

Macro Roundup Article

Headline: China's Collapsing Birth and Marriage Rates Reflect a People's Deep Pessimism

Article Link: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/02/28/behind-china-collapse-birth-marriage-rates/>

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Tweet: Nicholas Eberstadt @AElecon argues that the 46% plunge in China's birth rate over the last six years is driven by a new national pessimism among young people.

Summary: In 2022, China had only about half as many births as just six years earlier (9.6 million vs. 17.9 million). We see millions of young people joining spontaneous movements expressing alienation from work — tang ping (lying flat) — and from Chinese society itself — bai lan (let it rot). Last year, during one of the regime's innumerable, drastic pandemic lockdowns, a video went viral in China before authorities could memory hole it. In the video, faceless hazmat-clad health police try to bully a young man out of his apartment and off to a quarantine camp, even though he has tested negative for the coronavirus. He refuses to leave. "Don't you understand," they warn, "if you don't comply, bad things can happen to your family for three generations." "Sorry" he replies mildly. "We are the last generation. Thank you." That moment prompted the spread in China of a despairing social media hashtag: #Lastgeneration.

Primary Topic: China

Topics: China, Demographics, Op-Ed/Blog Post, Workforce

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