What is 'Everyday Life'?
An Exploration of its Political Connections.

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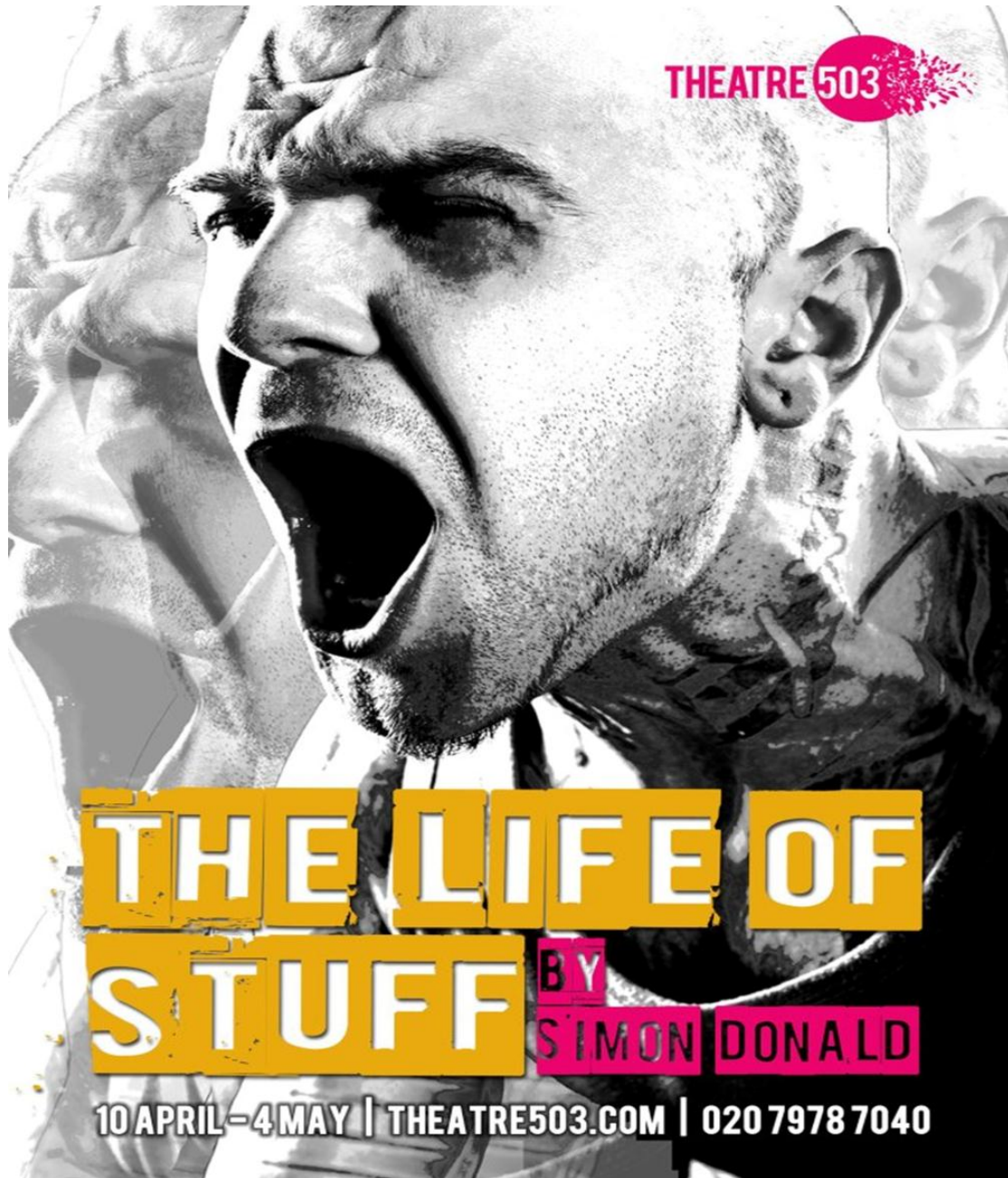**DBP/CBS, Denmark & Open University, England.**

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Abstract

The notion of 'everyday life' (EDL) has found renewed analytical purchase in recent years and has become a widely used term in explorations of social life, moving all the way from studies of the family to the financial system. But what exactly is EDL and how can we understand it? This paper undertakes a preliminary investigation into how the term has been interpreted in various literatures. There are a wide variety of analytical takes on EDL and the objective is to utilize this preliminary discussion to provide the intellectual resources to deal with its connections to politics and constitutionality in particular. Although the relationship between EDL and constitutionality might at first sight seem remote the argument is that there is an emerging constitutionalization of EDL that is heralding a potentially new form of citizenship amongst those subject to its strictures. Throughout the paper it is relationships operating in the imaginary that are stressed, contrasting this to a more normal emphasis on social relationships in the first instance.

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1. Introduction

In this paper I begin an exploration of the notion of 'everyday life'. This is mainly directed at the socio-political context for thinking about everyday life. In recent scholarly activity in political economy and institutional analysis the idea of everyday life has appeared as a significant element in investigations of how institutions and societies are thought to be configured and organized (eg. Martin 2002, Hobson & Seabrooke 2007, Langley 2009).

Two impulses drive this reappearance of everyday life (EDL) as a key approach in socio-political analysis.

First it speaks to a turn away from a 'top-down' political economy – where it is the macro setting of, and relationships between, the institutions of governance and regulation that occupy the centre stage – towards a more 'bottom-up' approach where the emphasis shifts to the ideas and practices of the everyday in institutional life as a site for exploring the nature of governance and regulation. This often involves a micro based investigation of both the discursive practices of the agents involved in, say, financial regulation --- the struggles and conflict between these for influence and authority; their ideas and ideologies (Park & Vetterlein 2010) – and the more mundane concrete mechanisms that articulate their calculations and interactions, organized around definite and practical settings like the office, the trading desk, the selling of products, etc. (Ho 2009, Riles 2010, Zaloom 2008, Svetlova 2012, Lopes 2013)[1]. This is thought to give a better or more authentic insight (or opens a neglected insight) into exactly how social interactions take place and how regulation, norm building and governance is formed or really works. A study of the micro everyday level reveals what the macro aggregated context serves to obscure. Indeed, a more radical claim is that this micro bottom up approach provides the key contours around which the macro aggregated settings are configured. It provides the proper basis for an understanding of the larger structures of governance and regulation, of institutional policy making and its implementation.

Second, EDL is associated with mechanism and practices: the materialist or 'practical turn' in analytical matters. Clearly this is closely linked to its bottom up characteristics. Studying from the bottom up involves investigations into the practices that articulate the everyday. Only a thin theorization is required before we can get into the mechanisms in play in any institutional or organizational context. So, in part the turn to the everyday also involves a turn away from elaborate theorization. It speaks to a modest encounter with theory and a preference for 'thick analytical description'. Such a 'political arithmetic' is theoretically parsimonious but empirically generous.

2. Getting into the Everyday

However, the everyday presents a problem because it is itself somewhat obscure and mysterious. Because it occupies an often hidden domain – precisely tucked away in the interstices of the commonplace and the taken-for-granted, articulated by the offhand remark and the cliché – its excavation is resistant to an easy interpretation. Thus if it is to be explored theoretically and given some analytical precision the idea of the everyday is much more problematic than it might at first seem. Subsequent sections outline in a preliminary manner how it has appeared in several literatures not all of which immediately address traditional political economy or institutional issues but which, nonetheless, provide the intellectual resources to undertake the task of specifying the contemporary 'politics of everyday life'.

In what follows I will argue that EDL is associated with the *practically given*-- with its appearances and its concrete settings -- but always registered through the 'imaginary'. This represents the analytical choice for the paper. There is a prodigious amount of historical work associated with EDL, particularly as it is represented through the discourse of sociology. However, the sociological aspects of EDL are downplayed here, though not completely ignored -- indeed, that would be impossible as well as intellectually indefensible. But it is the *imaginary dimensions* to EDL that are stressed instead. The 'imaginary' occupies a different analytical space to that of 'social relations', it is suggested. Of course they are not unrelated spaces, but the imaginary is about interpolating subjectivities and identities as a consequence of psychically formed relationships in the first instance not social ones. It is about the symbolic and fantasy, the will, significatory practices and an often mobilizatory 'hailing' into a subject position at the behest of the unconscious. This is in distinction to the hailing into subject and identity positions associated with social relations. Here these subjectivities and identities are a consequence of the positions occupied by agents set within the structure of their social or cultural relations. Ones' perspective on the world is a consequence of where one stands in relationship to others in a structure of relationships.

In part this emphasis on the imaginary is to try to redress an imbalance in studies of EDL and, indeed, in the analytical domain more widely. We live in a time when 'social constructionism' is rife and where social enterprise and social media are the ubiquitous formations of our modernity. And whilst I have nothing necessarily against social constructivism – when it is used sparingly and carefully -- it does tend to 'privilege the social' in analytical matters (eg., in the cases of 'the social-studies of this….' or 'the social-studies of that'…., etc.). 'Social relationships' are seen as the underlying determinant of all other relationships that are broadly associated with socio-political analysis. Nowhere is this more so than in contemporary approaches to the market and economics. "Analysis of the market mechanism needs to be firmly embedded in social relations" is a current strong refrain from this position. And that goes for all other aspects of what is termed society. But why privilege the social in this way? Although no doubt contentious, historically the category of 'society' was more a political construct that a straightforward social one. Each time 'society' has been constituted as an object of analysis – and with it 'social relationships'-- it was a political move that swept it into existence and propelled its advance (e.g., Donzelot 1994, Wickham 2013)[2]. The term 'society' represented a mechanism of governance (or perhaps of 'governmentality'): it was (and still is) part of the technique of power for governing a population. Thus this paper remains sceptical about the singular significance attributed to 'social relations' in the analysis of EDL. As a consequence, the voluminous sociological literature dealing with EDL is not the centre of attention here, though aspects of it are addressed in passing[3].

Everyday Life as a 'Residual'[4]

We can begin by reiterating that EDL in a colloquial sense is generally considered as the mundane of ordinary life: something not much reflected upon because it seems so obvious and familiar. In an analytical sense, however, this just means that it is something 'left out' of an account. It is a kind of residual. When a seemingly satisfactory 'structural' explanation has been offered there is always something either not fully explained or not relevant, and that is where 'EDL' lurks.[5] It is unexplored and unexplained, perhaps unrecognized because it does not enter the official or conventional frame of interpretation. It is a 'left over': a remainder (like a book that is remaindered, a film that goes straight to DVD) something that is a *remnant* (of its former self). So if we are to establish a different analytical frame there is a need to provide an account of it. This is the task set for the serious analyst of the everyday.

Everyday Life as 'Critique'

A second strong way EDL has entered the analytical domain is for it to be considered as a primary aspect of the practice of critique. For Henri Lefebvre, for instance, the task set for his

'critique of everyday life' is to bring this back into the orbit of Marxism (2008, *Critique of Everyday Life*). He wants to provide an account of this as an arena that has slipped away from the grip of the historian or particularly the Marxist historian equipped with Marxist theory. He wants to bring this back into the Marxist analytical fold as the site where any transformation of the social order will begin. Critiquing EDL (indeed auto-critiquing it by those subject to its dictates) is the first step in uncovering the ideological configuration that holds the proletariat (and others) in its grip. The task is to create a kind of fugitive arena where critique is able to come more to the fore: a kind of non-place that disturbs ordinary life through the operation of critique[6].

And this sense of critical engagement is paralleled by de Certeau's (1984) analysis of EDL as a *sphere of resistance*. Following Foucault rather than Marx this time, de Certeau views EDL as a place where a certain 'freedom' can operate, one that pushes against the constraining authority of institutional routines and the deadening hand of normalization. One example that de Certeau uses to illustrate his general points is walking through city streets: pedestrians 'negotiate' the strategic conformity of the city streets with a tactical resistance as they wander unhindered, making their own decisions about exactly where to go and how (though back alleys, along lanes, over bridges).

And a modern equivalent of this is provided by Boltanski (2011 & 2013). In this case it is linked to a clear emancipatory project. If only we could adopt the *spirit of critique* – an open space of self-reflection and reflexivity – the constraining force of existing forms of justification for social life (as outlined in Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 – there are six of these forms of justification: civic, market, inspired, fame, industrial, and domestic) could be dissolved and we would enter an(other) emancipatory era of personal and collective freedom. Thus associated with the term 'critique' is always an emancipatory project it would seem.

So there are several forms these critical engagements might take but one intriguing historical intermediating category involves the flaneur (Baudelaire 1863, Benjamin 1977): that flamboyant and dandyish figure of the urban landscape who disrupts the conventional codes of conduct with a confident panache and brash exteriority of style. Rather similar to de Certeau's pedestrian the flaneur strolls through the streets, flaunting a leisurely countenance whilst all around him are enterprise and poverty. He (or less often she – Wolf, 1985) provides a counterpoint to the bustle of city life. But this disruptive flaneur is very happy in the crowd. Indeed the flaneur cultivates the crowd: that exemplary formation of the modern metropolis. The flaneur wanders through the crowd, leisurely observing and participating in its everyday life, but at the same time somewhat distant from it, which provides the flaneur's critical edge.

So *the crowd* is one of the early concrete precursory manifestations of EDL. Crowds were first and foremost a feature of the urban landscape. Crowds embodied the conditions of the city and the urban, indeed of modernity. They were a new phenomenon of the 18th Century. But they had their more dangerous counterpart in the figure of *the mob*. The crowd becomes the mob as collective fear or excited agitation spill on to the streets. Though mobs clearly existed in the countryside it is in the context of urban life that the mob has had its most forceful impact. It was a new and dangerous actor on the urban stage in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

And the mob is not the electorate. It is not a rather angry, vengeful electorate, out to murder a few more people on the way to the polling booth! Both the crowd and the mob loose some of their potency when they are replaced by the category of the electorate in the 20th century (though the crowd may live on as it is re-invented under the title of *the multitude* by contemporary Marxists like Hardt and Negri, 2000)[7]. However, whist the crowd and the mob were exemplary early precursors of EDL, analytically they were 'topics' without an intellectual discipline. There was no crowdology or mobism. This inhibited the continued

analytical purchase and utility of the idea of the crowd or the mob. For analytical purposes you need an 'ology' or an 'ism'.

So, as just suggested, crowds rather disappeared, even as a 'topic' in the 20th century (though see Borch 2013). On the one hand they were replaced by the category of the electorate; on the other hand the crowd was segmented and differentiated by the growing complexity of social division and organization. And this is where modern day notions of EDL emerge. The figure of the crowd was replaced by the (modern day) category of a fragmented EDL. EDL is a direct inheritor of the crowd/mob – viewed as essentially a public formation, at least as the source of an intellectual encounter.

However, this attempt to re-incorporate EDL back into Marxism via the idea of the critique of EDL may be (indeed, probably is) misguided. There is no EDL in classical Marxism: *Das Capital* does not have chapters dealing with 'areas of life' like feeling unwell or how humble it is to be an artist. At best it can operate as a critique of ideology, but such a notion of ideology is fraught with its own contradictions and non-sequiturs that it's utility is even further compromised. We examine an alternative specification in the next section.

3. Every Day Life and 'Modernity'

As just mentioned, there is something about EDL and modernity that is worth exploring. Perhaps these two categories neatly coexist? Modernity is a somewhat tainted and discredited category, particularly as it is often associated with its others: 'post-modernity' and 'post-modernism'. But, putting these reservations (prejudices?) aside for a moment – and treating modernity as a principled category in its own right -- might provide added insights into the constitution of EDL.[8]

Like modernity, EDL is often fleeting and intermittent. It is a zone which borders on questions of *desire* (and therefore the imaginary). At one level EDL is 'organized desire'. People organize their desires at the point of the everyday. And it is a place where the objects of their desires appear most readily, whether this is in the context of patterns of their consumption, or their aspirations and achievements predicated upon their institutional location. Desire drives the everyday. Thus modernity and the everyday involve the production and presentation of a multiplicity of objects and facts (the outcomes of desire). Sometimes this is characterized as the production of information. But I would stress the exteriority of information and facts (perhaps *ex*formation rather than *in*formation, *ex*clusion rather than *in*clusion: facts are defined by their exteriority). And information, facts, etc., go along with communication. Thus in the context EDL the modern world could present itself as a huge production and accumulation of commodities (recall Chapter 1 of Marx's *Das Capital* Vol.1: 'Commodities and Money'). Or so it might at first seem. Because whilst Marx would stress the infinite possibility of commodification under capitalism, the overwhelming number of relations under capitalism -- or rather, as stressed here, under modernity -- are not commoditized and are unlikely to be so. This is because – in the context of information and language considered as communication -- modernity explodes the numbers of relations that are not readily available for full commoditization or marketization, namely, objects/things in the form of talk, chat, nattering, information and communication. Modernity is characterized by the explosion of talk and chat, a huge and seemingly infinite production and accumulation of such *stuff*. Language is the key to EDL, and language is not easily controlled or commoditized[9]. So modernity is characterized by a somewhat under-explored expansion of stuff; a huge amount of stuff, not all of which appears as commodities[10]. And this stuff is often made up of 'left-overs': bits and pieces that serve no particular purpose (or have little worth) but which are accumulated much for the sake of it, often out of habit.

Everyday Life and 'Language'

Whilst it is *objects/things* that are stressed here rather than commodities as such -- and such objects/things can include language -- not all objects are language. However, in this section it is the relationship between language and EDL that is stressed. Again, this speaks to the imaginary dimension of language.

If EDL is a zone between objects and desires it is a zone which is permeable. It articulates the 'inside' of our desires and thoughts with the 'outside' of social and linguistic facts. In Freud's terms it would be a zone of *relaxed vitality* and relative freedom. But one of *ex*timacy rather than *in*timacy. As Freud (1940) demonstrates in *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, language is a process of the production of misunderstanding and misconceptions, productive mistakes and broken promises. It is not so much a terrain of meaning and sense-making understood in the usual manner but rather exactly a terrain of such *sense seeking* consequent upon the productive misunderstanding. Because language exists it is necessarily flawed, and so are we as the users of language. Only ghosts, gods and the dead -- the 'unborn' or 'no longer born' -- are flawless. What propels language (and us) is the struggle to make sense through the productive encounter with misunderstandings and mistakes, which continually re-produce themselves. Thus in so propelling it expels at the same time. We are not so much *im*pelled as *ex*pelled by language. It forces us to embrace a radical exteriority[11].

Of course, one should not leave this discussion of the imaginary, language and EDL without mentioning Maurice Blanchot (1982) who drew a distinction between everyday language and literary or poetic language. Literary language is anti-realist and distinct from ED language, he suggests. In everyday language words are the vehicle for ideas; in poetic language, however, the word escapes the signified (the idea) – it overflows the thing to become a free floating signifier, full of ambiguity and allusion, strange and mysterious. This implies that words mean something because they negate the physical reality of the thing. But that is literary language. However, might it not prove productive to invite Blanchot's poetic language to address and interrogate the ordinary language of EDL? Thus we could examine the ambiguous rhetorical nature of language, and the irreducibility of the written word to notions of absolute truth or falsity.

So, there is a sense in which EDL is a 'discarded' realm: that which has been 'put aside' since it does not add much to an explanation. Thus it could also be a domain for the *non-dramatic*. If EDL is the ordinary and the mundane, it is not full of dramas or exaggerated significance. It does not obviously lend itself to playing to the crowd, sweeping rhetorical flourishes, actorly presentations or a posturing to the gallery[12].

4. Everyday Life and 'Space'

Is there something about EDL and space? Where does EDL take place? Generally it is considered to be 'local' in some way, not 'global'. This locality can be local in the sense of taking place within a geographically limited space, or in terms of an institutional locality – the place where people work and dream. It is (always?) '*nearby*'. And the nearby here is in a sense not necessarily a measurable space or distance. For instance things, events, actions, etc., can be drawn closer simply be being openly enacted. So a stage play brings thing to life and nearby since it activates a presentation that triggers a memory or an emotion. It reminds us of what EDL is like. And it is comforting to be reminded of this, so there is something *comfortable* about EDL – when it is recognised as such. It is more comforting than a structural explanation (which appears 'remote') so this may account for the recent rise in interest in the politics of EDL, at least in part[13].

This notion of the nearby also operates in the case of the multitude, I would suggest. But here the global is already in the local, so to speak. The multitude acts as a singular for Hardt & Negri. Its particular location is in the comforting common zones where the multitude meets and talks, which are always nearby for them/it.

And this aspect of EDL taking place nearby connects to another related term: the *nearly*. In EDL lots of things not only happen nearby, but they also nearly happen. To some extent this makes EDL a rather *tedious zone*. Things that happen there are boring ("I was nearly run over by a bicycle this morning. Really, where? Oh, just nearby here….", etc.). So EDL is saturated by these moments. The point about the 'nearly', the 'nearby' and the 'almost' is that they are the stuff of the mundane and the ordinary. How many people were nearly murdered, almost killed, or nearly won things? Many more than actually experience these tragic or fortunate events. If however, you were run over and, say killed in a bicycle accident, or won a marathon race, or were killed in battle, that would be an event that lifted you out of EDL strictly speaking. Those who are murdered or who die in battle, have a monument dedicated to them, those who are nearly murdered or almost killed get no public recognition. They 'disappear' into EDL.

5. Everyday Life and 'Time'

Having dealt with some of the issues associated with EDL and space we can briefly move on to its intellectual cousin 'time'. Again, there would be a huge literature to confront here so I cut through this by concentrating on a few remarks about one of time's most obvious connections to EDL, mainly via *work*. Is working-time part of EDL or is it only leisure-time that can be associated with it? There is certainly a demarcation in time associated with the work/leisure divide. The time of work is a disciplined time, whereas EDL silences that authority. EDL time is casual, heroically indifferent to the discipline of working-time, often involving a 'waste of time': it is located in the 'rest of time'. And it is associated with the *last time*. EDL time is haunted by this last time; with the accident and the death. This is the everyday of time: what haunts us and tricks us, a place of memory and solitude, somewhere where we wander through our thoughts and the imaginary. Later I want to develop this notion of time and link it to an administrative culture which organizes a parallel notion of citizenship; what I call 'Real Citizenship', and which gives this EDL notion of time a renewed political edge.

6. Everyday Life and 'Capitalism' (again)

Let us return to the discussion of capitalism so as to further develop the argument about its connections -- or not -- to EDL. Several definitions of capitalism are worth considering. The first is something which most contemporary social theorists would recognize as an enduring feature, one that paraphrases Marx: capitalism is more of less a system of 'accumulation for accumulation's sake'. It's the endless accumulation of commodities – where commodities are distilled or condensed social relationships that appear as things – leading to the festishization of commodities, etc. And the marketization of such commodities is an imperative for such accumulation. In one way or another, this is a definition of capitalism robust enough to encompass most contemporary social theory: the relentless commodification and marketization of everything. This particular definitional characterization was questioned above.

A second definition is one often first attributed to Martin Luther King: capitalism is communism for the wealthy and free-enterprise for the rest of us. This nicely captures the way the rich are becoming the most voracious 'welfare dependents' mainly via corporate bailouts. This is clearly the case with banks -- they seem to be the recipients of almost endless public

subsidies[14]. But it is also true of iconic UK corporate brands like Virgin and StageCoach (Richard Branson -- the CEO of Virgin Rail is always described as 'one of Britain's foremost entrepreneurs') which have taken over £500 million in state subsidies since they gained the franchise to run the North-West Coast railway line (CRESC 2013). Branson is an enormous 'welfare beneficiary', and the taxpayer is subsidizing his billionaire life style and his recent non-dom status. This is also true of many utility companies – those who now run the privatized local utility services. They are paid by the local taxpayer on a street by street basis but these companies put little back into the local community other than the payment of near minimum wages to their operatives. Finally, in the UK at least, corporate interests associated with infrastructure investments are demanding their own subsidies before commencing the bidding process for public-private partnership deals. They want the state to take all the downside risk and indemnify them against losses (*Financial Times*, March 8, 2013, p.2). Such state guarantees amount to an implicit subsidy, and the infrastructure firms are able to extract this because the government is desperate to stimulate growth at a time of otherwise tight fiscal austerity[15].

All this amounts to a huge welfare dependency by large sections of the corporate world – who have become veritable 'welfare junkies'[16]. They used to be welfare providers in the form of providing and running pension schemes for their employees, but this function has collapsed as companies have progressively closed their final pension schemes and shifted the burden directly to their employees or onto the state. It is clearly a 'win-win' situation for companies and the wealthy: it is communism for the wealthy, *laissez faire* for the poor.

Scandalous though this may be, it's another definition that I would like to stress here: that capitalism is a system that eventually meets all our desires: it's a desire generating and fulfilment machine. This is where it abuts EDL directly since, as suggested above, EDL is closely associated with the production and fulfilment of desires. But, as we all readily recognize, as soon as these desires are fulfilled we realize two related things: they were a nightmare to start with – we never really wanted them (or their consequences), and now we have other desires instead – we want something different (think of consumption, sex, or our careers!). The desire machine goes on. Or so it seems because I would question whether this is really an issue of capitalism any more. It's more like modernity than capitalism. So we get back to modernity and EDL again.

7. Everyday life and 'Politics'

In this section we consider some preliminary associations between EDL and politics. Let us begin by adopting a conveniently simple definition of politics: it involves the relationship between sovereignty, territory and citizenship. We can all accept that this is not a totally adequate definition but it captures the essential frame working feature of politics from the late middle ages to perhaps mid-way through the 20th Century – it represented the 'superior instance' of all of politics, I would suggest[17].

But what happened after the Second-World War, mid-way through the 20 century? Again, to make things simple this kind of politics was undermined by 'internationalization/globalization', the retreat of the state, and eventually the rise of 'neo-liberalism', etc. And 'politics' was replaced by 'administration' as a consequence (sometimes this is expressed as 'managerialism'). That is the big consequential change. We are all now subject to '*appropriate* forms of administration' in all aspects of our lives – or that's the project for our governance. We are governed and managed. Conflicts over sovereignty and territory have diminished amongst advanced countries. Administration has become the new 'superior instance' of politics (though not its exclusive instance). This can involve our own self-governance as well as societal governance. And administration has as its overwhelming aspiration the production of *normality*. From the point of view of our political and corporate

masters the norm is the ultimate goal. How does this appear in the context of EDL? Those studies of institutionalized 'norm building' referred to in the introduction are exemplary instances illustrating this process.

And this relates to the *politics of performance*. Performance has become the master trope for qualification, justification, valuation, worthiness, etc, in an administered society. Everything is subject to the dictates of performance: 'we' must perform and deliver ("what are your deliverables?"). And this is done relative to a standard, to a benchmark, to a norm. [18] The production of these standards, benchmarks and norms is a key element in this process (Ponte, *et al*. 2011) but equally important is the measurement of everything relative to these. We are continually measured, monitored, judged, valued, assessed, rewarded, paid, praised and -- it must be recognized, energised --- by 'performance criteria'. And this is not only true of individuals but also of institutions, and indeed whole countries. All these are subject to the dictates of performance[19]. They are listed, ranked, sorted and categorised according to their performance standard (so as to ensure 'competitiveness', or to become 'entrepreneurial', etc.). If they (or we) don't come up to scratch, then we are subject to penalties or sanctions.

So our EDL—or a large part of it – is organized around a pervasive injunction to perform. This is the administrative/managerial form of EDL in the contemporary era. It is a pervasive imperative which we have ingested into the taken-for-grantedness of everyday experience and practice, into the obviousness of common sense procedures that makes us fit for a life. We perform this on ourselves as well as on others without really noticing it (Thompson 1985, Thompson 2008). Up until the immediate post-Second World War period it could be argued we were social democratic *citizens* (solidaristic and community minded), but now we are all neoliberal *subjects*: exercising a 'choice', managing our desires, plotting our careers, re-balancing our investments (both human and financial), all according to the dictates of 'proper administrative governance' set out for us by the administrative norm and the market[20].

8. Everyday life and 'Law'

And this is where the entry of the law into EDL most clearly appears. Elsewhere I have argued that the law is at heart an administrative structure (Thompson 2012). Clearly, there is a complex relationship between law, legislation and the courts in respect to what the law is. But it is important not to reduce 'law' to either legislation or court activity, though they are clearly closely related in various ways. Legislation produces laws and the courts adjudicate on them (producing judgements in respect to them and determining sentences) but neither of these are the law as such. Rather the law operates 'between these' as it were; it is the forms of administrative procedures that are initiated and legitimated by legislation, and which are adjudicated on by the courts[21]. The law as an institution is a central place where a particular kind of truth is produced or claimed[22]. But the law is also a body of rules for the resolution of conflicts where other means of resolution have failed. Clearly, this conception of the role of law – as one of authoritatively sanctioned procedural rules for the resolution of conflicts and the production of truths – effectively defines law as an administrative apparatus aimed at guiding conduct. Indeed, at one level - given this definition -- *all law* is simply authoritatively sanctioned administrative rules and procedures of one kind or another. Administrative law, for instance, can be viewed as a particular form of legal enactment.

The point of this discussion is that an administrative society – as outlined above – chimes closely with this understanding of the law. These two elements have run together in the realm of EDL. As the 'administered society' has advanced so the law has become the governance mode of choice across the regulatory spectrum. The law is now increasingly the default position in respect to regulatory governance[23]. Administration and administrative law are almost on a par with one another. They are no longer separate activities. And this stretches to *contract law* under contemporary conditions. Contracts are the main means by which, for

instance, public-private partnership agreements are enforced: they are now part of an elaborate administrative apparatus through which the state 'governs' both its own and an increasing slice of 'private' activity. Administrative law has absorbed contract law (if these two were ever entirely separate).

So EDL is infused with an administrative culture – manifesting itself in the manner in which institutional life is itself configured (ideational struggles, norm building, policy formation, etc.) – and it appears there increasingly in the form of a legal apparatus codifying and legitimizing its strictures. This is its particular 'appropriate form of administration'. The encounter between administration and the law is a prime site for the operation of EDL. It is the way EDL manifests itself in contemporary institutionalized practices. And it is subject there to the dictates of 'performance'.

But can EDL disrupt this normality? For instance, Hadot (1994, 2011) wants to de-escalate the significance of philosophy as the self-appointed adjudicator on intellectual matters, to make it a more mundane and routinized 'spiritual' exercise: to make it a part of EDL.

Everyday Life and 'Constitutionalization'

Finally, is there an EDL of constitutionalization? The administrative society and the law connect to constitutionality via the proliferation of organizational forms that pervade our modernity. If we take Gunther Teubner's use of Niklas Luhmann's framework of system and subsystem communicative action to characterize the constitutionalization of the social sphere then this results in a proliferation of constitutional orders (Teubner 2012). Luhmann views the driving force of modernity as an increasing social fragmentation and social differentiation. The result is a proliferation of social organizations (autonomous systems and sub-systems), each of which has its own 'constitution'. Thus the process of constitutionalization explodes under these circumstances (Fischer-Lescano & Teubner 2004). And constitutions in this framework have no constituent power 'outside' or 'prior to' the constituted power, as in classical discussions of constitutionalization (where the pre-citizenly 'people' in some sense deliberate in a convention and establish a constitutional order via a form of the social contracting). Rather they are predicated on already existing constitutionalized mechanisms (human rights, judicial borrowings, networks of juridical contacts and references, etc., i.e., already codified *legal* instruments, norms and practices). Those actors who make the constitution already posse constituted powers (Thornhill 2012).

So, in this case, EDL is already 'full' of constitutionalized comings and goings, and more will inevitably follow [24]. Everyday encounters with the proliferation of organizations and institutions that administer our daily lives are themselves encounters with mini-constitutional orders. We are immersed in such constitutional orders almost on a continuous basis. And I would suggest that here is where EDL constructs what I would want to term 'Real Citizens': citizens who may be beyond a conception organized by the category of sovereignty but who are, nevertheless, not beyond constitutionality or the law [25]. This also borrows from the discussion of EDL and time: it exists in another time to official, authoritative time. It is a citizenly 'waste of time', perhaps stretching to 'the end of time', an encounter with the imaginary of time, but a time nonetheless that remains micro-constitutionalized. And this is not a substitute for all other aspects of citizenship -- even that residually associated with sovereignty -- but a parallel aspect of citizenship. So EDL is saturated with constitutionality because it appears in EDL as the formation of the rules and regulations that govern our day to day activities: that which constructs us as Real Citizens.

And it should be made clear at this point that although the discussion in this section was initiated by a reflection on Teubner's and Luhmann's analytical devices, it does not share their idea of a 'system' or set of subsystems as the necessary framework for organizational life. Nor does it share their idea of fragmentation. The EDL being described her is not totally

fragmented but still 'ordered' by a constitutionalizing process. The analysis here remains open to an imperative that does not insist on its predication to systemic properties or characteristics.

9. Everyday Life and 'Preliminary Conclusions'

Clearly, according to these accounts, EDL could mean many things to many people. But, I would suggest there are several common themes that run through this presentation. The first is that EDL has to do with desire and language: it is a place where these two coincide and EDL is redolent with the consequences. The object of EDL is an utterance or a quotation. Secondly, it may force us to refocus on modernity rather than just on capitalism; nevertheless where capitalism is viewed as a vital – but not the only -- constitutive element of modernity. Thirdly – in the case of the politics of EDL in particular -- there is a complex relationship between administration, the law and social constitutionality in the realm of institutional analysis. This is where ELD and Real Citizenship lurk.

Thus the politics of EDL is embedded within these three sets of relationships – it works across language and desire; modernity and the production of stuff; and law, constitutionality and administration.

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1 These authors are examples of the 'ethnographic turn' in financial studies, involving the detailed micro-investigation of particular financial working environments. This represents one of the most successful turns to EDL as a site for analytical work.

2 Even Margret Thatcher's famous remark that: "There is no such thing as society….." was an overt political move to divert attention onto her subsequent phrase "…. only individuals and their families". Denying the existence of 'society' is as much a political move as reaffirming its centrality.

3 Regretfully, therefore, this paper does not deal with important sociological issues of EDL associated with the family, gender, welfare, education, 'life worlds' or the micro-interactionist performativity in Goffman's sense (Goffman 2002), and so on. It is not that I think these aspects unimportant for a comprehensive analysis of EDL only that there is not the space to address them all here, and that the emphasis for the paper is elsewhere, locate more in its imaginary and other neglected aspects.

4 A number of the formulations in this and subsequent early sections of the paper have benefited enormously from viewing a series of lectures given by Mark Cousins at the AA in London over the winter period 2012-13 under the general title 'Where is everyday life?' (Available at: < http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/PUBLIC/AUDIOVISUAL/videoarchive.php >).

5 So there is some connection between the renewed popularity of EDL as an analytical claim and the demise of the utility attributed to structural accounts of socio-economic activity, institutional practices and change. And this goes for approaches that insist upon epochal changes associated with terms like 'neo-liberalism'. I remain hesitant about deploying this category because of its supposed ubiquity. From the point of view of the analysis here neo-liberalism is sometimes important but it would be the manner in which it is operationalized in practical and concrete settings that is insisted upon, and these are so varied and particular that the tern can only operate as an initial opening gambit, not something that completely frames the analytical project.

7 So here would be another 'site' for the operation of EDL: the common places were the multitude meet. And this is also a resolutely liberatory/emancipatory site for Hardt and Negri.

8 Perhaps rather oddly, exemplary intellectual figures of what is often termed 'post-modernism' (Lacan, Derrida, Delurze, Zizek ?) actually want to return to a per-modern terminology and analytical terrain (a 'return to the Greeks'). Thus they want to re-establish and work with terms like friendship, nobility, honour, gracefulness. So, perhaps rather perversely, they are really pre-modern thinkers rather

than post-modern. Whatever else, this illustrates the need to get away from a conception where modernity is contrasted to its singular other, namely 'traditional'.

9 This is because language always 'overflows' attempts to constrain it. The productivity of language – its inner logic and its dynamic – resists its control. Two classic ways of trying to control language are via the notion of ideology and discourse. These constrain what can be said: when, where, why and how. But in the end they always 'fail'. Language moves on, defying, by-passing and outflanking these attempts to channel it into acceptable meaning arrangements and sense making procedures. And this goes for the attempts to commercialize communication and information flows via the internet, www, etc. As is being proved on an almost daily basis ICTs provide an infinite opportunity to avoid and undermine their full commercialization.

10 This emphasis on 'new stuff' is not meant to imply that there is a not a huge continuity in EDL as well. A lot does not change. It hangs-in-there, resistant to innovation.

11 For those who continue to be confused by the seeming (non)difference between pre-determinism and determinism in language – and in thought more generally – the final chapter of Psychopathology of Everyday Life should provide clarification: see chapter 12: 'Determinism, Chance and Superstitious Beliefs'. From the point of view of this paper, whilst everything would be determined, nothing is pre-determined.

12 On the other hand, a lot of EDL would seem to be dramatic – particularly as interpreted in a Goffmanesque preformative and theatrical modality. But this seems to me to be wrong and in part represents my hesitancy in respect to fully adopting Goffman's approach.

13 An interesting account of EDL and the local is provided by the LSE's 'ordinary streets' project. This examines (and champions) the local (mundane, ordinary) street against the 'shopping centre' street.

"The street is emblematic of the ordinary city, a common urban currency that transmits direct forms of exchange and expression. As a space constituted by 'ordinary' citizens, it has a volatile and a convivial capacity: a register for explosive protests as well as quieter, sustained transformations. We turn to the commonplace logic of street to explore everyday transformations and how these are differentially represented through small independent shops, local interest groups, and local government organisations. We aim to analyse the street in ways that have significance for policy and planning, as well as interests around immigration and the socio-spatial 'scapes' that spans local and global realities." (Ordinary Streets: An ethnography from local to global. < http://lsecities.net/objects/research-projects/ordinary-streets >, accessed 8 April 2013-- see also Hall, 2012).

14 In the UK banks are being heavily subsidized to lend. This has taken two main forms: 'quantitative easing' (£385bn spent so far) and 'funding for lending' (F4L – £80bn available).

15 A case in point concerns the construction of a new nuclear power station at Hinckley Point in the UK. The government has had to give cast iron and very generous guarantees about the price it will pay the EDF and Chinese construction and operating consortium for electricity through to the end of the station's life (25-30 years ahead), despite the obvious impossibility of forecasting competitive fuel prices that far ahead.

16 So forget about the poor immigrant or hard pressed individual welfare dependent who are the one's getting all the blame for Britain's debt plight. It is giant corporations who are the real welfare dependents in the UK.

17 So, this definition is a loose one but also robust enough, I would suggest, to encompass even quite radical conceptions of politics like Schmitt's 'friend-enemy' distinction and the raw energy that control of the means of force brings with it, and of Hobbes's insistence that the state has the right of life and death over its subjects. All these features of politics ultimately relate to its sovereignty, citizenly and territorial aspects (I thank Gary Wickham for reminding me of the need to clarify these points).

18 So the sequence goes: benchmarking, performance, delivery, efficiency, security, competitiveness…which is endlessly repeated. As Boltanski (2011) remarks, a key element in this

particular manifestation of contemporary EDL is its mandatory repetition which, of course, provides it with its rhetorical force.

19 Note here a difference to Goffman's conception of performance mentioned in an earlier footnote. Goffman (2002) is concerned with the micro, subjective aspects of intimate interconnections: his symbolic interactionism. By contrast performance here is associated with a definite institutionalized practice. It is not a subjective 'theatrical' activity, though it might involve elements of this in the particularities of its enactment. Rather it is a procedure: a practical mechanism for objective assessments of performance, institutionalized by rules, norms, benchmarks, etc.

20 This imperative is very noticeable in the case of academic life, where the transformation from a citizenly persona to a managed subject has been particularly rapid and intense.

21 And I would argue this remains the case even in 'common law' contexts where it is courts and judgments that are often thought to also create law: but here the law as such is still authoritative rules and procedures even if it is created by courts and judgments.

22 This is a particular feature of the Foucauldian approach to institutions, I would suggest. Institutions are arenas for the production of particular and distinct regimes of 'truth'. This is not only the case with the law as an institution, though here the relationship to truth telling is more obvious, but it is a feature of all intuitions. They produce truths in respect to the particular object of their analysis. But they also produce distinctive 'personas' in that context. This is the second distinctive feature of a Foucauldian approach to institutional analysis: institutions are arenas for the production of personas adequate to their tasks (in the case of the law: judges, lawyers, barristers, criminals, etc.). Of course, there is no guarantee that these institutional moments will be successful: institutional analysis is redolent with disappointments and failures.

23 This is particularly so in the realm of international ('global') governance. For the most part governance here has become a matter of the modality of administration by international administrative law (Cohen and Sabel 2005 – see also Thompson 2012).

24 It is important to note the features of an organizational constitution being appealed to here: self-conscious rule making; an internal governmental institutional structure; delineation of spheres of competence and an interpretative autonomy able to assesses the scope and meaning of those competences; clarification of stakeholders and specification of the rights, responsibilities and obligations of those party to the constitution; some form of separate legally recognized authority with autonomy for policy formation. Not all of these may be present in every 'constitution' but they represent a template for assessment.

25 Thus this notion of citizenship is not simply the consequence of an act or an enactment (Isin and Nielsen 2008, Isin and Saward 2013). Real Citizenship – as termed here – whilst similarly concerned with the everyday activity of politics as the enactment approach, differs in that it sets this within a 'constitutional order' of rules, administrative governance, legal restraint and performative regulatory oversight. The mundane day-to-day of citizenly activity always bears a legal moment and is supported by a (sometimes informal) quasi-constitutional framework or settlement. I do not see how one can talk about 'citizenship' (as, perhaps, in distinction to the general conflicts and struggles that accompany a life) other than in these terms.

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