

In spite of the welter of stories that were current in the 1970's, about PhD's driving cabs, the truth was that advanced education still meant a better chance for employment, and especially for well-paid employment. The alternatives for the baby-boomers were either unemployment or a clerical or other low-level entry position in the service sector.

The shift in employment within the manufacturing sector presented new problems for older, unionized, blue-collar workers. Their skills often were unsuited for shifts into new production techniques or, more ominously, into new firms, plants and locations. The shift among production facilities and products mentioned above presented the existing labour forces in many states with problems of layoffs, plant closures, and unemployment just as the competition for jobs was heating up because of demographic changes. For a black, middle-aged steelworker in Gary, Indiana, the prospect of moving his family to Houston, Texas, to compete with youths for janitorial or other such jobs, must have been daunting in the extreme.⁷

Regardless of what happens in the future, the picture for manufacturing employment, as opposed to production, is not rosy. Automation and robotics will serve to put the manufacturing industries of the future into the same category as resource producers and processors, industries with high income and capital flows but with relatively low employment levels. The same revolution, or a similar one, that sent millions streaming out of the farms and into the factories around the beginning of the 20th century is now doing the same thing to the manufacturing sector as Charts 1-A and 1-B project: