

Explaining Donald Trump's Rise With Economic Misinformation

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Everyone has heard about Donald Trump's soaring poll numbers as the current leader in the race for the Republican presidential nomination. Many have also heard the explanation that he appeals to those who feel left behind by the economy. Unfortunately, the way the media often tell this story has little to do with reality.

We got a great example of [creative analysis](#) in the Washington Post's Wonkblog section. It tells us:

Non-college grads have struggled since the turn of the century: Economist Robert Shapiro estimates that incomes stagnated or declined from 2002 to 2013 for American households headed by workers without a degree, a marked departure from prior decades.

Both parts of this are seriously misleading. First, it is not just non-college grads who have struggled since the turn of the century. Most college grads have [seen little or no wage gains](#) since then. The second part is wrong also, since wages for non-college grads had also [been stagnant since 1980](#), so for them the experience of the last 15 years has not been "a marked departure from prior decades."

Later, the piece doubles down on this misleading picture:

Trump is selling an economic message that unifies growing concerns among liberals and conservatives alike, "which is that growing GDP doesn't necessarily help people on the bottom," said Mickey Kaus, the author of the Kausfiles blog.

The data clearly show that most people have been seeing little or none of the gains from economic growth over the last decade, not just people on the bottom.

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