

Spotlight on Seray Ergene | *U. of Massachusetts Amherst*

CMS Division Best Doctoral Student Paper, 2017



I'm a Ph.D. candidate at UMass Amherst in Organization Studies. I'm originally from Turkey and came to the US for my doctoral studies. My overall research centers on sustainability, and I'm interested in studying how organizations engage with social and environmental issues at present. I believe that sustainability needs to be studied from the lens of production and consumption relations, and for my dissertation project I follow the sustainability practices of a US clothing company whose production operations

are outsourced to developing countries. Specifically, I do multi-sited ethnography and follow organic cotton seeds along their value chain, starting in Turkey until they become 'sustainable' t-shirts to be purchased at retail stores in the US. My theoretical lens is informed by both management and other disciplines such as economic geography, feminist ecological theories, and science and technology studies.

The paper that received the CMS award argues that management and or-

ganization studies need a different way of thinking about sustainability because the underlying political-economic premises of our current theories make people and nature exploitable in knowledge production practices. In order to think differently, I bring in alternative analytic concepts from feminist ecological perspectives. Specifically, with these concepts I aimed to re-tune scholarship's focus on material processes of everyday life and well-being of natural and cultural ecologies, particularly in the Global South.

My research is interdisciplinary, and I also completed a Graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies at UMass Amherst. In a broad sense, I draw my inspiration from contemporary anthropology and feminist science and technology studies.

At times, well most of the time, I feel very isolated as a management doctoral student trying to do interdisciplinary and critical research in the US. I wish the values and guiding philosophies underlying CMS were shared among the US management schools as much as they are in Europe. Perhaps that's a dream. But I know that I am pursuing research that is important for me. Although at times I am discouraged, I know that I'm not an alien. Thank you, CMS community, for being there and keeping me going.