

Call for papers

Critical Management Education: Beyond and Below Academia

Session type: In-Person Paper Presentation Stream with Critical Development Workshop

Convenors:

Alessia Contu

alessia.contu@umb.edu

Professor of Management, University of Massachusetts, Umass (US)

Amon Barros

amon.barros@fgv.br

Associate Professor of Organization Studies, FGV EAESP (Brazil)

Hellen Cordeiro Alves Marquezini

hellenmarquezini@uvic.ca

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Peter B. Gustavon School of Business, University of Victoria (Canada)

Jennifer Manning

jennifer.manning@mu.ie

Assistant Professor in Responsible Management, Maynooth University, School of Business (Ireland)

Martina Śliwa

ms4519@bath.ac.uk

Professor of Management and Organisation, University of Bath School of Management (UK)

Organizers' diversity statement:

The organizing team comprises scholars based in Brazil, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Three of them are White women, one is a Black woman, and a Latino. Three of them are European, and two are Brazilians. All organizers have experience in chairing streams, development workshops and paper presentation sessions in international conferences (i.e. ICMS, AoM, Egos), and all have in common their engagement and research alignment around Critical Management Education (including editorial, research and teaching experience in the ME field).

Few people dispute that education is critical, and that we need critical education. However, what does it mean to be critical in the current age? Formal education is under continuous pressure, both from governments that seem to disregard the fact that one of the forces pushing against education seeks to increase scarcity, and from reactionaries who flirt with a past when only a few could afford to go to university to think. The constant push towards more technical learning and early professionalization, in the more generous interpretation, responds to short-termism. Management education is at the heart of many universities and often reflects these demands. Business schools are often among the largest in student numbers, not only in anglophone contexts, and are usually invited to respond to market pressures alongside the dynamics of higher education.

Forces that arrive as external pressures, beyond budgetary constraints, include new technologies that can reorganize not only what counts as knowledge, and how learning happens, but also what academic work is (Barros et al., 2023), who will be an academic in the future (Gatrell et al., 2024), and what counts as academic labor. Critical management education also cannot fail to consider the impacts of war, geopolitical crises, and epistemicide on global knowledge development, from the attacks on critical topics to the leveling of entire universities (Mota & Bazin, 2026; Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2023).

In the ongoing context of multiple crises, we assert that CME remains relevant today (Barros et al., 2024; Lacerda & Sadeghi, 2026; Larson et al., 2024). However, we invite authors to build upon this confident affirmation and elaborate on why. What becomes of CME when management education is reconfigured both beyond and below the academy (Abdallah, 2025; Arjaliès & Banerjee, 2024; Izak et al., 2025; Liu, 2022)? We suggest extending the conference theme “CMS beyond the Academy” by explicitly addressing what happens below it.

By “beyond”, we mean the relationships between management education and wider social worlds in which management knowledge travels, shifts, and is contested (Ehrnström-Fuentes & Böhm, 2023; Willmott, 2025). By “below”, we mean the infrastructures that are often less visible to outsiders but still frame possibilities for knowing. This includes the metrification of academic careers (Butler & Spoelstra, 2014, 2020), the use of rankings without proper appraisal (Jones et al., 2020), political-economic conditions that structure educational practice from underneath, eroding job conditions (Myers et al., 2026; Vianna et al., 2026), and identities that are marginalized in societies and organizations (Liu, 2022).

A critical new issue also invites our attention. The ubiquitous presence of generative AI extends beyond conversations to mediate intellectual work and the practice of teaching and learning (Acemoglu et al., 2026; Bergenholtz et al., 2026; Izak et al., 2025). This “beyond and below” framing should not be ignored, as these forces often operate together, creating the conditions of possibilities for people working and learning together. We also highlight that CME is not guaranteed by critical intent or a higher ethical moral ground, but because it is often much more realistic than other forms of knowledge and knowing (Barros, 2025; Harding, 1992).

CME scholarship has shown that management education can reproduce inequalities and invites educators to walk their talk (Contu, 2018). Despite institutional arrangements that often suggest otherwise, teaching is at the center of any scholarship, especially as a site where critical knowledge can be built together (Barros et al., 2024; Manning, 2025).

The stream, therefore, welcomes contributions that examine CME as an ethico-political project, but especially as an empirical and theoretical problem: how do society, organizations, academics, and students create or suffer the conditions for developing possibilities of knowing that neither sugarcoat nor deny realities? Another look “below” would examine, for instance, how generative AI and algorithmic mediation of learning can change multiple dimensions of the teaching-learning-research relationship, which is often seen as the parameter for a good educational environment. A good example of how to look beyond and below usual framings is the way Crawford (2021) shows how business interests are entangled not only with the politics of AI but also with the material world that makes it possible.

Another element of concern is the politics driving the curriculum. Decolonial scholars in management have shown how the field canonizes geopolitical and linguistic hierarchies (Abdallah, 2025; Jammulamadaka et al., 2021; Śliwa et al., 2025). However, there is growing backlash against inclusiveness and equality, including the delegitimization of educational projects (Nkomo, 2021; Prasad & Śliwa, 2024).

Therefore, we invite conference submissions that operate at both levels.

Beyond the academy: Decolonization and backlash of marginalized peoples/knowledge

- Epistemic injustice and hegemonic knowledge hierarchies
- Pluriversality and Indigenous knowledges

- Criticality and contestation of management knowledge across societal domains (e.g., activism, communities, civil society organizations, NGOs, social movements)
- Relationships between business schools and broader political-economic systems
- Universities as sites of political struggle and knowledge destruction
- Imagining post-neoliberal or alternative business schools

Below the academy: Praxis and performativity in managerial education

- The praxis of being a critical management educator
- Critical management education as intellectual activism
- Applications and extensions of Freirean pedagogy in management teaching and learning
- Teaching in contexts of war, geopolitical instability, and climate crisis
- Hidden infrastructures shaping knowledge production (rankings, metrics, audits, journal lists)
- Neoliberal governance of universities and its impact on critical management learning and education
- Epistemic implications of generative-AI and the risk of knowledge collapse

Supporting Details on the Stream/Session Type

This in-person stream is designed as a hybrid format that combines a conventional paper presentation stream with an embedded Critical Development Workshop in every session. Each session of this stream will culminate in a facilitated roundtable talking circle (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020) involving presenters and attendees alike. Following the presentation of papers organized around a shared theme, participants will be invited into a collective reflective discussion to share insights, interrogate tensions, exchange experiences, and pose questions emerging from the papers and the broader concerns of the session. The inclusion of a structured talking circle workshop in every session is in line with the iCMS ethos concerning power, voice, exclusion, and the politics of knowledge production. The format intentionally disrupts the conventional separation between presenter and audience. Instead, it creates a more democratic and inclusive space in which knowledge is co-produced through collective sensemaking, critical questioning, and mutual learning.

Submission Details

Please submit an extended abstract of up to 1,000 words and 200-word authors biographies/positionalities in one PDF document by the conference submission deadline. If accepted, it is not necessary to have a full paper submitted to the stream convenors prior to the conference, although participants will be expected to present their work in full by June 2027.

How to Submit: mail papers to cme.beyondandbelow@gmail.com

If you have any queries, please contact Hellen, and we'd happily discuss this stream in further detail with you. Inquiries: hellenmarquezini@uvic.ca

If you wish to submit to this stream using means outside of a traditional academic format, please contact the convenors in advance and we can discuss alternative arrangements for submission.

Please note that this stream will run in person.

References

- Abdallah, C. (2025). Against mastery: Epistemic decolonizing in the margins of the Business School. *Management Learning*, 56(2), 389–400.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076241236341>
- Acemoglu, D., Kong, D., & Ozdaglar, A. (2026). AI, human cognition, and knowledge collapse: No. w34910. *NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES*.
- Arjaliès, D., & Banerjee, S. B. (2024). 'Let's go to the land instead': Indigenous perspectives on biodiversity and the possibilities of regenerative capital. *Journal of Management Studies*, joms.13141. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.13141>
- Barros, A. (2025). Putting management knowledge in perspective: Education as an ethical and political endeavor. *Management Learning*, 56(1), 115–123.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076241284246>
- Barros, A., Bristow, A., Contu, A., Wanderley, S., & Prasad, A. (2024). Politicizing and humanizing management learning and education with Paulo Freire. *Management Learning*, 55(1), 3–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076231221792>
- Barros, A., Prasad, A., & Śliwa, M. (2023). Generative artificial intelligence and academia: Implications for research, teaching, and service. *Management Learning*, 54(5), 597–604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076231201445>

- Bergenholtz, C., Vuculescu, O., Günzel-Jensen, F., & Frederiksen, L. (2026). Leveling up or leveling down? The impact of generative AI on student performance in business schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, amle.2025.0029. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2025.0029>
- Brown, M. A., & Di Lallo, S. (2020). Talking circles: A culturally responsive evaluation practice. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 41(3), 367–383.
- Butler, N., & Spoelstra, S. (2014). The regime of excellence and the erosion of ethos in Critical Management Studies. *British Journal of Management*, 25(3), 538–550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12053>
- Butler, N., & Spoelstra, S. (2020). Academics at play: Why the “publication game” is more than a metaphor. *Management Learning*, 51(4), 414–430. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507620917257>
- Contu, A. (2018). ‘... The point is to change it’ – Yes, but in what direction and how? Intellectual activism as a way of ‘walking the talk’ of critical work in business schools. *Organization*, 25(2), 282–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508417740589>
- Crawford, K. (2021). *The Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1ghv45t>
- Ehrnström-Fuentes, M., & Böhm, S. (2023). The political ontology of Corporate Social Responsibility: Obscuring the pluriverse in place. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 185(2), 245–261. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05175-1>
- Gatrell, C., Muzio, D., Post, C., & Wickert, C. (2024). Here, there and everywhere: On the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in management research and the peer-review process. *Journal of Management Studies*, joms.13045. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.13045>
- Harding, S. (1992). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is “strong objectivity”? *The Centennial Review*, 36(3), 437–470.
- Izak, M., Barros, A., Prasad, A., & Śliwa, M. (2025). Generative artificial intelligence and learning: At the dawn of idiocracy? *Management Learning*, 56(3), 407–415. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076251348575>
- Jammulamadaka, N., Faria, A., Jack, G., & Ruggunan, S. (2021). Decolonising management and organisational knowledge (MOK): Praxistical theorising for potential worlds. *Organization*, 28(5), 717–740. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084211020463>
- Jones, D. R., Visser, M., Stokes, P., Örtenblad, A., Deem, R., Rodgers, P., & Tarba, S. Y. (2020). The performative university: ‘Targets’, ‘terror’ and ‘taking back

- freedom' in academia. *Management Learning*, 51(4), 363–377.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507620927554>
- Lacerda, D. S., & Sadeghi, Y. (2026). There are alternatives! Navigating tensions in critical management education. *Management Learning*, 1–19.
<https://doi.org/13505076261422427>
- Larson, B. Z., Moser, C., Caza, A., Muehlfeld, K., & Colombo, L. A. (2024). Critical Thinking in the Age of Generative AI. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 23(3), 373–378. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2024.0338>
- Liu, H. (2022). How we learn whiteness: Disciplining and resisting management knowledge. *Management Learning*, 53(5), 776–796.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076211061622>
- Manning, J. (2025). A performative critical management studies: Developing a critical management pedagogy as intellectual activism praxis. *Organization*, 32(4), 607–622. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084241264521>
- Mota, R., & Bazin, Y. (2026). Genocide and business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-026-06293-w>
- Muzanenhamo, P., & Chowdhury, R. (2023). Epistemic injustice and hegemonic ordeal in management and organization studies: Advancing Black scholarship. *Human Relations*, 76(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267211014802>
- Myers, F., Collins, H., & Glover, H. (2026). 'Lost futures' and undermined pasts of the pandemic: Digital lecturers' ghostly reflections of time, self and the university. *Management Learning*, 57(1), 27–46.
- Nkomo, S. M. (2021). Reflections on the continuing denial of the centrality of "race" in management and organization studies. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, 40(2), 212–224. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-01-2021-0011>
- Prasad, A., & Śliwa, M. (2024). Critiquing the backlash against wokeness: In defense of DEI scholarship and practice. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 38(2), 245–259. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2023.0066>
- Śliwa, M. & Prasad, A. (2025), Crafting sustainable careers as minority academics. *British Journal of Management*, 36(4), 1416–1424. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12914>
- Śliwa, M., Decker, S., De Barros, A. N., Omeihe, K., & Prasad, A. (2025). Decolonising the business and management curriculum: An ontological modesty perspective. *Management Learning*, 56(2), 153–159.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076251323764>
- Vianna, F., Calderari, E. B., Meneghetti, F. K., & Wanderley, S. P. (2026). Content providers, distance learning, and the neoliberal university: Degrading resistance

to the “most humiliating job in academic career”. *Management Learning*.

<https://doi.org/13505076251390719>

Willmott, H. (2025). Management theory: Jungle, myth, or hoax? *Academy of*

Management Review, amr.2023.0098. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2023.0098>