Our Broken Escalator:
Gathering Systemic Troubles
In 21st Century America

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“Mission Accomplished”?  
USA: Households and Nonprofit Net Worth, quarterly,  
2000-2017 (trillions of current US dollars)
The Big Slowdown…
Real (2009 USD) GDP, quarterly, 2000-2016
(exponential trend-line 1947-2007)

…And The Crash

(seasonally adjusted)

Decline of the Males
Employment to Population Ratios: Ages 25-54 by Sex, 1948-2017 (seasonally adjusted)

An Invisible Army of Men without Work
Percentage of Prime Working Age (25-54) Men Without Paid Employment:
USA 1948-2017 (Civilian Non-Institutional Population, Seasonally Adjusted)

Decadal Averages:
1950s: 6.2%
1960s: 6.3%
1970s: 8.7%
1980s: 11.5%
1990s: 12.3%
2000s: 13.4%
2010s: 16.9% (through May 2017)
### US male “work rates”: Nowadays vs. Selected Depression years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and source</th>
<th>Employment to population ratio, men 20-64 (percentage of civilian non-institutional population)</th>
<th>Employment to population ratio, men 25-54 (percentage of civilian non-institutional population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 (BLS)</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 (Census)</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930 (Census)</td>
<td>88.2*</td>
<td>91.2*^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** * = calculated for total enumerated population, not civilian non-institutional population  
^ = 25-44 population—corresponding male 25/44 work ratio for 2015 would be 85.3 for civilian non-institutional population alone

**Sources:**  
The Great Postwar “Flight From Work” by Men
(seasonally unadjusted)

NILF to Unemployed Ratio
(unemployed = 100)
1950s: 86
1960s: 115
1970s: 150
1980s: 115
1990s: 186
2000s: 219
2015: 303
2017: 338 (thru May)

Race To The Bottom
Labor Force Participation Rates for Men Ages 25-54:
USA vs. 22 “Original” OECD Member States, 1960-2015

Who is more likely—and less likely—to be in the 7 million+ pool of prime age NILF men?

Relative odds by demographic characteristic: 2015 (Census CPS Microdata)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Nativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-20%</td>
<td>-59%</td>
<td>Foreign Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-43%</td>
<td>Native Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Anglo” (Non-Hispanic White)</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>Never Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>+31%</td>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Black</td>
<td>+71%</td>
<td>+77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Uncanny Regularity of the Male Flight From Work
NILF Rates for Men 25-54 Years of Age: USA, 1965-2016

Notes: Recession variables- The data used to create this figure is from the “Current Population Survey” (CPS) as was downloaded from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data used to create the regression table in the upper left corner is also from the “Current Population Survey” but was downloaded from IPUMS-CPS for statistical manipulation. 1 if “year” variable falls into any time during the following list of recession dates; 0 otherwise.
Not All High School Dropouts Seem To Have Suffered
Labor Force Participation Rates for Native and Foreign Born Prime Age
Men With Less than a High School Education (1994-2015)

Notes: “Nativity” is a variable that equals 1 if an individual was born either in a territory of the United States or born in one of the fifty United States; “Nativity” equals 0 otherwise.
Where Are The U-Hauls?
NILF Rates Among Prime Age Males by State (2015)

Coefficient of Variation by State:
1980: 0.121
1990: 0.128
2000: 0.143
2010: 0.154
2014: 0.170

## Disability Nation


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Prime male disability benefit</th>
<th>Two or more prime male disability benefits</th>
<th>Disability benefit, household level</th>
<th>Two disability benefits, household level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985 NILF</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>38.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>51.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 NILF</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>56.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disability, Medicaid, and the Opioid Epidemic
Reported Recipience of Disability Benefits and Means Tested Benefits by Education:
US Prime Age Non-Labor Force Men, 2013 (percent)

Source: SIPP
Felony Nation
Estimated Population of Felons and Ex-Felons: USA, 1948-2010

Bonus Round: Rural America in Extremis
Rural Is The New Inner City

Of America’s 906 low-work counties in 2008/12, 720 were non-Metro

(“Low work” defined as 35%+ of population 25-64 years of age with no paid employment)
The Great Recession hit non-Metro areas harder—
And recovery has been much weaker in them.
It’s Flyover Country For Immigrants,
“The White Death”
All-cause mortality by race and ethnicity: USA, ages 50-54, 1999-2015

The Geography of the White Death
All-cause mortality, white non-Hispanics, ages 45-54

The Geography of “Deaths of Despair”
Drug, alcohol and suicide mortality, white non-Hispanic ages 45-54

Less God, More Despair?