

CMS Doctoral Dissertation Award Winner, 2017

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Having completed my doctorate, I now have the space to reflect on my experience. The journey to get to this point was not easy, but it was an experience like no other that took me from a research office in DIT, Ireland, to the rural highlands of Guatemala, and finally to Atlanta to receive the CMS Doctoral Dissertation Award. Although I began my doc-

me to immerse myself in new cultures and challenge myself, my beliefs and my understanding of our world, but, moreover, I came to learn that those in the Global South / 'Third World' had much to offer. The many people of the many cultures I encountered during my travels required much more than the delivery of aid or being 'taught' how to develop by 'doing busi-

ganising in the socio-economic margins of the Global South. My enthusiasm was met with equal passion from my PhD supervisors, Paul Donnelly and Miguel Imas, whose curiosity, tenacity and intellect have greatly influenced my growth as a researcher, teacher and citizen. It was during the early months of my doctoral studies that my attention was drawn to Critical Management Studies and, on reading more, I understood that, to the benefit of management and organisation studies, critical management studies encourages the questioning and critiquing of the authority and significance of mainstream thinking and practice. This disciplinary movement motivated me to move forward with my idea for my area of research.

My ethnographic research took me into the everydayness of life for marginalised Maya women working together in community weaving groups. The Maya women welcomed me into their homes, lives, and work, and their strength of character, culture, and knowledge became the heart of my doctoral dissertation.

Undertaking my doctoral research was overwhelming and lonely; an ethnography generates an immense volume of data (taking eighteen months to analyse and six months to write-up!) and I had no colleagues, friends or family with me during my time in Guatemala. While this was very challenging, it was also exciting, and I soon developed close relationships with the Maya women participants and their families. Together we developed our theorisa-

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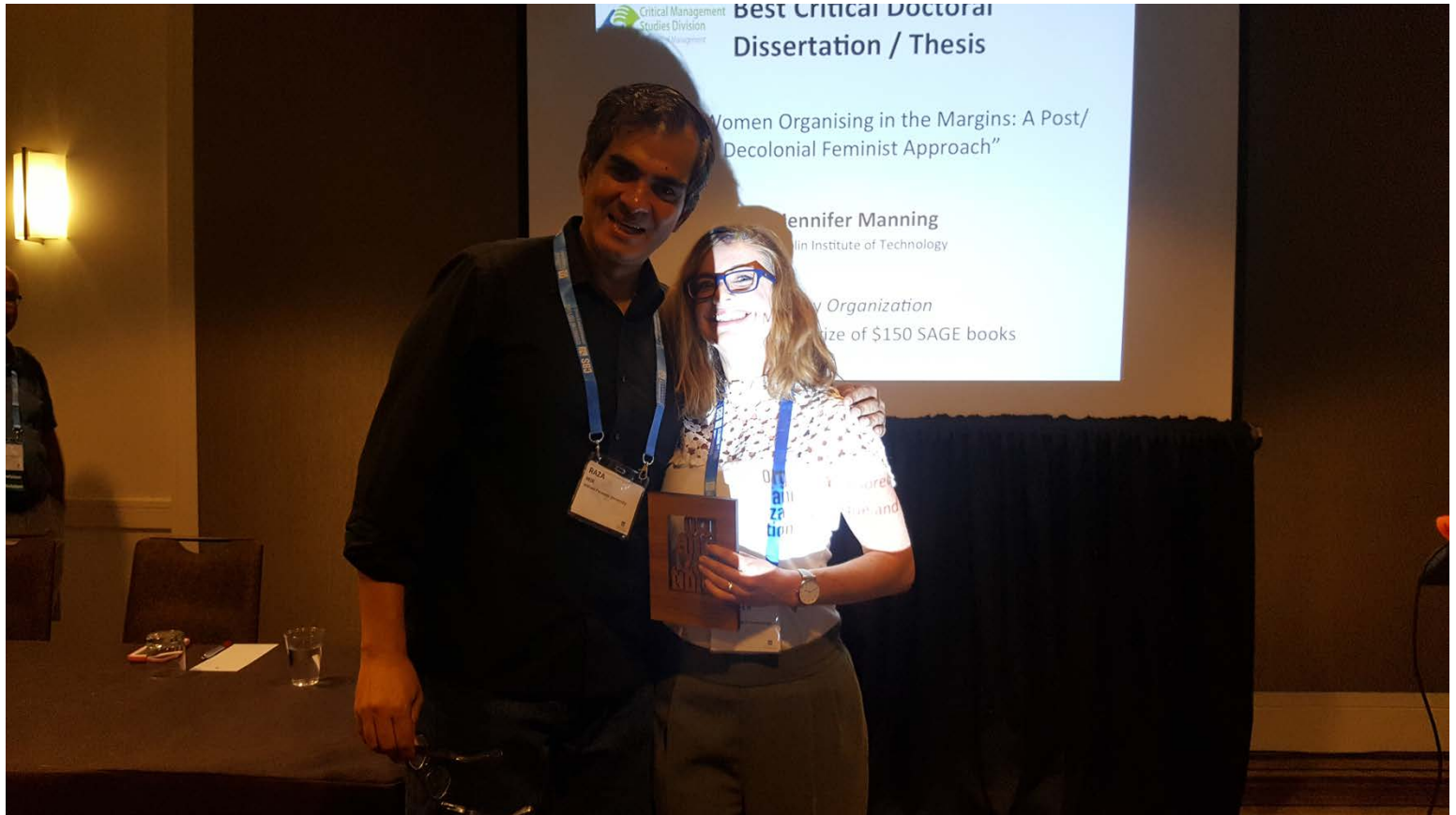


toral studies in 2012, the story of my study begins in 2009 when I left my job working in the non-profit sector in Ireland and embarked upon a twenty-month journey travelling the world (or as much of the world as I could travel in this time on a limited budget!). I travelled through India, lived in Xi'an, China, travelled around South-East Asia, went island hopping through Oceania, and volunteered for a social foundation in Guatemala when travelling Central America and the Caribbean.

These formative experiences enabled

ness' according to Western epistemologies. I came to an understanding that the Western world needed to listen to, and engage with, them as people in their own right. It is only through dialogue, which requires listening as much as talking, that we can advance mutual understanding.

With this understanding and worldview, when I returned to Ireland to prepare scholarship applications and ready myself for PhD candidacy, I was confident that my area of research would be exploring the lived experiences of those working and or-



tion of their working practices that respects their indigenous worldviews, with which the women respect each other and reclaim the value of community and collective action, where they are at one with the community of the home and the community of the group under conditions of equality and cooperation, while also being orientated by the realities of life as a Maya woman living in the socio-economic margins.

I hope to return to work again with the Maya women participants and share with

them how our work has been received, and, in time, engage in further research with marginalised, indigenous women in the Global South. I am now approached by Irish and international postgraduate students wanting to pursue their PhD candidacy with me in this area of research that provides space for Global South women to voice their own understanding of gender, identity and work from within the context of their social, cultural and historical location.

I was humbled and delighted to travel

to AOM in Atlanta to receive this award. My many thanks to the reviewers of my application and their constructive feedback. I felt instantly welcomed into the CMS division and community, where I was provided with the opportunity to engage in many exciting conversations, attend intellectually stimulating PDW's, symposiums and presentations, and generally spend time with likeminded people engaging in fascinating research. I hope I can be a member who can contribute as much as I have received!