

In US, economic averages miss big picture

By **CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER**
Associated Press



MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Dozens of FedEx jets queue up for takeoff at the airport here. Beale Street, the heart of the music district, hums with tourists. Yet the empty storefronts in Memphis' moribund downtown and the cash-advance shops strewn near its highways tell another story.

It's a tale of two cities, all in one place. And it's a tale of two Americas: the one that national averages indicate has all but recovered from the Great Recession and the one lost in the statistics.

The pattern is evident in cities and towns across America, from Memphis to Colorado Springs, Colorado, from Wichita to Jacksonville: The national numbers aren't capturing the experience of many typical people in typical communities.

A key reason is that pay and wealth are flowing disproportionately to the rich, skewing the data used to measure economic health — and producing an economy on paper that most Americans don't recognize in their own lives. That disconnect has fueled much of the frustration and anxiety that have propelled the insurgent presidential campaigns of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders.

Worried about the economy

Again and again, primary voters who were most worried about the economy told exit pollsters that they had cast their ballots for Trump or Sanders, according to Edison Research, which conducted the surveys on behalf of The Associated Press and television networks.

Trump's candidacy, in particular, has been driven by support in some of the most economically distressed regions in the country, where jobs have been automated, eliminated, or moved to other states and countries. It's in these places that the outsider message of an unconventional candidate promising a return to the way things used to be resonates most.

Mike Williams voted for Trump in Tennessee's March primary, which the billionaire won easily. To many, it would seem that Williams is doing pretty well — he earns \$22 an hour as a maintenance worker at an Owens-Corning factory, along with health care and retirement benefits. But his hourly

pay has only recently returned to where it was a decade ago, when he worked as a welder.

"I feel like I'm going backward rather than forward," Williams, 51, said on a recent afternoon after finishing his shift.

One reason he backed Trump, he said, is that he feels less secure than in the past, when more manufacturing work was available.

"I remember when you could quit a job today and go to work somewhere else tomorrow," Williams said. "There was always someone hiring."

The depth of that kind of insecurity after seven years of national economic expansion has caught many observers off guard.

"The political reaction to the economy leads me to wonder if we're looking at the wrong things," said Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at Northern Trust and former economist at the Federal Reserve. "The averages certainly don't tell the whole story."

Income, job growth

Consider incomes for the average U.S. household. They ticked up 0.7 percent from 2008 to 2014, after taking inflation into account. But even that scant increase reflected mainly the rise in income for the richest tenth of households, which pulled up the average. For most others, incomes actually decreased — as much as 6 percent for the bottom 20 percent, at a time when the economy was mostly recovering.

Or consider employment. The U.S. economy has added a healthy average of roughly 200,000 jobs a month since 2011. Yet most have been either high-paying or low-paying positions. By the end of 2015, the nation still had fewer middle-income jobs than it did before the recession, according to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

That reflects what economists call the "hollowing out" of the workforce, as traditional mid-level positions such as office administrators, bookkeepers, and factory assembly-line workers are cut in recessions and never fully recover their previous levels of employment.

Part-time jobs surged in the recession, too, and remained high in the recovery, even while



AP Photo/Karen Puffer Focht
Pedestrians walk past a "for sale" sign on Elvis Presley Boulevard in Memphis, Tenn., in May.

full-time work was slower to return. The number of full-time jobs has risen just 1.3 percent since December 2007, when the recession officially began. Part-time positions are up more than 12 percent.

In Memphis, hiring resumed after the recession and the unemployment rate has dropped to match the national figure of 5 percent. But jobs in low-paying industries, such as retail, restaurants and hotels, are the only category to have fully recovered from the recession, according to Moody's Analytics. Higher- and middle-paying jobs still trail their pre-recession levels.

In Millington, a Memphis suburb where Trump held a rally in February at a military airfield, residents complain that most of the available jobs are in the fast-food chains that dot Highway 51, the main thoroughfare.

The rebound from the recession has been felt in vastly different ways not only by income levels but across geographic lines. Areas like Las Vegas that still bear deep scars from the housing crisis have lagged behind the nation's recovery. So have cities like Memphis that need robust consumer spending to fuel growth at the shipping and logistics firms that form the backbone of its economy.

By contrast, cities like Seattle, Denver and Austin, Texas, with heavy concentrations of information technology, management consulting or other highly paid services, have enjoyed a disproportionate share of the job and income growth. In other words, the richest places in

the country are making the economy look better than it actually is, while places like Memphis stagnate.

In the first half of the recovery, jobs grew 5.6 percent nationwide. Yet in the wealthiest one-fifth of zip codes, hiring jumped 11.2 percent, according to the Economic Innovation Group think tank. For the rest of the country, total jobs increased just 3.3 percent.

"It's hard to find an average city," Tannenbaum says. "There just aren't a whole lot right in the middle."

The same is true for households. These data suggest that the post-World War II trend of a steadily growing middle class, lifted by broader national prosperity, is reversing.

Shrinking middle class

Slightly fewer than half of American adults now fall in the middle-class camp, according to the Pew Research Center, a vast shift. In 1971, 61 percent of households were middle class, according to Pew, which defines middle class as income between two-thirds and double the median household income.

And while home prices have risen nationwide since 2012, they're still below their boom-era levels in most parts of the country. Since most middle-class wealth is in home equity, those families are poorer than they were before the recession.

By and large, more affluent Americans are the ones who hold stock — and stock prices are back near record heights.

In Las Vegas, which is still recovering from its huge housing boom and bust, Tracy Brigida's husband, Michael, last summer lost his second job in three years. Tracy, 48, has been paying the bills by substitute-teaching while raising their two children, one of whom is autistic and is home-schooled.

They still owe more on their Las Vegas home than it's worth, having bought it nine years ago. They hoped it would build wealth for their retirements. Now, it's a money pit.

The couple initially supported Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's presidential campaign. But after Michael's latest layoff, they switched to Trump.

Families like hers, she says, seem forgotten in the celebration of rosy national economic averages.

"This administration wants to tell us the economy is better and people are getting jobs," she said. "But that's not my experience."

With higher-paying jobs clustering in wealthier metro areas, business and political leaders in the weaker cities fight to attract and retain employers. Memphis has provided tax breaks to attract or keep 36 companies, including Electrolux, Mitsubishi Electric and Unilever.

Education, job skills

Community leaders have also focused on improving the education and skills of the area's workforce, which trail national averages. A Brookings Institution analysis found that three-quarters of jobs in Memphis require post-high school education or training — something that 40 percent of the area's adults lack.

Rising automation at many

warehouses is also undercutting efforts to create solid middle-income jobs. Memphis is a leading transport hub: In addition to FedEx, shipping firms such as UPS, DHL, and XPO Logistics have warehouses in the region. So do other companies like Nike. Yet Memphis still has 3,200 fewer transportation and warehousing jobs than it did before the recession.

Contributing also to the decline of middle-income positions has been the rising use of temporary workers, whose ranks have surged 54 percent in Memphis since the recession ended while the area's overall jobs grew just 3.3 percent. City officials involved in workforce training say some of the unemployed have 25 years of work history — all of it through temp firms.

Chris Rice, 29, has worked steadily in the Memphis region for the past 10 years, all at temporary jobs. Rice most recently worked as a forklift driver for Electrolux and for CEVA Logistics, a privately held warehouse and distribution firm.

The CEVA job ended after the company lost a contract to distribute Microsoft's X-Box, Rice said during a job fair at a community center in Bartlett, a Memphis suburb.

Rice said he was hopeful of getting a new temp job at an assembly plant owned by printer manufacturer Brother International. He was the only forklift driver at the job fair.

Still, "I'd love to have a permanent job," he said. "I'm tired of going from temp agency to temp agency when there's no work."

Contributing to this report were AP staff writers Nicholas Riccardi in Las Vegas and Adrian Sainz in Memphis.

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MONDAY EVENING													JUNE 13		
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30		
2	KATU	(2)	NBA Basketball Playoffs Golden State Warriors at Cleveland Cavaliers Site: Quicken Loans Arena (L)	Jimmy Kimmel (N)	Paid Program	Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy!	KATU News at 11	(35) Jimmy Kimmel						
4	KOMO	(4)	NBA Basketball Playoffs Golden State Warriors at Cleveland Cavaliers Site: Quicken Loans Arena (L)	Jimmy Kimmel (N)	Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy!	Seattle Refined	KOMO 4 News	(35) Jimmy Kimmel						
5	KING	(5)	NBC Nightly News	KING 5 News	KING 5 News	Evening	American Ninja War	"Indianapolis Qualifier" The competition heads to Indiana. (N)	Spartan (P) (N)			KING 5 News	(35) Tonight Show		
6	KOIN	(6)	KOIN 6 News at 6	CBS Evening News	Extra	Ent. Tonight	Mom	2 Broke Girls	Scorpion	BrainDead (N)		KOIN 6 News @ 11	(35) S. Colbert		
7	KIRO	(7)	KIRO 7 News	CBS Evening News	The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Mom	2 Broke Girls	Scorpion	BrainDead (N)		KIRO News	(35) S. Colbert		
8	KGW	(8)	KGW News at 6:00 p.m.	Live at Seven	Inside Edition	American Ninja War	"Indianapolis Qualifier" The competition heads to Indiana. (N)	Spartan (P) (N)				KGW News at 11	(35) Tonight Show		
9	KRCW	(9)	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Modern Family	Modern Family	Reign "Intruders" (N)	Whose Line Is It?	Whose Line Is It?	KGW News at 10	(35) Two 1/2 Men	(05) Two 1/2 Men	(35) King of Hill		
10	KOPB	(10)	This Old House	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour	Carol Burnett's Favorite Sketches	The Kingston Trio	Celebration	Yoga for Arthritis						
12	KPTV	(12)	6 O'Clock News	Family Feud	Family Feud	So You Think You Can Dance (N)	Houdini & Doyle "Bedlam" (N)	10 O'Clock News	11 O'Clock News	Loves Ray					
13	KPDx	(13)	Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	FOX 12's 8 O'Clock News on PDX-TV	FOX 12's 9 O'Clock News on PDX-TV	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Popular"	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Execution"					
13	KCPQ	(13)	Name Game	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	So You Think You Can Dance (N)	Houdini & Doyle "Bedlam" (N)	Q13 News at 10	Q13 News	Modern Family				
20	TBS	(20)	American Dad	American Dad	Family Guy	Family Guy	Family Guy	American Dad (N)	Family Guy	Full Frontal (N)	Conan (N)				
22	KZJL	(22)	Two and a Half	Two and a Half	The Simpsons	The Simpsons	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Friends	Friends		
29	ESPN	(29)	(4:00) MLB Baseball (L)	Baseball Tonight (L)	SportsCenter	SportsCenter	SportsCenter	SportsCenter	NBA Tonight	ESPN FC	MLB Baseball				
30	ESPN2	(30)	(4:00) NCAA Baseball	UEFA Soccer Euro 2016 Italy vs. Belgium Group E	Baseball Tonight (L)	NBA Tonight	ESPN FC	MLB Baseball							
31	NICK	(31)	H.Danger "Indestructible Henry, Part 1"	The Thundermans	The Thundermans	NickyRickyDicky	Other Kingdom	Full House	Full House	Friends	Friends				
32	DISN	(32)	Movie	K.C. Undercover	Liv and Maddie	Austin & Ally	★★ Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer	(:40) Jessie	(:05) K.C. Underc.	Girl Meets World	Stuck in Middle	Friends Whenever			
34	FAM	(34)	(5:45) ★★★ The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (2013, Drama)	Josh Hutcherson, Donald Sutherland, Jennifer Lawrence.	Guilt "Pilot" (P) (N)	Monica Medium	"Muddy Waters" (N)	The 700 Club							
35	FAM	(35)	(5:00) Prometheus (12) Noomi Rapace.	(:20) ★★ Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (12, Act) Rufus Sewell, Dominic Cooper, Benjamin Walker.	★★ Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (12) Rufus Sewell, Benjamin Walker.	UnREAL "Insurgent" (N)	UnREAL "Insurgent" (N)	UnREAL "Insurgent" (N)							
36	ROO	(36)	(5:00) Madec Goes to Jail Tyler Perry.	★ The Family That Preys (08) Sanaa Lathan, Rockmund Dunbar, Alfre Woodard.	Maids "Another One Wipes the Dust" (N)	UnREAL "Insurgent" (N)	UnREAL "Insurgent" (N)	UnREAL "Insurgent" (N)							
38	RFT	(38)	(5:00) Surfing	Mariners Access	Sounders Access	Wild Places	Planet X Square	Planet X Square	Cliff Diving	Bull Riding Championship	UFC 180				
39	FOOT	(39)	(5:00) Soccer Copa America Centenario (L)	Soccer Copa America Centenario Uruguay vs. Jamaica Site: Levi's Stadium -- Santa Clara, Calif. (L)	MLB Whiparound	Fox Sports Live	TMZ Sports (N)	Speak for Yourself							
43	SPIKE	(43)	(5:30) ★★★ The Expendables 2 (12) Liam Hemsworth, Sylvester Stallone.	★★ The Expendables (2010, Action) Eric Roberts, Steve Austin, Jet Li.	★★ The Expendables 2 (12) Sylvester Stallone.										
44	COM	(44)	Futurama	Futurama	Futurama	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	The Daily Show (N)	Nightly Show (N)			
45	HIST	(45)	(5:00) The Story of All of Us "New Frontiers"	Barbarians Rising "Part 1" A battle begins as the barbarians rise against Rome.	Barbarians "Part 2" Spartacus leads a slave uprising that threatens Rome. (N)	The First 48	"Cranked"	The First 48	The First 48	(05) The First 48					
46	A&E	(46)	(5:00) The First 48 "Murder in Pleasant Grove"	First 48 "Last Stop: Paradise/ Bad Blood"	The First 48 "Senior Year"	The First 48 "Cranked"	The First 48	The First 48	The First 48	(05) The First 48					
47	TLC	(47)	Deadly Women "Mad or Bad"	Deadly Women "Catch Me If You Can"	Deadly Women "Heartless"	Deadly Women "Hidden Rage"	Deadly Women "Hidden Rage"	Deadly Women "Hidden Rage"	Deadly Women "Hidden Rage"	Deadly Women "Hidden Rage"					
48	DISC	(48)	Outlaws "Knockin' on Heaven's Door"	Street Outlaws "The Aftermath"	Street Outlaws: Full Throttle	Street Outlaws	Fat 'N Furious "Helicat Challenger"	Street Outlaws	Street Outlaws	Street Outlaws					
49	NGS	(49)	Mygrations "Animal House"	Extreme Alaska "Denali National Park"	Starks "Yellowstone National Park"	Mygrations "Valley of Death" (N)	Mygrations "Collapse" (N)	Mygrations "Valley of Death"	Mygrations "Valley of Death"	Mygrations "Valley of Death"					
50	TNT	(50)	Castle "When the Bough Breaks"	Rizzoli "Two Shots: Move Forward"	Rizzoli "Dangerous Curve Ahead"	Rizzoli & Isles "Cops vs. Zombies" (N)	Major Crimes "Present Tense" (N)	TURN: Washington's Spies (N)	TURN: Washington's Spies (N)	TURN: Washington's Spies (N)					
51	AMT	(51)	(5:15) ★★★ Magnum Force (73) Clint Eastwood.	(:45) ★★★ Dirty Harry (1971, Action) Harry Guardino, Reni Santoni, Clint Eastwood.	WWE Monday Night Raw	Cake Wars "Spongebob" (N)	Chopped "Chopped Gastropub"	Chopped "Viewers' Baskets"							
52	USA	(52)	NCIS "Iced"	Modern Family	Modern Family	WWE Monday Night Raw	Cake Wars "Spongebob" (N)	Chopped "Chopped Gastropub"	Chopped "Viewers' Baskets"						
53	FOOD	(53)	Guy's Game "Culinary Saved My Life"	Guy's Game "Big Burger Battle"	Kids BBQ Championship "State Fair" (N)	Cake Wars "Spongebob" (N)	Chopped "Chopped Gastropub"	Chopped "Viewers' Baskets"							
54	HGTV	(54)	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big	Tiny House, Big
55	FX	(55)	Rise of the Guardians (12, Ani) Voices of Alec Baldwin, Isla Fisher, Hugh Jackman.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.	★★ Despicable Me 2 (2013, Animated) Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Carell.
57	CNN	(57)	CNN Tonight With Don Lemon	CNN Tonight With Don Lemon	Anderson Cooper 360	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom	CNN Newsroom
58	FNC	(58)	The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly	Hannity	The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly	Hannity	On the Record	On the Record	On the Record	On the Record	On the Record	On the Record	On the Record	On the Record	On the Record
61	CNBC	(61)	Shark Tank	Shark Tank	Jay Leno's Garage "American Muscle"	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar	Blue Collar
63	BRVA	(63)	Southern Charm "Saint and Sinners"	South/Charm "From Here to Paternity"	South/Charm "Words of Wisdom" (N)	The Real Housewives "Uncensored" (N)	Wives Dallas "The Full Nelson" (SF) (N)	WatchWhat (N)	Real Housewives	Real Housewives	Real Housewives	Real Housewives	Real Housewives	Real Housewives	Real Housewives
64	TCM	(64)	Movie	(:45) ★★ Let Us Be Gay (30) Rod La Rocque, Norma Shearer.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.	(:15) ★★ The Girl Said No (1930, Comedy) Leila Hyams, Polly Moran, William Haines.
65	SYFY	(65)	(5:00) Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles ...	★★ Friday the 13th (09) Danielle Panabaker, Amanda Righetti, Jared Padalecki.	12 Monkeys "Hyena" (N)	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.	★ Child's Play (1988, Horror) Alex Vincent, Chris Sarandon, Catherine Hicks.
162	RFD	(162)	American Rancher	Red Steagall	Horse Master	Inside Reining	Craig Cameron	Rural Eve. News	Rural America "Live" "CanCooker"	American Rancher	Red Steagall	Product Showcase			

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