

## Abstract

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### KNOWING MANAGEMENT An Ethnographic Study of Tinkering with a New Car

This study accounts for “running things” and “making things happen” in a product development project. It reports how a project team explored and constructed realities, and how they changed their views of reality during the development process of a new car project. I found that throughout the day the project team was involved in a self-organising process of arguing and discussing the events of the project governed by their strategies for creating action.

The project team work is to be seen as a *knowing community* and this thesis describes their knowledge production through concepts such as *tinkering*. Tinkering (bricolage) is rarely used in organisation theory and its strong relevance in this particular setting is pointed out. The theory of a temporary organisation (Lundin and Söderholm, 1995) is also used as an applied frame of reference and is extended by adding such categories as *tinkering*, *rhythm*, *looping* and *mixed practice zone*, which summarise the project team’s practice.

To collect and interpret the field material, an ethnographic method was applied. This method offers a chance to learn the rules of social life by interacting with people for a period of time. In addition to observing various project team meetings, I have tape recorded, taken notes, eavesdropped, and chatted with many people from the project and outside the project on a daily basis throughout the course of a year.

**Key words:** project management, tinkering, rhythm, looping, automotive industry, knowing community, decision-making, ethnographic study

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