

Life Course Research and Social Policies 5

Isabel Baumann

# The Plight of Older Workers

Labor Market Experience after  
Plant Closure in the  
Swiss Manufacturing Sector

# **Life Course Research and Social Policies**

Volume 5

## **Series editors**

Laura Bernardi

Dario Spini

Michel Oris

Life course research has been developing quickly these last decades for good reasons. Life course approaches focus on essential questions about individuals' trajectories, longitudinal analyses, cross-fertilization across disciplines like life-span psychology, developmental social psychology, sociology of the life course, social demography, socio-economics, social history. Life course is also at the crossroads of several fields of specialization like family and social relationships, migration, education, professional training and employment, and health. This Series invites academic scholars to present theoretical, methodological, and empirical advances in the analysis of the life course, and to elaborate on possible implications for society and social policies applications.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/10158>

Isabel Baumann

# The Plight of Older Workers

Labor Market Experience after Plant Closure  
in the Swiss Manufacturing Sector

Isabel Baumann  
Center for Health Sciences  
Zurich University of Applied Sciences  
Winterthur, Switzerland

National Centre of Competence in Research  
“Overcoming Vulnerability - Life Course  
Perspectives” - NCCR LIVES  
Lausanne, Switzerland



ISSN 2211-7776                      ISSN 2211-7784 (electronic)  
Life Course Research and Social Policies  
ISBN 978-3-319-39752-8              ISBN 978-3-319-39754-2 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-39754-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016945030

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and the Author(s) 2016. This book is published open access.

**Open Access** This book is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, duplication, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, a link is provided to the Creative Commons license and any changes made are indicated.

The images or other third party material in this book are included in the work's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in the credit line; if such material is not included in the work's Creative Commons license and the respective action is not permitted by statutory regulation, users will need to obtain permission from the license holder to duplicate, adapt or reproduce the material.

This work is subject to copyright. All commercial rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature  
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# Acknowledgments

This study emanates from a research project conducted together with Professor Daniel Oesch at the University of Lausanne. He initiated this project and was crucially involved at all stages of the process. The PhD thesis that resulted from the project was supervised by him with impressive academic knowledge and scientific rigor. It was a great pleasure and an enormous privilege to work with him and I would like to thank him for his encouragement and inspiration.

The realization of this study would not have been possible without the survey participation of workers who lost their job because their plant closed down. I would like to sincerely thank them for offering us their precious time to respond to the questionnaire and for their willingness to share their experiences. In order to collect the data we received indispensable help from representatives of the works councils, plants, cantonal employment offices and trade unions. I would like to particularly thank Pierre Niederhauser who facilitated meetings with workers who experienced plant closure, provided me with profound insights to the process of a plant closure and enormously supported our study. Moreover, my gratitude goes to Urs Schor for taking the time to share his knowledge and experience, and for his continuous encouragement. I am highly thankful to Jessica Garcia, Lorenza Visetti and Katrina Riva for their research assistance and for the pleasant collaboration. My thanks go to Roman Graf, Grégoire Metral and Stefan Floethkoetter who provided the project with IT support, to Robert DiCapua for the title page of the questionnaire and to Emmanuelle Marendaz Colle for communication assistance. I appreciated the methodological expertise of Maurizio Bigotta, Eliane Ferrez, Francesco Laganà, Oliver Lipps, Alexandre Pollien, Caroline Roberts, Alexandra Stam and Boris Wernli who helped with the survey procedure, data analysis and data management.

My gratitude goes to Lucio Baccaro, Marina Dieckhoff, Duncan Gallie, and Dominique Joye, who accepted to be the members of my PhD committee and provided me with very valuable insights that have importantly contributed to this study. I am very grateful to Gaëlle Aeby, Karen Brändle, Carolina Carvalho Arruda, Julie Falcon, Claire Johnston, Maïlys Korber, Sebastian Lotz, Christian Maggiori, Emily Murphy, Laura Ravazzini, Jacob Reidhead, Rosa Sanchez Tome, Emanuela Struffolino, and Nicolas Turtschi for their helpful comments from their reading of

my work. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Anna von Ow who took the time to carefully read and comment on the entire manuscript. Parts of this study were presented at WIP workshops at the Institute of Social Sciences between 2010 and 2015, at workshops of the NCCR LIVES at the University of Lausanne in 2012, at the Congress of the European Consortium for Sociological Research in Stockholm in 2012, at the Economic Sociology Workshop and the Inequality Workshop at Stanford University in 2013, at the ISA World Congress in Yokohama in 2014, and at the Economics, Health and Happiness Conference in Lugano in 2016. I am very grateful for all the inputs to this study that I received on these occasions.

Procedural and financial support from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) is acknowledged. My thanks go to Werner Aeberhardt, Andrea Bonanomi, Bruno Burri, Jonathan Gast, Thomas Ragni, and Bernhard Weber for their inputs and assistance. This study has been conducted within and the publication of the manuscript has been encouraged by the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) “LIVES – Overcoming Vulnerability: Life Course Perspectives,” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. I would like to thank Bernadette Deelen-Mans and Evelien Bakker at Springer for their assistance and an anonymous reviewer for her/his valuable comments on the manuscript. Richard Nice is gratefully acknowledged for his careful proofreading.

My final thanks go to Victor Garcia to whom I am deeply grateful for his support, inspiring conversations, and shared academic experiences such as a research stay abroad.