'Engineers optimise everything': Socialisation and control in software development work

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Chapter 1 "How do we know what is the right thing to do" - an introduction

"How do we know what is the right thing to do" Peter stated during a meeting in which the Butler team was discussing how to proceed from the results of a survey sent out to the people using the services Butler provides. The answers to the survey had been roughly as expected and overall positive. The discussion was therefore not desperate or anxious, but it was characterised by a sense of what now, what can we do to improve our work. In other words, it was exactly the kind of discussion I was at Klarna to listen to and I was jotting down keywords and quotes in my notebook as fast as I could. I had arrived at Klarna, a financial technology company, with the intent to study how the company and its employees do and discuss performance management, i.e. how to do the best work possible and how to improve the work being done.

Experience of performance management from my own previous places of employment ranged from complete ad-hoc work with no intentional performance management taking place to a formalised structure with an annual review, performance ratings and quarterly performance goals. What I arrived to find at Klarna was a strong focus on improving the work being done, but this performance management took place within a completely different discourse and thus resulted in a different practice than the formalised bureaucracy I had previously experienced. It is the resulting practice this thesis is about. To start with, the words performance management are rarely uttered and thus my research question came to be
- how does Klarna convince their employees do what the company wants them to do?
- how does Klarna make the employees want to do what the company wants?

I had expected to be looking at the importance of numbers and metrics with regards to work performance, being inspired by Merry's (2011; and Coutin 2014) and Power's (1999) writings on numbers and their meaning and importance in contemporary organisational life. What quickly became apparent was that even though metrics are used, as we shall see in chapter seven, they are only a minor point in the context of how work performance is constructed at Klarna. What is important though is feedback, which constantly came up in conversations about work, what work to do and how to do it. Hence I started 'following' (Marcus 1995) the idea and practice of feedback. This following led me to three issues of
interest: identity and the production of subjectivity at and through software development work, the importance of speed in theory and in the practice of work, and finally, how power flows in the social relations within the workplace.

Some short caveats to the research questions. Even though the phrasing focuses on what Klarna does, the answers provided in this thesis focus on how the employees come to do and think as they do. Rather than looking for the origin or cause, I am looking at how productivity is produced. In the end my research topic became something rather different than I had anticipated, but going along with the unexpected carries with it an opportunity. In anthropology, the place and importance of serendipity is often emphasised since ethnographic fieldwork, being more inductive than deductive, has a history of going along with the unexpected as we encounter it during our fieldwork (Brenneis and Ellison 2010).

Throughout this thesis I will be referring to what happens "at Klarna", by this I mean from my data at Klarna that is taken from two teams within the Engineering department. As such my claims are primarily about the Engineering department rather than the company as a whole. I have framed my analysis around the fact that my informants are software developers, being one kind of engineers. Consequently, engineer, software developer and programmer will be used interchangeably to refer to the collective of the informants and the wider collective of employees within Engineering at Klarna. To be clear, this was also the practice among my informants, where some referred to themselves as programmers, some as developer, some as engineers and most of them switched between two or three of the categories. This thesis on the other hand is not about software development as a general practice, but rather focuses on development as paid labour within a profit-making corporation. The line between programming for fun and for money is at times non-existent, like when the company holds a programming challenge where employees are encouraged to participate, but which is not about programming anything related to what the company actually produces and sells. Moving an blurring this boundary is an intentional part of corporate practice at Klarna.

Researching paid labour is important, not only because of the significant time and effort so many of us spend on it, but also due to the pervasive effects of the work that we do. As Laura Nader points out, studying what is important gives us energy (Nader 1972:286). The practices we see at Klarna are being emulated by more and more companies, some more successfully than others. Having friends working in such workplaces, and having done so
myself, I feel it is important to analyse it, especially from a non-managerial point of view, i.e. not asking what works and does not work, but asking how it works. It is the anthropological approach of creating strangeness from the familiar (Krause-Jensen 2013:44) and studying self-reflexive professionals in my experiential home that Klarna was both due to geographical location and professional context.

One of the earliest anthropological studies of paid labour was the 'Hawthorne studies' that took place in an electric factory outside Chicago, USA in the late 1920s. It was a large cross-disciplinary research project looking at how to improve employee productivity. These studies were the first to empirically prove the importance of the social context of work, in particular how:

"the workers did not respond as individuals, but as a social group. They had developed their own informal organisation, their own perceptions of what constituted a good day's work, and their own local response to management ideology" (Garsten and Nyqvist 2013:3)

The importance of the social and the informal has since been two of the main anthropological research contributions within various organisational studies. Research on work performance was traditionally, that is until roughly the 1980s, focused on how to make the process of doing work faster or in some other way more effective. This focus came from its' basis in industrial mass production, like the Hawthorne studies, where the impetus was on doing routine tasks at the highest speed possible without decreasing quality. It was also grounded in the belief that increasing work performance was a matter of using control in order to squeeze as much of the labour potential from employees (Sewell 1998:398). In the 80s a new trend in management literature started which changed the focus from the execution of work, and thus employees' behaviour in doing work, to employees' "insides - the hopes, fears, and aspirations - of workers, rather than their behaviors directly" (Deetz in Alvesson and Willmott 2002:620). At this time there were studies showing how motivation and engagement had a significant impact on employee performance, exemplified by studies of organisational culture (Garsten 1994; Kunda 1992). It also coincided with an increase in what is sometimes referred to as 'complex' work, for example IT work, and discussions on the difficulty of managing such work via behaviour (Rennstam 2007:14). The outcome of such complex work was not as directly a result of specific behaviour, but instead the indirect result of a combination of behaviours and thought processes. Therefore behavioural management came to be seen as too crude a method for managing such work and thus focusing on people's thoughts and feelings gained significance. This has eventually led to an increased interest in social relations at work, most
recently exemplified by Google's announcement that after a multiple-year study on what makes some work teams work well and other not, their result is that positive social interaction causing psychological safety is the most important factor for good work (Rozovsky 2015).

Research on management and corporate practices have gone hand in hand with those practices ever since those early Hawthorne studies in the 1920s. So also in this study set in a company where normative management is the most widely used.

"Normative control is directed not towards the behaviour of the employees (as is the case with for example bureaucratic methods), but towards their thoughts, beliefs, norms, interpretations and emotions." (Rennstam 2007:33)

This form of management technique corresponds remarkably well to notions of subjectivity, where subjectivity is an "actors' thoughts, sentiments and embodied sensibilities, and, especially, their sense of self and self-world relations" (Holland & Leander in Luhrmann 2014:231). It is in the experiences of these individual actors that this study is grounded, rather than for example the entity that is 'the corporation' Klarna. From this it is narrowed down to how the subjectivities of these individuals, whom I have met as employees, are produced in the context of their workplace.

This research is grounded in a post-Foucauldian approach where the production of subjectivities, social interaction and power relations are essential features of human life. Klarna is a workplace where there is little overt control exercised and where the employees describe themselves as being autonomous in how they do their work. Despite this autonomy work flows very smoothly, without much conflict between individuals and without any obvious rebellious tendencies anywhere. There is neither the employee resentment of nor resistance against corporate goals and ideals that is seen in some workplaces (Sewell 1998). So how can we reconcile these notions of autonomy with the smoothness of the work execution? One answer could be in the privileged position of the employees at Klarna. They are after all, well educated with well-paid jobs in a growing industry. If they are not satisfied at Klarna, they can find jobs elsewhere without too much trouble. This would then have to be true for all developers, in Stockholm at least, who share the same privileged position, but that is not the case. My work with developers in a telecommunications company in Stockholm a few years prior to this research made that obvious. There, people did not feel autonomous, there was a fair bit of resentment, there was simply put a very different mood to the place. As the answer was not in the inherent structural position of the employees on the job market, a
rather Marxist approach, where was it? This is when the notion that processes work best when they "make individuals 'want' what the system needs in order to perform well" (Lyotard in McKinley and Starkey 1998:3) fits very well. Making employees want what the system needs is the production of certain forms of subjectivities.

We are moving in the intersection of post-modern approaches to subjectivity and power, as exemplified by Barbara Cruikshank in her book *The will to empower: democratic citizens and other subjects* (1999). Cruikshank writes about the democratic welfare state and how it produces the subjectivity of 'the democratic citizen' by "work[ing] upon the capacities of citizens to act on their own behalf" (1999:39). It is not in limiting the possibilities for individuals to act that those individuals are shaped by their interaction with the state, but in the state's creation of systems which enables, encourages and eventually enforces individual action. Where the citizens of the welfare state is expected to act within certain domains, such as education and child rearing, corporate employees are expected to act in other domains, such as socialising with colleagues and working on work.

The importance of the social aspect of technical work like software development has been emphasised by many researcher looking at development work (e.g. Higgins 2007; Mackenzie and Monk 2004; Rennstam 2007). When combined with the literature on the controlling aspect of teamwork (e.g. Barker 1993; Ezzamel and Willmott 1998; Knights and McCabe 2003; Sewell 1998) we can see how these two factors may amplify each other in team-based software development work. The social aspect of software development work produces and reinforces specific subjectivities within the employees, in particular with regards to the appropriate relation between the individual and technology. The boundaries or limits of desirable subjectivity and behaviour can be clearly seen in the recruitment process, which is a common context for subjectification processes (Bergström and Knights 2006:356).

In the here and now, the influence and thus importance of IT work can hardly be overestimated. It is an increasing sector of the economy, both in terms of specialised IT companies, but also in the IT departments and services spreading within non-IT companies (Rennstam 2007:7). Klarna is an example of this as they sell an IT-based financial service, namely electronic payments and credit provision and thus straddle the IT company vs non-IT company boundary. There was a time when IT was considered a separate specialised branch
or industry, but with its growth it has taken over or become part of many parts of daily life, from socialising to travelling, to shopping, playing games and of course working.

There are some full-length ethnographic accounts of IT development organisations written in the early 1990s when there was a growth in such work (Garsten 1994; Kunda 1992). A second round of books have been written more recently, based on research taken place after the turn of the millenium and the bursting of the so called dot.com-bubble (Rennstam 2007; Takhteyev 2012). What they all, and many other studies, show is how IT and other engineering work is far from the idealised technical process that it is sometimes made out to be, often by non-engineers. Even though what the users and consumer see in the end is a functional black-box, the work done to produce that black-box is a messy, subjective and highly social practice.

1.2 Thesis chapter overview

In chapter one the research project which has resulted in this thesis has been introduced as well as the importance of work and especially IT work as a research topic considering the influence of IT in the daily lives of all people. In chapter two we will see the methodology of the research and in particular the fieldwork explained. Research ethics are discussed, as is the data collection methods. In chapter three we contextualise the IT industry, software development methods and the company Klarna which provides the setting for the research. In chapter four, the first ethnographic chapter, the theme of feedback is exemplified, explicated and drawn out to show the role it plays in social relations, especially peer-to-peer ones. Whereas in chapter five we turn to socialisation, subjectivity and recruitment. How the idea(l) of a software developer is produced in social interaction and who and how the company recruits. Chapter six will explain how the paradigmatic notion of speed, as in being quick, is conceptualised in the IT industry and how the notion of speed is then enacted in daily work as prioritisation. The relative absence of stress and the notion of 'necessary' work is also elaborated on. In chapter seven, the final ethnographic chapter, we elaborate how relations of power and control operate in a context structured around autonomy and the importance of peer relations as a control mechanism in teamwork. Finally, in chapter eight, it is all brought together.
Chapter 2 Methodology

How was this study conducted and what are the implications of how it was conducted? Those are the questions this chapter will answer with relation to the fieldwork and some post-fieldwork considerations.

2.1 Consent

According to the American Anthropological Association (AAA) "[a] primary ethical obligation shared by anthropologists is to do no harm." (2012:4). A similar opinion, but with a different emphasis is used by The Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet), that argues the necessity of balancing the need for research and the need to protect individuals (2002:5). In both cases though, one of the foremost means of preventing harm to individuals is ensuring that all those who participate consent to do so, and consent based on the most relevant information possible. Weighing the risks for harm and potential benefits is not only a consideration when starting research. It is part of every choice made, from field site to methods and from fieldwork to writing and presenting the results. Since I did my research in an organisational context, the basis of any consent given becomes complicated by that context.

2.1.1 Access and/as consent - a pre-arrival story

There is a vast amount of anthropological literature on the difficulty of gaining access to organisations in order to conduct fieldwork within them (see for example Garsten 2013; Mahmoud 2013; Monahan and Fisher 2014; Schweger 2013). This difficulty can take the shape of non-responses to requests, excuses and just straight up refusals. I experienced such difficulties when contacting my first aim for a field site. It was at a company in which I had previously worked, but in a different part of the company, meaning I had no direct contact into this unit. I was in contact with the acting manager of the unit a couple of times, both emails and a phone conversation, there was a cautious interest expressed, but being the acting manager he wanted to wait for the new manager to start. After some emails back and forth with the new manager, and one postponed meeting, we met for a short meeting with one other colleague at the unit. The new manager seemed more ambivalent about the project, whereas the colleague was more positive. The colleague was the one who notified me a week later, by email, that they "didn't feel this study would be in depth enough to yield useful results for us or you". Whilst that may well have been part of the reason, this was also the expression of an organisation that is bureaucratic, defensive and not overly open to trying new things. On the
other hand, as Nader pointed out already in 1972 "[a]nthropologists have had problems of access everywhere they have gone; solving such problems of access is part of what constitutes 'making rapport'." (1972:302). My experience on my next attempt, with Klarna, was the complete opposite.

My contact into the company was a former colleague, Katrin, now working as a management consultant at Citerna1. Citerna is a company that has had a number of consultants working at Klarna for several years. They felt that my topic was of interest and suggested Klarna would be interested as well due to the 'culture' of the company, i.e. being open to trying new things. What followed was a set of meetings, each moving me further up the hierarchy of the company, in order to get approval for conducting my fieldwork with them. I met two firstline managers who were both very positive, then one of their managers who seemed equally encouraging and certainly curious about the results, and finally the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the company, for what was explained as a 'just wanting to meet and see who you are'-meeting. Following that meeting a preliminary starting date was set, about two months into the future. From then until half-ways through the first day of my fieldwork I was nervous that Klarna's consent would be withdrawn. Not an unusual experience for anthropologists in this position (Krause-Jensen 2013:45). The actions of these managers continued to structure my fieldwork as we shall see, but what had been agreed, and what I did, was that I would spend two months doing participant observation and interviews at Klarna, focusing on two teams. As such I spent roughly 8 hours a day, five days a week for the two months of September and October of 2015 within the Klarna offices in central Stockholm.

2.1.2 Consent stories

On the starting day of my fieldwork I arrived at the Klarna main office in Stockholm, and after a brief wait, Tore, one of the managers I had met during the access negotiations, turned up and showed me in. We talked about the planning for the fieldwork and I was told that the task of finding the two teams I would spend my time with had been delegated to the two managers I had initially met, Daniel and Jonas. Tore and I spoke about how to introduce me to the teams I would sit with, both agreeing that it would be important to not just 'throw it upon' the teams, in order to prevent them feel coerced into participating. After a while Jonas turned up and we

1 The name Citerna and the name of all individuals throughout the thesis are pseudonyms in order to protect the identities of the participants.
mentioned this issue to him, as he is the manager of one of the teams. His suggestion was to "just do it" straight away. The team was due to have their daily morning meeting just then, so he asked me to come along and get introduced. A minute later I'm standing in a group of 7-8 people who all talk about the work done yesterday and the work planned to the current day. I was left for last and Tobias basically introduced me as someone who was going to be sitting with them doing thesis work and asked me to explain my topic, which I proceeded to do.

It is worth knowing that thesis work is standard practice in all higher education engineering programs. As such, there was little need to explain why I would be in a workplace for my thesis. The significant difference is that engineering thesis work centers around the technology used and often consists of constructing, trialling or executing a technical solution in a practical environment. I was not there to work on their system, but to do ethnographic fieldwork. The explanation for what my ethnographic fieldwork would involve largely corresponds to the contents of this chapter, i.e. consent, methods and anonymity, but from the point of view of plans, rather than end results.

My introduction to the other team was handled rather differently. In this case the manager, Daniel, had five teams and a team lead for each of them. Instead of going directly to the teams I was invited to his weekly meeting with the five team leads. There I was asked to introduce the research and the practicalities of my planned fieldwork. I was asked some questions, mainly about whether the research would disrupt or take time away from work for whichever team I would join. After I left, they discussed and decided on a team, which was communicated to me afterwards. The team lead for that team then took me to meet the team a couple of days later, and I spent the following week with them.

As you can tell, in the case of one team the manager made a decision of giving consent of behalf of the team, whereas in the other case the team had the opportunity to discuss it internally beforehand. In both cases I made it a point to be very clear on the fact that anyone not wanting to personally participate could communicate that to me or their manager, whichever they were most comfortable with. Nobody did and in the process of arranging interviews all but one of those I asked for an interview acquiesced. At each interview I started by once again asking for consent to record the interview, emphasising that I would be the only one hearing the recording and that any information would be anonymised as far as possible in any presentation of the material.
Aside from the interviews, there were a few team meetings where I reiterated the possibility for them to withdraw consent for that specific meeting. Both cases were for meetings that I felt were more personal, namely a team DISC analysis and a team feedback session. At the other end of the spectrum were the bigger meetings for the whole Engineering department or the whole company. Here the issue of consent was the complete opposite as in not at all personal, but also a situation in which I could not inform and get consent from the speakers to my observing. Nevertheless, all such presentations were by employees of Klarna and were speaking in their capacity as employees, and I had consent from the company to observe and participate, having made clear before I started that I would participate in general company lectures and meetings. As such I relied on the proxy consent given by the management on behalf of the company to include these meetings in my research, in line with the ethical guidelines of Vetenskapsrådet (2002:9).

2.1.3 Closeness and distance in and out of the field

Being introduced to the field and the informants via management, whilst necessary in order to receive the company's consent, also meant arriving with a certain positionality. The most obvious example was being referred to as being an "undercover agent from management sent to spy on us" as one of the team members jokingly put it upon my introduction to the team. I was also introduced as "the company spy" by a different team member when meeting another team. In some ways I was a spy, albeit a very conspicuous spy. There is no doubt that the management that gave me permission to conduct the study at Klarna did so for their own reasons, one of which is to find out more about what happens within the company and among the employees. Getting to read this thesis was one of the conditions of conducting the research. The potential use of this thesis by management was one of the reasons I emphasised the individual consent of each informant as previously described.

As the AAA Statement on Ethics discusses "[a]nthropologists must weigh competing ethical obligations" (2012:9) that may occur and keep the principle of 'do no harm' first and foremost. Doing research within a corporate context is likely to pitch the interests of different individuals or parts of that organisation against each other. Thus, knowing some explicitly

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2 A DISC analysis is a personality test created in the 1920s. The acronym corresponds to the four main character traits the test is supposed to measure, namely dominance, influence, submission (steadiness in more recent versions) and compliance.
stated interests and guessing at some of the implicit ones is knowledge I have simultaneously kept in mind and kept at a distance throughout the research process.

Doing fieldwork at Klarna was to a large degree doing 'fieldwork at home', even though this is far from a straight-forward notion (Aull Davies 2008:41ff). Most obviously the location was in the city, and thus country, I grew up in, but also due to a number of other factors. Most of the employees at Klarna were around my age, white, university-educated and most of the time communicating in English as their second language. All of which are facts that are also the case for me. My job prior to my masters' studies had been at a global telecommunications company, where I was doing administrative work in a software development department. Hence working in a software development context and with developers was familiar to me. This amount of familiarity comes with advantages and risks. Krause-Jensen, a Danish anthropologist who did his research at the headquarters of Bang & Olufsen, describes it as "[t]he most immediate problem is to not 'go native'" (2013:55) in an environment that can appear "deceptively familiar" (2013:43). My struggle with this started in a slightly different end, namely in that I had to stop comparing my field site to my prior place of employment. I needed to see the field for what I could observe, not only in comparison to somewhere else. It meant stepping away from some of my tacit assumptions (Wolfinger 2002:88). The constant comparison passed after the first few weeks of fieldwork though. The issue of not 'going native' appeared again during the analysis and writing, when I had to extract myself from Klarna's own language and thinking in order to avoid simply replicating it in my own writing. It was necessary to produce an estrangement from my experiences during the fieldwork in order to create analytical distance. This process consisted of equal parts physical and social distance from the field site, reading relevant academic literature, and reflecting on the similarities and discontinuities between the literature and my data.

2.1.4 When research topics change
When I started my fieldwork I framed my research topic as "looking at how companies measure performance". As it quickly became clear that Klarna does not really measure performance, I started looking at what they do instead. My description of the topic changed to "looking at the interaction between corporate ideas of good work performance and employees' ideas of 'doing a good job". The phrasing was largely decided on as I started the interviews and the question of "how do you know if you're doing a good job?" sparked the most interesting answers. As the fieldwork progressed and the data was starting to accumulate,
there was a clear tendency to what was becoming the core concept of how people spoke about performance, and that was 'feedback'. So I started explaining my research as "looking at how using feedback as the core concept, affects performance management".

That one's research question changes with time is part of inductive research. Regardless of how open I had been with the informants about that possibility from the start, how my research would be inductive and although I had a topic, the topic could potentially change according to data received, the issue of consent nevertheless arises, because what my informants consented to at the start, was not the same as what I ended up focusing on. As the AAA's latest *Statement on Ethics* states "[t]he informed consent process is necessarily dynamic, continuous and reflexive" (2012:7). Therefore, wanting to make sure I made them aware of changes in the research focus was important. At the same time I did not want to tell them all of my thoughts regarding tentative results as I was concerned about bias as I was in the middle of the interviews and wanted to make them as comparable as possible, acknowledging that perfect comparability is impossible. So my compromise became being open about themes and less open about possible connections between or causes of issues within those themes. The opportunity to be entirely open about my thoughts and ideas came towards the end of the fieldwork and after it. Then it was rather the opposite, I took the opportunity to talk about ideas and tentative conclusions with several of the informants in order to get feedback from them.

2.2 Limitations

As with all studies this comes with its own limitations. Rather than try to squeeze them all into a few separate paragraphs I cover most of them in different parts of this chapter. First and foremost is me, the researcher, which I discussed in the previous section. Secondly there are the limits of how the fieldwork, analysis and writing were carried out, which will be covered in the section on Methods further down. Finally we have the limitations of the field as constructed within Klarna, which I will turn to now.

As may be expected, the closer you get to the field site the more the limitations actually matter. The difference in granularity means that within the company, the limitations are actually stronger. Well, my fieldwork centered around two teams for the most part. There are about 30 teams in the Engineering department, which in turn makes up less than a fifth of Klarna as a whole. As such my results cannot represent the company as a whole, or even the
Engineering department. I will now briefly lay out some of the specificities of these two teams within the company context. More information on both Klarna as a company and on the teams will follow in the following chapter.

It is not uncommon in organisations that whoever brings up an issue is eventually the person who is chosen to investigate or solve it. As such I ended up with teams managed by the two managers I met in my first meeting at Klarna. They themselves and people around them both acknowledged that they both have rather clear, and similar, ideas of how they want the organisation to be run. Their ideas were explained as "being at one end of the scale" in comparison with all the Engineering managers. Even though there is a debate about how much of an impact managers actually have on the work and employees within their area of responsibility (Alvesson and Willmott 2002:621), there is no doubt that they have some impact. Thus, making the teams I spent most of my time with, not so typical for the organisation in general. Additionally both of the teams work on internal services, rather than the services or products being sold to Klarna's customers. The implications thereof I cannot elaborate on as my data from other teams is not sufficient to draw any conclusions.

A quirky possible limitation turned up towards the end of my fieldwork, once I had conducted most of my interviews and was starting to see patterns in the interview data. This concerned the time of employment. It turned out that those who had worked in the company for more than a year and a half were more balanced between critical and positive opinions in their interviews. Whereas those employed for less than a year were more uniformly positive about the company, their own work and basically everything. There are two main interpretations of this difference. The first is that those who have been employed longer have seen more and so have a more thorough understanding of the context and their own role in it, whereas the newer employees have yet to go beyond a sort of 'honeymoon phase'. A version of this interpretation is that those with a shorter employment time feel less secure in their position and as such are more cautious about what they say. Secondly, it could be the case that those having worked there longer have seen the organisation as it used to be and not only as it is currently and as such have more divergent views, whereas the newly employed have only seen the current organisational phase. That there was a change in top manager for Engineering and a re-organisation about ten months before the fieldwork started is one of the origins of this suggestion as there were some rather negative comments about the previous organisation and management from some employees. From this the question arises of whether it is having
seen a change in the organisation that makes the former more ambivalent, or is it because what used to be was not as good. Meaning that those only seeing the present actually give a more accurate account of the present, that is not affected, or maybe more correctly tarnished, by the past? I would argue that there is a little bit of both potential causes and in my overview of Klarna in chapter two I will return to this question and the changes in the organisation over the past year or so.

2.3 Methods - planning and change

Methods are both chosen and improvised according to the situation. This is not as contradictory as it may appear as having a plan actually makes way for the improvisation that is needed to follow whatever serendipitous events that may occur. As is common, I relied on a few different methods for data collection during my fieldwork. The main upsides of doing so are getting different kinds of data from different methods and the ability to triangulate the data (Bernard 2006:235). The risk of using several methods on the other hand is not going deep enough with each method and ending up with non-cohesive data, neither of which appeared during or after the fieldwork for me. Doing fieldwork in an office with people working meant choosing methods that would provide data without disrupting my informants' work. I also needed to consider time as I had two months to spend on site, even if follow-up visits would have been possible if required.

2.3.1 Participant observation

The pre-planned part of my research methods were participant observation and semi-formal interviews. They are the basis for much anthropological research and would fit well with my chosen field. Having a field that was very spatially determined meant I had no trouble finding people to talk to or events to observe. Such a structured field site also meant it was relatively easy to fit into as there were clear routines to follow in terms of when to be where and how to behave. Having worked in a similar type of company and office also simplified this process.

To reiterate, I spent office hours every working day for my two months of fieldwork being at Klarna. When starting at Klarna I decided to spend the first couple of weeks trying to familiarise myself with the company, the teams and the individuals I were with. In practice this meant hanging out and tagging along with the two teams in whatever they were doing. I decided early on to spend every other week with each team. I chose a weekly schedule to fit the rhythm of the working week, but also to make my presences and absences within each team more predictable. It also created a steady schedule for me and made comparisons
between the two teams easier as I switched between them all throughout the fieldwork. It is not only the presence that determines the data, but also the absences. As Schwegler shows in her account of researching the Mexican state bureaucracy, where you are present will determine your understanding of a context or event (2013:238). As limitations of access precludes certain perspectives it opens up for others. In my case this meant less access and time spent with managers and more access and time with teams. The resulting thesis is thereby written from the point of view of these teams, rather than from a management perspective, which is otherwise rather common in organizational studies (Rennstam 2007:10). This difference between management focus and 'bottom up' approach is also reflection of the disciplines of organisational studies and anthropology as a whole.

Doing participant observation among software developers, and indeed most professions, comes with the difficulty that "these settings often involve activities requiring expert knowledge and highly specialised skills. Such requirements make participation difficult" (Krause-Jensen 2013:49 italics in original). Not being able to participate in the technical tasks that make up the developers' work put limitations on what I was able to do. It was one of my concerns ahead of starting fieldwork, being unable to get good enough data because "mere physical observation does not go very far when studying software work: one mostly gets to see people staring at their screens, typing, and occasionally swearing." (Takhteyev 2012:15). Similarly, because a lot of conversation happens in chat channels, there is less talk to overhear and less of those 'breaks around the water cooler'-moments that can otherwise be such a good source of informal interviews. On the other hand, since I had access to (many of) the chat channels those conversations were part of the participant observation. Another behaviour that was immensely helpful for me was that a lot of work was done in pairs or groups and thus people sat around talking about the work they were doing a lot of the time. In combination with an open-plan office this provided quite some insight into daily work. Also, being more observing than participating also gave me the opportunity to be more attentive to what others were doing rather than focusing on my own participation (Thedvall 2013:112).

Apart from being around daily work and being social, there were quite a few meetings. These were often the most data dense contexts. The meetings can be divided into regular work meetings, team meetings and presentation meetings. The regular work meetings were recurring daily, weekly or monthly meetings with a regular set of participants, most
often a team, and where the topic of the meeting was to discuss work practicalities. The daily standups that I will cover in chapter seven is one example of this type of meeting. Team meetings are those meetings concerned with the less practical aspects of work, in particular teamwork. If the work meetings gave me information on how the daily work was done, the team meetings told me the team members' opinions of what work is like and how they feel it should be. The 360-meeting discussed in chapter four exemplifies this kind of meetings. Finally we have the presentations, by which I mean larger, either department- or corporate-wide, meetings where the format is more lecture-based than discussion-based. I have used data from these largely for background information, to understand the context within which the informants work, and also for a view on official corporate discourse and self-representation. If my opportunity to participate was limited with regards to technical work, in some of the team meetings I had the ability to participate more. Not to the extent that I had "meetings as the field" though (Thedvall 2013:108), only that they were one of the more important data sources.

2.3.2 Fieldnotes

One of my concerns prior to starting my fieldwork was around the practical aspect of fieldnotes. As Wolfinger states "[f]ieldnotes are an oft-neglected yet fundamental part of ethnography" (2002:92). There are as many ways of writing field notes as there are field researchers and besides the two formal sources I had (Bernard 2006; Wolfinger 2002) I found browsing the internet prior to my fieldwork and looking at people's suggestions and ideas for inspiration was very valuable. As with any research project I was worried about not getting (enough) data during my fieldwork. My worry was quickly overcome though when I ended up writing pages of field notes each day of the first week of fieldwork. At the end of my fieldwork, that is eight weeks in the office, I had roughly 120 pages of typed fieldnotes. My fieldnotes were mostly of the comprehensive kind, i.e. writing down as much of everything as possible and keeping to the temporal structure of the field (Wolfinger 2002:90). As the fieldwork proceeded the comprehensive approach gave way to a more salience-based approach, consisting of taking notes more according to perceived relevance. Having read Wolfinger's article I also made a point of recording 'non-events' or omissions (2002:92), for example taking note of who did not speak at a meeting, who was not present or with who and when people did not argue their point of view. Despite all my fieldnotes, when writing up the examples that appear in this thesis there was still much more that I could remember than was written down in my notes.
A risk with comprehensive note-taking, and participant observation in general, is that it can generate data that is largely unstructured. With the amount of fieldnotes mounting my worry morphed from lacking data into concern for the topic and structure of my data instead. Commencing with interviews relieved much of that concern as it provided more structured and more easily comparable data. This was my feeling during and immediately after the fieldwork. During the writing process though I have returned more to the data from the participant observation for the examples used in this thesis. The importance of the data from the interviews should not he underestimated because of that usage though. The interview data has often provided the confirmation of observations or generated ideas for observation. Thus each method has supported, exploited and generated data for the other methods. After the end of the fieldwork the fieldnotes were coded with reference to the themes that I saw emerging towards the end of the fieldwork and further into the analysis. Primarily these themes were feedback, identity, speed and power, i.e. the ethnographic chapters that form this thesis.

2.3.3 Interviews

Doing interviews to complement the participant observation had been the plan from the start for several reasons. Primarily I assumed that the employees might express themselves differently when not in the company of their colleagues, and sometimes manager and as such the interviews would be an opportunity to be more critical of their workplace. It was also an opportunity to see if they would express different opinions, or be more critical, in private, than they were in the company of others. So the interviews were one way of validating the data from my participant observation which consisted almost exclusively of situations where there were others present.

Interviews were also the only way of getting access to senior managers as they have very tightly scheduled workdays, making informal interviewing much more difficult, if not impossible. This is a common feature when "studying up", as the phrase coined by Nader in the 1970s for studying people in higher positions of power (1972:284; Krause-Jensen 2013:49). Interviews were also used to find the perspectives of people outside of the two teams I spent time with, as such I interviewed two HR-persons, one of whom was responsible for the Engineering department. In total I conducted 19 interviews, one of which was with two people together, the rest being individual interviews. They lasted between 40 minutes and an hour each. All were semi-structured interviews which as Bernard explains are good for when
you need to fit a lot of your queries into one occasion and also "in projects where you are dealing with [...] people who are accustomed to efficient use of their time" (Bernard 2006:212). As the interviews were conducting during work hours the use of time was a highly relevant issue. The importance of context and environment for the interviews made me decide to keep them within the office- and work-structure (Aull Davies 2008:122). As such all these interviews were pre-booked, took place in one of the office conference rooms and, as mentioned, were conducted during office hours.

I transcribed about a third of the interviews and listened through the rest of them for data coding. The transcriptions were coded in the same way as the fieldnotes, i.e. with reference to the key themes that I saw. Non-transcribed interviews were listened to and salient parts were coded as above with certain especially interesting parts being transcribed for reference and quoting.

### 2.3.4 Post-fieldwork

Research is undoubtedly learning and if we look at classical theories of learning they contain a number of stages, one of which is experiencing and one which is reflection on that experience. These two stages are considered complementary in allowing learning to happen and be conceptualised in the learner's mind (Granberg and Ohlson 2004:60). Similarly one could say that anthropological research is one long learning cycle, where there is a period of experiencing followed by a period of reflection. Alternatively there are daily cycles of incremental learning taking place both during the fieldwork and during analysis and writing. The relation between the proximity and immediacy of the experiences, followed by the distance of reflection and abstraction, is part of what makes anthropological research what it is (Aull Davies 2008:231). The process of reading and writing is in of itself a process of distancing in a lot of ways. Analysing is picking apart and objectifying the personal experiences and observations of the fieldwork and as such it creates distance in and of itself. In my own writing there has been a clear movement from the earlier chapters which were much closer to emic discourse and understandings, whereas the later chapters were more analytical and etic, closer to the literature, but also more distanced from the field.

This perceived distance is not always so absolute though. As Sluka points out in writing about relations with informants and communication of one's research findings "[i]t is inevitable that those we study read the resulting texts, and are the fiercest critics (2012:198).
In my case presenting the results has been an explicit part of the condition for being allowed access to do fieldwork at Klarna. Vetenskapsrådet argues that feeding back of findings and results serves two purposes. The first is an ethical responsibility to your informants of giving them the opportunity to find out the results before they are made public (2002:15). The second is more to fulfill one of the basic purposes of research, which is to share knowledge with society as a whole and in particular with those to whom the research is relevant (Vetenskapsrådet 2002:15).

2.4 Anonymity and data protection

Maintaining anonymity, like consent, is not a one-off act, but rather a continuous process. It involved making sure that my primary data, i.e. fieldnotes and interview recordings, were both backed-up and protected. Maintaining confidentiality of electronic data is particularly important as it is so easy to duplicate (American Anthropological Association 2012:11f). As such I backed-up my material to encrypted cloud storage and only stored information locally on protected devices. Equally important, I was careful with my fieldnotes-notepad, did not write names attached to comments and had a privacy screen on my laptop for doing work while in the office. The caution was more prompted by my concern than my informants' and a lot of my primary material do not come from one-on-one situations, making the material less private to start with. Besides protecting the material there is the question of how to protect the sources of information that I use throughout this thesis. First and foremost there is the identity of the company where all of this action takes place. In my discussions with the company preceding the fieldwork I was told that they would want to read the final thesis before determining whether to consent to the company name being given or if they would want it anonymised. Having read the final version I was given approval for using their real name.

2.4.1 Anonymity of teams and individuals

Within the organisation the situation is somewhat different. Guaranteeing anonymity could not be achieved only by giving people another name in the text. Language use can be recognisable and so can certain topic knowledge be. On the other hand, most of the data comes from situations in which multiple people participated and is thus not anonymous to begin with. In my communication with the informants I stated that I would use nicknames and work to conceal the identities of people in the text, especially with regards to information given in the interviews. Most of the examples used take place within one of the teams. Even though they have been given new names, anyone who knows which teams I spent time with
will undoubtedly be able to identify which team I refer to in almost all the examples I use. That was also brought up in conversation with the teams at the beginning of the fieldwork.

An issue when changing people’s names is to what degree you choose a name that represents the identity of the person in question, that is do you give a woman a female name, a Swede a Swedish name and so on. I realised about halfway through my fieldwork that this would be a bit of a problem when combined with anonymity, in particular with regards to gender as there are very few women in the Engineering department at Klarna. In the two teams I spent my time with there was one woman. The other team had a female project manager. Of the people I interviewed four were women, two of whom worked in the HR department, generally a more female-dominated profession. So how do I provide anonymity to my female informants, without giving them all male names and completely erasing the female presence that does exist? There is also the issue of nationalities, as there were eight represented in the two teams. Giving the only Russian a Russian sounding name is hardly anonymising. In the end I decided on giving them names that follow their gender and nationalities, but not use the easily identifiable names to exemplify anything expressed only to me.

2.5 In conclusion
Throughout this chapter we have followed the research process of this thesis project. We started with the contrast in easy of gaining access to a field site for exploring the research topic, where Klarna were much more open than a previous potential field site. We have seen how negotiating access also constitutes part of the gaining of consent from the research participants and how this process of consent affirmation was negotiated and re-negotiated throughout the fieldwork, in particular with regards to a changing research focus. We have also seen how the choice in methods was executed and how those methods structured the data that came out of the fieldwork. Finally we have seen how the issue of anonymity and how to protect the sources of that data, while not compromising on for example gender representation. As such this chapter has provided a methodological context for this thesis and we will now move on to a different kind of context, namely that of the IT industry and the company that is Klarna itself.
Chapter 3 Background and context

This thesis is about software developers within an IT company and that is the setting that this chapter will provide some context for. I will start with some background on the setting that is the IT industry in Sweden and in particular Stockholm. This will be followed by an explanation of Lean and Agile, two ways of working or philosophies and practices of doing software development work that are the basis for much of the thinking and discourse in and of work at Klarna. Finally, we will move onto Klarna itself, the history of the company, its organisational structure and an introduction to the two teams, Butler and Koala, that form the basis for this study.

3.1 The IT industry and software development

The contemporary IT industry developed out of mechanical technologies and has turned into both a separate sector of the economy, made up of specialised IT companies, and also a part of most other non-IT companies. As such the technology and practices of IT work suffuse most forms of work. With the spreading of its' usage it is not only worklife that is filled with IT, but it is also an integrated part of entertainment, socialising and home life for large parts of the population globally. As "products of engineering work increasingly guide our behaviour" (Rennstam 2007:8) the principles guiding IT development work affect more and more of us, directly or indirectly.

IT consists of hardware and software. The hardware is the physical machines that we use, e.g. laptops, mobile phones and certain parts of cars; while software is the programs written in code which gives the hardware functionality. Where hardware is potentiality, software is functionality. The coded contents of the software is what determines what a machine will actually be capable of doing, for example telling my laptop to interpret my pushing the buttons on my keyboard to mean the corresponding letters should show up on the screen.

3.1.1 The global and local in software development

With the increase in usage of IT software development has become a global practice, with around 10 million developers spread worldwide (Takhteyev 2012:2). Despite its' very global nature, software production is highly centralised to a handful of places internationally, Silicon Valley in California, USA, most notably."The practice of software development thus appears to be simultaneously remarkably placeless and starkly placed." (Takhteyev 2012:4). One of
the locations where a lot of IT work happens is Sweden and Stockholm. Sweden has a tradition of industrial production, in particular technically advanced industrial production, which has provided a basis for developing an IT industry as well. Now Stockholm has become one of the hubs of software development internationally with a long list of successful companies, from Skype and Spotify to King and Klarna. There are a number of such hubs internationally, sometimes they are national and sometimes urban, e.g. Israel, Bangalore.

In Sweden there are several centres for the IT industry e.g. Stockholm, Malmö and Luleå, which have generally growing out of technical universities and their graduate students. Within the context of Stockholm the IT industry is also significant, despite Stockholm housing both the centres of the Swedish financial sector and its state administration. It is estimated that 18% of the workforce in Stockholm County work in "high-tech related jobs" (Stockholm IT Region 2014). And there are 22,000 technology companies in Stockholm, including six so called unicorns, i.e. companies with a valuation of over one billion US dollars (Stockholm IT Region 2014). IT accounted for 42% of Swedish productivity growth between 2006-2013 (Ek 2014) and thus we see the importance of the IT industry to the population of Sweden and Stockholm, both through all those working directly within the IT sector of the economy, but also in its indirect effects.

3.1.2 Lean as a way of working

Lean was the name given to the Toyota way of production by a group of American scholars in a book called *The Machine that Changed the World* (Womack et al. 1990). The basic idea is that in order to make any production process as efficient as possible, one must remove as much of the "waste" in the process as possible. This leaves only, or as close to it as possible, the value-adding parts of the process. The origin of the ideas of Lean came from Toyota's post-WWII industrial production and there has been some debate about its applicability in non-factory settings. Partially due to its focus on slimming the execution of routine labour, as routine tasks are not the basis for development work, which is more exploratory and problem-solving. The important values in Lean is to always focus on the value for the customer, making the production process visible, making the production process flow, only produce what is asked for by the customer and finally, to reduce any unnecessary work in the production process. Lean had an upswing in the IT sector, and especially among new small companies, with the blog and book *Lean Startup* (2011) by Ben Riese where he argues for the applicability of Lean to the product development and not only industrial mass production. He considers Lean startup "a scientific approach to creating and managing startups and get a
desired product to customers' hands faster" (Ries 2016). Lean is important for understanding how Klarna approaches speed which we shall cover in chapter seven.

### 3.1.3 Agile movement and what software development entails

Around the turn of the century the IT industry exploded, first by growing and then by collapsing. It was also becoming more and more about software, rather than hardware. How to develop good software well was a major topic of discussion, and not just a minor issue. The established process was based on project management ideas, which raised a number of problems with regards to software. Software is hardly ever a one-off process like a project, but rather a continuous process of improving the working of something, often by adding new functionality to it. The size, in any way of counting, of software projects was also increasing over time, while there were increasing questions about their relative success. In 1995 the Standish Group published a much discussed report stating that only 16% of all IT projects were completed on-time and on-budget, notably not including the need to also deliver to the original order specification (The Standish Group 1994:2).

In this environment there was a lot experimenting with different ways of working with IT projects. Approaching the turn of the century there were a number of models, practices and ways of working competing for attention. Several of them had similarities and the term 'light' models was starting to become popular (Highsmith 2016). In February 2001 a number of leading proponents of many of these methods gathered for a two-day conference, the result of which was *The Manifesto for Agile Software Development*.

"We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
- Working software over comprehensive documentation
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
- Responding to change over following a plan

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more." (Beck et al. 2001)

The Manifesto was signed by the 17 participants at the conference (all men). The origins of the ideas in the Agile Manifesto can be traced back to the 1980s and in some cases even earlier (Abbas, Gravell, and Wills 2008:97). So why did these ideas become so popular at that time. The coincidence with the bursting of the dot.com-bubble is one suggestion. Changes in the market creating a need for new work practices is another idea (Abbas, Gravell, and Wills 2008:96).
To explain the contents and meaning of agile development methods for an audience not familiar with software development, we need to look at both contrasting methods and some particularities of software development. The main contrast to the agile method is the 'waterfall' method which consists of a number of steps, followed in order from start to finish in a development project. If you were to use the 'waterfall' method to say make an app for a mobile phone that tells you how far you have moved each day. You start with requirements, that is what the product you are developing is supposed to do and any other criteria that it needs to fulfill. Requirements can be to create a certain functionality, say a button to start and stop measuring, in a product. Alternatively a requirement can be non-functional such as ensuring that the battery-consumption of the finished product does not exceed a set level as you do not want your phone to run out of battery if you use the app for a couple of hours. Once you have the requirements as specified as possible you construct a system model for how to make this happen, explaining how the different parts will fit together and how they will interact with any other relevant system, like how this app would interact with any mobile phone it will be installed on. Once there is a model you code each of all the functionality desired. Code is performative language in its essence, as it is writing formulas which a computer, or any machine that has computing abilities like a mobile phone, will read as instructions for what to do and how to do it. Meaning anything and everything you want the computer to do, you will have to tell it to do. Then you fit all the bits that have been coded together, unsurprisingly called integration. This complete piece is then tested extensively to check that it fulfils all the requirements that were set out at the start and work in whatever context it is supposed to work in, e.g. a mobile phone. The finished app is then made available for use. This is a very simplified explanation, but it outlines the basics.

In agile software development you both reverse the order for some of the steps, but also do them differently. Requirements should be discussed in close contact with existing or potential customers from the start and be open to modification throughout the process. You then start coding a small, but often important, part. You then test it directly and check if it works. If so you move on to the next small part and repeat the process. As soon as you have something useable, which should be fairly early, you make it available for use. Each new part and function that is coded and tested is then added piece by piece to the product in use. This is called iterative and incremental development and is a core part of agile (Abbas, Gravell, and Wills 2008:95). In addition to this order of doing development, there is more of a focus on the
people involved and what they do, rather than either the plan for how it should be done or the specific methods for doing it. There are a number of additional principles and practices that circle around these basics (Abbas, Gravell, and Wills 2008:101). An important purpose of Agile is to be better suited to the "messiness and improvised performance of programming" (Higgins 2007:468).

3.2 Klarna

How does Klarna fit into the IT industry context that has been laid out above? Well, it is a mid-sized financial technology company, meaning it straddles the world of IT and financial services. The company was founded in 2005 in Stockholm by three young men. The core service, or product, that Klarna produces is a payment service that involves being the middle-man between the buyer and seller in online transactions. This includes invoice and other credit-based forms of payment, meaning Klarna takes on a certain part of the financial risk of those transactions. The purpose is to make it easier to buy online, leading to more people buying more and thus making more money for the seller, for Klarna who earns money by providing the service and commission on sales, and finally making it easier for the customer to make the purchases they want to make. They currently have offices in six countries and employ around 1300 people with an annual turnover of 2,8bn SEK (Shanley 2016).

3.2.1 Company history

The history of the company is a well-packaged narrative and narratives are "more than simple chronicles of events; they give shape to forward movement of time, suggesting reasons why things happen, showing their consequences" (Sennett 1998:30). Then what does the story of Klarna tell us. It is worth noting that Klarna is a company with a clear and to the employees very present corporate narrative. When I attended the mandatory New Employee Orientation (NEO), the first session consisted of a recording where Jonathan, one of the founders, tells the story of how Klarna came to be. Now the story could end there, as an hour of history which is left behind as people get started on work, but that is not the case. Instead the story or parts of it regularly pops up in everyday work situations and in descriptions of the company. As such it is tied into the daily work within the company. The founding story as it is told goes as follows.

It tells the story of three young men, all recently graduated from the Stockholm School of Economics (Handelshögskolan). One of whom, called Jonathan, had an idea about providing invoicing as an easy option for online purchases, bypassing the big banks who
made it bureaucratic and hard to use. He invited two friends and despite being brutally rejected at their first pitch, in front of a prestigious audience no less, they nevertheless pushed on and made their idea reality. And did so despite lacking practical experience and know-how of many of the crucial parts of their business. The company has since grown phenomenally and been profitable almost from the beginning. It aims high and succeeds.

All of which is very true, but also tells us something about the values being pursued through this narrative. The parts that keep being used as snippets of the story center around the founder/s individually, entrepreneurialism and success. Jonathan was the person with the initial idea and has remained the CEO of the company. The other two founders have each left operative roles in the company, although kept shares and/or board seats. Throughout the company he is "Jonathan" and anecdotes about what he has done or said are commonplace. He is known for being a good speaker and his 'big speech' at the annual company party is a standing highlight. Not having been at Klarna at the time when either of the other founders were still present I cannot say if the focus on the founders was more collective when more than one of them was still present. My impression though is that 'Klarna equals Jonathan' and vice versa. How he is represented by employees borders on that of a "charismatic leader" (Weber 1946). Startups are notoriously unsteady and risky businesses, but Klarna represents itself as anything but risky, at least in the negative sense. As the original business idea was being the middleman for invoicing, a large part of the business idea and profitability lies in actively taking onboard risks. Even though the business has expanded into other areas, risk and the ability to turn risk into profit is still at the core of the business. To balance the presence of risk, profitability and success are prominently broadcast in any and every forum possible. Emphasised is also that success is not 'just' doing better than previously or better than competitors, it is about doing spectacularly well.

3.2.2 Recent history and change

If we turn to the more recent history of the company we see both similarities and differences, where the continuity rests in the focus on success and the notion of achievement. Zooming in on how the history as told compares to the official narrative it is clear that there is some dissonance. Unsurprisingly, critical views disappear in the narrative. An obvious example is when Klarna was the focus of a series of critical articles in one of the main Swedish newspapers due to their fees on late payments and the lack of transparency of the payment terms. The critique argued that Klarna's payment system was made to increase the number and amount of late payment fees, interest payments and other additional payments. This
would increase the earnings for itself and its sister-company which handles debt collection (Neurath 2014). There has also been critique of the corporate culture and management style of both the CEO and other senior managers (Emdén 2014). This was brought up in one of my interviews by an employee who has been with the company for several years. He described the environment as "you came in to the weekly meeting with the managers and were shouted at". From those who have worked at Klarna for a couple of years it is clear that work practices and management culture has changed quite significantly over the past three or so years. In particular the important position of head of Engineering has been held by individuals with very differing ideas of how to manage their organisation and this had caused significant changes throughout the organisation below. In the past five years there have been three individuals who have held the post, each rather different in their management style.

Thus how employees perceive the organisation is shaped by how long they have been working there. It is notable how many of the employees are relatively new. Among the 20 or so people whose employment time I know, around half have worked at Klarna for less than a year and another quarter for less than two years. Thereby determining the time perspectives of employees' narratives, which is one of the factors for looking only at the present situation at Klarna at the time of my fieldwork. Even though there is certainly interesting analysis to be done with regards to the changes that have happened both before and after that time, that is not within the scope of this study.

3.2.3 Organisational structure
The structure of the company can be seen in the figure below. It is a mid-sized IT company, with around 1300 employees, with the majority working in the main office in Stockholm, Sweden. This study took place within Engineering, which has around 260 employees. Of those, ca 30 worked in the Product Development office in Tel Aviv, Israel; a handful in an office in Uppsala, Sweden the remainder worked in Stockholm headquarters of the company.
The Engineering division has a rather young set of employees, with an median age of 32 years old (including managers). Out of their 260 employees only 30 are women, 8 of whom work in the Tel Aviv office, where they have made an effort to recruit for a more even gender balance. This means that in the Stockholm office of Engineering just about 10% of the employees are women. This compares to 15% and 18% at some of the largest IT companies (Constine 2016; Weise 2016). It can also be compared to 20% of all programmers and system developers working in Stockholm county being women (‘Yrkesstruktureren I Sverige 2012’ 2014). The company has no data on race or nationality of its employees, but employs a significant minority of its staff from abroad. In the two teams I observed there were individuals from Sweden, Romania, Brazil, Russia, Spain and Germany.

Each of the departments in Engineering has a number of sub-sections, due to space constraint the figure above does not show all of the section. In fact IT Operations has six sections, Product Development Stockholm has eight sections and Product Development Tel Aviv has three sections. Each section consists of one or several teams. During my fieldwork I split my time between the one team that made up the Engineering Support section and one of
the five teams that made up the Servicing section (both named in the graph). What the
organisational chart does not show is the separation of the product development into two
functional parts. The company has two parallel technological systems that form their IT
products and services, the original system and a newer one, created about two years ago. In
the previous setup of the organisation it was arranged according to the separation of those
technologies, but in the most recent re-organisation, in the spring of 2015, the teams working
on the two technologies were put into the same organisation. For example, in the Servicing
section there were two teams working in the "new" system and three teams working in the
"old" system.

3.2.4 Butler & Koalas
I spent most of my time with two teams, Butler and Koalas. Butler was the engineering
support team, meaning they were responsible for helping the Product Development teams
with the IT tools needed to write, test and deploy code. Butler adapt generally available
programs to the specific needs of the Klarna teams, but they also develop their own solutions.
In addition they sometimes go and sit with a Product Development-team to see how that team
works and provide individualised guidance to that team. This last part is of particular
relevance at Klarna where the Product Development teams have a large degree of autonomy
in how they technically execute their work, meaning the teams end up with rather different
needs and solutions. There had existed an engineering support team at Klarna for quite a long
time, at least four years or so. There are nine people working in the team, plus their manager.
Of those two are consultants on long-term assignments at Klarna. The regular staff turnover
can is obvious as during my two months with this team one consultant's assignment ended,
one person announced that he was leaving for another job and one person was in the process
of being recruited. Butler had one woman in the team, as opposed to Koalas who did not.

The Koala team on the other hand were organisationally located in the Product
Development department, in the Servicing section noted on the chart above. The purpose of
the team was to develop a program for Klarna's own customer support staff. They were to
create a program that would coordinate information from all the various parts of the system
that make up the Klarna products. As Klarna's system is buildt in a modular fashion, allowing
for clearer separation and separate development of each part, information is also located in
each system individually. Each part of the system can gather information from the other parts,
but to make customer support more efficient (faster), a more user-friendly program was
desired. That program was being created by the Koala team. The team had existed for just over a year when I did my fieldwork in the early autumn of 2015. Most of the current team members had started in Koala since March 2015, one as recently as July and with two more employees starting in October and November. At the end of October there were nine people in the team, including the team leader, which included two consultants on long-term assignments. Working closely with the team was also a product owner and a project manager.

### 3.3 In conclusion

From this contextualisation we can see how the two teams this research is based on are located within two different departments of the Engineering division and have different histories, Butler's being much longer than Koala's. The recent and founding history of the company has elucidated its active construction of a self-representation as a growing and successful company, whilst avoiding the more turbulent times in its past. The company in turn is part of a larger context constituted by the IT industry and software development practices. The amount of IT work shows its influence on society, even more so if we include all users as well. The software development practices are essential to understand the how work is socially constructed and practiced at Klarna. In these practices we find the importance of cutting out unnecessary work, not being bureaucratic and focusing on the individuals and social interactions that constitute software development, all features that will be further explicated in the following chapters and we will start with the final one of them, namely the construction of development work and the developers doing this work through inter-personal feedback.
Chapter 4 Feedback

Feedback showed up in my fieldnotes already in the first few days and as the weeks went by I started to suspect and eventually believe that feedback in fact was the foundation of how performance is communicated, discussed and worked on by the people in the Engineering department at Klarna. It is not numbers that form the core features of performance, as is common in many corporations and other organisations today (Merry 2011). At Klarna, feedback came up when colleagues talked about their interactions with each other, when talking about technical information and test results, with regards to customers and when talking to managers. Its prevalence, almost omnipresence, in turn makes it problematic because what does feedback in actuality mean? At times it seemed to refer to any and all communication, but that is not entirely true. It can be narrowed down somewhat, to evaluating communication regarding work. As this is a work context it was only communication about work that was seen as feedback. Opinions shared about home renovation projects or holiday plans were not work-related talk and so was excluded from being feedback. Feedback was an important part of what Higgins refers to as 'code talk' in his research on programmers (Higgins 2007). Where 'code talk' is the

"usually unplanned but commonplace and opportunistic interaction between members of a team. It happens so frequently that it becomes mundane, an almost ignored though necessary feature of their day-to-day work. [...] [Where they] describe circumstances, compare interpretations, generate understanding, and deal with breakdowns. These are opportunities for the team’s members to represent and account for their working life" (Higgins 2007:481)

He argues that it is this talk that creates significant amount of the meaning produced in and by software. That the production of software is social at its core and I would argue that anyone who has spent time with programmers working would have a hard time arguing with that. Feedback is both an explicit and implicit part of this 'code talk', but at Klarna it also goes much beyond talking about code. What constitutes 'work talk' at Klarna is broader than the technically focused talk that Higgins discuss. Because at Klarna the employee as a person is also seen as a valid subject of work talk. As mentioned, this does not stretch to home renovations or holidays, but it does include many forms of behaviour at work, such as how you organise your desk, how you plan your work and how well you interact with your colleagues. Around all of these there are local norms of how you are supposed to do them, some of which I will elaborate on later in this chapter.
Besides what topics are considered valid for designating an utterance as feedback, there is also a sentiment or motivation required, namely to provide an opinion on someone else, directly or indirectly. There is some disagreement among the developers at Klarna if it needs to be intentional or not. When discussing feedback as an explicit practice, it was referred to as intentional. A typical example is when Johanna tells her team mate Markus how useful she found his suggestion for a technical solution that he just came up with. Or when Brian, one of the senior managers, sits down with one of his subordinate managers and talks about how Brian feels the other is doing and his impression on what his subordinate is doing well and what does not seem to work as well. In contrast to these kinds of descriptions and practices, there was another description that appeared in many of the interviews. When I asked the interviewees how they know whether they are doing a good job, the most common answer was "because of the feedback I get from my colleagues", phrased in a number of ways. In their descriptions of this feedback though, what they described was more the unstated sentiments that were communicated in their 'code talk'. In these situations the motivation did not need to be intentional, it could also be perceived only from the recipient. It could be when sitting discussing work with a colleague.

One day, after returning from lunch Pontus and Tobias sat down at Tobias' desk to work on a new task. Pontus went to grab a coffee as Tobias cleared his desk and pulled up an extra chair. They sat down and started talking about where to start and what would be needed to make it work. They were working on the search-functionality and were having problems with the system becoming slow when searching for larger amounts of data, i.e. doing less specific searches. Their talk was largely drowned out by general humming, keyboard smatter and the soft thudding of footsteps as people walked past the open team area. As they got into the work, their talking became less of a dialogue and more of half-spoken sentences and individuals words, such as "but what about..." or "hmm, not sure". Eventually Pontus had an idea:

Pontus: How about if we do this connection, maybe...
Tobias: Yeah (hesitating), but wouldn't that make it harder over here (points to another part of the screen).
Pontus: (pause) Your're right, but if we do it the other way we talked about, then calling up the information from the database will take longer.
Tobias: Hmm, yeah, so how do we avoid both of those?

So it went on for well over an hour. In agreeing or disagreeing with each others' suggestions and by pointing out potential problems with them, both Pontus and Tobias are expressing their
opinions on each others' work, though not for the purpose of feedback, but only directed at the
task they are trying to solve. This form on indirect feedback, where the opinions expressed are
about someone else's work or ideas for work is the most common form of feedback, even
though it is only indirectly acknowledged as feedback in the first place. As stated, it was only
in discussing one of the functions of feedback, namely getting an opinion about your work,
that this was described as feedback. In other contexts it was not mentioned when referring to
feedback.

4.1 360-meeting - the role of feedback
Having provided some context to feedback as a concept and practice we will now turn to what
was the most spectacular example of feedback that took place during my fieldwork, namely a
team feedback session.

It was Thursday morning and the whole morning was set aside for a 360-meeting for
the Koala team. 360-feedback is a management concept that refers to putting one person in
the, often metaphorical, center and him/her then asking for feedback from people all around
them in their organisation. It is the 'all directions'-part that has provided the name, as feedback
is in most other contexts conducted either between manager and employee or between
colleagues only. This 360 was more of a team feedback session, where an entire team comes
together to give and receive feedback, which can be done in a number of different way.
Koalas had a setup that consisted of having a single person being the recipient and the rest of
the team giving feedback to that person all at once. In this two hour meeting there was enough
time to give feedback to two of the team members. The Koalas had also decided to only give
feedback related to certain team values that they had previously determined. It was the second
time the team held such a meeting, the previous one was held two month prior just before I
came to Klarna.

The entire team gathered in a meeting room and we sat around waiting for the last
people to arrive. Then Javier, the team leader, started the meeting by going over why they had
started these 360-meetings and how they had decided on the team values that they used as
basis for the feedback. The team was then split into two groups and spent 15 minutes on a
'getting to know each other' exercise. It consisted of talking about family, growing up and
previous experiences of bad jobs and as such it established a more personal and informal
mood, as well as a sense of openness and disclosure. After the exercise the whole team was
brought back together. The team values were then written on the whiteboard in the conference room we were seated in. The team values are: attitude, craftsmanship, business knowledge, cross-team initiatives, delivery, communication, knowledge sharing and pair programming. Javier asked who wanted to go first and Serge volunteered. Serge was then invited to decide in which order he wanted to go through the team values and did so by starting in the middle of the list and going from there. Both Johannes and Javier immediately made a joke about how Serge had obviously chosen to start with his strongest one, namely Delivery. After the chuckling died down Johannes started by saying how Serge's delivery-focus helps Johannes when they work together as it makes him feel faster and more productive. And on it went, with everyone pitching in comments and opinions wherever they felt they had something to add. Even though it was mainly the others speaking to Serge, he also responded and commented on some of the feedback, mainly to affirm if it was something he was already aware of or something new to him. All throughout, my feeling was of a context in which there was a balancing between seriousness and light-heartedness.

Once we had moved through all the values written on the board, there was a short five-minute break and then we returned. Tobias volunteered to go next and went to stand up. As the subject of the feedback he stood by one corner of the table, next to the whiteboard where the values were written down. The rest of us sat around the conference table. Being a fairly small conference room we were a bit squeezed, meaning Tobias was not standing away from the rest of us, but he was the only person standing up. The process then repeated with Tobias as it had done with Serge.

I went into this meeting being both curious and a little bit apprehensive. The latter because I know I get uncomfortable in confrontational situations and I was expecting there to be some level of it, but it never really materialised, at least not beyond moments of minor awkwardness. All through the meeting there was quite a bit of banter going on, both with the person in the 'hot seat' and between the others and it was not just a way of breaking a negative mood or such like. All in all it was a very relaxed atmosphere for a situation that could be confrontational and emotional in a variety of ways. This is not to say there was no tension. Even though the majority of the feedback fell clearly on the positive end of the scale, there were some critical comments. What may have modified the poignancy in those cases was that they were all issues that were not new to the person receiving that feedback. All of the more negative comments were acknowledged with an "I am aware of that" or a nod of the head.
There was never any surprise. This could be construed as a defence mechanism, of acknowledging criticism without appearing disturbed by it. The lack of surprise could also be interpreted as a conscious display of traits seen as positive in this context, such as self-awareness and humility. From my own observations though I knew that some of the critical comments were ones that had been stated previously and the lack of surprise was thus expected. Then what is the purpose of this meeting? What does it actually do?

One way of framing this meeting is as a ritual performance. By approaching the 360-meeting as a ritual I do not mean to suggest that it is separate from the other work being done within the company by these individuals. In opposition to the British tradition of social anthropology which, following Durkheim, had a tendency of separating the religious/sacred from the profane/technical (Leach 2014:73). That is not what I am suggesting, but I follow Jackson and Leach in not separating the two and rather see this meeting as both work in a very practical sense and a ritualistic performance (Jackson 2014:249; Leach 2014:74). Rituals have a long tradition as a topic within anthropology and rituals can be analysed as expressions of social structure, rituals of rebellion, carnevaque, cargo cults, symbolic, bodily practice, continuity and change. With the large amount of literature on the subject comes almost as many definitions, but similarities crop up sound like this "a specific recurring special event that is heavily orchestrated by norms of correct behaviour" (Catasús and Johed 2007:170). With anthropological research moving towards studying Western societies as well as 'studying up' (Nader 1972), meetings like the one above have been analysed as ritualistic performances (e.g. Catasús and Johed 2007; Francis 1998; Thedvall 2013).

Dawn Francis, in her article on staff meetings in a school as rituals, argues that repetition and predictability are important aspects of these meetings. "[I]t did not take long to learn to anticipate accurately the form, process, and outcomes of the various committees" (1998:585). Even this 360-meeting, which was not as regular or had been going for as long as some other meetings within the team, it nonetheless had aspects of repetition and predictability in it. For example the recurrence of the feedback in the meeting, bringing up that which has previously been brought up. The responses from the two recipients were also almost exclusively in the direction of confirmation. Either confirmation as a way of expression previous awareness of the content of the given feedback or as an acknowledgement and thus continuing along the script of the meeting. The repetition of feedback can be seen as a manner of rehearsing or preparing, where the feedback is first given
in private and only later in this more public setting. The meeting could then be characterised as a "ritual of confirmation" (Catasús and Johed 2007:170).

As noted, there was no surprise expressed over the criticism expressed. Instead there was a clear feeling that critical comments were not news to the participants, at least not the giver and receiver of the specific feedback in question. Even if the communication between the giving and receiving party is not new, the context with an audience certainly is. Introducing an audience or a 3rd party changes the dynamics of a situation. In discussing violence Whitehead makes the point that:

"[a]ny observer is necessarily implicated, even as an unwilling or unwitting participant, in the violence they observe because the meanings and thus motivations to such violence are linked in turn to how such acts are interpreted" (Whitehead 2013:35)

This is not unique to violence, regardless of how violence is defined. Feedback as a practice inherently change when it is no longer a context limited to the party giving feedback and the party receiving it. When observers are added, the target of the explicit and implicit communication in feedback becomes dual, carrying meaning to both the recipient and the observers. Francis also discusses the role of the observer within a meeting. How it is not only the people speaking or directly participating in the communication that are important, but also the audience (1998:588). By audience she refers to those meeting participants that do not play active roles in that particular context, even though their presence may be required and their participation formally invited. I believe the importance of this meeting is partially in this collective nature of the team meeting. It is about making the feedback collective, giving and receiving it in front of the rest of the team creating a collective acknowledgment of its existence. By doing so the importance of the stated reason for the meeting, which is to improve each employee's and thus the team's performance, is further emphasised. It does what Catasús and Johed argue that annual general meetings do for the board and senior management of a company. It "influences their perception of themselves as being in business for the sake of delivering shareholder value" (2007:171). As such the 360-meeting reinforce the importance of good performance as the reason for being at work and the team values as significant and valuable means to that end.

4.1.1 Feedback and norms of participation, speed and teamwork

All the feedback given during the 360-meeting was based on the 'team values' as previously decided upon, but these were not the only values reproduced in the meeting. In fact, even the
active participation in the 360-meeting and its feedback process may not have been an explicitly stated expectation, but it was nevertheless a strongly implicit one. Making the recipient of feedback volunteer for it marks a desire to actually see people volunteer and actively participate, rather than being 'mere' passive participants. This expectation of active participation is common as a condition of belonging to the social group of a profession, where "[s]hort of full participation, a novice is not fully accepted within the community (is short of legitimacy), and lacks belonging (remains peripheral)" (Huzzard 2004:352). In fact, the expectation of active participation was explicitly articulated by Javier, the team lead, after the meeting as we sat talking about the meeting. He stated that "this is about performance" and not only in terms of the feedback an individual receives, but also in that giving feedback is part of assessing the person who does so. As the team lead, part of Javier's job is to make sure the team as a whole and each individual within it does good work, i.e. performs from the company's point of view. There is an expectation on actively participating in team and individual activities aimed at improving 'performance'. The sentiment I heard expressed at another occasion was that "helping others improve" is part of an individual's responsibility as an employee to do as much as possible to improve performance.

The importance of speed, or being fast, is repeatedly established throughout the 360-meeting. The team value of Delivery was specified as both getting things done and doing so quickly and/or on time. When giving feedback on the value of Delivery there were therefore a number of references to speed, such as Johannes' comment mentioned earlier where 'delivery focus' was seen as a factor in making another person get work done faster and therefore feel more productive. That speed is so intertwined with productivity leads to it being of significant value in any work-related discourse, leading to any reference to being fast automatically being seen as good unless there are clear arguments against it. Along with the link to productivity, speed was associated with time-based predictability, i.e. being able to estimate how long some work item would take to finish. "Learning fast" was brought up as a positive, but learning was also spoken of in terms of something to "keep up" with, implying a context of an ever-changing environment. All these comments may seem rather disparate, but the imperative of always being fast(er) is a common theme.

At only one stage was speed mentioned as something potentially negative, which was in relation to pair programming. Pair programming is when two people together work on one task simultaneously. Meaning sitting next to each other with one person holding the keyboard
and doing the actual programming and the other sitting besides the first person. Depending on the purpose of pair programming the dynamic between the two people can vary. The two primary purposes of pair programming are, firstly to increase the quality of the work done, by being two people thinking about and doing the work, and secondly to increase learning by having one more knowledgeable and one less so working together on a particular issue. When quality is the primary reason the dynamic between the two individuals is more equal and balanced with regards to participating in the work. Whereas in the case that learning is the primary reason, the dynamic is weighted towards one of the two participants. Whilst giving feedback on pair programming it was mentioned that Serge can "be a bit too fast sometimes", but this was immediately followed by the hedging statement that "maybe it is more about not talking enough". The issue at hand was that when holding the keyboard Serge did not explain enough of what he was doing, thereby making it harder for the other person to follow, understand and learn from what he was doing. Thus 'speed' was modified into being about comprehension about what was happening. That comprehension was needed in order for quickness to make sense in practice.

As pair programming is only one example of, teamwork is a constant feature of work in the Engineering division of Klarna and the importance of one's team mates is significant.

Anton: I really like your approach to testing, that you test a lot.
Tobias: Well, having worked in testing before, more tests equals being more comfortable.
Johannes: We do sometimes go into rabbit holes when we pair though, which we need to watch out for.
Tobias: That's my perfectionist side. I'm ok with taking my time doing things, but maybe I should think about the others a bit more. (my italics)

Here "going down the rabbit hole" indicates doing too much work in one area and thus not moving forward with the work tasks. This 'slowness' is framed as bad not with reference to productivity or company targets as one might expect, but instead it is framed with reference to his immediate colleagues in the team. The motivation for working faster is here seen as a duty to one's team mates, rather than a duty to be productive for the company as a whole. Seeing work as a responsibility aimed at colleagues instead of the employer brings the power dynamic inherent in responsibility much closer to the individual employee. Rather than a corporate interest mediated by a supervising manager, we have here corporate interests mediated by your team mates, the people at work that you do actually work with and spend most of your time with. In writing about a similar kind of event, also a team-based peer
review but a more formalised one at an American electronic hardware producer, McKinley and Taylor states that:

"[t]he monthly peer review was, then, a spectacle of discipline, an event which reminded the individual of the supposedly constant, inescapable, and silent scrutiny of her/his workmates" (McKinley and Taylor 1998:182).

They see the situation as a spectacle in line with the ritual analysis discussed earlier, but also a way of reinforcing the feeling of constant presence of your colleagues and implicitly their constant awareness and judgement of what you do at work. McKinley and Taylor are part of the 'critical management' approach within organisational studies that sees teamwork and the discourse of self-governing that often accompanies it as means of increasing control over employees (see also Barker 1993; Ezzam and Willmott 1998; Gabriel 2005; Knights and McCabe 2003). While the 360-meeting could have the function of reminding the employees about the constant scrutiny of their colleagues, that was not the sentiments expressed by my informants. They were much more positive about it, seeing it more as a fairly mundane, but useful, practice for improving work performance and strengthening the relations between the team members.

4.2 Ways of doing feedback

From the 360-meeting we have seen one example of feedback at Klarna and how it can be analysed as a ritualistic performance. The example above is only one and to get an idea of the amount and breadth of feedback at Klarna I will look at a few more example, highlighting both different formats of feedback and how feedback plays a role in reproducing social norms in this context.

4.2.1 Formal feedback or feedback via meetings

The 360-meetings is not the only meeting for feedback, there are also the 1-on-1s and retrospectives. 1-on-1s are meetings where an employee sits down with their manager or team lead and have '1-on-1 time'. The regularity of these meetings varies, but most schedule it for once per week or every other week. There are others who instead meet 'when needed' which then often relies on the employee to request having such a meeting. In the latter cases the 1-on-1s tend to take place less often. The purpose of the 1-on-1s includes: bringing up work issues, either technical or non-technical ones; checking to see how an employee is doing; giving feedback; receiving feedback and talking about what is happening in the department and company. The 1-on-1s are explicitly hierarchical meetings, always involving an individual and the person closest above them in the organisational hierarchy. Despite this they
were not described as judging or evaluating, but more as an opportunity for an informal conversation, away from work and other people. As the entire office is open plan, the possibility of having such conversations without disruption is reliant on moving away from the desks and preferably using a meeting room.

The other regular meeting where feedback is important is the retrospective. A retrospective is a meeting held to critically discuss the participants' experiences of a given time or context. It can be about a project, or a form of working or a set time period. All teams have some form of retrospective on a regular basis, e.g. once every month, and most often the purpose is to look at what has happened in and to the team since the last retrospective. Keeping that purpose in mind, everybody are asked to consider what has worked well and what has worked less well and I was able to attend a handful of them during my time at Klarna. They, like the 360-meetings, are team-based feedback meetings scheduled at a certain regular interval, but whereas the 360-meeting is about individual-to-individual feedback in front of the team, the retrospective is about individual-to-team feedback. In practice a retrospective tends to consist of people writing post-it notes about issues, positive or negative, that they can think of regarding the work of the team for the previous month or so. Everybody then put their stickers up on a whiteboard, divided unto positive stickers and negative ones with each person presenting each sticker they put up as they do so. Then all the stickers, or only the negative ones, are grouped according to similarity of issue and there is a discussion on what can be done to improve the situation with regards to the negative comments brought up.

Retrospectives are a method for ensuring that performance and improvement occurs within an organisation, but do they really achieve that. Retrospectives are seen as one part of a coherent system of working, where work is done in temporally organised repetitive development cycles and the cycle between retrospectives is one of the longest cycles in use. There is also a daily cycle based on standup meetings which will be discussed in chapter eight. In this way "the iterative cycle of writing, compiling and running code [is] a metaphor for the whole process of software development" (Mackenzie and Monk 2004:96-97). Thus the inherent micro-cycle of programming is abstracted up to the level of organising all work. This abstraction can be compared to that which Michael Power describes as a development of auditing work in his book *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification* (1999). In the book he argues that the practical work of auditing, as in checking the accounting books of a company,
has been abstracted into checking that the company has a method for checking their own accounts. The presence of a method to do something then comes to substitute the presence for the thing itself. The question is then if these retrospectives are "ritualized practices of verification whose technical efficacy is less significant than their role in the production of organisational legitimacy" (Power 1999:14). Because the retrospectives undoubtedly produce organisational legitimacy in the eyes both of the participants and outsiders, but having this ritualised role does not mean retrospectives are purely ceremonial. With these meetings, as with the 360-meeting, technical and sacred elements of work blend together. Suggesting that such meetings have not turned into the completely decoupled and self-referential structure that some audits have become (Power 1999:95f).

4.2.2 Informal feedback or unplanned feedback

Besides the different meetings and formal settings for feedback there is also ample feedback given in settings not set aside specifically for feedback. This informal feedback comes in two main forms: feedback as part of working and feedback separate from work. The latter, feedback separate from working, consists of those occasions when someone has feedback about something specific and takes a colleague aside to give that feedback. It is not pre-planned and often concerns something that just occurred. These 'feedback sessions' normally take only a few minutes, ten at the most. Giving feedback this way is very much in line with Klarna's management ideals of workplace feedback. So for example, one morning Javier asked Johannes if he had a few minutes because "I want to give you some feedback". They went to the nearest coffee machine, which is close by, but situated so that sound from the seating area and the machine will not travel back to the desks. They sat down for maybe five to ten minutes talking and then came back and went straight back to work.

The other form of informal feedback is that which happens during the 'doing of work', most often when working together on the same task. As pair programming was seen as a desirable practice, working together on tasks was a common occurrence. In his study of programmers in a small Irish software development company, Higgins refers to this kind of talk as 'code talk'. He argues that this talk is important because "software is now almost exclusively performed and produced as a team generated collective activity" (Higgins 2007:480). Thus a large part of programming work is the social interaction between programmers working together. 'Code talk' is described as "the usually unplanned but commonplace and opportunistic interaction between members of a team." (Higgins
Whilst Higgins discusses its importance to the practice of software development work, I would argue its importance for individuals' sense of self as workers. As it was feedback in this kind of context that most of the interviewees in this study identified as the most important to their assessment of their own work. It is what determines how an employee evaluates their own performance, competence and professional achievement. As they work quite a lot together, they all have a well-grounded knowledge of each others' competence with regards to work and they regard each other as good at their work. Consequently, an assessment from someone whose competence you consider high will carry plenty of validity as that assessment will be calibrated against the person's own competence.

Somewhere between these two kinds of informal feedback were all the comments given out during standup meetings or after having reviewed somebody else's work. At the daily standup meetings each person went through what work they had done or completed the previous day and compliments were regularly given on how good a solution was, or what a good idea someone had had, or just a "well done for getting that done". These small encouragements worked to reinforce colleagues' positive opinions and assessments of their own and each other's work. Similar types of comments, although generally a little less celebratory, were given after reviews of each other's work. Reviews are a mandatory part of the process for all work tasks and is there to ensure that someone who did not participate in doing the work also looks it over before it is put into use. As soon as someone has finished a task, they submit it for review in an internal IT system and a team mate will pick it up and look it over before "approving" it. Positive feedback on the reviewed work is therefore often used as a way of also expressing that the review is done.

4.2.3 Outside influences - technology and customers

One might have the impression that all feedback at Klarna happens between colleagues, but that is not the case. The technology they are working on itself and their customers, are other important sources of feedback that I will now turn to. In fact, these three sources of feedback: colleagues, the technical system and customers, were those mentioned in almost all my interviews as the most important in an individual's assessment of his own work.

By technical feedback I mean feedback from and about the technology itself. It can be given due to being prompted or on an ongoing basis and can also be given on a number of levels of a system. This form of feedback is an omnipresent part of software development
work and takes the form of testing and its results, system indicators that constantly provides
information about the 'health' of a system and all sorts of warnings and alerts that pop up on a
regular basis for some reason. The 'problem' with all forms of technical feedback is that it is
not technical only, in the sense that it requires human interpretation and thus becomes social
facts. Technical feedback may sound straightforward from the outside, for example a test
either passes or not, the system is either working or not. In practice this is not how it works
though. An example is the regular occurrences of warnings appearing on one of the common
screens in a team area. Live system information is commonly visualised on large screens in
the team areas. These screens indicate problems by "going red", literally meaning an indicator
becoming red either in the colour of the indicator or the field it is displayed on. In the figure
below we see an indicator of the overall status of a system. Both displays shown are about the
confidence in the current testing done on the system. Hence, the red portion on the top left
only indicates an uncertainty, rather than an actual fault of some kind.

Now, warnings happening are a regular occurrence, as in it happened in both teams a couple
of times a week at least. The reactions and following actions though varied a great deal
between those occasions. Sometimes one or two people would look up at the screen, take
notice of what had changed, shrug their shoulders and state "Oh, it's just the update that's
running" and return to what they were doing previously. Other times a few team members
clustered in front of the screens discussing if whatever change had triggered an alert was
actually cause for concern. Going to their own computer to check with related systems and
see if it was a contained issue or related to something broader. Alternatively if there was a
problem with a general corporate IT service that was having side-effects on their own ones,
which they would then not be able to fix themselves. Finally there were times when a red alert
was the sign of an urgent, local problem that some of the team immediately started working
on fixing. Often accompanied by someone from another team coming over to check if they
are where the problem is located. Such a problem is often caused by a change, making the
temporary solution to roll back the system to the latest working version and then try to figure out what actually caused the problem in the first place.

In some ways the technical feedback is the one affecting day-to-day work situations the most. It has the ability to determine if a work item is complete, as in having completed testing without faults, or if it needs more work or maybe even complete re-work. It can also throw up unplanned items when alerts go off, causing changes in what work can be or needs to be done that day, or maybe longer term. But this feedback is also very much subject to interpretation, by the individual programmer and by the collective team, making the system a less clear determinant factor than it may seem. This is because "[work] includes complicated negotiations between members of the development [team] and the development of shared, contingent interpretations of what “gauges” mean" (Mackenzie and Monk 2004:110). As we saw in the case of the alerts, even such an obvious indicator as an alert can mean such different things and it is the socially mediated meaning that determines the effect on work, not the indicator itself.

Finally, the third source of feedback, besides colleagues and technology, is the customers. Who you define as "the customer" can vary, for both Butler and Koala their customers were other employees within the company. In the case of Butler, their customers were the product development teams and for Koalas it was the call center support staff. In official discourse at Klarna, the importance of the customer is emphasised and this can be seen as part of a general trend of increasing business- and customer-focus among employees in qualified professions (Anderson-Gough, Grey, and Robson 2000:1152). During my fieldwork there was a "Customer Love week" at Klarna with presentations and workshops all aimed at reinforcing the importance of the customers' perspective and how this perspective ought to be an integrated part of all work within the company. In the words of one of the speakers "being customer-centric is what matters".

The same attitude pervaded the Engineering teams, where the question of "what would be of most value to the users" came up in most conversations and was often deployed in order to support one's own argument for one technical solution over another. Despite all this talk about the customer and their importance, such talk was often accompanied by a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity about what 'the customer' would actually want and need. 'The customer' as an abstract figure often appeared, but the customer as an actual person, or
persons, did not appear nearly so often. In research on the construct and role of the idea of 'the client' among trainee auditors a similar picture emerge, of 'the customer', or 'client' in this case, having a prominent role in discussions of professionalism for example, but where this role was not related to actual clients or personal experiences with clients.

"[I]t is clear that the dominance of 'the client' in trainees' organizational sensemaking is as much, if not more, a result of [...] discursive practices within the firm rather than stemming from the encounter between trainees and clients."

(Anderson-Gough, Grey, and Robson 2000:1162)

The usage of an abstract 'customer' to strengthen an argument shows the weight the idea of 'the customer' carries, even when the idea is not at all clearly connected to an actual customer.

Both Butler and Koala had their customer within the organisation and thus did see and talk to them directly as well. Direct interaction always created energy and motivation in the employee/s who had the contact. Despite this, forms of contact were often only maintained by one or two individuals, while the other team members ended up in the position of agreeing with the norm of the importance of customer focus and being anxious about the lack of customer feedback, but not actually taking steps to enable personal interaction with people who were customers.

4.3 In conclusion

Feedback is the central emic concept in the discussion of practice of performance management at the Engineering division at Klarna. Customer feedback is seen as very important, but not sought after as much in practice. Technical feedback on the other hand is unavoidable in software development work. IT is everywhere all the time, but also always subject to interpretation, making it less purely technical than one may believe. Since feedback is considered important at Klarna, there are plenty of formal settings provided for giving and receiving feedback, such as retrospectives, 1-on-1-meetings and 360-meetings. Together with the informal feedback given as part of working together, in pair programming or as a team, we see how feedback is a constant presence in the practice of working at Klarna. This feedback on both the individual and collective level work to produce norms of behaviour. In context such norms constitute part of the subjectivities of the employees. How employee subjectivities are formed is what we will analyse in the next chapter.
Chapter 5 Socialisation and recruitment - the production of subjectivity

Engineering is generally viewed as a highly technical profession, what they produce are things non-engineers often gawk at, as is the case with massive constructions, or just shake their head not even trying to understand, as is the case with most computer programs. Because of this technical focus there is a risk that other aspects of engineering, as a profession and as a practice, are overlooked. As such I will be exploring the social and communicative aspects of working as a software developer, being one form of engineering.

5.1 "Engineers optimise everything" - constructing the image of an engineer

"Engineers optimise everything" Anders, one of the Butler team members, told me one day while walking back to the office after lunch. We were discussing the company fitness program that had a campaign to make the employees exercise more. The program was setup so that employees were to form teams. Each individual would then get a point for each 30 minutes of exercise done during the two months the program was running. But you could only get one point per day and a team member who did no exercising at all during the two months would not count toward the team points. At the end of the two month, the team with the most exercise points average received fitness wristbands as a prize and all participants in the program received a smaller token gift as well. The reason for Anders' statement was that he had figured out the most efficient way of winning the competition. To win a team should consist of people doing no exercise except one person, who in turn would do the maximum amount of exercise one could get 'credit' for according to the program. As such the team would get the optimum rate and win, despite not doing even close to the most amount of actual exercising. His solution would allow the maximum amount of points for the least effort involved, i.e. the maximally efficient action.

If we take a look at the fitness program from a non-optimising point of view, what do we see? Well, we can find a company, or at least their HR department, explicating a very clear norm for the employees, namely to exercise in order to be or stay fit and healthy. The way the program was introduced, as a competition, could also be related to the rather young average age of their employees. In fact, the exact same idea was executed at my former workplace, but there it was not a competition and only on an individual basis, not based on teams. With the structure of the programs almost entirely identical, there nevertheless appeared significant differences in how the program was promoted and executed, and which
values were attached to it. One of the effects in Anders' team was an intensification of the talk of exercising and sports that already existed in the team. Sports is recognised as a way of creating a 'we' within a workplace, especially in male-dominated workplaces (Fogelberg Eriksson 2005:125), which the Engineering department at Klarna undoubtedly is with only 10% women employees. Something both programs have in common is the implication that the fitness of employees is a valid concern for an employer. They expand the range of employer influence beyond the sphere of both the physical location of the workplace and the activity of doing work, making new areas of life subject to corporate influence and control (Cruikshank 1999:6).

Rather than seeing the statement "engineers optimise everything" as descriptive, it can be taken as a normative statement, that is rather than suggesting this is what engineers actually do, it may suggest that optimising is what they should do. Thus defining a content to the category of 'the engineer' and simultaneously reproducing 'the engineer' as a category. In other words the statement reinforces the idea that 'engineers' are a collective, a group to which the speaker and many others, belong. It also suggests a vocabulary of motives in implying 'optimisation' as the reason for this category of 'engineers' acting and thinking the way they do. All of these movements, (re-) producing a category, defining its contents and a motivation for the collective category, fall within the various forms of identity regulation within work organisations that Alvesson and Willmott discuss as a form of organisational control (2002).

"[O]rganizational control is accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses about work and organization with which they may become more or less identified and committed" (2002:620)

This way employees can through discourses about for example their profession produce and reproduce a normative standard for themselves and their colleagues that is in line with the ideals promoted by the management at Klarna.

So far we have looked at only a single statement and from that only one aspect of the professional identity of software developers, as engineers. Optimising is certainly not the only thing an engineer should do, or not do. Another subject that was used for creating this kind of collective identification, was references to technology. Not primarily the consumer-based technology that turn up in many everyday conversation, but stories of computers, software and related technologies turned up regularly in the production of a normative subjectivity.
5.2 Fika with Metas - technology, problem-solving and expertise

It was Tuesday and for the Koalas that means their weekly *fika* (coffee break) with the Mega team. It was the Mega's turn to bring cake to the *fika*. When a company grows leaps and bounds each year, like Klarna which has doubled in amount of employees most years, the social relations between the employees change. With the size increase comes an increasing specialisation of the work (Sennett 1998:36). Different departments work on separate products and different teams work on separate parts. In this environment knowing people personally is no longer automatic. So Koalas had a regular fika with one team and a regular lunch with another team, as a way of connecting with people and teams outside of their own section.

Most of the conversation during the *fika* with Megas concerned computers and programming in one way or another, mostly non-work-related. For example, Anton told us of a physics class in middle school where the teacher had taught them about magnetism and had mentioned how the CRT-screens that all TVs used to be based on are magnetised. Coming home from school that day Anton decided to test it on the TV in the living room at home. He took a magnet and played around with it in front of the TV-screen. He succeeded in making the colours distort and thus was able to confirm what the teacher had taught them in class that day. His parents were less enthusiastic about it when they came home to a TV with a distorted screen, although his father did fix it, as he apparently knew how to re-magnify it. This story, along with several others, were about experiences from childhood or teenage years. Tracing one's technology interest far back in time thereby becomes one way of confirming that interest as both genuine and serious. Serious as in something that will not change easily and genuine in that it is not dependent on one's (current) job, but pre-existed any job, and even education about technology. As Johannes commented on another occasion:

"we are all people who grew up playing with computers from the age of five, and hey, happen to be only boys [...] and grew up in middle-class households".

This idea of a long-standing technology interest was further displayed through several stories of how each of them had managed to crash or otherwise destroy computers, servers etc over the years. Amusingly, two of them had managed to destroy a computer and a keyboard respectively by vacuuming. Vacuuming causes dust to move around and if this happens within something running on electrified circuits, then short-circuiting is not unexpected.
Altogether these stories were reminiscing about earlier experiences with technology, all premised on mistakes and accidents. They were funny stories that were both premised on a certain shared experience and prior knowledge, while also reinforcing that shared experience. These kinds of stories, when more directly about work, are referred to as 'war stories'. The term means "a story of a memorable personal experience typically involving an element of danger, hardship, or adventure" (‘War Story’ 2016) and they are an acknowledged part of both learning and socialising among software developers. There is an interesting gendered aspect in talking about work in terms of 'war stories' or stories 'from the trenches' as they are sometimes called. In a conversation with some of the Koalas they were discussing the deep knowledge Tobias has of the technical structure they are working on and the difficulties of transferring that knowledge to the others in the team. Tobias had recently done a presentation on one part of the system for the entire team, but acknowledged that there is so much more and most of the knowledge is not easy to 'just teach' as it is not structured in that way, according to him. Johannes then replied that "it can probably just be done via war stories", suggesting that these are an established form of learning, even if they are much less formalised than for example the workshop that had been held by Tobias.

There is a significance in that these stories centre around some form of hardship or adventure. Notice how the examples written above discusses problems, failures and the like, but what these stories do is portray the problems as humorous, even somewhat ridiculous in either cause or nature like the vacuuming making a server breaking down. Even when the problem was not funny, the hindsight with which the story is told makes them appear so. In his research on humor at in a work blue collar company in the USA, Zachary Schaefer argues that humor, as a form of sense-making, is a way of infusing positive values into ambivalent traits or experiences.

"Infusion scripts are a performance where workers narrate noteworthy activities to other workers, affording the narrator the chance to infuse any abnormal, awkward, or negative aspects of the job with positive meanings" (Schaefer 2013:519)

In this manner, the stories told above infuse the ambivalent experiences of having caused technology to break down with a positive element of providing entertainment, creating a feeling of common experiences and possibly with an educational element as the positive twist. In addition to disabling the potential danger in these stories they are also turned into displays of one of the most vaunted trait of an engineer, namely problem solving. I was told during the fieldwork that "the value of an engineer is equal to the value of all the things he has broken
doing his job". Breaking technology is here set up as the necessary precursor to creation, solution and thereby success. These types of narratives and the interactions they create thus contribute to the sense of a collectivity that is firmly connected to the interaction with and understanding of certain forms of technology.

These stories also produces 'expertise' which Carr, in his article *Enactments of Expertise* (2010), identifies as being produced in four ways, all four based on the notion that expertise is something you do, not something you are or have (2010:18). These four "constitutive processes [are] socialization, evaluation, institutionalization, and naturalization" (2010:27). He refers to socialisation as consisting of the period of training that is generally required to develop expertise. Training may be associated to organised training, but even though Carr is not explicit he does seem to include any form of training that "involves learning how to define and frame, as well as to interpret and engage objects in an expert way" (2010:20). In other words learning how make sense of certain object in specific ways. The importance of language in this process can be seen in the jargon that appears in any field. In fact, writing this kind of thesis makes it particularly visible as I translate, merge, incorporate or explain words and concepts from my field and the field of academic anthropology.

One setting in which this language is learnt is formal higher education in engineering, which most, but not all of the developers at Klarna have gone through. In many engineering companies all technical employees will be expected to have an engineering degree and not uncommonly they may even be from the same university and degree program (Rennstam 2007:81f). At Klarna, the range of educational backgrounds was broader, even though the majority still had an engineering degree. Learning specific concepts associated with one's field of, actual or prospective, expertise can be transformational for university students. Such concepts are referred to as 'threshold concepts' (Moström et al. 2009:181). In a study on the transformations caused by such 'threshold concepts', among students in computer sciences, the researchers found "changes in [the students'] thinking, identity, behavior, and confidence" (Moström et al. 2009:185). Interestingly, even though the study asked students for "concepts that transformed the way you see and experience computing" (2009:182), all the answers received, 108 of them, only told of positive transformations which in most cases took place in a situation where they faced an inadequacy with their current approach, i.e. they ran into problems. These kinds of significant experiences, taking place within education, made students feel more confident and more like a computer scientist (2009:183). The positive
effect of stories of problems and their solution is similar to the 'war stories' mentioned earlier. As such both the experiences and their re-telling as a story to others who share a similar background may increase the feeling of collectivity and belonging among developer colleagues.

An example of institutionalisation of expertise is the portrayal of software as universal in its presence and application, giving it the appearance of being produced the same way for developers globally and working the same way for users globally. In a study of software development in Rio de Janeiro, Takhteyev describes in his book *Coding Places: Software Practice in a South American City* how that global universalism is patently not the case (2012). Against the appearance that all you need to code and learn to code is a computer, internet access and electricity (2012:3), he argues that there is in fact a significant amount of "work that peripheral practitioners must do to give software development its seeming universality" (2012:6). Certainly this does not only apply to peripheral practitioners, however defined. It is rather the case that experts produce expertise in their portrayal of the object they are experts on and by portraying the object as universal the authority of their expertise is thereby strengthened. This is part of what Carr refers to as 'institutionalisation' of expertise, where knowledge is both recognized and authorised as conferring status of 'expert' (Carr 2010:24). Hence, telling 'war stories' can in addition to being a learning tool also institutionalise the knowledge and expertise of the storyteller and by responding with similar tales the listeners can strengthen the original narrative and place themselves within the same framework of expertise.

5.3 Externalisation

In the introduction to this chapter I brought up the risk of over-determining the technology aspect of software development as a profession and practice. I have nevertheless discussed precisely how technology, or rather narratives of experience with technology, is used to produce an identification with an engineering collectivity. These narratives internalise failure into technology experience and infuse it with positive associations of humor and problem solving, but as failure is included so other aspects are excluded, for example certain ethical considerations.

Externalisation as a concept has its origins in the discipline of economics where it refers to the exclusion of certain costs in the calculation of the cost of production onto other
parties. It is used extensively in debates around the environmental damages caused by companies in their production. When a company calculate the costs of production they include such things as salaries, machinery and location costs, but not the costs which they do not need to pay in order to ensure the production takes place, such as environmental costs. These on the other hand society, in the form of local communities or local and national governments, are often forced to take care of in lieu of the company that caused the damage in the first place. There is a significant body of anthropological research on this, which Urban & Koh, in their review of ethnographic research on business corporations, call "corporate-effects research" (2013:142). In the borderlands of externalisation we find corporate social resposibility (CSR). Dinah Rajak, in her book *In good company: An anatomy of corporate social responsibility* (2011), writes about how the employees of a global mining company's CSR department make decisions on who will be covered by corporate HIV/AIDS treatment by "construct[ing] a 'community' of beneficiaries [...] to the benefit of some, and the exclusion of many" (Rajak 2011:235). In this case the company internalises HIV/AIDS treatment as a corporate responsibility in regards to their current employees, but externalises any responsibility for families and communities built around and for the mines that the company owns. As such certain issues are internalised while others are externalised and one of the context in which we see this play out at Klarna is recruitment.

5.4 Recruitment - the process

Klarna is a fast-growing company. By the time I was finishing my fieldwork at the end of October 2015 they had recruited around 400 new employees since the start of the year, increasing the total number of employees by more than a third. Recruitment being an important activity, as the executive in charge of the Engineering division told me, is therefore hardly surprising. Even beside the fact of being a growing company recruitment is important. In knowledge-intensive industries and companies as well as those where normative steering is important, both categories which Klarna belongs to, recruitment plays a particularly important role. In knowledge-intensive companies because the main resource of the company, what makes them money, is the employees. For companies using normative, also called value-based, forms of steering recruitment is considered one of the main means of normative control (Rennstam 2007:33).

When looking at recruitment and its relation to subjectivity there are two main parts to look into. The first is the actual recruitment process - how are people actually recruited, by
what means and methods? The second is the 'content' of what the company looks for, in other words what kind of person is the company looking to recruit? I will tackle both of these, although only from the point of view of the current employees of the company, meaning there are no accounts of people who have participated in the process but not been employed. Those who are absent, and thus externalised, through this process are one of the concerns running through this discussion.

In recruitment, one's subjectivity becomes instrumentalised. It becomes the means by which a person applying for a job can progress through the recruitment process, maybe getting a job and then hopefully enjoying that job. The norms and ideals that we have seen so far in this chapter are deployed throughout the recruitment process. It is not only the subjectivity of the 'candidate', as the job seeker is called at Klarna, that is instrumentalised, so is the subjectivity of the 'recruiters' at Klarna. These 'recruiters' are not only the HR personnel specialised in recruitment, but importantly also the managers and developers involved.

If we start with the process of recruitment, there are some standard features at Klarna, i.e. job adverts, interviews and a 6-month trial period of employment. One difference though is the emphasis on recruitment via recommendations from current employees. There is an internal referral scheme where any employee can recommend people, whether for an advertised position or just in general. The presence of this feature is emphasised already at the New Employee Orientation that all new employees attend when they start at Klarna. There is a tradition in the company of recruiting via personal connections, from the early days when Klarna was a small company run by three friends (Emdén 2014). There was some criticism of this way of recruiting as the company grew, due to the lack of meritocracy in the system, but also due to the homogeneity it engendered. In spite of this criticism, the practice of recruiting via personal connections is once again becoming common via the usage of recommendations from staff. The difference now is that there are many more persons whose connections are used. Whilst this negates some of the tendency toward homogeneity, it far from prevents it, as several employees remarked when talking about recruitment and the people employed at Klarna. The stated reasons for using personal connections as the basis of so much of their recruitment, they account for at least a third of all recruitments, are threefold. That it is cheaper to recruit this way as it can prevent the need for advertisements and the surrounding work. This also makes it faster, as there can be a list of potential recruits for many potential job openings. Finally, Klarna has data suggesting that employees recruited via connections are
more likely to stay at Klarna longer than those recruited via other means and thus decreasing the staff turnover rate.

Once potential employees are identified they are contacted by someone working in the HR department for a brief chat, which includes a "culture check" meant to ensure that this person would 'fit in' at Klarna. This applies both to people who apply for a position and those recommended by an employee. What this "culture check" actually means was no more clear from the point of view of Engineering staff involved in recruitment, they assumed it was just talking to the person in some way to ensure that they would "fit in" or "work well" within the company. Being called up by a company directly was noted by several of the Swedes recruited to Klarna this way as being a positive surprise, since recruitments within the IT sector are mostly conducted via recruitment companies, keeping their employer name secret for much of the recruitment process. If the person is deemed suitable a row of interviews start, and it can be a bit of line-up of them.

Within the product development department, which constitutes two thirds of the Engineering section at Klarna, they recently re-worked their recruitment process. The dual purpose was to both create a unified process for the whole department and also to improve the 'hit rate' of the process, that is having a process that is better at finding the most suitable people. And while this certainly created a greater similarity in the process and what the recruiters involved actually looked for, some of the traits they did look for were expressed in such individual terms that it can be questioned if the end result was 'more hits'. I will return to the definition and negotiation over the meaning of personal traits in the next section. One of the key consequences from this change has been to create a common 'pool' of potential interviewers, both managers and technical staff, meaning the members of the pool would be doing more interviews and therefore presumably get better at it by virtue of experience, but also to prevent the "wrong" people being involved in interviews and thereby giving a negative impression of Klarna to the candidate. The need to not just find the 'right' people but also show Klarna in a good light expresses some of the ambivalence on the job market where Klarna is recruiting. Whether it is a seller's market or a buyer's market is almost impossible to determine. What is clear is that both sides, candidates and recruiting companies, are in the enviable position of having multiple options open to them and the issue is more about finding a good, or even the best, match, than of finding any match at all. The re-worked recruitment process can be summarised by the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Pre-screening</strong> (generic for all Engineering)</th>
<th><strong>Interview in the office</strong> (team specific)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical interview 1</td>
<td>Technical interview 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Manager 1</td>
<td>Engineering Manager 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on team</td>
<td>Technical interview 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary and final decision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pre-screening consists of shorter interviews intended to find those individuals that seem promising. These are generally not conducted in person, but via phone or video calls. After this first set of interviews the people who conducted those interviews discuss and decide on whether this is someone to proceed with and if so, what team/s would be most suitable. The purpose of the pre-screening is thus to decide who they consider to be good enough candidates to recruit in general, without having any specific position in mind, whereas the second round is to determine whether a person would be suitable in a specific role and team. The second round of interviews are then done. They will be more targeted at the team/s and their specific context, both in terms of technical skills needed and personal suitability. In this second round both the manager's interview and the technical one will be conducted by the manager for and team members of the team in question.

The extent of the process, or the number of steps in it, also reinforces the impression of a high level of selectiveness. The emphasis on technical interviews not only gives a greater possibility of assessing technical skills, but also signals the value of those technical skills. Having several of them leads to the candidate meeting more current employees, and vice versa which is a way of providing both sides a greater possibility to assess if they want to proceed, but also starting a process of familiarisation and socialisation into the collective that is the company itself. The technical interviews explicitly serves dual purposes in not only assessing technical skills, but also how those skills combine with personal traits and social skills and if they do so in a way that suits the company. And as we shall now see, this combination of technical and social skills, which is far from clear, is key to what the company looks for when recruiting.
5.5 Recruitment - what are they looking for?
We have now covered how Klarna attempts to figure out if an individual is what they are looking for, but what is it they are actually looking for? That is what we turn to now. With such a high rate of recruitments I had the opportunity to talk both to several recently recruited employees and several who had been involved in the recruitment process representing the company, either managers interviewing or team members doing technical interviews. A few themes emerged as central in descriptions of what Klarna looks for when recruiting engineers: the distinction between technology- and product-focus, learning and ambition and how it ties in with sociality and finally heterogeneity.

5.5.1 Difference and homogeneity
As I mentioned there was some debate in the company about the risks associated with recruiting employees via personal contacts. This has lingered and is still one of the concerns brought up when discussing recruitment. The feeling that Klarna still has a too homogenous employee-base makes "recruiting different kinds of people", as one manager phrased it, an important consideration when recruiting. Interestingly, in his ethnography of a large engineering company in Sweden, Rennstam notices something similar, there is a feeling of homogeneity in and among the employees and this is seen as a problem (Rennstam 2007:81f). In Rennstam's example, the homogeneity is ascribed to the educational backgrounds of the employees, most being engineering graduates from the same local university. At Klarna it was less obvious what actually constituted the problematic homogeneity. Gender was pointed out by several informants and considering that only 10% of the employees in Engineering are female, there is a clear imbalance there, even greater than many other technology companies. Besides gender, the only definite factors brought up to me was age, where the median age of employees was 32, forming a fairly young employee group. Besides gender and age, most people spoke about the "same type of people" as constituting the homogeneity. Lack of clarity could equally be the cause or consequence of the lack of structured efforts to change the makeup of the people hired, as it is difficult to change something when one does not know what actually needs to change. At the Tel Aviv-office there have been efforts to even out the gender (im-)balance among the engineering employees, with some success. Hence the absence of similar efforts in the Stockholm-office is even more remarkable.

One model, used by Klarna, for approaching what is meant by "different kinds of people" is offered by DISC. DISC is a behavioural assessment test created in the 1920s which is
supposed to determine how others perceive you and centers on four traits, namely dominance, influence, stability and compliance. DISC is one version of many behavioural assessment frameworks and it is the one Klarna has chosen to use. Several employees within the HR department have received training in how to use the DISC assessments and they are offered as a service to teams within the company. The assessments consists of two questionnaires which are then analysed and in this circumstance, doing the test on a team basis, the analysis is conducted on both an individual and a team basis. This analysis is then brought to the team to be discussed and I participated in one such meeting. The four traits that DISC centres around are each represented by a primary colour. So someone who is high in influence, as the graph on the left shows, is for example then "a yellow type of person".

Simplifying a person into a colour is a two-step process, where the first part quantifies the person into a set on numbers by ranking them on a 1-100 scale in each of the four main traits. Sally Engle Merry (2011; with Coutin 2014) writes about quantification of social realities and the use of indicators in human rights and domestic violence policy work. She argues that the creation of statistics "are used to consolidate complex data into a simple number or rank that is meaningful" (2011:86). This consolidation works to remove the complexity, in this case turning the entirety of a person into a set of four numbers on a scale. It not only simplifies the topic at hand, numbers in themselves also carry "an aura of objective truth" (Merry 2011:84) and in a context comprising engineers, numbers provide not only truth, but also familiarity. Hence the numbers make something more real and more truthful than it previously appeared. Quantification also creates room for comparison in a way that words do not. Being 64 on the red scale makes it undoubtedly higher than the 58 you are on the blue scale for example, and certainly lower than the 72 your colleague received on the red scale for example. In the meeting where the DISC-results were discussed by the Koalas this effect was immediately obvious as everybody started comparing their results with each other and remarking on who "was more blue" or "less green" than somebody else as the numbers made it unarguably true.

This points to the second step of simplification, where the numbers are further simplified, or abstracted, into colours. Rather than talking about the numbers with regards to a
specific character trait, like influence, they would talk about yellow as being the frame of reference, thus each individual turned into a colour. Anton had a high score for dominance and was dubbed "a red person", while Tobias scored close enough on both stability and compliance that he was "mainly blue with quite a bit of green in him". This happened not only during the DISC-meeting itself, but continued in the team over the following weeks. Statements and behaviour by a team member was regularly explained by means of reference to 'their' colour, often in a rather joking manner. At a presentation some weeks later the speaker introduced his presentations with the words "this will be a rather yellow presentation". This suggests the people who have done the DISC do integrate it into their way of seeing people and the world around them.

Using this kind of test enforces a particular way of thinking about people, while avoiding other ways of thinking. The most obvious way in how it does so is in the selection of the four main traits that the test centers around. They frame what kinds of characteristics that are deemed relevant and connecting them to the primary colours only reinforce the notion that these are 'primary' personality traits, from which other traits can be derived, just as one can derive other colours from the primary ones. Beside the framing provided by the choice of traits, there is an even more fundamental framing taking place, namely in the selection of what is to be assessed. The DISC analysis is about personality, the personality of individuals. In doing so this test externalises any and all social structures. There is no gender, class, ethnicity, dis/ability etc. These are structural characteristics that unquestionably affect who we are, how we behave and how we are perceived, but they are entirely invisible in the DISC framework. The framework treats people as socially decontextualised entities. In other words, it may show certain kinds of difference, but it is also completely blind to other forms thereof, differences that are visible in the demographic makeup of the employees, like for example gender and age.

The HR employee in the DISC-meeting said that "it is not used for recruitment yet" (my emphasis). Nevertheless, as we have seen as employees become more familiar with it, it is integrated in how they think about people and potential types of people. The more managers and team members in the 'recruiter pool' that have participated in a DISC-assessment, the more they will come to integrate the assessments' way of categorising and thinking about people into their recruitment practices. As such, even though the DISC is not formally used for recruitment, e.g. candidates taking an assessment as part of the recruitment
process, it is slowly but surely becoming a part of recruitment anyway. On one occasion, a manager explicitly talked about "red people" and "green people" in a discussion about which individual would suit a certain team for example. Even though this may seem minimal or temporary, creating structures of assessment and measuring have the tendency that "once [...] in place they become extremely resilient" (Merry and Coutin 2014:11).

The individualism that the DISC assessment relies on is visible in how people describe what they look for when interviewing somebody. In the interviews I conducted I asked all those who have participated in interviewing candidates what it is they look for. The most common answer was looking for someone who they "get along with" or "would work well with". In other words, they reference themselves and individuality, rather than generic traits such as 'being a good team player' or 'being ambitious'. Sometimes this 'getting along with' was ascribed to the importance of teamwork as in working well with others or having good social skills. Most often though it was in reference to oneself, that they were looking for someone they personally would like working with. Several informants spoke of their concern for what such a personal judgement of interviewees would mean for makeup of those recruited and their worry that it would lead to homogeneity in those being recruited. One manager, Jonas, expressed it this way:

"[when recruiting] I rely a lot on my gut feeling. [...] But then when you rely on your gut feeling it easily becomes a homogenous group. So I've consciously tried to make it less homogenous, so we're not so alike."

The "trying to make it less homogenous" consisted of recruiting people that to his point of view were different, so for example he wanted to have people who:

"One likes to play superhero because then they can save the world, while the others maybe work more in the background. And we need both for it to work. Then it would be very good to have a girl. I hope we will get more girls in because that's how it is. It needs a mix of those who work and are doers, and those who are thinkers, and evangelicals and so on".

Like with the DISC framework we are here talking about differences in personality, but not according to a set framework or set conceptualisations of what difference means.

In a similar vein, Johannes spoke about looking for "people I would have fun working with", while recognising that this risks ending up with only a very specific type of person employed. It is worth noting that Johannes only participated in 'technical interviews' which had the purpose of assessing technical skills. In practice this meant seeing how the
person being interviewed interacted with the technology and the interviewers, separately and together.

"A tech interview is basically a way to see if this is a person I could have fun solving problems with. So that it’s not someone who just sits there coding without saying anything about what he’s thinking or doing"

A technical interview most often consist of the interviewee having to handle a technical problem or issue of some kind. As the quote illustrates though, the technical aspect and the social aspect of the task are completely merged. It is not only how you technically deal with the issue at hand that matters, but also how you socially do so, further strengthening the notion of programming as an inherently social practice.

Both Johannes and Jonas struggled with their awareness of the current homogeneity among the employees and their desire to lessen that homogeneity, but in the end it was their personal feeling about a candidate that determined their assessment of them. Even if they did have more firm recruitment guidelines that they were to rely on, it would not remove the need to rely on one's personal judgement. As "despite their apparent objectivity, [...] techniques of knowledge and decision making entail interpretive work and discretion" (Merry and Coutin 2014:11-12). If they were to use the DISC analysis for example, they would receive one assessment of the candidates, but it would not say very much about whether they were the superhero-type or more someone working in the background. Nor would it tell all about the person, like if you would actually enjoy working with the person, which in the end was one of the most important parts, the other being their approach to technology which I will turn to now.

5.5.2 Technology skills, but not too technology-focused
Besides personality which has just been discussed, there was another theme that arose regularly and it concerned the relationship between technology and business interests. There is a "common view of engineers as unwilling to sacrifice technical finesse and quality in favor of more profitable products" (Rennstam 2007:163). This is a gross oversimplification as most conversations where different technical solutions are discussed both technical quality and profitability mix together and are used to argue for both sides of the argument. A typical example was this one time when a problem occurred and Butler was discussing different options for fixing the problem. One option was a "quick and dirty fix" that would be pretty quick to implement, but create an exception in the system. The other option was to re-work a larger part of the system to incorporate a fix that would be better integrated. The comparison
brought up was that if you have a leak in your roof, do you fix the leak with some plastic tapes to the outside or do you re-do as large a part of the roof needed? These kind of issues arise on a daily basis and rather than frame them as technology vs. profitability, they are framed in terms of which is the most profitable? Because the actual issue is rather how individuals assess the cost of doing the more thorough fix against the quicker one. The thorough fix will take more work and time, costing both the labour taken to create the fix and the cost of having the problem for the longer time it will take to sort out. On the other hand, the quick fix will not be as good and so will have a smaller but persisting cost and a 'dirtier' fix, i.e. less well done, will carry a risk of future failure which would add additional cost to that solution. So what we see is that technology is talked about as value, or profitability, not as opposed to it. It is not that technology does not matter, after all if there was no money involved they would probably all prefer to do the proper fix, but they all recognise that it is the interests of the company that has to come first and therefore value, direct or indirect, always trumps any other claims.

In recruitment, Klarna wants to ensure they hire people who are willing and able to think in terms of value rather than technology. Therefore they actively look for people who are, in their words, product-focused rather than technology-focused. While showing an interest in technology was a common display in social settings at work, such as we saw in the description of the cross-team fika earlier in this chapter, there was a difference between such social settings and work ones. In more work-focused contexts, which includes both recruitment and the 360-meeting discussed in the previous chapter, it was not the technology itself that was the focus, but instead the business, or the product that embodied the business, for each team. Hence Serge was given positive feedback in the 360-meeting on "not treating the code like magic" but rather as a (business) function. He responded that although he "likes beautiful code, for me that means code that is understandable". In other words, it is not about code or technology for its own sake, but for a very specific business purpose. In recruitment this means looking for those with not only good technical skills, but those who also see and are interested in the purpose the technology serves. As Daniel, one of the managers, stated it:

"it is not simply [recruiting] those who like building architecture and building technical air castles really. We want people who are really business driven and want to solve problems in the simplest way possible."

Here a focus on technology comes to mean enjoying the complexity of technology for its own sake, without consideration of business needs. Whereas being business focused means
building the technology needed for the business purpose, no more but no less. This concern with doing the right work, and not more, will return in the next chapter where we see a similar ideal, but with regards to speed.

5.5.3 Achieving against the odds - corporate self-image
The purpose of the recruitment is to find employees that 'fit in' at Klarna. Having looked at some of the employees' interaction and self-portrayal and also the recruitment process, what we will now turn to is the company's self-portrayal. In other words, what is it these potential employees are supposed to 'fit in' to? As previously mentioned, the founding narrative of Klarna is made present on a regular basis within the company. One of the key features of the founding narrative is that of 'achievement against the odds'. There is one part of the narrative in which this is most prominently featured, namely presenting the business idea at a key event at The Stockholm School of Economics (Handelshögskolan). During my two months at Klarna I heard this part of the story being told three or four times and it appears in most, if not all, accounts of the history of the company and the founders personal histories (e.g. Emdén 2014).

I first heard the company's own account of their history when attending a two-day introduction for new employees. Klarna runs these "New Employee Orientation"-days every two week to ensure all new employees receive a basic set of common information about the company as a whole. This includes a tour of the physical offices and getting people their id-badges. The intention is that as many as possible will attend these two days as their first two days of employment, so if possible starting dates of new employees are coordinated to the most suitable Orientation date. The first item on the agenda for the these two days is being told the "story of Klarna" by one of the founders and current CEO. The Orientation coordinator explained that for a long time the CEO had been the one to come and tell the story himself to all the new employees, but eventually that became unmanageable, so nowadays they use a video recording of him telling the story instead.

Focusing on the event at Handelshögskolan, the story goes like this: There is an annual dinner at Handelshögskolan for their sponsors in the private sector. This entails an afternoon of speeches and presentations followed by a formal dinner. Among those present are a large number of dignitaries from Swedish high society and industry. As part of the afternoon's proceedings there was going to be a presentation of some of the up-and-coming
business ideas from current students and recent graduates of the university. The Klarna founders had by then been working on their idea for a few months and had the support of an investor and advisors at a startup centre. The current CEO, Jonathan, was the person who presented their idea, beside four other hopefuls. Their idea was rejected outright by both the jury and the audience vote. Afterward, as the three founders were standing around feeling a bit down, an older man came by and told them to ignore the "bunch of old men who can't keep up with the times". So they decided to do just that and continued on, working even harder to prove those 'old men' wrong.

In the narrative present that is certainly how they present themselves, as having succeeded in proving them wrong and proving the viability and success of their idea. As we know "[n]arratives are more than simple chronicles of events; they give shape to forward movement of times, suggestions reasons why things happen, showing their consequences" (Sennett 1998:30). The emphasis in the story above is put on overcoming difficulties to achieve success. The fact that their idea was one of five selected to present that day is for example not mentioned at all. The narrative centers around the overcoming of an obstacle and the negative response to their idea only being a minor setback along the way to success, not the achievement in getting to present at all. This narrative of achieving against the odds is also present in any goal or target setting within the company. One of the managers described this as setting goals at a level that makes people think "we can't possibly achieve that". Nevertheless, he continued, they do achieve them in the end. Regardless of the veracity of the description, by describing the story in this way, success is illustrated by highlighting their insurmountability to start with. This is not to say that the description of their achievements is in any way incorrect or unfair, but it certainly has an effect to describe the past, present and future in this way. It produces a clear valuation of what results are valuable and why they are valuable, namely that achievement or success is the 'proper' aim and thus motivation for work. It also categorises people who have overcome obstacles and continued striving as those possessing a certain ability. This kind of person is then construed as being the kind of person they want at Klarna and also how those already employed should be.

Having discussed the purpose of constructing this narrative of insurmountability followed by success, the question of how this success is achieved in practice remains. In Rennstam's (2007) dissertation on engineering work he discusses in some detail how the engineers he observes manage deadlines in their daily work. In describing a particular project
we are shown how the project requirements, i.e. the conditions the end result needs to fulfill, as previously determined, are re-negotiated among the people working on the project in order to meet the deadline set for having it finished. The discrepancy between what the engineers are asked to deliver to a certain deadline and the possibility of actually achieving that goal results in modifications to the content of the delivery (Rennstam 2007:157). Sometimes this is negotiated with the project manager and sometimes it is framed as a "technical decision" placing the responsibility with the engineers rather than the project manager. I heard several discussions like this during my fieldwork. An example was when one of the teams had a goal to be finished with something by the end of the week. During the morning standup on the Wednesday it was questioned whether they would finish in time. What followed was a discussion on what to prioritise, what was necessary to include and what, if anything, could they either completely skip or at least move until the following week in order to achieve their goal for the current week. These kinds of prioritisations on what work to include and what to exclude are made on a daily basis and form one basis for judging other's professional judgement. Hence showing the desire to reach goals and do so using one's professional judgement appropriately is another important characteristic that recruiters at Klarna look for.

5.6 In conclusion

Klarna is a company doing knowledge-intensive work, in line with such work they emphasise the importance of their employees, their competencies, skills and what kind of people they are. Accordingly recruitment becomes very important as it is the means by which employees are found and chosen. At Klarna, the "kind of people" they look for is an ambiguous ideal of sameness and difference, where the sameness is simultaneously seen as positive and problematic and difference equally so. These undefined notions of sameness and difference also hide the externalisation of the structural differences, elsewhere acknowledged. By significantly involving their current employees in the recruitment process a mutual engagement is commenced even before employment is confirmed. The recruitment process itself functions as an early socialisation process of the potential employees, which then continues for those who in the end are employed. This socialisation provides a context in which relations to technology are narratively constructed and reinforced. Thus creating a feeling of collectivity based on technology and professional expertise as developers and engineers. Peer relations between developers as developers and as colleagues thus contribute to the construction of work and employee subjectivity.
Chapter 6 Producing speed - prioritisation and necessity

On my second day at Klarna I attended an internal developers' conference, Klarna's first one ever. Being only my second day in the field it was a good opportunity for me to 'hang out' with the Butler team, but also meet other employees. I attended presentations and had lunch with team members of the Butler team, while breakfast and a coffee break was spent with other employees. The conference was held in a beautiful, old building situated 10 minutes walk from the office. In the welcoming speech the organiser, Uri, who works in the Tel Aviv-office of Klarna, told us how the event had come about. The conference took place the day before the annual company kick-off, meaning a lot of the overseas employees would be coming to Stockholm for a few days. In connection with this, Uri wanted to arrange a meet-up between his team and a team in Stockholm that they work closely with. The idea of a meeting eventually expanded into meeting several of the teams in Stockholm, to eventually wanting his team to meet all of Engineering, or even get all the people from the Engineering department in the Tel Aviv office to meet all of the people in the Engineering department in Stockholm. Combined with expanding this from the planned two hour-meeting into a full day one and it eventually turned into an idea for a one-day conference for the whole Engineering division instead. He went to the site manager in Tel Aviv to ask for permission and was asked to return with a one-page explanation and motivation of the event. A colleague of his spent most of the night writing up the one-page motivation, including what a potential schedule could look like, with four conference tracks, including topics and speakers. It was passed on to the Engineering management and approved, taking two weeks from the first idea until they got the 'go ahead'.

It was no coincidence that this was the narrative presented as the background for the conference. As previously explained, Klarna describes themselves as a company that achieves against the odds and one of the main tropes of this achievement is speed. Agile, flexible and quick to change were also some of the most commonly used words when I asked informants to describe Klarna as a company. Why is speed, change and flexibility so important?

The word speed refers to "the rate at which something happens or is done" or "the quality of being quick" (Merriam-Webster 2016). Throughout this chapter I will be referring to the latter meaning of the word, i.e. equating speed with being quick, since it is what is meant by 'speed' at Klarna, and in the wider IT industry as well. The link between speed and
action and motion is worth noting as the latter two carry their own connotations. Both motion and action are closely related to change. In fact, speed often seems to infer change as inherent in it, that speed is the rate of change, rather than the rate of for example repetition. There is also different meanings of time and speed in differing contexts, where work is associated with expectations of time being used purposefully, in contrast with social settings where thinking of time as purposeful would be anathema and even considered inappropriate (Brannen 2005:113). I would argue that time is not only perceived as purposeful in business, but is also seen as scarce and thus more valuable. In the world of business the perception is that time moves fast and everything happens so quickly that speed, in the sense of being fast, has become crucial to succeed or even to merely survive. Let us see how this plays out in the context of Klarna and their Engineering employees.

6.1 'To stay put is to be left out'

Sennett writes that "[t]o stay put is to be left out" in his book The corrosion of character: the personal consequences of work in the new capitalism (1998:87) in which he argues that working lives have changed from linear and repetitive in industrial production to changing and flexible in post-industrial production and that this change comes with negative consequences. Nevertheless, the book reproduces the image of a world in which speed and change is paradigmatic, an image we also find within the IT industry.

Klarna is part of an IT industry that has experienced fantastical growth in companies, market, employees and turnovers over the past two to three decades. If we look at Klarna itself, the company doubled the number of employees for several years in a row and its valuation now is ten times that of five years ago, which is the second time it has ten-doubled its value (Jerräng 2014). E-commerce, their business, grew by 18% in Europe last year and is predicted to grow around 15% per year for the next two years (‘Online Retailing: Britain, Europe, US and Canada 2016’ 2016). In other words, both the environment in which it operates and the company itself is used to and expects a high rate of growth. Growth here refers to the amount of money flowing through an industry or a company, what in a corporate annual report would be the 'company annual turnover'. Interestingly, what is meant by a 'high rate' is in fact an exponential rate of change, often referring to Moore's Law. Moore's Law is the observation and prediction in 1965 by Gordon Moore, co-founder of Intel, that the number of transistors in integrated circuits would double each year. It was revised to double every two years in 1974 ('Moore’s Law’ 2016). As integrated circuits are the basis for computer
processing, it was an observation on the possible growth in computer processing speed. The
doubling of capacity every two years has since then happened, up until the summer of 2015,
when it was revised down to doubling every two and a half years. Moore's Law is used as
historical proof, future belief and future expectation, all in one, for the rate of change in the IT
industry. Moore's Law is a common reference point within the industry and sets an
expectation of what rate of change is considered fast, namely anything higher than the
exponential increase of Moore's Law. This sets higher expectations of speed compared to
most other contexts. The association between information technology and speed has also
meant that the spread of the technology into people's everyday lives has brought with it
similar expectations of speed and the notion of speed as associated to progress and success to
people's daily lives (Zilber 2006:147f). This is not to say that this association originates only
in the IT industry, but it is particularly strong there.

In IT things happen and they do so quickly, so also at Klarna, which has led to speed
and a fast-changing world being paradigmatic truths at Klarna. Speed and change are spoken
about as constants in life and the world, and as such they are factors that always need to be
taken into account, but whose existence, cause or even form are not questioned. I would argue
this is not only the case at Klarna though. We see it in a variety of contexts in the
contemporary world, including academia and social life, where people feel time-poor and that
everything is changing rapidly (Boud, Cressey, and Docherty 2006:17; Brannen 2005:126).
Change is spoken about as constantly increasing and as a fundamental part of life, including
work. The feeling of constant and fast change produces the feeling that is quoted as the
section title, namely that "to stay put is to be left out" (Sennett 1998:87).

With speed being a paradigmatic truth comes the notion that it is good or even
necessary to be fast, making slowness and stillness inherently negative features or practices.
Where Sennett calls it being "left out" (1998:87), at Klarna the most common phrasing was
"being stuck", which I heard a fair few times during my fieldwork. It often came up during
discussions about different options to pursue and where the participants in the discussion had
all made their positions clear and nobody seemed to be about to change their minds.
Mentioning 'being stuck' often preceded a suggestion to move ahead with any of the options
with the, sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit argument that "any option is better than
being stuck". This usage of words and meaning echoes an implied meaning in Sennett's quote
above, namely that change is valuable in itself and does not need to be aimed at a specific
goal. This runs somewhat counter to the notion of work time as supposedly emphasising purposefulness mentioned earlier. As in the quote we here find change represented as being about the desire, or need, for change itself, rather than for a specific purpose. Thus turning change into something that is about moving away from something, whether a time or a place or something else, rather than moving toward something.

The quote from Sennett in the previous section is also about the consequences of this fast-changing world, namely that it has become impossible to stay in the same place or do the same thing over a longer period of time (Sennett 1998:22). This is certainly not a new idea, already in the 5th century BCE the Greek philosopher Heraclitus is quoted saying “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man”. Despite the notion of the ever-changing world being old, we still talk about change as a sign of 'this age'.

We should be careful about this seeming inevitability of change and speed since presenting one's life and reality as such invokes the "highly symbolic nature of time poverty as a marker of having 'arrived', in the West in particular" (Brewis and Jack 2005:56). Accordingly, talking about oneself, or one's company, as operating in an environment defined by speed is actually a way of implicitly emphasising one's own success in being and succeeding in such an environment. From this angle, the constant invocation of speed within the IT industry can be viewed as more an attempt at self-positioning and self-representation in order to gain status than a description of one's surroundings.

The assumption of the world being fast-changing never seems to be questioned in business, but to what degree does that belief itself create the change that it presupposes? Elmholdt and Brinkmann talk about a "looping effect" (cf Hacking) which refers to how "[t]heories and ideas are closely connected to ways of understanding and acting." (Elmholdt and Brinkmann 2006:176). They are discussing such a looping effect in relation to the usage and importance of learning in personnel management over the past two decades, where an increase in academic research and theorising of learning partially preceded and thus may have caused an increase in attention to learning in the corporate HR practices. This attention then often reference the academic studies to explain the importance of learning, thereby creating a self-referential looping effect. What if we instead take Moore's Law as an example? It was formulated as an observation on the development of the previous ten or so years, with a
prediction that the pattern of those ten years would continue long into the future. As the observation came from a senior person within the industry, in fact one of the people in charge of making the development of semiconductors, to what degree are we seeing a self-fulfilling prophecy. We can call it 'path dependency' or 'observer bias', but the fact remains that making predictions on a result one is involved in creating will bias the end result. As such, setting insurmountable goals, as mentioned in the previous chapter, can then be seen as a way of producing that particular outcome as much as setting a goal for others.

In addition to the potential for a looping effect there is a trend of externalising the causes of change by whomever is talking. They can be attributed to 'the market' (Sennett 1998:22), to technology or customers (Brannen 2005:119) or to the business environment (Zilber 2006:149). If we combine a looping effect, self-fulfilling prophecies and finally externalisation of causality, then we end up in a mental place where we believe the world works a particular way because academics have theorised it as such, authority figures have proclaimed it to be so and the causes for it are beyond our control. Accordingly we end up in a situation where, as Zilber argues, it is the symbolic power of the concept of speed that is important, more so than any 'objective' characteristics of it in the contemporary context (Zilber 2006:149). This causes what Brannen refers to as the 'extended present' (cf Nowotny) where she argues that the extended present:

"leaves little time or space to contemplate what lies beyond the present. It not only stops people from imagining the future; it stops them from doing anything about it or creating changes in the future." (Brannen 2005:116-117)

If we cannot conceive of how to change the future, is it any wonder that being fast has become such an important characteristic in the contemporary workplace. If change is inevitable and we cannot control it, then all we can do is try to determine some (any) direction and try to move in that direction as fast as possible, since standing still is seen as the surest possible way of being left behind.

6.2 *Yak shaving* and the production of 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' work

We have seen that speed is an imperative at Klarna and in the wider economic context in which Klarna operates, but how is this operationalised in the daily work of the software developers. This is what we shall turn to now and what we find is that speed becomes prioritisation; it becomes a question of not doing unnecessary work in order to save time and thus gain speed. Worth noting is how the avoidance of unnecessary work is an central part of Lean, which we saw in chapter three plays a significant role at Klarna.
During one of the morning standups with the Butler team, Tomas was talking about a work task that he was going to work on during the day. In so doing he mentions in passing another small task he has to do, which causes a discussion.

Tomas: I'm going to start working on this task now, but first I just need to check in with Hampus [working in another team] and see if the fix I provided for them yesterday worked out.
Peter: Do you need to check in with them? If it doesn't work, surely he will get in touch.
Tomas: But I want to check in and make sure everything worked out well. It won't take long and it's better to check and not just assume.
Peter: But is it really necessary?

A couple of other team members weighed in and the end result was that several of them concluded it was unnecessary to check back in. Even though they felt it would have been a nice thing to do, but as it would take time from getting more important things done it was deemed unnecessary work. In this manner, certain kinds of work are externalised by being considered unnecessary and it can be questioned what is being externalised and thereby lost in this decision.

Speed, or being fast, can mean a great many different things. "[O]ne cannot say what a word means apart from how it is used, or what it is used to say" (Cruikshank 1999:21). So what does speed mean in this context and how is it practiced? One of the foremost ways of being fast at Klarna was to not do things that are not absolutely necessary to do. There is a constant attention to, and distinction between 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' work tasks, as exemplified above. Software development consists to a large extent of tasks where the exact work required for the task cannot be exactly pre-determined (Rennstam 2007:12f). Such development work is in fact often described as problem solving, in that there is generally a clear goal, for example developing a certain functionality to be added to the system, but with a fairly open-ended idea of how to achieve it. This open-endedness also means that no one task is the same as another, as each requires at least tweaking of existing solutions, if not the creation of a completely new one to achieve whatever goal one has.

Imagine a checkout page for an online store. Adding a field to enable people to enter their mobile number to receive delivery notification by SMS might sound pretty simple. The difficulty is not in adding the text box, but in for example programming what forms of content the text box should accept, i.e. what will be recognised as a valid mobile phone number.
Should the country code be accepted or not and if so how should people write it? Do you need to programme it to allow the usage of spaces when writing the number? If so will you need to re-format the number when the number will afterwards be integrated into whatever customer database you have? As the database is where personal data will be connected to the specific order and coordinated with delivery information being sent from the supplier to that database. These are only some of the questions that will need to be figured out in order to actually develop a new function, even something as small as a text box for mobile phone numbers.

As such, software development is not predictable or routine work. Not being routine work makes it very difficult to optimise in the manner one might optimise repetitive tasks as the contents of the tasks is less clear (Alvehus and Kärreman 2007:456). If it is harder to optimise the execution of tasks, then becoming more selective about what tasks will be done at all makes sense. What can be determined and decided on publicly and collectively also matters. Knowledge work is more oblique in that the activity of working is not visible, making it less controllable from the outside (Alvehus and Kärreman 2007:456ff). Visibility is therefore something which is actively produced in the form of IT tools and physical whiteboards where stickers represent all work tasks that the team is working on and will need to work on in the near future. In the absence of visibility within such a work task, which tasks someone works on becomes more controllable via such methods as standup meetings, discussed in the following chapter.

In this 'hurried and ever-changing' world there always seems to be a gap between what you want to do, what you have time to do and what you absolutely need to do. This grey area is where priorities are made. In software development the result is that the "discrepancy between the requirements of the time plans and the perceived possibilities is thus what lies behind the constant need for 'making priorities'" (Rennstam 2007:157). As there is never enough time to do everything, you need to prioritise and in so doing producing the categories of 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' work. This justifies the externalisation of certain work tasks as they are deemed less valuable and unnecessary, such as checking in with the people you helped the day before. These kinds of judgements take place all day every day in development work. Not prioritising strictly enough or with enough focus can lead to yak shaving.

The term yak shaving comes up every now and then. It means getting stuck into fixing some small problem that is seemingly unrelated to the actual task one is doing, but that
could eventually, after several repetitions, lead to solving the actual task (‘Yak Shaving’ 2016). The expression comes from the idea that trying to fix a tangle in the fur of a yak by cutting or shaving it off will inevitably lead to having to shave it all off, as one tangle leads to the next which leads to the next and so on until you realise that there is no fur not entangled in the rest. In software development you encounter this issue when there is a need to go in and add to or modify old code for a new function. If you then realise that the old code is not very good it may be tempting to try and fix it, a process called re-factoring. Doing so would improve the quality and make it easier to implement whatever changes are needed, but will also take time. The question is also what part of the code you re-factor, as you rarely work with only a small isolated bit of code, thus the risk of ending up re-factoring more and more of the code, or shaving more and more of the yak. Yak shaving was for example brought up during the 360-meeting that I described in chapter four. Johannes was declaring that he is happy to pair with Serge because he feels more productive. The reason he feels more productive is because Serge keeps him on-track and prevents him from "getting stuck into re-factoring and ending up yak shaving all the time". Here, productivity and speed are brought together in the context of not doing unnecessary things. Being fast, and thus productive, is about sticking to the task at hand, rather than diverging into something that eventually would have a result. Keep in mind that yak shaving does not imply doing something useless or that will not serve any purpose at all. It means something that would take a lot of repetitive work to reach a desired result. The problem is not in a lack of productive outcome, it is the time taken to achieve that outcome that qualifies it as 'unnecessary' work.

In doing work that is not routine there is an inherent difficulty in speeding up the execution of an individual work task that we do not find in routine work. In combination with the feeling of an already high-paced work environment it becomes difficult to imagine the speeding up of individual work tasks. Speeding up by cutting things out thus becomes an obvious approach to increasing (the sense of) speed in doing work. It is making a virtue out of necessity as the old saying goes.

6.3 What about stress?

There is no doubt a focus on speed at Klarna, speed is important and it is noticeable, but this is far from unique to Klarna. Simultaneously with an increasing focus on speed and flexibility in work life, there has been critique of this focus leading to stress and other negative consequences. As such I was interested in observing whether stress would become apparent in
one way or another during my fieldwork. The result is that during my time there I hardly saw any signs of this stress. By this I mean both my subjective impression from spending time in the office and what people told me. People did not push each other to work faster or get frustrated by things taking time. There was little talk about hurrying for deadlines or employees increasing their work time unduly by skipping lunch, taking lunch at their desk or staying late in the office. On the other hand, there were hardly any long lunches or coffee breaks and people made sure they compensated for coming late or leaving early. It could be due to long-term stress being hard to see unless you know a person really well, or that the people I met were just good at hiding it. When I asked informants about my impression of the relative absence of stress they agreed that they did not feel stressed in most cases. A few of them pointed out that it had not always been the case though; that a couple of years ago the work environment was much more stressed. My findings are particularly interesting as qualitative studies of what is sometimes called the 'new economy' mostly find stress, increasing intensity and other negative effects, whereas quantitative studies on the other hand tend to not find those things (Perrons 2005:59). As such it is interesting that I find the opposite of what I 'should' find. Namely that having done qualitative research I find attitudes and feelings that definitely describe a certain intensity of work, but do not describe stress as a significant part of their work.

There are some indicators that could explain the relative absence of stress at Klarna, even in this rather high-paced working environment. The first of them is multi-tasking, which has gone from being uncommon in industrial production to very common, and highly valued, in service- and knowledge-work, to once again being something that people are starting to avoid (at least in theory). In business the latter is partially due to the influence of Daniel Kahneman's book *Thinking, fast and slow* (2011) in arguing that multitasking does not actually make work happen faster. What multitasking can do is contribute to producing the sense of an 'extended present' which was mentioned earlier in this chapter.

"With increasing pressure upon employees to engage in multiple work tasks simultaneously, time is fragmented and is experienced as ‘speeded up’ so that tomorrow never seems to arrive" (Brannen 2005:114)

Brannen argues that the practice of multitasking in fact changes one's perception of time and one of the effects of this sense of time is increased levels of stress. In the Engineering teams there is not very much multi-tasking, in fact avoiding multitasking is in fact seen as a generally positive value, meaning that most of the time spent working their energy and
attention is focus on one task at a time. This sequential arrangement of work tasks creates a more coherent sense of time. Arranging their work sequentially is promoted by how they structure their work as the Agile methods they use explicitly state that tasks should be finished before starting on a new one. Thereby preventing the tendency which Brannen notes of "people [packing] more and more into their lives in a nonlinear way so that they are constantly integrating different activities into present time" (Brannen 2005:116).

Another contrast between the stressful work and lives described by Brannen compared to my observations at Klarna concerns the role of individual versus collective work, or the presence or absence of social relations in and at work. At the workplace Brannen describes people work individually and most importantly they are held responsible for their work on an individual basis. This responsibility leads to the employee organising their work accordingly, that is both for themselves and by themselves.

"In managing their time, the working experience becomes individualized, leaving people in a state of uncertainty about what others may be doing." (Brannen 2005:116)

"In some work contexts, [...] the basis for the development of caring relations between workers is weakened through the intensification of work. As people spend less time in social interaction in the workplace and are treated individualistically, so workplace cultures generate feelings of individual insecurity." (Brannen 2005:118)

Avoiding such uncertainty, and the stress it causes, is at Klarna based on the organisation of work into teams. Within the team there is a different experience, of a collective sense of work and time. Meaning that even intensive work does not weaken social relations, but rather strengthens them, as the work is what joins the collective of the team together. Brannen contrasts the individual commodification of time with a "moral economy of time" in which "time ought to be given freely and should not be costed or measured." (Brannen 2005:117). The closer social relations of a team may increase the moral aspects of work time, over the commodified aspect and thus be a factor in preventing stress in and about work.

Hand in hand with the issue of individual versus collective work is how individualised work correspond with greater feelings of both autonomy and responsibility.

"In this stretched-out present, individuals seem to act autonomously; at least they have little sense of being externally controlled." (Brannen 2005:116)

Rather than feeling like a stressful job meant being controlled by the employer or managers, Brannen's informants felt like they had the autonomy to act independently and in fact had the
responsibility to do so. This combination of autonomy and responsibility caused the feeling of being in control themselves, rather than being externally controlled (Brannen 2005:122). This mirrors the view of employees at Klarna very well. They feel that they have autonomy in their work and thus feel enabled. The feeling of lack of control, and stress, in Brannen’s case study was rather attributed to the lack of boundaries and thus the endlessness of work and one's responsibilities (Brannen 2005:122).

6.4 Doing the right things

Speed is produced by means of prioritisation as we have seen. Consequently being fast becomes making constant decisions on what is 'the right thing' to do at any given time. That an employee is fast means rather different things depending on the context. With manual labour it means having the muscle memory to do a physical routine as quickly as possible without making mistakes. In knowledge work it means having the knowledge and experience to not have to think too much about it, again without making mistakes. In software development, being quick means having the professional judgement, often based on experience as we saw in the previous chapter, to know what is needed for work and what cannot be left out of it, without making mistakes. It is having the knowledge to make correct judgements on what is necessary and what is unnecessary tasks to complete in order to achieve whatever is requested. It is the ability to judge what is 'the right things' to do and not do.

When 'doing the right thing' counts as speed, then quality for example can be re-framed as being important because of its importance in maintaining or increasing speed. This is in fact a common argument with regards to quality work in software development. One of the central practices for ensuring quality in software is to search for faults in newly written software code, which is what constitutes 'testing'. It is considered good to test new software as soon as possible in order to find faults as "early" as possible. Finding faults quickly makes them faster to fix, which makes the overall time for the development faster. Thus doing work of high quality is motivated by speed.

This correlation is not absolute though, there is a constant balancing between when the speed gained by certain quality work is or is not compensated for by the time taken to do the quality work. One such discussion took place during a Koala team retrospective where they were focusing on pair programming specifically. In the discussion on pair programming, mob programming came up. Mob programming is basically the same as pair programming,
only with more than two people sitting together working on one work item together. In the earlier part of the meeting all the team members present had talked about and agreed on how important they considered pair programming to be and all the benefits it has. In an exercise they all rated pair programming as something that is good to do and although they do it, they all wanted to do it even more. When mob programming was brought up though the tenor of the discussion changed somewhat in that it suddenly turned much more ambivalent. Suddenly they did not all agree that it was a good practice, despite pair and mob programming being so similar. Instead there were only a couple of individuals who felt mob programming was a good continuation and complement to pair programming, while another few individuals felt that it would risk "slowing them down" too much compared to its' benefits. The latter deployed the importance of speed as an argument against mob programming, despite agreeing to it being in favour of pair programming. Johannes, who was in favour of mob programming, pointed out that exact issue, when stating that "mob programming gets a lot of the same criticism that pair programming got a decade ago". Also nicely using temporality to imply that as the view on pair programming has changed, so will the opinion on mob programming. As all those present were in favour of pair programming, the opinion changing to a more positive one would be seen as a developmental progression. As such, so would a critical opinion on mob programming be construed as old-fashioned and conservative, an absolute no-no in this industry and company.

When the 'extended present' was brought up earlier in this chapter it was used to illustrate the immediacy and focus on the present that can be seen in the IT industry and Swedish society as a whole. The 'extended present' is here understood as limiting people's ability to think and act with a long-term perspective in mind and also bringing feelings of powerlessness associated with this lack of strategic agency (Brannen 2005:114). In the previous section we saw some practical reasons why despite working under conditions of 'the extended present' the stress associated with it does not appear. If we turn to look at it at a more abstract level what we find is that what limits its effect is the imperative to make decisions and "move forward" that came up in every discussion where there was a potential decision to be taken and uncertainty about what was the better option of the available ones.

In the Butler team they had quite a few discussions on how they should structure their work in order to best serve their customers, i.e. the rest of the Engineering department teams. They did a survey to get a better idea of which of their services were most appreciated
and which were causing the most problems. At its most fundamental, the discussions concerned whether they should focus on providing a more standardised service to all the teams and ensure this standard worked really well, or if they should work more with each individual team and provide services directly to each team and spend less effort on the general service. Each person in Butler had their own view, some stronger than others, and each based on their personal experiences, in their current role or from previous jobs. In the middle of a meeting discussing how they would like to work, Peter stated:

- But, how do we know we are doing the right thing? Or how do we know that what we are suggesting we do will actually be useful?

The answer was, after a bit of mumbling, was that:

- Well, we don't know for sure, so we'll just have to try it then. And if it doesn't work, we try something else.

In this, and many other situations, what happens is that motion itself is used to "suddenly suspend reality" (Sennett 1998:88). Motion, change, and thus speed becomes the answer to unknowable situations. Instead of letting fear of failure make everything stop, that fear is instead avoided by constant movement, in the belief that moving is always better than standing still even in the face of uncertainty.

6.5 **In conclusion**

Efforts to 'do the right thing' at work constitute a significant portion of the construction of speed at Klarna. In an industry where work tasks are complex and hard to visualise, prioritising between work tasks becomes the means by which speed is generated. In this manner speed is becomes a question of which work to do and which to exclude, more than about how work is done. The designation of certain kinds of work as contributing to speed thus becomes a question of whether it will be done at all or not. As speed is one of the primary motivators at Klarna due to its paradigmatic status in the IT industry as a whole. Working fast in a socially dense setting, as a team can be, combined with the avoidance of multi-tasking makes stress a much smaller feature at Klarna than might be expected in such a speed-focused environment. While teamwork may decrease stress it increases social control and that is what the next chapter will look at.
Chapter 7 Collegial control - power relations at work

Discussing feedback we have seen how central peer relations and assessment are in producing the work environment at Klarna. Furthermore we saw how recruitment and socialisation produces certain employee subjectivities. Finally, in the previous chapter we saw the organising role speed has with regards to work. In this the final ethnographic chapter, we turn to the issue of how peer relations between colleagues are deployed as a means of corporate control.

Arriving in the office around half past eight I put my bag under my desk and take out my laptop, connecting it to the power cable. I say good morning to those Butler team members already present and exchange a few words with Leandro. I sit down and open the laptop and start checking my email inbox. A few more team members drop in the minutes tick by and eventually someone stands up and asks if it is not time to start the standup. We are still missing two team members and Johanna mentions that Tomas had a doctor's appointment and would be arriving later. Marius is not there yet though and it is suggested that we wait a few minutes and check the team chat channel to see if he has written anything about getting delayed for work. He had in fact written about having problems with traffic and warning us he might be a few minutes late, but arrives as Johanna tells us this.

As everyone is now accounted for we stand up and amble to stand around the whiteboard placed parallel to the team desks in the open plan office. Once we have all gathered around the whiteboard Peter starts by pointing to the topmost sticker in the 'Ongoing'-column of the board and asks whose sticker it is and Leandro briefly explains that he has been working on it, with some help from Johanna. They got quite a bit done, but there is some work left to do and they expect to complete it before lunch today. Peter continues by talking about the sticker below which is now 'done' and Peter moves it to the 'Done'-column before moving on to the next sticker. It proceeds in this manner through all the stickers on the board until we, almost twenty minutes later, are finished and split up to go back to our desks and work.

There are two routines that all employees participate in daily, with only the rare exception, one is lunch and the other is the morning standup meeting. The daily standup meeting is held each morning in all teams and I would argue it is one of the foremost framing
devices for work at Klarna. It exemplifies how control is exercised within the teams, between colleagues as peers and how power and control are configured in particular ways within the framework of "autonomous teams" that Klarna uses. To gain an insight into how power and control operates within the teams at Klarna I will start with a discussion on power as a concept. This will be followed by three sections covering standup meetings, pair programming and metrics, where each section will highlight specific aspects of the power configuration observed within the Engineering department at Klarna.

7.1 What is power - power as productive

Power is a concept with a history and the amount of different definitions could fill a dictionary by itself (e.g. Dahl 1957; Foucault 1995; Hobbes 1968; Lukes 1974). Despite this, power is rarely mentioned explicitly in organisational theory and in particular management studies, where instead control, steering and management are the terms of choice. The consequence is that theories of power are less present and the meaning of power is taken for granted. In studies of organisations power is generally assumed to mean something along the lines of conventional definitions of power, as "the capacity of individuals to exert their will over others" (Buchanan & Badham in Huzzard 2004:353). Such a definition presuppose a causal effect by one party on another party, but additionally assumes an opposition between voluntary and coercive, with exercised power seen as a coercive, and thus negative, force (Cruikshank 1999:31f). There has been extensive critique of this view on power, for example in its focus on individuals, that one's will is known and that power is intentional and is assumed be executed in action, rather than non-action (Huzzard 2004:354). When thinking about power, even after reflecting on the various definitions there are and their various components, it is easy to fall back on the notion of power as coercion. Seeing power as coercion will disable us from seeing the productive and positive force that power can be. Consequently we may fall into the trap of taking the binary opposition of agency/freedom versus repression/domination for granted (Cruikshank 1999:23), where power is seen as a means of the latter to limit, or completely prevent, the former.

What role does power play at Klarna then? At Klarna power is spoken about in terms of autonomy, that is the ability to decide for oneself. Thus power is conceptualised with emphasis on power over self, externalising the existence of power and control between and over other individuals. The emphasis on autonomy comes from a particular historical context within the business world. It comes from a background of conventional, hierarchical
bureaucracy where power-relations are highly formalised along the lines of the formal organisational structure. Associated with this form of organisation is also the managerial focus on behaviour as the origin of productivity in employees, meaning managerial control was directed at such things as time keeping (clocking in and out), optimisation of the manual execution of work tasks (high task specialisation) and more. These control measures are still common in low-skilled and low-status jobs and often go hand in hand with outsourcing of work and rationalisation of staff numbers. It is sometimes referred to as the 'low road' response to the globalisation of the economy in organisational management (Boud, Cressey, and Docherty 2006:4-6). The increase in service- and knowledge-based work in the latter part of the 20th century made the focus on behaviour less productive as doing such work is rarely constituted by visible labour. Thus the managerial focus shifted towards the internal rather than behavioural features of employees and feelings, attitude and motivation became important (Fleming 2013:62). Therefore the corresponding 'high road' response to the globalisation of the economy entails flatter and more decentralised organisations with skilled and engaged employees (Boud, Cressey, and Docherty 2006:4-6). The importance of engagement came from the realisation that rather than focusing on forcing as much of the potential output from individual employees out, it was more productive to make employees want to produce as much output as possible (Sewell 1998:401). One of the factors that was revealed to affect motivation was autonomy. In these new management configurations power is thus exercised by means of autonomy in order to produce highly engaged employees leading to increased productivity.

Autonomy is defined in a particular way at Klarna, namely by focusing on the how to do work, not what work to do and by assigning autonomy to teams, not individuals. The official discourse at Klarna concerns 'autonomous teams' which in practice means teams are given output-based goals and a large degree of freedom in how to reach them. This freedom is both a condition for and on condition of work being done at a satisfactory pace and level. The line between what and how with regards to work is at times indistinguishable as there are a number of practices, or how's, that are considered pre-requisites for doing good enough work. As such, the teams decides on how to work with feedback and team values, but if individuals, or a team, is considered to not engage with these practices enough or at all, then managers take note and demand action. It is a balance between push and pull, between encouraging employees to be proactive with work and demanding them to be if it does not happen 'by itself' and it produces a context in which employees feel autonomous, but nevertheless act in
line with managerial expectations. How this is produced through various daily work practices is what the rest of the chapter will show.

7.2 Standup meetings - peer control and visibility

Processes work best when they "make individuals 'want' what the system needs in order to perform well" (Lyotard in McKinley and Starkey 1998:3). What does the process of standup meetings make the employees want?

As we saw in the beginning of this chapter every morning of every working day each team has a 'standup' meeting. It is a short (15 minutes) meeting where all the team members gather together, standing up, to go through the work currently happening within the team. The meeting takes place in front of a display, often a whiteboard, showing the team's work items. The purpose of these standups is a mix of task assignment and information sharing. It is where the completion of tasks is reported, where problems are brought up, where people make decisions on what to work on next, or offer to join on a task someone else is already working on. Standup meetings are almost always held in the mornings and having the standup at this time makes it the collective start of the working day for the team. It becomes the common gathering point for the team, regardless of whatever plans they have for the day and any absence or late-coming is very noticeable as the entire team is gathered. Missing the standup is also inconvenient as it hinders the coordination of that day's work tasks. On the other hand the presence of the board makes it easier to catch up for someone arriving late as it shows the updated status of work.

The standup is one of the official 'ceremonies' of agile product development, the others being planning/estimation, demo and retrospective. Combined they are meant to be the steady points setting a regular cadence for the team's work process as one "focus of software design methods rests on making work predictable in relation to timing" (Mackenzie and Monk 2004:101). In order to have flexibility though these meetings need to be held often, thus having the meetings daily creates a particular rhythm of work. It reinforces the working day as the basic time unit for work. For example, several teams measure the time it takes for an item to go from not yet started to finished, the 'cycle time' for an item. These are measured in days. This is in line with stated aims of both agile product development and Klarna Engineering management, to separate work into smaller item. Having a daily rhythm sets the expectation on what is a reasonable size for a 'small item', i.e. it should most appropriately be
measured in days, not weeks and not hours. The balance of how often to hold the standup, and how much time they should take, is also related to the discussion from the previous chapter about 'doing the right things'. It is at the standup where most discussions and decisions about what is the 'right thing' to work on happens. Consequently standups are undoubtedly important, but they are also seen as "taking time away from work" as I heard several individuals express themselves whenever a standup started to run over. Talking about what work to do is not seen as doing work, even as it enables the work to happen.

The standups are held around the team whiteboard which consists of stickers for each separate work task and whether it is finished, in progress, or waiting to be started. On those in progress there is some kind of marker to indicate who is working on it.

The whiteboard is not only a physical piece of furniture that people gather around for the standup, it is also the basis for the meeting structure of the standup. Using standup meetings and a whiteboard like this is called kanban and is a method related to Lean production methods. The standard procedure when working this way is to go from right to left, i.e. starting from what has been finished to ongoing to not yet started. Butler also chose to have rows where work tasks were thematically arranged. Thus the meeting was supposed to proceed from right to left in the columns and from the top down in each column. Centering the meeting process so very clearly around the physical layout of the board made it very easy to see which item was due to be brought up next. Nevertheless, in the beginning it was common for people to follow the habit from before, where each person covered all their tasks at once and then moved on to the next person. The presence of the board made it visible to all
those present what the 'correct' speaking order was, in consequence the whole team actively participated in maintaining that order, often with explicit reference to the physical board.

So when Anders after talking about item 1 started to drift over into talking about item 2, located in a different column, Peter (or Andreas or someone else) would interrupt after a moment saying "But Anders, that [points to item 2 on the board] is not where we are at the moment. Let's wait with that until we get there." The talk would then move back to the next sticker in turn. In this way the physical board became the basis for a temporal meeting process, where following the meeting process meant going through the items on the board, following a set path on the board and dealing with whatever stickers were placed along that path in the order they appeared. The existence and layout of the board produced a certain behaviour in the team, of both following and making others follow the whiteboard structure.

The purpose of the standup is a mix of information sharing and task assignment, but it also works as a check-up on the work in the team and of the individual team members, as everyone provides an update on what they have worked on, how it is going and what they will be working on. As much as the meeting is about control over work tasks, it is just as much control over the people in the team. Even though the board is focused on the tasks, each team member has a number of tags with their name on, to show which tasks they are working on. This makes it obvious when someone's tag is not on the board, and thus supposedly not working on any task. There were several occasions where towards the end of the standup it was pointed out that a team member did not seem to have any task assigned according to the board. This was always phrased as an implied question to the person in question, requiring that person to account for why their name was not on the board. The common answer was that the work they were doing should not be on the board for some reason and sometimes this was taken as valid, for example when sitting working with another team for a few days. Other times it led to discussion as to whether the work they were doing should in fact be on board to "make it visible" to the rest of the team.

There is an ongoing struggle between using the board as the ideal, a model to which the actual work should be correspond versus using it as a representation of the actual work. In other words, should the board correspond to the work or the work correspond to the board? Unexpected work tasks that turned up highlighted this disagreement on a regular basis. On one occasion when such an item came up the discussion went as follows:
Tomas: [holding a new written sticker in his hand] I got asked to do this thing so I'm just going to put this up here as well [in the ongoing tasks column].
Peter: Wait, no, shouldn't that go in the backlog [work to be done] column first.
Tomas: But I'm going to work on it today.
Peter: But should you? There are already items in ongoing column, shouldn't they be finished first, before starting on something new?

These discussions were based in disagreements on what the purpose of the board was. What Peter is saying is that what is on the board is prioritised and anything that needs to be added should follow the process displayed on the board, namely that all items start in the Backlog-column. Once there it can be compared to the other tasks there and they will jointly decide, or at least consent to, which items to start next. For Tomas on the other hand, the board was a means to visualise the work and its progress, not control it. With that approach, adding the sticker with the new task to the board was important as the board is meant to show what everyone in the team is working on, and he was going to be working on that task. Is the board showing or telling you what work to do.

Visualisation is an important part of several popular management approaches, e.g. Agile, Lean, Kanban. It is described as a way of making work and the workplace more open and transparent, and as helping people work together. Whilst represented as a means of 'knowing what goes on and what others are doing' it always goes both ways, leaving oneself and one's own work open to others. Exemplified by people having their name tags associated to work items, making the person responsible for that item at the following standup/s, until it is completed. Whiteboards, are placed to be visible for people passing by as well as the team themselves. People outside the team are supposed to be able to check the board and see what the team is working on, but I never saw anyone not related to the team actually do so. This potential for visual supervision correlates to Foucault's idea of Panopticism (Foucault 1995:195f).

The Panopticon is the architectural figure, a prison layout, of a social configuration where "the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded" (Foucault 1995:197). The physical arrangement is such that whilst there is a constant potential for surveillance, the surveyed party cannot tell when that potential is being used, rendering power both visible and unverifiable (McKinley and Starkey 1998:2). To what extent can we see this dynamic being present in relation to the whiteboard displaying the work? There is a stated intention that the whiteboard is there
partially in order to enable anyone in the office to go and see what any others are working on. The constant presence of the board and the inability to know if anyone will look at it both speak in favour of the analogy to the Panopticon. This can also lead to the internalisation of control that is an important part of Panopticism. On the other hand, the power of the Panopticon is based on the notion of one-way visibility (McKinley and Starkey, 1998:8), which is not the case here where anyone can go to any other's whiteboard. As such, there is not the imbalance inherent in the surveillance of the Panopticon. Also, for surveillance to 'work' it needs to have the ability of rendering the object of surveillance understandable and here an ambivalence of the whiteboard appears. Using a whiteboard is meant to render the work 'visible', but to whom? As each team does work separately, what is written on the stickers on the whiteboard is rarely comprehensible to anyone outside the team.

"[T]he engineers are protected by an impenetrable vernacular, and by the necessity of contextual knowledge for making comments about work" (Rennstam 2007:203).

Consequently, even though the work is supposedly visible to anyone as it is displayed openly on a whiteboard within their open-plan office, in practice the display is not rendered readable, at least to its content. What is readable is that there is a board and it may be possible to ascertain that it is in use, but nothing more detailed than that, unless you ask a member of the team. Thus turning the invisible power potential very visible and in need of translation, rather reversing the power dynamics of the situation.

Jens Rennstam, based on research conducted among hardware engineers within a large Swedish engineering firm, argues that 'peer reviewing' is the most common form of control in technical development work. By peer reviewing he means a practice "where one or more members of [a] community discuss, scrutinize and evaluate the work of another member or members" and that it takes place on "an operative level" of work (Rennstam 2007:191). He goes on to argue that it is a particularly effective form of control because it is unobtrusive in that it does not appear to the individuals involved as control (2007:199). Due to being unobtrusive it does not evoke critical judgement to the same degree as do methods that appear more obvious to the employees. Rennstam further argues that a reason for why it appears unobtrusive is due to its exclusive focus on work, that is what is being reviewed or assessed is work that has been done, that is being done or that is planned for, not the individuals actually doing the work (Rennstam 2007:199). This alienation of the worker from their work has a long history, starting with industrialisation and the introduction of capitalism according to
Marx (Fleming 2013:60). As we have seen from previous chapters in this thesis, regarding feedback, this is not the case at Klarna, where the individual employee is very much subject to peer review, both alongside and separately from their work. Despite this difference, peer review is not seen as an obtrusive form of control by the employees at Klarna. Where Rennstam suggests that peer review of the individual could be perceived as more obtrusive and therefore also meet more resistance, there is precious little evidence of that at Klarna. I would argue that the difference is in what is perceived as the legitimate subject of corporate control and that at Klarna the conception of the individual as an employee includes more spheres of life than was the case in Rennstam's field. In the company Rennstam did his research it was only the work, not the employees that were subject to peer review, at Klarna this has expanded to include the employees as human beings and this is a process that runs through recruitment, socialisation and as we see here, work practices. It is not only at Klarna we see this expansion of corporate control into spheres of life previously seen as private. Fleming for example sees it as a new "corporate philosophy [which] attempts to include the 'whole person' in the labour process" (Fleming 2013:58). Examples of which we have seen previously in this thesis.

7.3 Pair programming and teamwork - bringing control closer

In the previous section we saw how the organisation of work has made work, as a process, visible to the whole team. This visibility, or opening up and laying bare, of work happens not only at the daily standup meeting, but also takes place in the practice of doing the work. The prime example of this is pair programming. Pair programming means two people (if they are more than two it is called mob programming) sitting together and programming on one computer. Two people on one computer means one of them holds the control, in the shape of the mouse and keyboard. In both the Butler and the Koala team pair programming was seen as a desirable practice and was actively encouraged in the morning standups and other situations. As happened in one standup Leandro stated that he would begin a new task and then turned around to ask who wanted to join him in working on it. If Leandro had not asked someone else may have posed the question and asked if they could join in the work. Or if neither of those occurred, someone else in the team may pose the question of who else would join Leandro for the task. It did not happen with all work tasks, but certainly for the majority of them. From this we see how colleagues are not only involved in determining which task you work on during any given day and follow-up how it goes during the standup, often you will be
doing the work with someone else. Thus colleagues are made an inherent part of each others' work.

There are multiple reasons for pair programming, with the two most often stated reasons being quality and learning. Quality because "two sets of eyes are better than one set" as Daniel, one of the managers, expressed it once. Learning because it provides the opportunity to either learn by working with another person and getting another perspective on the issue or by working with someone more knowledgeable on the program, language or system you are working with. There are other reasons for pair programming as well. The learning that pair programming provides makes the skills of people in a team more overlapping, resulting in a team where each member can more easily replace each other if needed. Overlapping skill-sets create flexibility, but also replaceability as the individuality of skills decrease. Another reason is that by working so closely together the relationship between the team members are strengthened, as they spend more time together and do more work jointly. In chapter four I mentioned how the team members say they rely heavily on each others' assessment of their own work. An important reason they do so and can trust each others' assessments is because they have seen what the person whose assessment they received is capable of with regards to work. They have seen that person work, in detail, over some period of time as part of pair programming with that individual. Since tasks take from a couple of hours up to a couple of days of full-time work it is not uncommon to work intensely with a colleague for a day or so on a regular basis, which affects the relationships formed between colleagues.

Where standups provides the team with insight on a high level into each individual's work, pair programming provides much more intimate insight into the work of a colleague. In the same way you get an insight into your colleagues work, so does your colleague get an insight into your work. Working that much with others means most of your work is scrutinised, often modified, analysed and at times discarded by a colleague as and when you do the work. There is no distance, neither in time nor space between the work and person being assessed and the assessment and assessor. This immediacy of peer review brings corporate control closer to the individual employee compared to more traditional work and management practices. The protection that distance can provide is therefore significantly reduced.
7.4 Metrics - vertical control and horizontal self-discipline

During my time at Klarna the Koala team were just starting to use a set of metrics. Using here means the team lead would collate the data for the metrics and their data would then be comparable to both the other teams and to their own older data. Significant changes or disparities would presumable prompt concern and action, but as these metrics were introduced during the fieldwork they had not reached that stage by the time I finished my stay there. As such I am discussing the introduction of the metrics rather than their follow-up. The reason for starting using these metrics was that their managers asked all his teams, of which there were five, to measure five specific metrics and enter the data for those metrics into a central spreadsheet which was then used as the basis for a self-updating graph on the internal webpage for that section.

The measurements were brought in by Daniel, one of the section managers, after a re-organisation in which he became the manager of five teams. He started with three metrics, namely: cycle time which is the time a specific work item takes from start to finish; velocity which is the amount of work items finished per week; and definition of done which is a checklist for what is required of a work item before it is completed, for example types of testing. The final one is not a measurement actually, even though it was counted as one. It is more of a quality standard and the purpose of including it with the measurements was to both ensure that all Daniel's teams had one, but also to make them subject to change across his teams. Each of these metrics are commonly used in contemporary software development and thus familiar to all programmers. Daniel then added another two metrics: incident tracking which consisted of the number of incidents (which is a defined technical term) and uptime, that is the percentage of time that the system is up and running functionally. The metrics were discussed with the team leads for his five teams before being presented to all the five teams at a weekly standup meeting for their section.

The results of the measurements are displayed on an internal webpage (see figure).
On another webpage there was an explanation for all the metrics. The explanation covered the definition of the measurement, the purpose for using it and when and how the teams were expected to act on the information provided. The text on cycle time for example looked like this:

![Cycle time explanation](image)

Having a definition removes space for disagreement and provides the appearance of a straight-forward meaning attributed to the concept of 'cycle time', which a quick online search will tell you is not the case. While writing out the purpose ensures people are aware of the stated motives and reinforces the basis of those motives, as we see in the second bullet point where a secondary motivation is added.

Using metrics is an essential part of 'scientific management', also known as Taylorism, which sees management of people as a technical practice rather than a social one and makes that distinction in the first place. The purpose of scientific management was to "displace intuitive judgement with scientific assessment" (McKinley and Starkey 1998:10). The attempt to remove as much of the personal, relational and subjective practices of management have come to be criticised as it produces a highly regulated framework which some see as inhumane in its inflexibility and others see as unproductive, ironically for the same reason namely inflexibility. At Klarna the role of personal relationships and sociability is more important than formality and regulations and consequently the role of metrics is ambiguous. In my interview with Daniel, the manager introducing these metrics, he talked about the need of "having balanced objectives" to avoid too strict a focus on a specific metric. "Balanced objectives" referred to both the need to spread and balance between the different metrics, to avoid too much focus on just one of them, but also balance between the metrics and other ways of assessing work, such as feedback. The ambiguous attitudes were also found among the developers. Serge, one of the developers in Koalas, talked about not liking
"artificial measurements" of work as he felt they did not give an accurate picture of the quality of the work being done. Between the lines we find what Anders, in Butler, argued in a discussion about work methods, namely "if we don't measure, then how do we know if what we are doing is having an effect" juxtaposed with the uncertainty in any measurement's ability at representing reality as a whole.

Where standups and pair programming were examples of peer control, taking place horizontally within the team, metrics are a vertical control mechanism. At the same time, one should be careful in dividing vertical and horizontal control techniques as they co-exist in most practices. These metrics are undoubtedly vertical in originating from a line manager to his subordinate teams and employees and the results being reported in a way that the manager can check them. On the other hand, metrics such as these also produce horizontal control on two levels. Firstly, the metrics being used within five teams creates an opportunity for comparison between the teams. Indeed, one of the core strengths with using numbers is that they make easy comparison possible (Merry 2011:86f). Secondly, the metrics constitute a framework by which the team members will assess each other, similarly to the team values used in the team feedback meeting in chapter four. With measuring you draw attention to a phenomenon and as the team leader of the Koalas said when the uptime metric was introduced "now we need to pay attention to our uptime". Is the intention then that "organizational goals [are] transformed into personal goals; self-control supplementing - or replacing - organizational control." (McKinley and Starkey 1998). With the depth of social peer control that has been revealed these metrics will undoubtedly also be deployed as part of the peer interactions. Even though "engineers and their immediate managers are not helpless subjects to the objectives" (Rennstam 2007:185) or metrics they are nevertheless subject to them. As Rennstam argues employees can reframe the contents of such frameworks in a variety of ways, but they cannot completely opt out. Therefore they become subjects to these metrics in two ways, both as the subject being measured and compared, but also as subjects participating in the measurement of both themselves and each other (Cruikshank 1999:21f).

7.5 In conclusion

At Klarna autonomy is a central value, but as it is defined in terms of teams it produces a context in which individuals are tightly bound to their teams. Through a number of work practices teams in fact operate to lay bare individuals' and their work to the collectivity of the team. As such power is operationalised largely between peers, or colleagues, at Klarna. As
such employees become both agents of and subject to this form of corporate control. It is also a form of control that has a constant presence due to how integrated team members are in each others' work. Due to the framing of 'autonomous teams' that is used at Klarna, employees nevertheless feel autonomous in their execution of work.
Chapter 8 Post-production

Arriving at Klarna I was worried about employees being defensive about my presence and research, that doing research about them and their work would be considered intrusive. Instead I was met with openness and a pretty complete disregard for any sense of intrusion due to the research. It surprised me at the time, even as I was mostly grateful since it made conducting the research easier. Looking back at it now I read this openness as a part of the culture that prevails at Klarna, where you as an employee is subject to the gaze and assessment of your peers at work. From their point of view, what I did for my research was not so different from what they do as part of their work, that is observe and analyse their surroundings and in particular the people they most regularly interact with.

The primary purpose for a company within a capitalist economy is to make profit. One of the foremost means of making profit is to ensure the employees of the company are as productive as possible. Over the past few decades the techniques for ensuring employee productivity has changed from a concern with behaviours and rules to a focus on motivation and the inner lives of employees. In this paper I have, on the basis of my fieldwork at Klarna in the autumn of 2015, analysed how both inner lives and outer practices of employees are produced in line with corporate goals. It is a successful production considering the end result is an environment in which you have engaged employees who work hard and consider it both fun and largely of their own choosing. How does this environment come to work as it does? There are a number of structuring mechanisms that produce the result we have seen portrayed through the past hundred or so pages. The four themes, and thus chapters, were chosen because they are the most prominent when looking at this social context. They frame the significant issues related to work performance and how the discourse of work performance is constructed.

What we have at Klarna is a very actively produced corporate self-image where youth, hipness and success are given prominent places. This image plays a role in how employees come to see their work, workplace and themselves as able to make things happen. This view is further affirmed by the specific selection of employees, where only those who want it enough (a lot) and can fit criteria of official corporate discourse and technical knowledge displayed in an appropriately social way will be employed. The extensive recruitment process necessitates candidates making themselves into the kind of subjects, that
Klarna considers employable. In the recruitment, as well as in the work practices, there is a strong sense of following those who are at the forefront of creating 'best practice' within the software development industry. By portraying it as such, ideals and practices are motivated by reference to external parties and this externalisation contributes to the image of a company with a non-hierarchical structure, where employees are autonomous to a high degree. The feeling of autonomy is further strengthened as most control is exercised by peers in social interaction, making control social and horizontal rather than vertical based on formal authority.

This notion of autonomy is particularised to only cover certain issues, such as how to work with feedback, and to only cover the team as a collective, not the individual. Again externalising the authority within the company away from management and to the level of the team. Within the team the is a high level of formal and informal peer pressure. Formally through such channels as feedback, standup meetings and pair programming, all techniques within the workplace which subject employees to the viewing and assessment by their team mates. Informally, peer pressure is takes place in the socialisation at work, starting already as part of the recruitment process where you will meet both your future manager and at least one of your future team mates. How your portray yourself as a person, not just as an employee during the recruitment will be essential to whether you are hired or not. What you perform in the recruitment process will then follow you into employment, which means you need to live up to what you produced during the interviews. This entails making yourself a part of the team, but without only being a part of a team. You also need to be a proactive individual, pushing yourself and the rest of the team 'forward' (however defined).

It is not only work practices that are seen as originating outside of Klarna, so is the notion of the speed at which 'the world' is changing. Because of this ever-changing world nothing can remain the same, as it would then inevitably loose out and fail. This need for speed does not easily translate to doings work faster in software development work and indeed other forms of knowledge work. Hence speed needs to be produced in other ways than increasing the pace of repetition. What we see at Klarna is that speed is produced by means of prioritisation which divides work into 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' and any work categorised as unnecessary is simply not done. In practice then, speed is achieved by cutting out work. The stress often accompanying the focus on speed is somewhat mitigated by the creation of coherence through social relations within the team, where time and responsibility are
collectively held as well as through the avoidance of multi-tasking, which is known to increase the feeling of fragmentation of time.

As a social practice software development has a number of ritualistic elements which produce certain subjectivities. They entail a high level of active engagement with one's own and team mates' work performance through particular practices such as feedback in several different forms. Programmer subjectivity also draws on the production of a authentic interest in technology. One ritualistic element is the reference to speed which is ever-present and the need of which is never questioned. What it actually means in practice though, is not the idealised notion of change and improvement, but rather prioritisation between options, trying to determine value and cut out what is deemed less valuable and avoiding stress by constantly enabling and confirming that work is actually happening and thus 'moving forward'.

Implicit in all this is that the developers themselves are far from unaware of the structures I have written about. They would probably not agree with how important it has been argued to be through this thesis, but they know it is an intentional structure and a structure they themselves also actively participate in. By participating and incorporating themselves into these structures, employees internalise them and thus receive the benefits of the feelings of purpose and belonging a satisfying job can entail.

Thus we have seen how informal, social and peer relations in this context produce ways of working which are more engaged, for better and for worse. Showing a company and a set of employees who consider management of the Self as an accepted part of work management, which is an increasing trend in workplace management. In previous research this trend has largely been seen as an oppositional trend, driven by management and more or less resisted by employees in different ways. Through this thesis you see an example of how it can work in a workplace where it is not a conflictual part of work, but a taken-for-granted one. Hopefully it also shows some of the positive potential in this type of work, although it is certainly not without downsides. Doing such a study within an IT company carries an additional interest due to the indirect effects of the work. Investigating what is behind technology and the context in which it is produced is valuable considering how integral technology has become to all parts life for all of us. Equally important is looking at a growing sector of the economy, that employs more and more people and is becoming part of most types of employment in one way or another.
To conclude, as the interview with Brian, one of the senior managers in the Engineering department, was winding down I asked him if there was anything in particular that he was curious about finding out through my research and we ended up talking about my general impressions of the company and the employees, especially how they all seemed rather happy to be working there. He was, understandably, very happy about it as that had not been the general sentiment a year previously. As Klarna is a company that emphasises working hard and achieving against the odds I wondered out loud whether there was any danger in employees being content, if it could affect the work motivation negatively. His response was rather the opposite, namely:

"Once people are having fun and enjoying themselves and are happy, then you can get all serious. Because it's easier to go from that and say 'you know what guys, now we need to do this difficult thing'"

On other words, what we have here is a workplace where there is no contradiction between having fun and working hard. In fact they are seen as good complements to each other.

What we have seen in this thesis is the importance of the socio-cultural aspects of work in how that work is organised, motivated, performed and discussed. At Klarna, a company that can be described as a 'young and hip IT company', work performance is thus produced by means of peer control, feedback, avoiding 'unnecessary' work and social relations.
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