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**Stream: “Making Everyday Extraordinary”: Management and the ‘Everyday’ as Unit of Critical Analysis**

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“Making everyday extraordinary” – this is how a recent advert for a graduate position in Atos Origin (an IT company) reads. Although such statements have become common place they are easily dismissed as bombastic. But do they not contain important cultural and institutional clues to the logic of contemporary management and organisations? Indeed managerial discourses increasingly use the dimension of the ‘everyday’ to address work nowadays: the ‘everyday’ is the place and time for innovation, creativity, performativity, and self-realisation. Thus the ‘everyday’ is increasingly seen as the place where ‘out of ordinary’ performance may be ordinarily performed and expected, where excellence and total quality come as enhancements not just of production but also of the ‘self’ at work. As a result, one way or another, the ‘everyday’ is central to our empirical and theoretical efforts to understand how social order, institutions, work, and management unfold, what are their conditions of possibility and how they change historically.

For more than a century now, the horizon of the ‘everyday’ (the quotidian) has been central to a broad range of social, political, anthropological, philosophical and artistic thought : from the Soviet and Weimar claims to the ‘avant-garde’, from Surrealism, Situationism or Dada, to Freud’s opening up of the everyday to the full life of the *psuche*, to the works of Walter Benjamin, Theodore Adorno, and the Frankfurt School, on to those of Michel de Certeau, Henry Lefebvre, or Michel Foucault, from the earlier developments of empirical anthropological research to the massive contemporary body of cultural studies of consumption practices. It has been inspected there either as an opportunity for freedom or for further oppression, either as the site of mass-conformity and homogenisation or as the site for unique self-expression and counter-cultural resistance, either as marginal to the logic of history or as the very centre of historicity itself. Who speaks in the current discourses about the special place of the ‘everyday’ both at work and outside – and to whom, to what purposes and with which consequences for employees in organizations?

For organisation studies, especially for a conference dedicated to the theme of ‘organising’ itself, the theme of the ‘everyday’ at work cannot be but just as central as it is in the study of consumer cultures. That is why this stream invites contributions from various theoretical and empirical perspectives investigating the motif of the ‘everyday’ in both managerial practices and discourses, as well as in the research and conceptual endeavours of organisation studies scholars. To stimulate contributions to this stream, we will list a few possible avenues of thought but without the intention of precluding any other perspectives.

### *1. The ‘everyday’ in the history of management and organisation studies*

How does ‘everyday life’ feature as a theme in management and organisation studies? How has the ‘everyday’ been represented and conveyed in the theories of organizations and management for the past century?

### *2. Invocations of the ‘everyday’ in managerial discourses and practices*

Job adverts like the one above, as well as those calling forth ‘extraordinary people’ capable of mobilising the ‘genius in each of us’, have become common place. The relationship between such calls and the pressures of performativity and excellence, of total quality, ‘zero defects’, and ‘customer delight’ are all too obvious. Can ‘being extraordinary everyday’ be made into a ‘profession’? What is the logic of such managerial themes? Also, how are such cultural themes and motifs thought of, researched, and interpreted in organisational scholarship today?

### *3. The historical condition of the ‘everyday’*

Following on from the questions above, a fundamental yet systematically ignored set of questions regarding ‘everyday life’ is their historical condition. How is the ‘everyday’ thinkable historically? Is it possible to periodise the ‘everyday’ beyond its elementary quantitative-economic patterns? Is the ‘everyday’ akin to the ‘short term’, to the ‘immediate’, or is it, as Fernand Braudel argued in his *Les structures du quotidien* (1967), the repository of the *longue durée*? Is it possible to establish its relationships to epochal trends, to address it historically at all? Or is the ‘everyday’ only thinkable as ‘present’, ahistorically? How does an ordinary ‘everyday’ at work participate in the movement of history?

### *4. Conceptualisations of the ‘everyday’ in empirical research in organisation studies*

Whereas the ‘everyday’ seems to be a seductive and almost automatically legitimate site of organisational research, often empirical work takes the phenomenality of the ‘everyday’ for granted, without much further elaboration (if at all). Whether it is conducted in ethnomethodological styles, or with formalised instruments, empirical research takes the importance of the study of everyday practices to be self-explanatory. Through what fundamental conceptual operations is the ‘everyday’ brought into the theoretical efforts of social sciences and especially of organisation studies? What is the relevance of the ‘everyday’ as a manner of problematising organisational processes, managerial practices and discourses, and research itself? Where and when does ‘everyday life’ begin and end? What is it supposed to be distinct from? Papers reflecting on empirical research and the efforts put into securing the conceptual bases for interpreting the everyday would be very welcome.

These are but a few ways in which we can think of the importance of the ‘everyday’ for research in organisation studies. We invite contributions that, through such themes and others beyond them, share various experiences and ideas relating this crucial dimension of social thought to work in organisation and management studies.

**Submission Instructions:** Abstracts (maximum 1000 words, A4 paper, single spaced, 12 point font) should be submitted to [b.costea@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:b.costea@lancaster.ac.uk) by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

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## **Convenors**

Bogdan Costea works in the Department of Organization Work and Technology at Lancaster University. He is interested in the cultural and conceptual history of managerialism and its relationship to subjectivity and work in the context of modernity. Publications include: "Dionysus at work? The ethos of play and the ethos of management" (Culture and Organization 2005, 11(2):139-151); "Conceptual history and the interpretation of managerial ideologies" (Management & Organizational History 2006, 1(2):159-175); "The ethos of business in H.G. Wells' novel The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman" (Journal of Management History 2007, 13(1):21-32); "Managerialism and 'infinite human resourcefulness': a commentary on the 'therapeutic habitus', 'derecognition of finitude' and the modern sense of self" (Journal for Cultural Research 2007, 11(3), pp 245-264); "Managerialism, the therapeutic habitus and the self in contemporary organising" (Human Relations 2008, 61(5), pp 661-685). He has organised and co-organised streams at other CMS conferences (2003, 2005).

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Eric Pezet is Professor of Organization Studies and Human Resource Management, University Paris Ouest la Défense. Eric develops research about governmentality and the management of the self in organisations. He recently published *Accounting for Foucault*, Critical Perspectives on Accounting, with A. Mc Kinlay (underpress). He is a member of the Organizations, Accountability and Discourse group at St Andrews University (UK).