

the decline in births during the Depression years and a second decline in the 1960s and after, as birth control technology became commercialized and couples chose to postpone families or limit their size. The baby-boom is thus a unique phenomenon and its relative size has put pressure on different social institutions, as the age cohorts that make it up age, use different facilities, and express different needs.

The commercialization of birth control technology also enabled many women, whose recent historical experience in the industrial workplace had been limited largely to wartime needs, to enter the economy in large and increasing numbers. Partly this trend was due to changing morés about the role of women in society and partly it was due to economic pressures. In order to quickly gain the amenities that their parents had slowly acquired, young married couples found that both individuals had to earn income. Further, the pressure on the job market created by many young people looking for work almost simultaneously meant that available new employment was likely to be low-paying, unstable and with few prospects for promotion.

The early baby-boomers (cohorts born in 1940--1950) were relatively lucky, in that the expanding economy of the 1960's opened up employment opportunities and promotional opportunities at a relatively fast rate. This ease of entry was partly due to the inability of earlier, and smaller, age cohorts to fill up the openings. However, as the 1970's dawned, the slower-growing economy filled with relatively young people occupying most 'good' jobs presented a daunting challenge to the men and women of the later cohorts of the 'baby-boom.'²

Employment expansion took place in the 1970s, but the numbers and the quality of the jobs in terms of pay and promotion prospects were inadequate. Unemployment grew, and those under age 25 tended to feel its impact the most. Black youths in urban areas, for instance, often tended to have unemployment rates in excess of 50% toward the end of the 1970's.