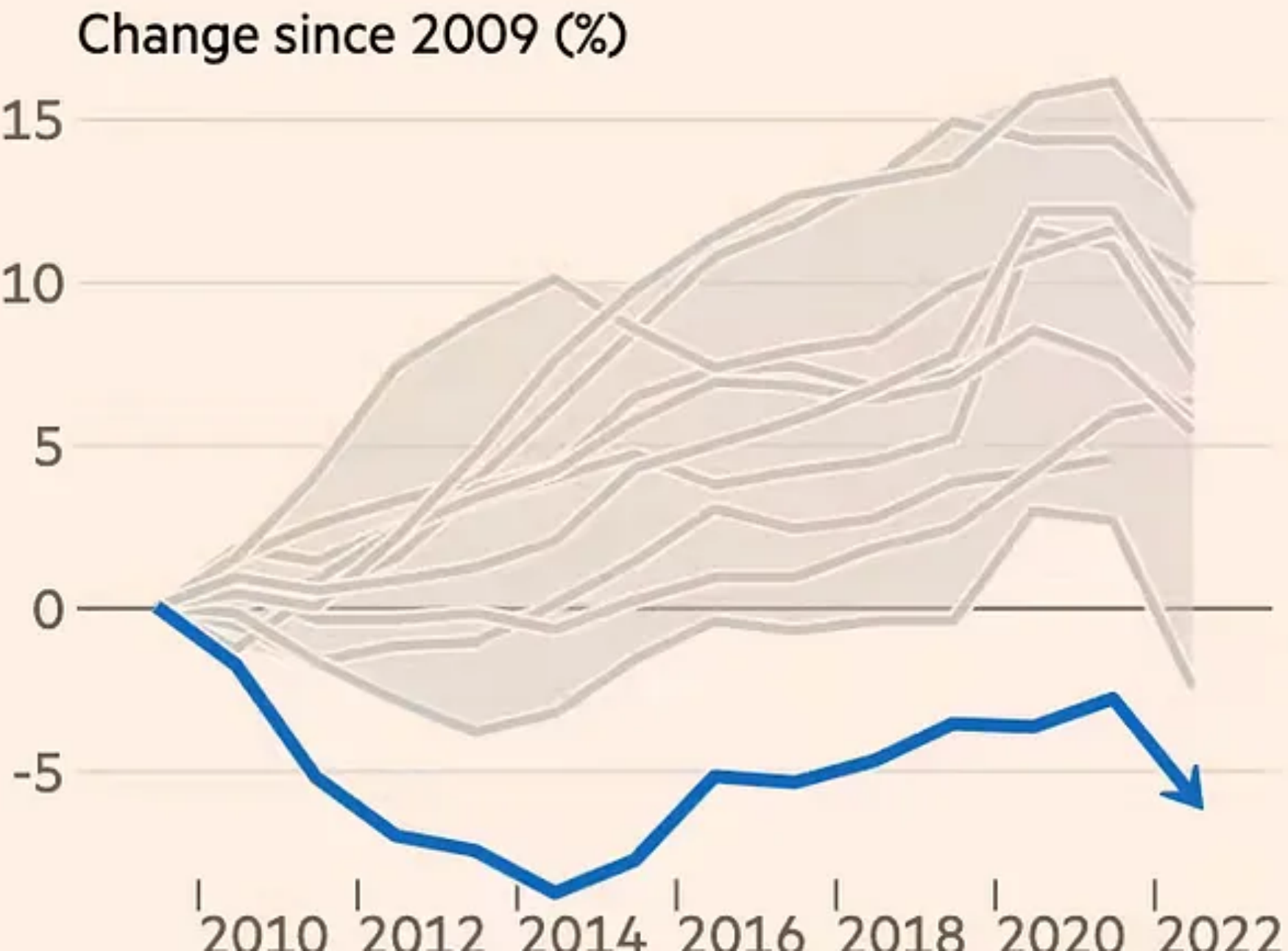
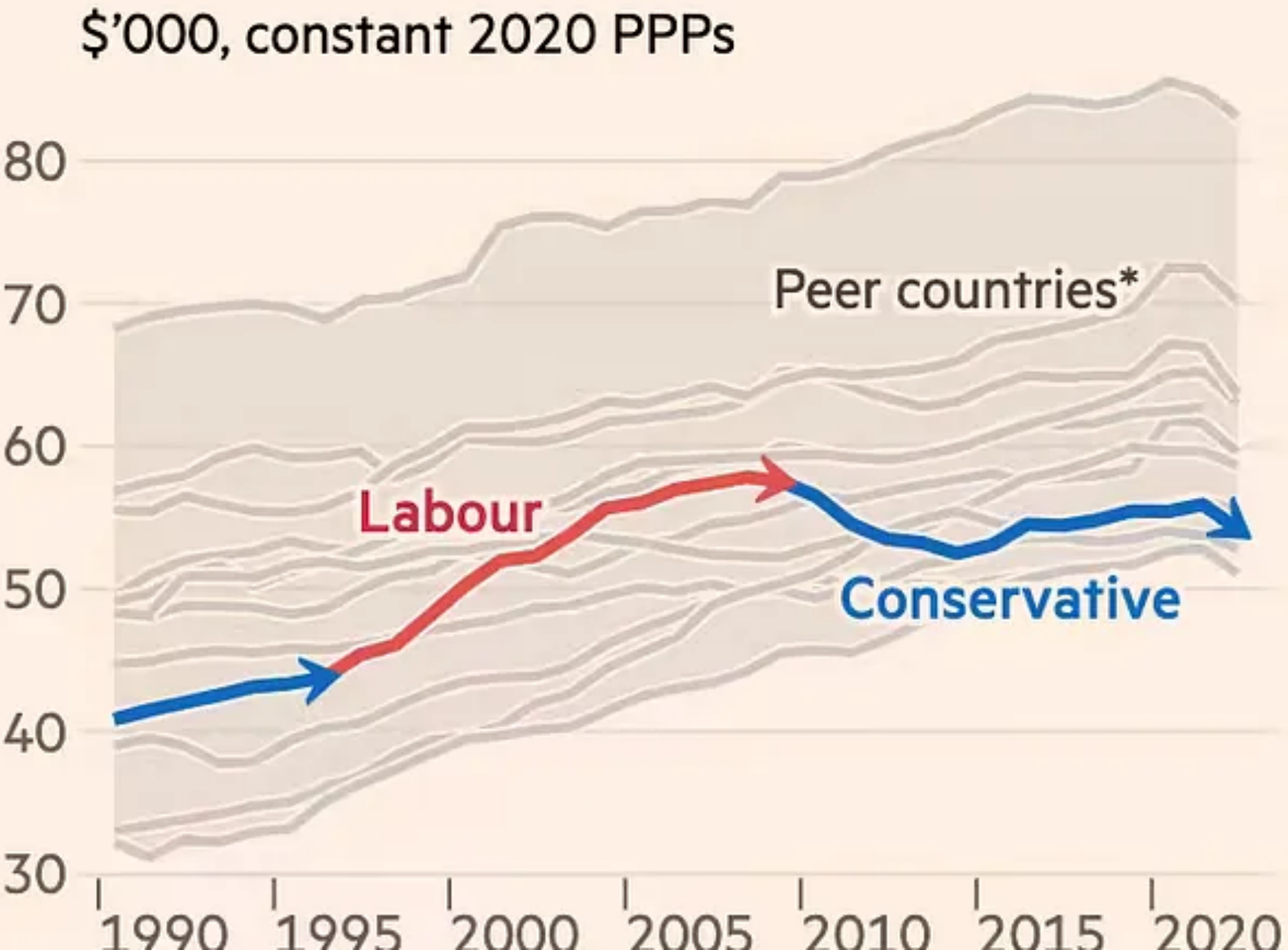


UK real wages are lower today than 18 years ago, and have fared much worse than any peer nation

Evolution of real annual average wages





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Very Briefly Noted:

- **Liz Hempowicz & al.:** [How the Jan. 6 Committee Can Help Enforce the 14th Amendment](#): “Congress codified *quo warranto* in the [District of Columbia Code](#)”. The federal district court in Washington may issue a writ of *quo warranto* against anyone in the District who unlawfully holds “a public office of the United States”...
- **Cory Doctorow:** [Pluralistic: What the fediverse \(does/n't\) solve](#)!
- **Dan Nexon:** [Microblog](#): “The [microblog](#) contains short, informal posts. These are the kinds of scribbles one might expect to find on Twitter or Mastodon, except here they reside at an actual weblog”!
- **Alan Blinder:** [The Use and Abuse of Inflation History](#): “Inflation expectations today are remarkably well contained. In fact, they are [nearly consistent](#) with the Fed’s 2% inflation target for the [Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index](#) (PCE). Of course, expected inflation is higher than 2% in the near term, because people can see that inflation is running higher right now. But over a five- or ten-year horizon, the numbers cluster in the 2-3% range. This matters a lot”!
- **William Wolff & al.:** [Have Trade Agreements Been Bad for America?](#): “The trade agreements that the United States entered into were strongly positive for America and that policy approaches taken need to be built on rather than abandoned”!
- **Ellie Murray:** “[The hardest thing about pandemics](#) for almost everyone is that infectious diseases are so different from everything else. All the intuition you have built up over a full & long life about risk & risk management is not only useless, but often actively harmful in a pandemic. Sure use Calabresi’s approach if you like, but make sure you correctly quantify the full scope of “accidents prevented” by masks. Transmission is exponential so there’s secondary & tertiary cases etc, plus sick people can’t work (at least not without transmitting)...
- **UNESCO:** [Archaeological Site of Aigai \(modern name Vergina\)](#): “Aigai, the ancient first capital of the Kingdom of Macedonia”!
- **Dan Drezner** (2017): [The Ideas Industry: How Pessimists, Partisans, and Plutocrats Are Transforming the Marketplace of Ideas](#)!
- **Ethan Mollick:** [“Mechanical Turk](#) plays a big role in research & it worked well for years”! but there are ominous signs: Invalid data in MTurk only happened in ~10% of answers 2015-2017, but that went to 62% in 2018 & 38% in 2019. 2022: out of a sample of 529 MTurk workers, only 14 were human”!
- **Plutarch:** [Marcus Cato Was a Cheap, Cruel Man](#): “[His] us[ing] slaves up as if they were pack animals and then driving them away and selling them when they were old is the mark of a deeply cruel character...”

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À’s:

Kathryn A. Edwards: [America Is Choosing to Keep Children in Poverty](#): *The Child Tax Credit worked, but Congress is letting it die anyway*: “Let’s face it: the US is completely capable of reducing child poverty. It chooses not to. Americans like to think that they live in a society of endless potential, where anyone with enough grit and determination can pull themselves up. Yet their elected representatives are unwilling to remove one of the greatest obstacles to prosperity “one that affects people at an extremely vulnerable stage in life, when they have no say in the matter. An expanded Child Tax Credit wouldn’t solve everything, but killing it off is a false economy. Congress is walking away from giving nearly three million children a better shot at the American Dream. That dream hasn’t failed: Policymakers simply lack the will to make it succeed.

Cat Valente: [Three Decades of Survival in the Desert of Social Media](#): “Be each other’s pen pals. Talk. Share. Welcome. Care. And just keep moving.... Protect the vulnerable. Make little things. Wear electric blue eyeshadow. Take a picture of your breakfast.... Us doesn’t have a web address. We are wherever we gather. Hello, world. Come in from the cold. This will be a good place. For awhile. And then we’ll make another one. Stop buying things and start talking to each other. They’ve always known that was how they lose. And remember, the lightest shade goes over the browbone, as delicate as a new year...”

Venkatesh Rao: [The Dawn of Mediocre Computing](#): “Computers already easily overwhelm the best humans at chess and Go. Now they have done something far harder: achieved parity with David Brooks at writing. OpenAI’s [ChatGPT](#), released as a research beta two days ago, has done to the standard high-school essay what cameras did to photorealistic painting and pocket calculators did to basic arithmetic”. When it comes to writing, nobody does mediocre more mediocrely than David Brooks”. In the grim darkness of the far future where there are only extreme weather reports, civilization will be dominated by Brooks-like humans and Brooks-equivalent computers living together in an awkward symbiosis. And that future starts today. We are witnessing the dawn of mediocre computing”. Declarations of AIs passing the Turing test are a bit like [declarations that Voyager 1 has exited the solar system](#), but I think this event is genuinely significant”!

Dan Nexon: [Explanatory Theory as Definition](#): “I’ve been very slowly working on a post about whether reactionary populism is a form of fascism. Well, it’s more about the *debate* itself”and particularly “things I find annoying.” One of them is when participants make arguments based on their theoretical priors about the *causes* of interwar fascism”. The argument is particularly poorly suited to ideologies and beliefs, which routinely outlast the conditions of their production. The circumstances that produced Christianity and Islam no longer exist, yet that doesn’t mean that there are no Christians or Muslims. Sure, modern variants of both differ in significant ways from their original forms. But no one who supports the “fascism” position thinks that reactionary populism is identical to, say, Nazism”!

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