

Preface

We are witnessing dramatic changes within labour markets and, once again, many welfare states have been restructured, the implication of which is, often, a less strong state and weaker protection of employees in many welfare states. This book is inspired by, on the one hand, a fascination with the ongoing technological changes, and, on the other hand, a long interest in the development of welfare states, often in comparative perspective, and thereby also the possible consequences for different kinds of welfare states by the ongoing transformation.

This book attempts to bridge the gap between these different approaches, spanning issues of technological change with labour market theory and knowledge on the development of welfare states, and what one might expect if the dramatic changes come into force over the coming years. Thus, the focus is on changes in the labour market due to new technology and how this presumably will influence societies, especially in the developed world.

My hope is that this book will contribute to the analysis and discussion of how welfare states can be maintained and developed if the political will is in place, so that it will be possible to support groups in society that are not affluent and often are in need of support from a welfare state system. It is also the hope that the book can help in understanding the possible risk of an increase in the social divide as a consequence of development, and whether not doing anything about this divide might have negative repercussions on the way in which societies function.

Thanks are due especially to my research group at Roskilde University for discussions and comments on several parts of the book, and also to my former colleague at RUC, Steen Scheuer. Naturally, the final responsibility is mine.

Bent Greve
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