

# Reflexive and experience-based trust and participatory research: Concept and methods to meet complexity and uncertainty in organisations\*

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In the course of general changes in work, informal processes are becoming ever more important, and the question emerges how to understand and organise them. This is a great challenge for research. Quantitative research methods are confronted with the problem that complex processes cannot be investigated and understood by simple inquiry. Qualitative methods are more adequate but should be complemented by participatory research methods in order to really grasp the phenomena. This article demonstrates the potential of participatory research to meet this challenge, using the concept of reflexive experience-based trust as a regulation resource in enterprises. This leads to a discussion of basic questions of social research: the separation of researcher and “object of research” is called into question as well as the separation of means, ends and objects of research. A concrete research and design project is presented which exemplifies the potentials of participatory research and the notion of reflexive experience-based trust.

**Key words:** trust, participatory research, sociology of work, organisation, qualitative methods

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