

workers in the United States. Data from the Current Population Survey, for example, show that nonparticipation in the labor force among men age 55 to 64 rose from 11.5 to 15.5 percent between 1956 and 1966.¹³

Much of this rise in nonparticipation occurred among men age 60 to 64 and has occurred during recent years. Table 6 shows the 1961–66 participation rates for males between the ages of 60 and 64. It can be seen that the participation rates have been falling rather sharply, especially after the minimum social security eligibility age of 62.

TABLE 6.—CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES FOR MEN, ANNUAL AVERAGES, 1961–66

Age	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
60.....	85.5	85.9	88.1	85.5	86.0	85.9
61.....	85.6	81.9	83.5	84.6	83.3	83.4
62.....	82.0	80.5	79.7	78.2	78.7	79.4
63.....	79.9	76.9	75.5	74.1	72.5	71.1
64.....	74.9	74.2	71.5	71.5	67.7	67.4

Source: Unpublished data, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The reasons for this trend are not definitely known. A 1963 survey of salary and wage workers, age 62 to 64 (retiring since 1957), found, however, that only 9 percent reported retiring because they “preferred leisure.”¹⁴ Almost 75 percent reported retiring because of poor health (53 percent) or involuntary loss of job (22 percent). Whether poor health was the real reason for those who gave it as an explanation for retirement or just a rationalization by some unable to find work is not known. Using a rather stringent disability definition, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found only 30 percent of men age 60 to 64 who were not in the labor force in 1966 unable to work because of long-term mental or physical disabilities.¹⁵ The appropriate percentage probably lies somewhere between the Social Security and Bureau of Labor Statistics findings.

F. Le Gros Clark has described part of the problem which may be arising as follows:

In the remote past it had always been possible to let a man moderate his efforts or change his style of work as soon as the years began to tell. The advance of mechanization made this progressively less practicable. Industry has now reached a point at which the dilemma is becoming self-evident; manufacture and transport cannot economically absorb more than a small proportion of their human wastage; i.e., the “marginal” types of laborer embodied in many of their older employees. The result has been the creation of an extended “no man’s land,” lying between the close of a man’s normal working life and the time when true old age at last supervenes.¹⁶

¹³ Susan S. Holland, “Adult Men Not in the Labor Force,” *Monthly Labor Review*, vol. 90 (March 1967), p. 7.

¹⁴ Lenore A. Epstein and Janet H. Murray, “The Aged Population of the United States—The 1963 Social Security Survey of the Aged,” Research Report No. 19 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1967), table 8.4.

¹⁵ Holland, *op cit.*, table 1. The BLS count of men “unable to work” excludes, however, men with temporary injuries or illnesses and men with some combination of minor disabilities.

¹⁶ “Work, Age, and Leisure” (London, Joseph, 1966), p. 13.