navigating Modern Life:**

- **Embrace your passions:** Just like the BoBos, find something you are passionate about and pursue it with zeal. Whether it's writing, music, art, or social activism, your passions can become a source of joy and fulfillment.
- **Prioritize your mental and physical well-being:** Aim for a balanced lifestyle that includes regular exercise, mindful practices, and healthy eating habits.
- **Connect with your community:** Build meaningful relationships with people who share your values and interests. Join clubs, volunteer, and engage in community events.
- *Be mindful of your consumption:* While it is tempting to chase the latest trends and luxury goods, remember that true happiness is not found in material possessions.
- **Seek a fulfilling career:** Choose a career that aligns with your values and allows you to make a positive contribution to the world.

Conclusion: Beyond the Paradise David Brooks' "Bobos in Paradise" serves as a powerful reflection on the evolving nature of American society. It highlights the complexities of modern life and encourages us to critically examine our values and aspirations. While the BoBos may not have achieved a true paradise, their story offers valuable lessons for all of us. We can learn from their drive, their commitment to their passions, and their focus on social change, while being mindful of the potential pitfalls of a highly competitive and demanding world. Ultimately, the key to finding fulfillment lies in cultivating a balanced life that integrates our personal values with our social responsibilities, allowing us to create our own paradise.

FAQs:

1. Are BoBos a monolithic group? No, the BoBo phenomenon is complex, and there is a wide range of individuals who fit into this

category. There are variations in their backgrounds, values, and lifestyles. 2. *Is the BoBo lifestyle accessible to everyone?* While BoBos are often associated with high incomes and privileged backgrounds, their values and lifestyle choices can be adopted by individuals from all walks of life. 3. What are the criticisms of the BoBo phenomenon? Critics argue that the BoBo lifestyle is superficial, materialistic, and elitist. They also point to the potential disconnect between their values and their actions. 4. How can we make a positive impact without becoming BoBos? There are many ways to make a positive impact without adopting the BoBo lifestyle. Volunteer your time, support local organizations, and engage in advocacy work that aligns with your values. 5. Can we create a more inclusive and just society? Yes, by challenging social inequalities and promoting equality of opportunity, we can work towards a more inclusive and just society. We can do this by supporting organizations that fight for social justice, engaging in political activism, and promoting diversity and inclusion in our own communities.

David Brooks and the Enduring Resonance of

"Bobos in Paradise"

In the ever-shifting landscape of American culture and social commentary, certain books leave an indelible mark, sparking conversations that echo for years. David Brooks' 2000 bestseller, "Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There," is undoubtedly one such work. More than two decades after its initial publication, the book continues to be a touchstone for understanding a particular segment of American society, its values, and its often-paradoxical existence. If you've ever found yourself wondering about the folks who seem to effortlessly blend intellectual pursuits with artisanal coffee habits, or who champion social causes while enjoying significant financial privilege, then "Bobos in Paradise" offers a fascinating, and often humorous, exploration.

The Genesis of the Bobo: A Cultural Synthesis

Brooks' central thesis in "Bobos in Paradise" is the emergence of a new elite class, the "bourgeois-bohemians," or "bobos." This group, he argues, is a fascinating synthesis of two seemingly disparate ideologies: the bohemianism of the 1960s and the bourgeois values of the pre-60s era. The bohemians, with their anti-establishment sentiments, artistic leanings, and rejection of materialist pursuits, have, according to Brooks, infiltrated and, in a sense, co-opted the very institutions they once scorned. They've achieved a comfortable economic standing, often through careers in fields like technology,

media, academia, and non-profit management, yet they retain a veneer of their counter-cultural roots.

Bohemian Roots, Bourgeois Branches

Brooks meticulously traces this evolution, highlighting how the once radical ideas of individual expression, social justice, and anti-consumerism have been repackaged and commodified. The very things that once defined bohemian rebellion – be it organic food, artisanal craftsmanship, or a casual disregard for traditional hierarchies – have become aspirational markers of the bobo class. Think of the Patagonia fleece jacket, a symbol of outdoor adventure and environmental consciousness, now a ubiquitous uniform in certain professional circles. Or the rise of farmers' markets, once a fringe phenomenon, now a weekly pilgrimage for those who can afford to prioritize locally sourced, ethically produced goods.

This isn't to say the bobos are purely performative. Brooks acknowledges a genuine idealism and a desire to contribute positively to the world. However, he also points out the inherent contradictions and the subtle ways in which their lifestyle choices reinforce their privileged position. The "authentic" experience, often sought after by bobos, can itself become a luxury, accessible only to those with the time and resources to pursue it.

Life in the Bobo Bubble: Values, Tastes,

and Aspirations

What truly makes "Bobos in Paradise" so engaging is Brooks' keen observation of the bobo lifestyle. He delves into their consumption patterns, their educational choices, their parenting styles, and even their sense of humor. It's a world where intellectual curiosity is prized, but often within a very specific, highly educated framework. The bobo palate, for instance, is not just about good food; it's about understanding the provenance of that food, the ethical considerations behind its production, and the cultural significance of its preparation.

The Sacred vs. The Secular

A key theme Brooks explores is the bobo's relationship with both the sacred and the secular. While they may have rejected traditional religious dogma, they often find a form of spiritual fulfillment in secular pursuits. This can manifest as a fervent dedication to certain causes, a deep reverence for artistic expression, or an almost religious devotion to personal well-being and self-improvement. The pursuit of "authenticity" itself can become a quasi-religious quest.

Conversely, the secular world they inhabit is often imbued with a sense of moral superiority. This can lead to a tendency to judge those outside their bubble, sometimes unconsciously, for their perceived lack of sophistication or their adherence to more traditional values. This is where the "paradise" in the title comes into play – for the bobo, their carefully curated world often feels like a perfect, enlightened existence, insulated from the less palatable

realities of the outside world.

Education as a Status Symbol and a Moral Imperative

Unsurprisingly, education plays a central role in the bobo identity. Higher education, particularly at elite institutions, is not just a pathway to good jobs; it's a rite of passage, a validation of intellectual worth, and a signal of belonging to the in-group. Brooks highlights the intense competition among bobo parents to secure the best educational opportunities for their children, from the most sought-after preschools to Ivy League universities. This pursuit of educational excellence is often framed not just as ambition, but as a moral imperative – the idea that it is their duty to cultivate bright, engaged citizens.

The Enduring Relevance of "Bobos in Paradise"

While "Bobos in Paradise" was published in 2000, its insights remain remarkably relevant today. The cultural and economic forces that shaped the bobo class have only intensified. The tech boom that was just gaining momentum when Brooks was writing has since reshaped our world, creating new forms of wealth and influence. The emphasis on "experience" over "stuff," the curated online personas, and the constant striving for self-improvement – all these are echoes of the bobo phenomenon.

The "Bobo-ification" of American Culture

One could argue that the bobo sensibility has, to a degree, become normalized and even democratized. Elements of the bobo lifestyle have filtered down and across various social strata. The appreciation for craft beer, for instance, or the interest in sustainable living, are no longer solely the domain of the elite. However, the core of Brooks' observation – the inherent paradox of a class that has embraced the anti-establishment while enjoying significant privilege – still holds true. The *degree* to which one can afford to live an "authentic," "ethical," and "intellectually stimulating" life is still a powerful indicator of social and economic standing.

Critiques and Counterarguments

Of course, "Bobos in Paradise" is not without its critics. Some have accused Brooks of oversimplification, of painting a caricature of a diverse group of people. Others argue that his analysis doesn't fully account for the structural inequalities that contribute to class divisions. And indeed, the term "bobo" itself can be seen as pejorative, used to dismiss or devalue a particular lifestyle. It's important to approach the book with a critical eye, recognizing that it's one interpretation, albeit a highly influential one, of a complex social reality.

The rise of social media has also added new layers to the bobo dynamic. The carefully curated online presence, the performative displays of virtue, and the constant pursuit of validation are all amplified in the digital realm. While Brooks focused on the tangible

aspects of bobo life – the artisanal bread, the hybrid cars – today's bobos often express their values and aspirations through their digital footprints, further blurring the lines between personal identity and public performance.

Conclusion: A Lingering Look in the Mirror

"Bobos in Paradise" remains a compelling and often prescient examination of a significant force in contemporary American society. David Brooks, with his signature blend of astute observation and gentle humor, invites us to look closely at a group that has profoundly shaped our cultural landscape. Whether you identify as a bobo, know one, or simply find yourself intrigued by the interplay of idealism and affluence, the book offers a valuable lens through which to understand the values, contradictions, and aspirations that define a certain kind of American dream. It's a book that, even after all these years, still encourages us to ask: where do we, and those around us, truly belong in this evolving paradise?

David Brooks and the Bobo Intellectual Paradise: A Vision of Cultural Harmony

David Brooks, the renowned journalist and cultural critic, invites readers into a compelling vision of what he calls the "bobo intellectual paradise"—a concept that blends the refined sensibilities

of the bohemian class with the pragmatic values of the bourgeois. This idea transcends mere lifestyle or identity, instead offering a deeper exploration of how intellectual depth, emotional depth, and cultural awareness can coexist in a balanced, meaningful society. Brooks, through his work, especially in *Bobos in Paradise*, crafts a nuanced portrait of a new elite not defined by wealth or privilege alone, but by an inner cultivation of values that bridge tradition and progress.

The Birth of the Bobo Intellectual Class

Brooks' concept of the "bobo"—short for bohemian-bourgeois—emerges from a sharp observation of contemporary American society. He identifies a growing segment of highly educated, culturally engaged individuals who reject both the excesses of traditional conservatism and the superficiality of unchecked liberalism. These bobo intellectuals seek authenticity, depth, and purpose, often embracing artistic expression, philosophical inquiry, and social responsibility. What sets them apart is not just their worldview, but their effort to harmonize intellectual rigor with emotional intelligence. In Brooks' view, this fusion represents a quiet revolution, a move away from polarized tribalism toward a more thoughtful, integrated form of engagement with the world.

Cultivating Inner Life and Cultural Wisdom

At the heart of Brooks' vision is the belief that true progress begins within the individual. The bobo intellectual paradise is not a physical

place but a state of mind—one cultivated through reflection, reading, meaningful conversation, and exposure to diverse cultural experiences. Brooks emphasizes the importance of emotional maturity, suggesting that cultivating empathy, humility, and self-awareness is as vital as economic or political acumen. This inward focus enables bobo thinkers to navigate complexity with grace, avoiding the extremes of dogma while remaining deeply committed to personal and collective growth. By valuing both the head and the heart, this intellectual class fosters a culture where ideas are not only analyzed but felt and lived.

Applications in Modern Society

The implications of Brooks' vision extend across education, work, and public discourse. In professional settings, the bobo intellectual ideal encourages leadership grounded in integrity, creativity, and collaboration—qualities increasingly valued in knowledge-based economies. Educational institutions that nurture critical thinking alongside emotional intelligence help prepare students not just for jobs, but for meaningful participation in society. In public life, this paradigm supports a more inclusive dialogue, one that honors lived experience without dismissing expertise, and that embraces diversity of thought without fracturing social cohesion. Brooks' work suggests that such values are not niche but essential for healing divides and building resilient communities.

Enduring Benefits and Future Outlook

The enduring benefit of embracing the bobo intellectual paradise lies

in its potential to foster a more balanced, thoughtful culture. By integrating intellectual depth with emotional wisdom, individuals and societies are better equipped to face uncertainty, respond to change, and sustain long-term well-being. Brooks envisions a future where this synthesis becomes a defining mark of progress—not measured solely by GDP or innovation, but by the richness of human experience and the depth of shared understanding. As cultural fragmentation and polarization intensify, the call for a refined, compassionate intellectual class offers a compelling roadmap toward a more harmonious and resilient world. In the evolving landscape of ideas, David Brooks' bobo intellectual paradise stands as a powerful reminder that true progress begins within—when we cultivate both mind and spirit, and strive for a life of purpose, connection, and enduring beauty.

David Brooks' seminal work, "Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There," published in 2000, arrived at a pivotal moment, capturing the zeitgeist of a nation undergoing a profound economic and cultural shift. More than two decades later, the book's insights into the rise of the "bourgeois bohemian" – or "bobo" – remain remarkably prescient, offering a lens through which to understand the aspirations, contradictions, and social dynamics of a significant segment of American society. This article will delve into the core tenets of Brooks' analysis, explore its enduring relevance, and examine the implications of the bobo phenomenon in contemporary America.

Understanding the Bobo: A New Aristocracy of Merit and Morality

At its heart, "Bobos in Paradise" is an exploration of a new American elite, one that emerged from the countercultural upheaval of the 1960s and 70s and subsequently assimilated into the capitalist mainstream. Brooks coined the term "bobo" to describe individuals who embody a unique blend of bohemian idealism and bourgeois practicality. These are people who, having once championed anti-establishment values, now inhabit positions of influence and affluence, often within fields that were once considered outside the realm of corporate power, such as academia, journalism, the arts, and increasingly, tech.

The Countercultural Roots of the Bobo

Brooks traces the lineage of the bobo back to the fervent idealism of the 1960s. He argues that many who participated in the counterculture – embracing free love, anti-materialism, and a rejection of traditional social hierarchies – did not, in fact, abandon their ambitions. Instead, they sought to reconcile their progressive values with the desire for comfortable, fulfilling, and often intellectually stimulating careers. This led to a strategic redirection of their energies. Instead of overtly rebelling, they began to infiltrate and transform existing institutions from within. The emphasis shifted from radical change to a more nuanced approach of weaving their values into the fabric of professional life.

The Bourgeois Embrace: Meritocracy and Material Comfort

The "bourgeois" element of the bobo is characterized by a belief in meritocracy, a commitment to hard work, and a desire for material well-being. Unlike the old aristocracy, which was based on inherited wealth and status, the bobo elite ascends through education, talent, and professional achievement. They value intellectual capital and see their success as a reward for their skills and contributions. This pursuit of success, however, is often accompanied by a conscious effort to signal their continued adherence to the values they espoused in their youth. This is where the inherent contradictions of the bobo lifestyle begin to surface.

The Contradictions: Idealism and Consumption

One of Brooks' most insightful observations is the inherent tension within the bobo psyche. While they may espouse egalitarianism and a disdain for overt consumerism, they often indulge in highly curated forms of consumption that serve to reinforce their identity and social standing. This manifests in a preference for artisanal products, ethically sourced goods, organic foods, and brands that signal a commitment to social responsibility. The bobo's purchasing decisions are not merely about utility; they are a form of moral signaling. They buy products that tell a story of consciousness and good intentions, thereby creating a distinct consumer culture that separates them from less "enlightened" elites. This phenomenon can

be observed in the proliferation of craft breweries, independent bookstores, and eco-friendly fashion brands, all of which cater to the bobo sensibility.

The Bobo Lifestyle: Culture, Consumption, and Social Capital

The "Bobos in Paradise" offers a vivid portrait of the bobo lifestyle, exploring the spaces they inhabit, the goods they consume, and the cultural capital they accumulate. Brooks paints a picture of a class that, while ostensibly anti-establishment, has created its own set of norms and hierarchies.

The Bobo Home and Habitat

Brooks describes the bobo habitat as a deliberate blend of the comfortable and the unconventional. Their homes are often located in desirable urban neighborhoods or charming, gentrified towns, reflecting both a desire for community and an appreciation for aesthetic value. Decor often features a mix of vintage finds, artisanal crafts, and contemporary art, signaling a cultivated taste that is both informed and authentic. The kitchen, in particular, is often a central hub, reflecting a passion for healthy, home-cooked meals and a rejection of processed convenience foods. This domestic sphere becomes a microcosm of their broader values – a space that is both aesthetically pleasing and ethically curated.

The Bobo Wardrobe: Signaling Virtue Through Style

The bobo approach to fashion is similarly indicative of their worldview. Eschewing ostentatious displays of wealth, they favor understated elegance and brands that align with their values. Think Patagonia fleeces, handmade sweaters, and durable, well-crafted footwear. The emphasis is on quality, longevity, and a subtle nod to nature or artisanal craftsmanship. This sartorial choice is not merely about practicality; it's a conscious rejection of the conspicuous consumption of previous elites, opting instead for a more mindful and responsible form of consumption that signals their progressive credentials. The "athleisure" trend, with its emphasis on comfort and casualness, can also be seen as a manifestation of the bobo aesthetic.

The Bobo Diet: A Moral Compass on a Plate

The bobo diet is a particularly telling aspect of their lifestyle. A deep engagement with food – its origins, its preparation, and its impact on health and the environment – is central to bobo identity. This translates into a preference for organic produce, locally sourced ingredients, and a generally healthy, often vegetarian or vegan, approach to eating. The pursuit of culinary excellence is often combined with a desire to support sustainable agriculture and ethical food production. Farmers' markets, CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs, and farm-to-table restaurants become essential social and cultural touchstones for this group. The ubiquity of kale and avocado toast is a testament to the bobo influence on

contemporary food culture.

The Enduring Relevance of "Bobos in Paradise"

Published at the dawn of the 21st century, "Bobos in Paradise" foresaw many of the societal trends that have continued to shape American life. The rise of the tech industry, with its often-idealistic founders and its massive wealth generation, is a prime example of bobo principles in action. Many tech entrepreneurs, having embraced a spirit of disruption and innovation, have become a new kind of philanthropic elite, shaping the future of society through their ventures and their considerable resources. The book's analysis of how countercultural ideas are absorbed and commodified remains highly relevant in our current era of "conscious capitalism" and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

The Bobo in the Age of Social Media

Social media platforms have amplified and, in some ways, transformed the bobo phenomenon. The constant curation of personal narratives on platforms like Instagram and Twitter allows individuals to meticulously craft their public image, showcasing their ethical consumption, intellectual pursuits, and progressive values. This digital performance of bobo identity can sometimes feel more performative than genuine, blurring the lines between authentic belief and social posturing. The concept of "influencers" often embodies this blend of personal branding and the promotion of

specific lifestyles and products, many of which align with bobo sensibilities.

Critiques and Counterarguments

While "Bobos in Paradise" offers a compelling and often humorous analysis, it has also faced criticism. Some have argued that Brooks' portrayal is overly simplistic, failing to capture the diversity within the "bobo" class. Others have suggested that the book inadvertently celebrates a form of elitism, even as it critiques it. The term "bobo" itself can be used derisively, implying a certain pretentiousness or hypocrisy. Furthermore, the economic shifts since 2000, including the increasing precarity of work for many, have raised questions about the accessibility and sustainability of the bobo lifestyle. The widening wealth gap and the impact of globalization have created new forms of social stratification that may not fit neatly into Brooks' original framework. Nevertheless, the core observations about the synthesis of idealism and affluence, and the unique consumption patterns of this educated elite, continue to resonate.

Conclusion: The Ever-Evolving Bobo Landscape

"Bobos in Paradise" remains a vital and insightful examination of a significant segment of American society. David Brooks masterfully captures the essence of a class that has managed to reconcile its countercultural origins with its pursuit of affluence and influence. The bobo, with their blend of idealism and practicality, their curated

consumption and their emphasis on intellectualism, continues to shape our cultural, economic, and political landscape. While the specifics of their habitat, wardrobe, and diet may evolve, the fundamental tension between their stated values and their privileged reality remains a source of enduring fascination and analysis. As society continues to grapple with issues of inequality, authenticity, and the meaning of success, Brooks' exploration of the bobo offers a timeless framework for understanding the complexities of contemporary American life.

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Digital organization further enhances productivity. Users can

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As technology continues to shape education, digital books will remain a cornerstone of modern learning. The ability to download **David Brooks Bobos In Paradise** reflects an evolving approach to education that prioritizes accessibility, efficiency, and user empowerment. Digital literacy is now a fundamental skill in the digital age.

In conclusion, downloading **David Brooks Bobos In Paradise** demonstrates the successful fusion of technology and education. Through legal and responsible platforms, readers gain access to vast knowledge resources that support academic study, professional development, and personal enrichment. Digital access makes learning more accessible, efficient, and inclusive, empowering individuals to pursue lifelong learning in an increasingly connected world.

Questions & Answers About david brooks bobos in paradise

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1	What is David Brooks' central argument in 'Bobos in Paradise'?	Brooks' core thesis is that a new dominant social class has emerged, the 'bourgeois bohemians' or 'bobos.' These are individuals who blend bohemian ideals of non-conformity and authenticity with bourgeois aspirations for wealth and success. He argues they shape much of contemporary culture and consumerism.
2	Who are the 'bobos' that David Brooks describes?	Bobos are typically highly educated, often with graduate degrees, who work in fields like tech, media, arts, and non-profits. They value authenticity, social consciousness, and experiences, but often within a framework of affluence and access to elite institutions.
3	How does Brooks illustrate the 'bobo' lifestyle and values?	He uses vivid anecdotes and observations of their consumption patterns, from artisanal coffee and organic food to carefully curated 'authentic' travel and education choices. He highlights their embrace of both intellectualism and material comfort, often justifying one with the other.
4	What are some of the paradoxes or ironies Brooks points out about bobos?	Brooks emphasizes the inherent contradictions: their pursuit of authenticity often leads to highly commodified and imitative behavior. Their rejection of traditional status symbols is replaced by a subtle but powerful status signaling through their discerning tastes and 'good' choices.

5	Why was 'Bobos in Paradise' so influential when it was published?	The book resonated with many because it provided a recognizable framework for understanding a rising and influential cultural group. It offered a witty and insightful commentary on the social and cultural shifts happening in America around the turn of the millennium.
6	What are some common criticisms of David Brooks' 'Bobos in Paradise'?	Critics often argue that the book, while entertaining, oversimplifies a complex social landscape. Some find it to be a rather elitist perspective, and others contend that the 'bobo' phenomenon may have been overstated or has evolved significantly since the book's publication.

David Brooks bobos in paradise essay, David Brooks and the bobos lifestyle, The bobos in paradise of David Brooks, David Brooks' bobos in paradise analysis, Modern bobos and David Brooks' vision, David Brooks on living the bobos in paradise, Bobos culture and David Brooks' perspective, David Brooks bobos in paradise reflections, David Brooks' take on bobos and utopia

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