

What are the mature men who do not work, do not look for a job, and are not retired doing?

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Abstract *Reduced participation of the male population in economic activities is the result of their later entry and earlier leave from the labor market. This earlier exit is not only associated to “early” retirement. Between 1993 and 2013, there was an increase in the number of men aged 50-59 who were not working, not looking for a job, and were not retired (NER). The literature stresses that work is the most important social event of a man’s life, and the traditional gender contract establishes the breadwinner role for men and the caregiver one for women. This growth suggests changes in gender relations since a decrease was observed in the proportion of male household heads, and an increase in that of male spouses, and of those living with their parents. This may be a consequence of their difficulties in participating in the labor market, also given their low education level; therefore, requiring greater participation from women. This trend is contradictory with the new demographic regime. A later leave from economic activities is an important requirement to minimize the challenges brought about by the reducing workforce and aging population.*

Key words *Male participation in the labor market, Retirement, Pensions, Gender relations, NER*

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Introduction

Since ancient times, Western cultures have demonstrated a concern in dividing the human life into stages, seeking to find some order and predictability in these stages. These are marked, on one hand, by biological events, such as puberty, menstruation, motherhood, menopause, widowhood, old age, death, etc.; and on the other, by social events, such as graduation, first job, marriage, retirement, etc. Throughout history, the modern state assumed questions that were of private and family order and began to regulate the stages of the course of life. These are standardized from birth to death, with an emphasis on education, entering and exiting the labor market, and retirement¹.

Until recently, only three stages were considered: first (childhood and adolescence); second (adulthood); and third (old age). Entry into the labor market is one of the events that marks the beginning of adulthood for men, and likewise leaving it, via retirement, is what characterizes the entrance into the last stage of life or old age. In other words, men have a life guided by the labor market, given that school, which marks childhood, can be regarded as a preparatory event for him. For women, marriage and motherhood are still the most important events in their social inclusion at this stage of life, even though their participation, both in school and in the labor market, has grown².

The objective of this study is to draw attention to the growing number of Brazilian men aged 50 to 59 who were not working, not seeking work, and were not retired nor pensioners between 1993 and 2013. These men will now be called the “Neither-Nors.” In 1993, 4.3% of all men constituted this age group, and in 2013, 8.6% constituted this group. Furthermore, although the ratio of women is predominant in this category, the comparable ratio decreased from 41.0% to 32.1%.

The main question is whether these men are in vulnerable conditions: not seeking work because of discouragement, are not retired due to a lack of historical contributions, and/or are part of a family capable of guaranteeing them basic survival until achieving a satisfactory position in the labor market, and/or their retirement. For this purpose, a profile of this population subgroup is outlined against the backdrop of resulting vulnerabilities and potentials of the family context in which he is included, compared to other possibilities of social inclusion. It starts from the assumption that age, education, marital

status, position and presence of younger children at home, and household income affect the allocation of time of these individuals.

The Neither-Nors: data and methods

The phenomenon of the “Neither-Nors” was first observed among the younger generation, when young people neither studied nor worked. Women also dominated this young group of people, but the number of men aged 15 to 29 has increased, and the number of women has decreased³⁻⁶.

For various reasons, this phenomenon may present important socioeconomic implications in both situations. In this study, the new demographic regime has called attention, which is already demanding the worker to stay longer in economic activity to compensation, at least partially, the negative effects of the aging population and the reducing supply of labor. However, what is observed among Brazilian men is not only an early retirement, but also a growing portion who leave the labor market without retiring. This leads to the question of, in what stage of life might these men be allocated, or if new events/social roles are characterizing the lives of Brazilian men.

The data used came from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) from 1993⁷, 2003⁸, and 2013⁹, and the Demographic Census from 1980¹⁰ and 2010¹¹, from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). In order to measure not working and not seeking work, we used the economically active population (EAP) concept. People who did not receive death pension benefits were also included in the non-retired group.

The study is divided into six sections, including the introduction and this note about the data and methods used. The third section analyzes the evolution and characteristics of Brazilian men aged 50 to 59, who were not in the labor force and not retired in 1993, 2003, and 2013; the fourth describes the social inclusion of these individuals; the fifth, their family conditions, compared to the conditions of those that experienced other forms of social inclusion. Finally, a summary of the results.

Allocation of the time between work and retirement

As previously mentioned, participation in the labor market is the event that traditionally char-

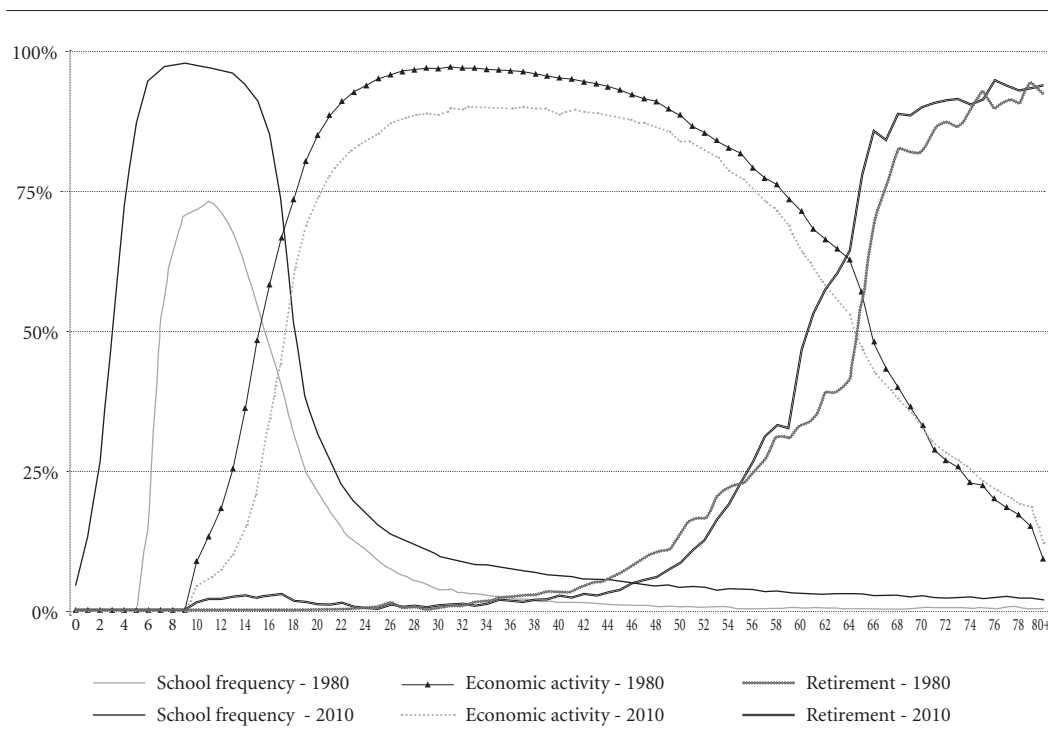
acterizes the life of men. Graph 1 shows the division of the life cycle of Brazilian men in all three stages, considering their participation in social events connected to the labor market in 1980 and 2010. An analysis of participation in these events between 1980 and 2000 for both men and women can be found in Camarano et al.⁴. It can be observed that the stages are clearly defined by participation in the events mentioned. In addition, it is apparent that one stage is subsequent to another, and that there is a thread of the prevalence of these events throughout their lives. On the other hand, it appears that these men simultaneously participated in more than one event, which seems to be a growing trend over time and has also been verified in other parts of the world. Currently, people of all ages change jobs much more easily and combine different activities such as work and school, retirement and school^{2,12}.

In Graph 1, we observed several changes in the thirty years studied: on one side, people started entering school earlier and exiting later; but on the other, they entered into the labor market later. The average age of entry into the labor market increased from 16.0 to 17.6 years of age, and the time of exiting occurred earlier, in ad-

dition to retirement. The result is from people living longer and spending more time in school and in retired conditions¹³. Death is becoming increasingly concentrated in extreme ages. However, spending less time in economic activities. A change in the life cycle can be seen, what Sheehy¹⁴ considers a “true revolution.”

Childhood ends earlier, and menstruation and sexuality start sooner. On the other hand, adolescence and youth are extended. This leads to the question whether adulthood is ending later, and consequently, entry into the final stage of life, or old age, is starting later. Retirement, in other words exiting the labor market, is traditionally the event that marks the entry into the final stage of life. Contradictory to the increased life expectancy, the average age at which people retire is declining almost everywhere in the world, including Brazil. In 1980, people retired on average at 61.0 years and 59.7 years in 2010¹³. For Debert¹, “adulthood is squeezed between an ‘endless’ youth and an early retirement.”

In Brazil however, legislation allows the retiree to return to the labor market without any restrictions, and this “early” retirement may not signify leaving the labor market. In fact, in 2012



Graph 1. Brazil: ratio of individual males in major events related to the life cycle.

Source: Demographic Census from 1980¹⁰ and 2010¹¹/IBGE.

it was estimated that men left the labor market at 63.4 years of age, 3.7 years after retirees, and 0.7 years earlier than in 1982¹⁵. This simultaneous participation becomes a tenuous delimitation of the stages of life.

Even though the timing and frequency of participation of men in these events have changed, the issue raised in this study is how to understand the increase in the number of people aged 50 to 59 who did not participate in any of them. There were 206,500 men in 1993, a figure that rose to 882,300 in 2013. This increase was relatively higher than the population growth of this age group, which resulted in an increased ratio from 4.3% to 8.6%. This suggests that these men did not meet the requirements to retire and experienced difficulties integrating themselves into some type of economic activity. Therefore, the question is, in what stage of life can these men be included.

Among the difficulties of their integration into the labor market, also cited were the prejudices regarding the work of older people. Although they have more professional experience than the younger, they have more difficulties to keep up with technological changes, absentee rates at work are higher due to morbidity, have less physical strength, etc.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of this segment was still composed of women, 80.9% in 2013, although this participation decreased over time, from 91.4% in 1993. This leads us to believe that there is a strong gender component in this phenomenon. It is assumed that some of these women have started a family and are performing the traditional role of a mother and homemaker. Approximately 81% of women that were not working and were not retired were married, and 91% had had living children in 2013.

Graph 2 presents the average number of years studying by Brazilian men aged 50 to 59 in four time-use categories in 1993, 2003, and 2013. These categories include: does not participate in the EAP and is not retired nor a pensioner; participates in the EAP and is retired and/or a pensioner; participates in the EAP and is not retired nor a pensioner; and does not participate in the EAP and is retired and/or a pensioner.

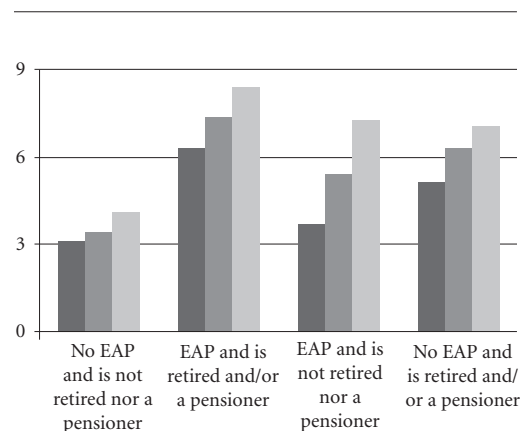
We observed that all men gained in the education area, most significantly for those who were only part of the EAP and were not retired, 3.6 years. Smaller gains were observed in the “Neither-Nors,” only one year. In 2013, the lowest education level was observed for the “Neither-Nors,” approximately four years of study,

and the highest education level was for those who worked and were also retired/pensioners. The difference between them was approximately four years. The lower education level may also be a factor that explains the difficulties of integration into the labor market. Camarano et al.⁵ showed that higher education levels lead to higher participation in economic activities for people at older ages, and consequently, a higher income.

A study was carried out in the United States on the withdrawal of men at work. Of the respondents, 40% stated that they could get a job in their area of work, but did not want to because of the low salary¹⁶.

In which families do the “neither-nor” men live?

The family condition is an important indicator, because it is within it that decisions are made regarding work, to provide or care for the dependent members. Traditional gender contracts establish that it is up to the man to work and provide for the family, and for the women to care for the dependent members. About one-fifth of the “Neither-Nor” men reported having some income in the three years analyzed, which by definition, are neither retirement nor death pension benefits. In 2013, approximately one-third of that income was from rent, 9.9% from donations, and the remainder was classified as interest,



Graph 2. Brazil: average number of years studying by the male population aged 50 to 59, according to the time-use categories.

Source: PNAD from 1993⁷, 2003⁸ and 2013⁹/IBGE.

dividends, other social benefits, etc. Trying to infer how these men live, we analyzed their family condition compared to other men of the same age, located in the three other categories. These were placed into only one group to facilitate the comparison (Table 1). The unit of analysis used here is in the home, although work usually refers to the family. For discussion about the concept of family and home, refer to Medeiros¹⁷.

Among the “Neither-Nor” men, the household heads predominated, but in a decreasing ratio - from 77.6% to 64.8% between 1993 and 2013. This reduction was offset by the increase in the ratio of spouses and children. The ratio of male spouses rose from 2.6% to 12.5%, indicating a possible change in gender relations. For example, according to the 2013 PNAD, 80.7% of these male spouses had a wife who declared having her own income, coming from work or retirement. An increase was also observed in the ratio of mature men in childlike conditions, which suggests that in the case of separation, and/or lack of work/income, these men returned to their parents’ home. This ratio increased from 6.8% to 11.5%. An average age of about 53.4 years was estimated for these children, in the three years considered. Another characteristic of adulthood is leaving your parents’ home and establishing your own home. The question is, therefore, what does this return or not leaving home mean.

Among men in other categories, household heads also dominated and in decreasing ratios. However, the ratios were higher than among the “Neither-Nor” men. In 2013, while 64.8% of these were household heads, the comparable ratio for the other categories was 77.3%. In this

Table 1. Brazil: Proportion of men aged 50 to 59 by household status, according to the time-use categories.

	Do not work and are not retired/pensioners			Other Categories		
	1993	2003	2013	1993	2003	2013
Household head	77.6	72.4	64.8	94.8	91.6	77.3
Spouse	2.6	5.7	12.5	1.0	3.5	15.4
Child	6.8	9.3	11.5	1.5	2.0	3.6
Other relative	12.5	11.5	10.5	2.4	2.7	3.4
Others	0.5	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.3

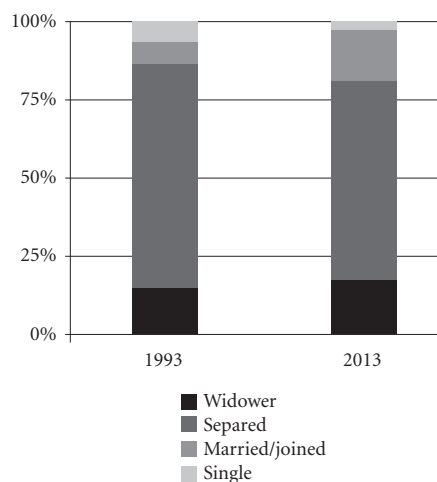
Source: PNAD from 1993⁷, 2003⁸, and 2013⁹/IBGE.

last case, the reduction in the ratio of household heads was only compensated by the increasing ratio of male spouses, also indicating a change in gender relations.

Changes in family conditions are generally related to changes in marital status, as shown in Graph 3. Most men who did not work, nor received retirement or pension benefits were married, a ratio that decreased from 71.6% to 63.8%. Furthermore, the ratio of separated men increased from 6.8% to 16.6%, and the ratio of singles rose from 15.1% to 17.4%. Increases in both ratios can explain the growth in the proportion of these men in childlike conditions.

Who financially supports these men?

Table 2 shows that men who did not work nor were they retired were placed in families whose average household income, a total and per capita, were much lower than that of families who had men aged 50 to 59 in other categories. The average per capita income value of households in which at least one “Neither-Nor” lived was 56.0% of the household income of men aged 50 to 59 placed in other categories. The lower education level of the household heads with “Neither-Nors” was 1.7 years less than the household heads without “Neither-Nors,” which may help explain their



Graph 3. Brazil: proportional distribution by marital status of men aged 50 to 59, who do not work and are neither retired nor pensioners.

Source: PNAD from 1993⁷, 2003⁸ and 2013⁹/IBGE.

lower income. In addition, fewer members participated in economic activities, which occurred in households with “Neither-Nors,” also resulting in a lower average household income.

About 54% of income from both types of households considered were from the income of the household heads. The second important contribution to the income of households with “Neither-Nors” was from the children (25.9%) and others in the household, the spouse (22.7%). This relatively higher contribution of children occurred in families in which the household heads were slightly older.

Work was the main source of income in both cases, which is consistent with the point in the life cycle of the household heads, whose average age was around 56. This contribution was lower in the households of the “Neither-Nors,” partially, because the number of people that worked in these households was lower, a difference of 0.6 people. This can perhaps be explained by the lower number of women in the EAP, 0.5 less than in households without “Neither-Nors.”

However, families with “Neither-Nors” are larger. This means a greater reliance on the income of those working or on social benefits. In both types of households, social programs including unemployment compensation, family allowance retirements and pensions were important contributions. This was higher in those with “Neither-Nors.” The donation contributions of non-resident members in the households was very low.

Final comments

It was observed that the reduced participation of the male population in economic activities is the result of later entry and earlier exit from the labor market. However, this earlier exit is not only associated to “early” retirement. Between 1993 and 2013, there was an increase in both the relative and absolute number of men who were not working and were not retired, and not pensioners. This increase signals a difficulty for them

Table 2. Brazil: Some income characteristics of households with people aged 50 to 69, according to time-use categories – 2013.

Characteristics	With at least one person who is <i>not in the EAP, nor</i> <i>retired/pensioner</i>	Without <i>Neither-Nor</i>
Average number of residents	3.5	3.1
Average age of the household head	56.9	55.1
Average number of years of education of the household head	5.7	7.5
Income (in R\$)		
Average household income	2,375.42	3,840.86
Average per capita income of households with adults in the category studied	689.10	1,230.80
Income sources of the household heads (%)		
Work	60.1	73.5
Retirement/pension	33.5	24.0
Rent	3.0	1.7
Donations	0.6	0.1
Other income*	2.8	0.7
Contribution of income by members of the household (%)		
Household head	54.4	54.5
Spouse	12.5	22.7
Child	25.9	16.7
Other relative and other member	7.2	6.2
Participation in the EAP		
Average number of people that are part of EAP	1.3	1.9
Average number of women that are part of EAP	0.4	0.9

Source: PNAD of 2013⁹/IBGE.

Note: * Other incomes include: permanent allowance income, savings account interest and other financial investments, dividends, social programs, and other income.

to integrate into the labor market. It was not investigated in this work if this growth could be associated to some physical, cognitive, or mental incapacity to work.

It is very common to find in the literature that work is the most important social event of a man's life, because the traditional gender contracts establish provider roles for men and caregiver roles for women. Events linked to the labor market, such as school and retirement; define the stages of their life. In this case, we wonder how one can understand this lack of inclusion into any of these events. The process studied here may be signaling changes in gender relations, given that a decrease was observed in the ratio of male household heads and an increase in male spouses and children. It may also be a reflection of needs, facing difficulties of integration into the labor market, which requires a greater participation of women in economic activities. In other words, changes in gender relations might be being caused by difficulties experienced by men in the labor market. The low educational level of the "Neither-Nors" may be contributing to this difficulty.

The trend analyzed here goes in the opposite direction to that required by the new demographic regime. A later exit from the labor market is an important requirement to minimize the challenges brought on by the reducing supply of labor and the aging population. For Bloom et al.¹⁸, the population not only lives longer, but also lives better, even in more advanced ages. As a result, aging pathologies have occupied a smaller space in the life cycle (relative and absolutely), which have extended the potential lifetime of work. As this is not happening in Brazil, it is necessary that public policies act on the promotion of adequate integration of these individuals into the labor market.

This can be translated by the increase in the number of professional opportunities for this group, through continuous training policies, occupational health, prejudice reduction, among others; because among the four categories studied in which these individuals can be included, this was the largest increase in relative terms (Camarano and Fernandes, 2014)¹³.

Collaborations

AA Camarano participated in drafting the text, study design, methodology, and the final revision. D Fernandes participated in data collection, drafting the charts, and assembling tables.

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