

Mikael Ottosson, Calle Rosengren\*

## Who can you trust?

### The Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees (TCO) and trust-based working time 1950-1970\*\*

This article aims to provide a historical perspective to the emergence of trust-based control systems in the workplace. These systems are often seen as a response to increased flexibility requirements following the progress of digital technology, globalisation and an increased knowledge content in production. In contrary to this opinion, it is argued in the article that the phenomenon has much longer historical roots. Based on a theoretical discussion of the concept of "trust", the article discusses the Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees, TCO's, approach to working time regulation in the 1950s and 1960s. Through a discourse analytical approach, the article demonstrates that professional employees felt that trust-based elements were important in their professional identity. They were people that you could trust!

Key words: **trust, professionalism, identity, industrial relations, time management** (JEL: J00, K31, M54, N30)

---

\* Mikael Ottosson, Centre for Work, Technology and Social Change, Lund University, Box 42, 221 00 Lund, Sweden. E-mail: mikael.ottosson@wts.lu.se.

Calle Rosengren, Centre for Work, Technology and Social Change, Lund University, Box 42, 221 00 Lund, Sweden. E-mail: calle.rosengren@wts.lu.se.

\*\* Article received: July 30, 2014

Revised version accepted after double blind review: February 20, 2015.