

When Populations Shrink: Should States Encourage Births or Adapt?

Redrawing the Blueprint for Smaller Generations

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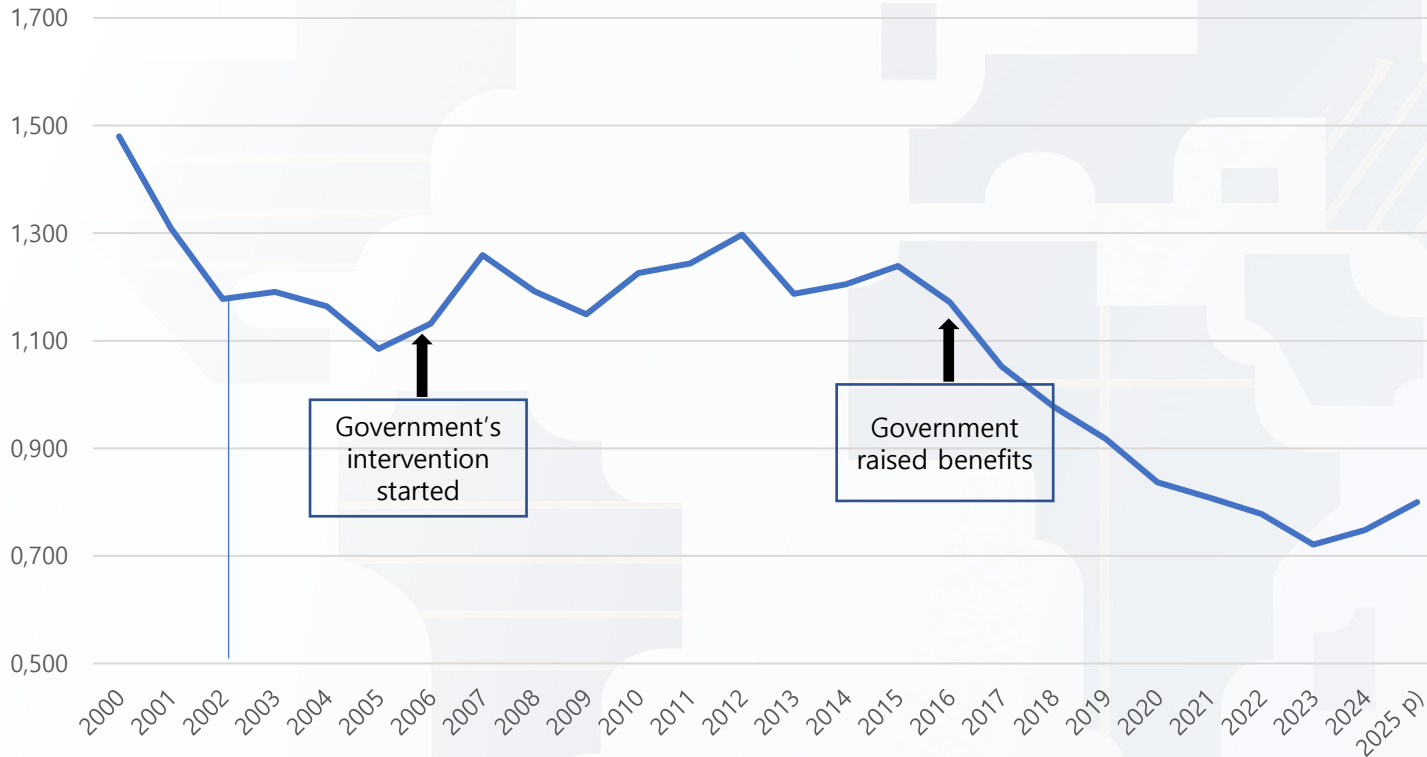
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The Korean Paradox

population

Trend of Korea's TFR



Population Policy Focal Point

→ Direct childbirth boosting policies
(Cash benefit, tax benefit, improved quality and accessibility of childcare services)

Government's spending for boosting childbirth over 20 years

Approximately USD 300Billion

The Determined Future

population

Cohort Size

1972: ~1,000,000

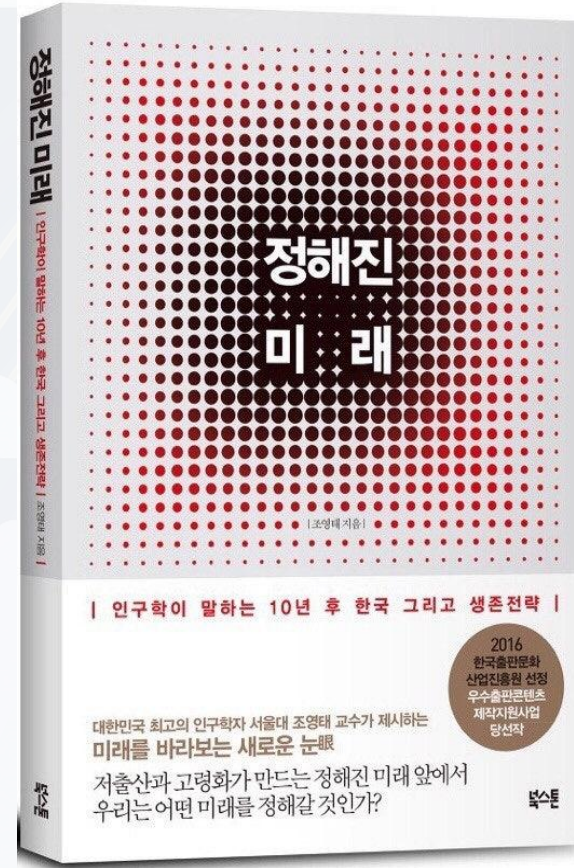
1994: ~720,000

2005: ~420,000

2025:
~250,000

Different Society
→ Needs different
social structures

(Mathematical Destiny, not
speculative risk)



The Determined Future, by Cho Youngtae
Published in Korean (2016)
Sold over 100,000 copies

The Limits of Mitigation

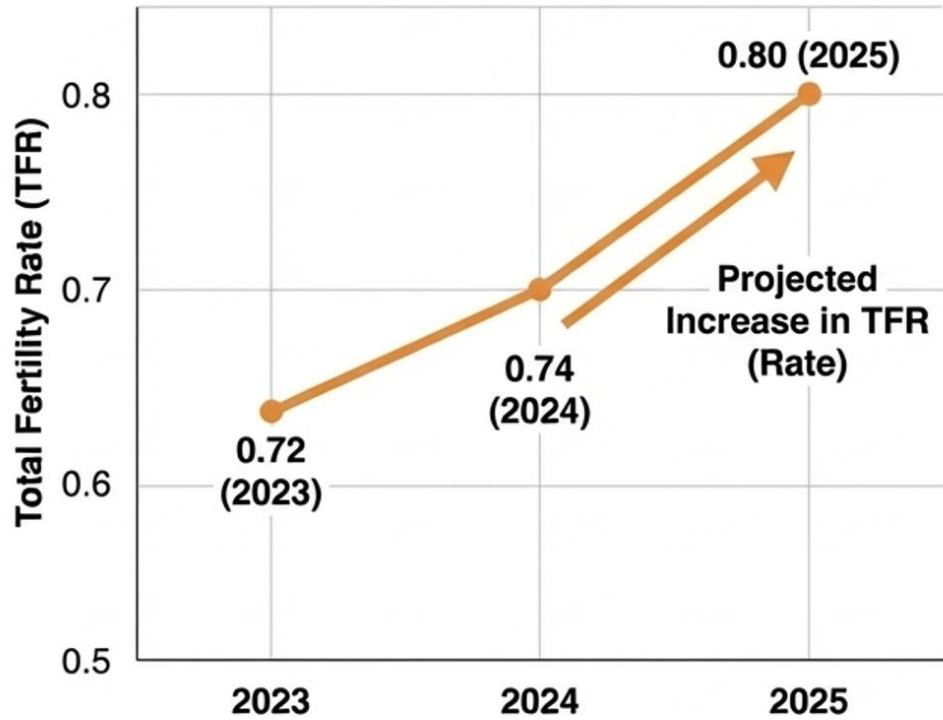
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- About 70% of the childbirth boosting budgets has been used to improve the childcare and rearing environment
- Neglecting the importance of the 'determined future'
- Little preparation → waiting until it happens (even too late to adapt)

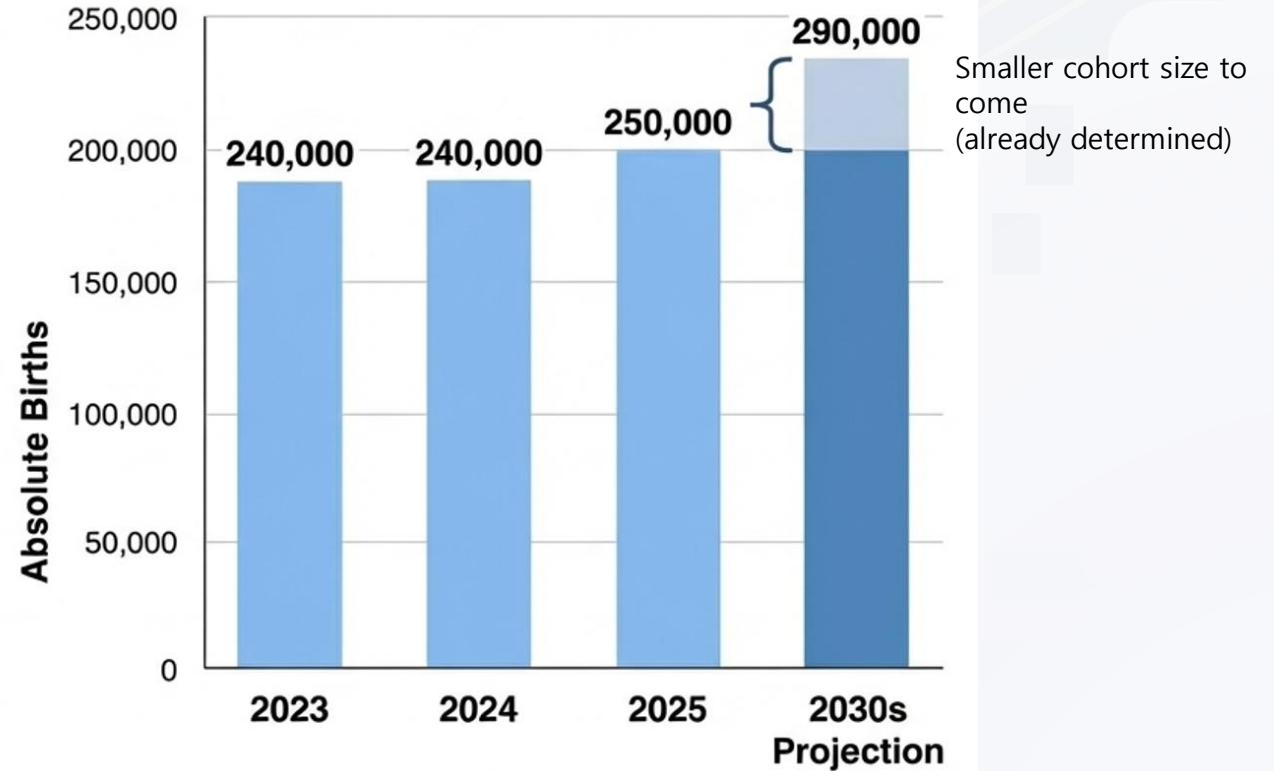
Is It Real Recovery, or Just an Illusion?

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Panel A: The Illusion

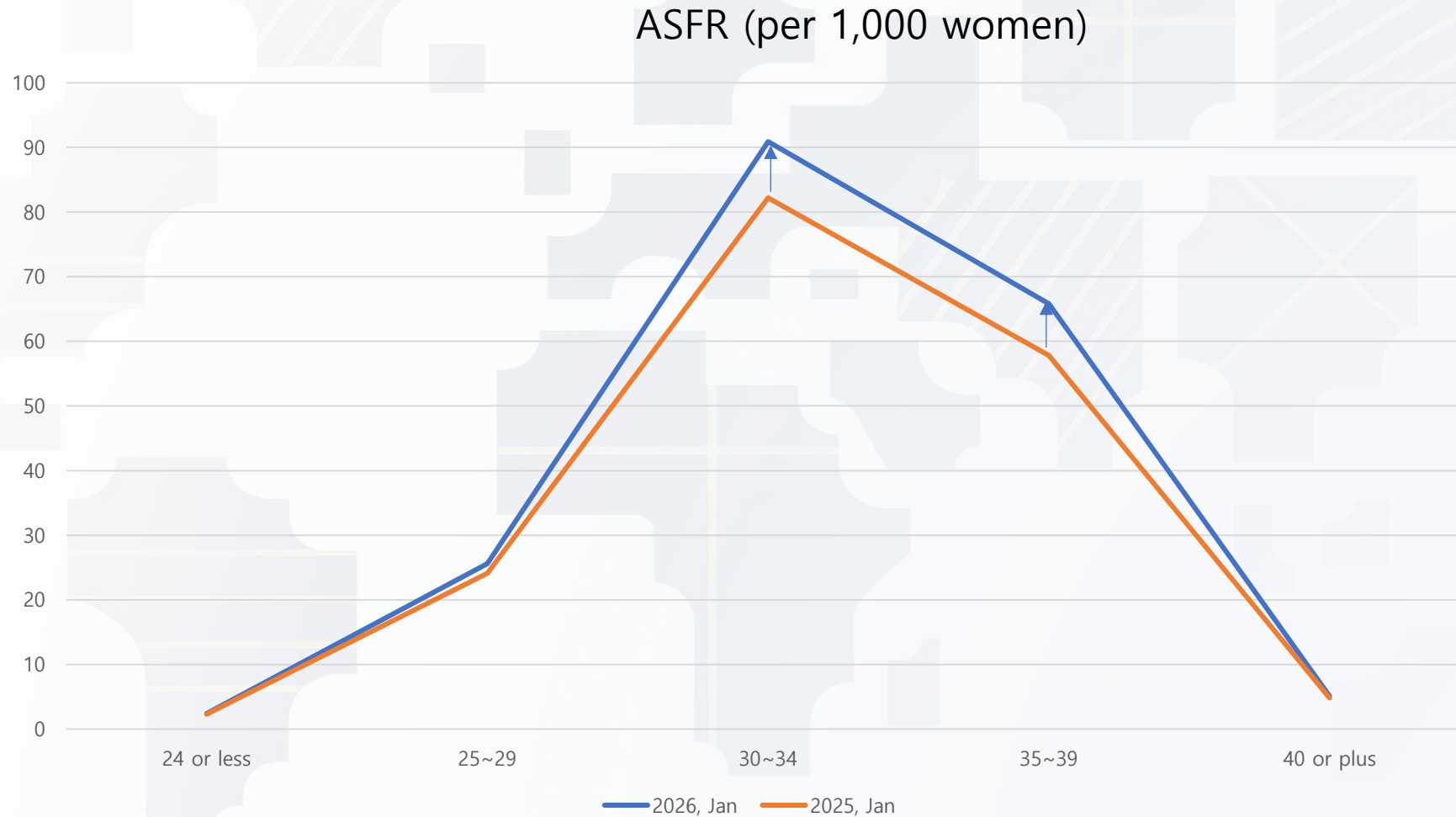


Panel B: The Reality



Is It Real Recovery, or Just an Illusion?

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Adaptation as the Solution

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Mitigation:

“We will not change the large-scale social order built by the many; it is up to you to increase your numbers to fit our system”

Adaptation: Structural Empathy

“Proactively redesigning our institutions, labor markets, and urban infrastructure to align with the quantitative and qualitative reality of the next generation that is already here”

Call to Action: Intellectual Courage

population

- It is our professional duty as demographers to demonstrate 'intellectual courage'
- We must face the determined future and demand structural redesign

Build a Vessel for Shallower Waters,
Rather than
Fighting the Tide



Sustainable national growth relies
not on
inflating our numbers,
but on
empowering the individual capacities of the
generation that is already here