

# Human Progress DOOMSLAYER

a newsletter that cuts through the gloom



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## China's Fertility Flip-Flop Shows the Folly of Legislating Family Sizes

After decades of violently suppressing births, the Chinese government is now pestering women to have more babies.

China isn't alone—as the world wakes up to the threat of falling birth rates, the number of countries with “raising fertility” as an explicit policy objective keeps rising.

While most of these initiatives don't rely on coercion, they also produce lackluster results. Instead, policymakers should focus on removing the many rules and regulations that make family life harder than it should be.

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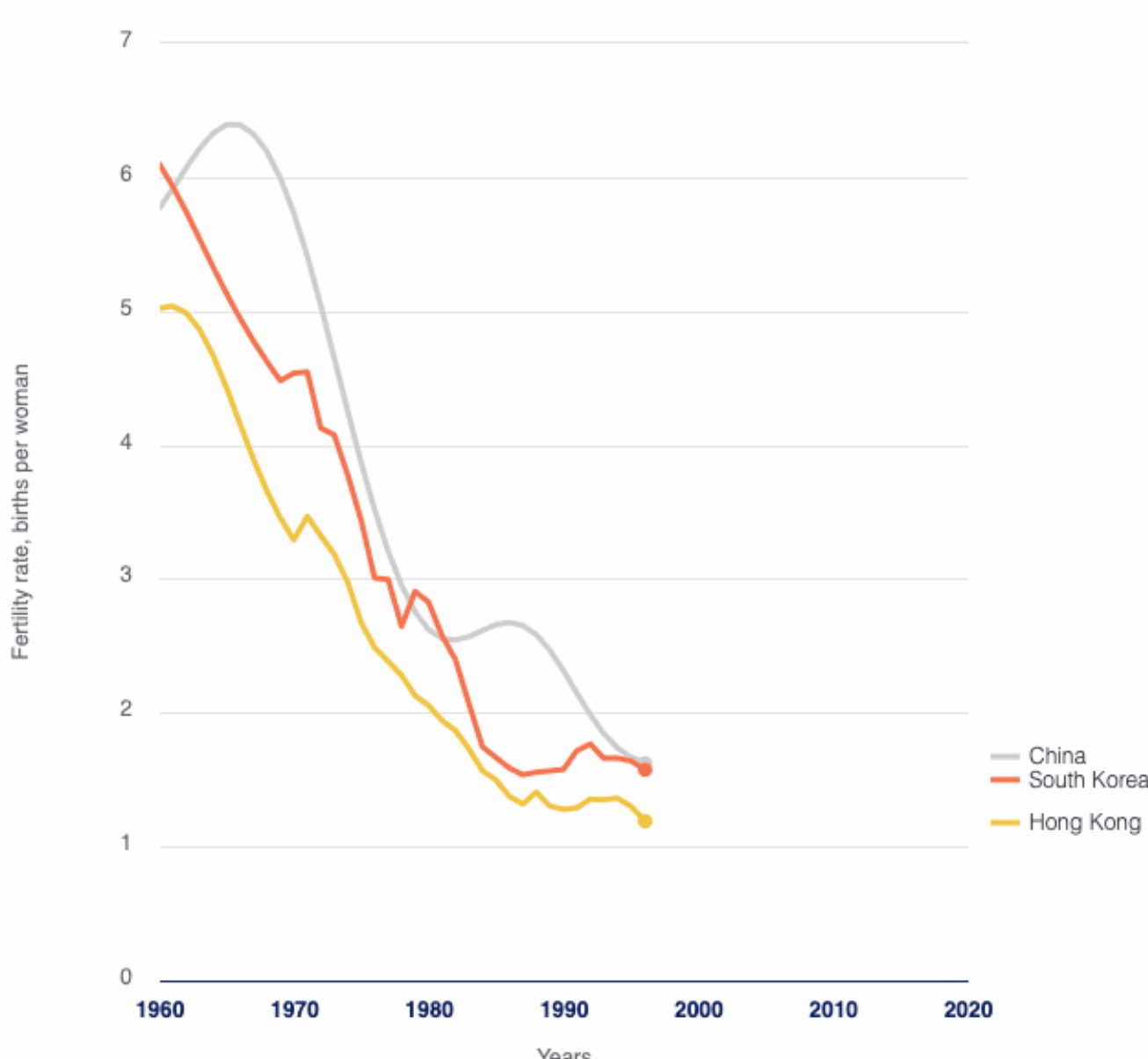
## Underrated Industrialist, Josiah Wedgwood

For most of history, elites looked down on merchants. That started to change in the 18th century, as industrialists like Josiah Wedgwood began to influence society.



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**Fertility rate**  
births per woman, 1960-2020



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Like current attempts to boost birth rates, China's one, two, and, later, three child policies had limited effects.

Neighboring countries without restrictions on family size experienced similar declines in fertility as their economies developed.

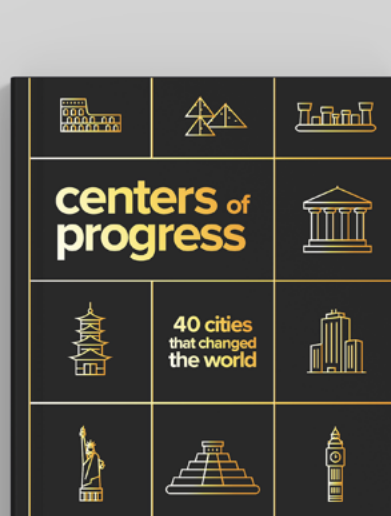
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