

Call for papers

Foods for critical thought: Critical Management Studies, agri-food systems, and *doing-with* food politics

**Critical Management Studies beyond the Academy? 30th June – 2nd July
2027, Lancaster University**

Convenors

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The challenges associated with fostering food systems that are sustainable, ethical, and attentive to both human and non-human life are immense. The globalization of agri-food systems (McMichael, 2009) and the widespread diffusion of an intensive, standardized agriculture (Friedma & McMichael, 1989), far from eradicating world hunger, have instead multiplied forms of vulnerability: animals/plants suffering, food insecurity, labour precarity and suffering among workers, exposure to pesticides and toxic substances, opacity within global supply chains, and the unequal burden of domestic food labour, among others.

These vulnerabilities constitute the very sites where multiple forms of domination are coproduced and reproduced - including those linked to class, gender, race, species and coloniality - disproportionately affecting marginalized populations, peoples of the Global South, women and non-human lives (Gilson, 2015; Lamine et al., 2019; Cadieux & Slocum, 2015; Lécuyer et al., 2025). As such, they speak directly to the concerns of the Critical Management Studies community, with its longstanding engagement with inequalities and power dynamics. This observation calls on MOS researchers to deepen their critique of dominant agri-food systems. More importantly, these violences call for the exploration and co-construction of alternative practices and imaginaries (Vijay et al., 2025) *with* societal actors – peasants, social movements, alternative organizations, etc. - rather than alongside them or in isolation.

Yet several challenges impede the enactment of such dialogue between neoliberal universities and society.

First, neoliberal scholarship has fostered a largely disembodied understanding of agri-food-related issues, relegating to the background the intimate relationships that bind human beings to food and its production. In organization studies, food has emerged only recently as an object of inquiry (Böhm et al., 2019), where early work in the 2000s primarily sought to understand consumer behaviour and the organizational practices underpinning globalized food supply chains under a productivist lens. Such managerial and instrumental approaches tend to obscure food as a site of domination situated at the intersection of public, private, associative, and domestic spheres; as a set of practices embedded in the intimate lives of individuals and collectives; and as a constellation of cultural representations and biomaterialities shaping relationships to the self, to others, to the world, and to non-human life (e.g. Driver, 2008; Moser et al., 2021; Di Domenico & Phillips, 2009; Shapin, 2025).

In this respect, scholarship on the ethics of care (e.g. Tronto, 1993; Bell et al., 2015; Antoni & Beer, 2024), feminist food studies (e.g. Parker et al., 2019; Williams-Forsen & Cognard-Black, 2014), posthumanist and more-than-human approaches (e.g. Haraway, 2016; Beacham, 2018; Ergene & Callas, 2023), and animal studies (e.g. Tallberg & Hamilton, 2022; Huopalahti & Jammaers, 2025; Wiart, 2026) provides insightful analytical lenses by revealing food as a relational, ethico-political, and lived social process. Pursuing this *ontological* rethinking therefore appears as a prerequisite for developing a more sensitive and affective engagement, and for creating the conditions for dialogue beyond academy, through shared lived experience.

Second, the study of alternative agri-food practices is constrained by research processes that remain poorly aligned with the pursuit of a genuine epistemic justice. A substantial body of academic work has contributed to critiques of dominant food systems by exposing the dysfunctions of deeply unequal structures, while investigating 'extreme' or 'exemplary' alternative cases as sources of inspiration and reflection. Yet the question of who is allowed to speak through these studies - whose voices are rendered visible and whose remain marginalized - is often addressed superficially, thereby reinforcing the risks of "usual suspectism" and "empirical light-touchism" in CMS (Spicer & Alvesson, 2025). Engaging in forms of co-construction beyond academia therefore invites scholars to rethink with whom, for whom, and under what conditions it is rendered legitimate. Doing so also entails giving voice to traces and residual presence (Tsing, 2015) of local and Indigenous agri-food systems that have been progressively obscured by agricultural rationalization, yet continue to persist in diffuse, implicit, and only partially legible forms.

Without seeking to undermine the substantial contributions of existing scholarship, we contend that *researching-with* agri-food systems requires greater engagement with the quieter, less visible forms of agri-food practice, as well as with voices that remain largely peripheral to dominant academic and public debates. Such an orientation invites scholars to move beyond extractive research relationships toward modes of inquiry grounded in *doing-with* (Laville and Salmon, 2025; Calás and Smircich, 2023). *Doing-with* assemble plural subjectivities and acknowledge the situated expertise embedded in everyday practices of “knowing how to grow”, “how to eat” and “how to care” – including non-human knowledge. In turn, this perspective calls for forms of engagement that unfold over the long term and exceed the sole pursuit of scientific production, fostering sustained spaces of dialogue, reciprocity, and collective reflection between academia and the communities with whom research is conducted.

We look forward to your paper submissions that can be empirical, conceptual or methodological in nature. In light of the limited availability of primary empirical studies, contributions grounded in new empirical evidence are especially welcome. We particularly encourage explorations of alternative organizations, territorial networks, meta-organizations, or more intimate practices. Relevant topics may include the complex and plural relationship to food, the (non)scalability of such practices, and the evolving role of researchers within these contexts.

We also encourage participatory and collaborative forms of inquiry, including co-authorship with non-academic actors, as well as creative, sensory, and experimental modes of presenting research findings that can foster more accessible, situated, and dialogical engagements with food-related issues.

Possible questions to address include but are certainly not limited to:

- How do agri-food practices participate in the reproduction or contestation of domination linked to species, gender, class, race, coloniality, or ability? What forms of collective emancipation, bringing together scholars and societal actors, are possible?
- How might ontologies of food – dominant or alternative – be rethought through ecocentric, multispecies, anti-speciesist perspectives, while fostering dialogue with society? To what extent might the very concept of ‘food’ be ontologically problematic?
- What would epistemically ethical agri-food research look like? How can scholars recognize and work with situated, practical, embodied, or non-academic forms of knowledge related to food?
- What methodological approaches allow scholars to attend to affects, attunements, dependencies, vulnerabilities, and embodied experiences surrounding food? How

might methodologies enable scholars to *think-with*, *feel-with*, and *write-with* societal actors?

- How can long-term, reciprocal, non-extractive and performative collaboration between academia and societal actors be enacted in food research?
- What opportunities and tensions emerge from co-authored or collaboratively produced research involving non-academic actors (e.g. activists, farmers, cooks, caregivers, workers, SSE organizations or citizen movements)?
- How might food become a site for rethinking vulnerability, interdependence, care, and coexistence in contemporary societies?

Submission process

All submissions should be sent directly to Amélie Gabriagues at amelie.gabriagues@univ-amu.fr by Tuesday 1st December 2026.

Formatting requirements

We welcome extended abstracts (up to 1000 words, excluding references) providing an overview of your contribution to the stream.

Extended abstracts should include a title, the authors' full name, affiliation, a corresponding email address, and a short biography for each author. Manuscripts should be formatted according to the following guidelines:

- Font: Times New Roman (font 11)
- Line spacing: single
- Margins: 2.5 cm on all sides
- Clearly delineated headings (if any)
- References in APA style

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