Partly, it was not necessary; in the assembly line “the machine dominates the worker; the worker is subordinated to the machine’s pace”. Overall, Ford had interpreted in life the mass production and the concept of mass consumption as a driving force of the economy (Grint, 2005:300).

Despite that, an Oil Crisis in 1973 affected the demand for the large cars, such as Ford or General Motors had dropped dramatically (U. S. Department of State, n. d.). More preferable became the Japanese small cars like Toyota. Fordism declining was also affected by regulation theory, which involved the continuous dissatisfaction with work (Giddens, 2009:895-896). The deskilling and dehumanisation of the work place provoked trade unions to strikes, regardless of how well they paid. This growing dissatisfaction of labour had led to the decrease in productivity and higher costs of production.

Furthermore, the fatal mistake of Fordism was an inflexible specialisation and production of only Model T cars. Customers wanted to have more individualised products, what Fordism had not provided (Strangeman and Warren, 2008:132). Consequently, Fordism was replaced by Neo-Fordism and Post-Fordism.

The era of flexible and non-standardised production, known as Post-Fordism has replaced Fordism. Piore and Sabel were the major followers of the Post-Fordism. Piore believed that with the development of new informational technologies, especially computers, the production became more flexible. Instead of remaking the whole assembly line to produce a new product, computers can reprogram different tasks to produce another product (Browne, 2005:346-347). These changes led to the replacement of the mass production by more small batched and individualised products. Piore and Sabel claimed that with increasing flexibility, the whole structure of the firms changed, and the needs of more flexible and skilled workers began to rise (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000:714). In addition, the firms adopted some Japanese technologies like just-in-time system and quality circles. In just-in-time system, instead of holding large parts in the reserve, they were delivered directly to appropriate workers on time they needed these parts. The quality circles were a system of general meetings of workers and managers, where both sides discuss how to increase the company productivity. Controversially to Fordism, an increased autonomy and an exchange of workers to cooperate with managers and taking part in the labour organisation decreased the labour conflicts and increased the job satisfaction (Grint, 2005:301-302).

According to Piore, the general trend was to move from concentrated large corporations to a large number of small businesses. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2000:714), Sabel pushed further this point by examining the Third Italy region. Based on his research, he found that small firms in Italy cooperate using each other’s specialist skills contributing a large “network” of companies. Particularly, Sabel pointed out “Benetton” in this “network”, which provided a distinctive and wide range of products in order to cope with changes in fashion market (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000:714).

Based on Piore and Sabel views, British economist John Atkinson developed his theory of flexible firms. According to Atkinson, there are two main types of flexibility: Functional and Numerical (Browne, 2006:372). Functional flexibility involved the redeployment of workers, which required the multi-skilled labour to work in several certain areas of the firm. These workers also known as “core” workers, who are full-time employed and highly job secured, for instance, managers, craftsmen, designers (Giddens, 2009:896). Numerical flexibility was provided by the peripheral group of labour such as supervisor, assembly and testing workers to increase the size of the labour in the company (Browne, 2006:372). These workers were full-time employed, however, they were less job secured than “core” workers because they were easier to replace than “core” workers. The addition group of peripheral workers were part-time employed workers. Atkinson believed that the “core” workers certainly benefit from these changes by increasing skills and participation in decision-making processes. However, the further workers away from the “core” group, the less likely they will receive these benefits (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000:714-715).