Feeling your job is at stake: Perceiving and reacting to job insecurity

Job insecurity constitutes one of the most severe stressors in today’s changing work environment. Commercial competition, government deregulation, and rapid technological developments have put reorganizations, mergers, and acquisitions as well as downsizing on the agenda of companies worldwide. As a consequence, many employees are concerned with whether they will be able to keep their job in the future.

My research examines why employees experience job insecurity and how they react to this experience. In my inaugural lecture I will present on how factors stemming from the sphere of family life, the organization that one works for, and the country that an employee lives in might affect perceptions and reactions to job insecurity. I will also present an ongoing research project in which my co-authors and I consider the impact of previous unemployment experiences on employees’ reactions to perceived job insecurity.

Overall, my research shows that perceptions of and reactions to job insecurity are affected by a very wide variety of characteristics that reside at multiple spheres of an employee’s life.