



The Great Implosion

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Is watching North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un shed earnest tears of sadness a cause for, well, if not jubilation, at least some schadenfreude?

Maybe not [in this case](#): he was listening to a lecture on his country's population collapse. He was [pleading](#) with young women to have more children. North Korea is experiencing *negative* population growth: well below the "replacement rate."

An inevitable result of horrific North Korean tyranny?

Well, population decline is almost a universal phenomenon. North Korea's population rate is alarming, but so is *South* Korea's—which is much, much freer.

And Japan's, for that matter; and Europe's.

So what do we make of the population growth alarmists from the 1960s and '70s? I refer to folks like Paul Erlich, who [wrote](#) *The Population Bomb*, and the "[experts](#)" who made up The Club of Rome, with its infamous 1972 report, *The Limits of Growth*.

Magnificently bad prophets.

But they had a huge impact—at least on Communist China, which instituted the One Child policy in 1979. Now, that country's population trend has reversed, with an increasing rate of decline.

Moreover, there may be a lot less people in China than was boasted of—official government stats admit a 2.08 million person drop from 2022 to 2023, following the previous (and first official) drop of 850,000. We can only guess the *actual* population, because communists lie. Yi Fuxian, a demographer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, [estimates](#) that China's population was less than 1.28 billion in 2022, not 1.41 billion, with the decline starting in 2018, not 2022.

Ask yourself: how many civilizations have survived a population implosion?

And for peoples with ponzi-like pension systems, this is even more devastating.

The Chinese are cursed, *but so are we*—for we all live in interesting times.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

Population Trends

Canada: 1.33 births per woman (2023).
 China: 1.0–1.16 births per woman (2023).
 France: 1.68 births per woman (2024).
 Germany: 1.46 births per woman (2024).
 Great Britain: 1.45 births per woman (2023).
 Japan: 1.26 births per woman (2024).
 Mexico: 1.80 births per woman (2023).
 North Korea: Estimates suggest a fertility rate of around 1.8–2.0 (2021), below replacement.
 South Korea: 0.72 births per woman (2023), the lowest globally.
 Taiwan: 0.87 births per woman (2023).
 United States: 1.64 births per woman (2023).