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SORAH SEONG

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SUMMARY

Sorah Seong is an organizational theorist who studies the social processes through which new ideas, strategic directions, and markets emerge and evolve, often involving dispersed actors. At the heart of her research is the interplay between purposive action and collective emergence. Her current work also examines how increasingly autonomous AI systems participate in and reshape these processes. Her perspective is informed by her experience as a founder, advisor, and author of two bestselling books on Web3 and AI.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France; Singapore 2026-present
Visiting Scholar
Department of Organizational Behavior

University of Washington, Foster School of Business, Seattle, WA 2018-2021
Assistant Professor
Department of Management and Organization (M&O)

- M&O PhD Admissions Committee, 2020, 2021
- Undergraduate Scholarship Review Committee, 2020, 2021
- Faculty Judge & Advisor for various student startup competitions, 2019-2021
- M&O Faculty Search Committee, 2019

AREAS OF INTEREST

- **Research:** Crowds, Emergence, Categories & Identities, Creativity, Strategy Process
- **Teaching:** Entrepreneurship, Strategic Management, Web3 & AI

RECENT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Author & Public Speaker 2021-*present*
- *Beyond AI: The Human Strategy* (2025), an award-winner, endorsed by CEOs and major media.
- *NFT Revolution* (2021), national bestseller (+100K copies sold), translated into multiple languages.
- Designed and delivered executive-education video courses on AI-era leadership and human judgment.
- Delivered 100+ talks across corporations, universities, startups, and industry conferences globally.

SQRT, New York, NY; Seoul, South Korea 2022-2024
Co-founder & CEO
- Led a team of quant traders and developers to build a fintech platform offering retail investors access to institutional-grade crypto trading strategies: "Hedge fund experience, robo-advisor simplicity."
- Launched and managed SQRT's B2B crypto asset-management business serving a family office.
- Oversaw product development, operations, community growth including a newsletter, and fundraising.

fashionxDAO, Ethereum blockchain 2022-*present*
Founding Member & Advisor
- Co-founded and led a Web3-native fashion collective exploring decentralized creative production.

- Led physical garment production, launch events, and the design of tokenomics and governance.

Madrona Venture Labs (MVL), Seattle, WA 2022
Entrepreneur in Residence (EiR)
- Scouted as a Web3 lead, developed a venture concept focused on DAO discovery and engagement.
- Led weekly meetings with MVL leadership and tech leads on market research, concept/product development, team recruitment and fundraising plans.
- Pitched the idea at MVL Demo Day ("Launchable"), leading to WR3P, the predecessor to SQRT.

EDUCATION

INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France & Singapore 2012-2018
PhD in Management, specializing in Organizational Theory and Entrepreneurship
- *Dissertation*: A Theory of Crowds for Market Emergence and Entrepreneurial Dynamics: Semantic Rhythms, Collective Memory, and Identities
- *Committee*: Philip Anderson (chair), Jason Davis, Frédéric Godart, Gabriel Szulanski
- Recipient of the Strategy Research Foundation (SRF) Dissertation Scholarship

London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), London, UK 2010-2011
MSc in Theory and History of International Relations (joint degree)

Harvard College, Cambridge, MA 2005-2009
AB in Sociology with a secondary field in Visual and Environmental Studies

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Godart, F., **Seong, S.**, & Phillips, D. (2020). The Sociology of Creativity: Elements, Structures, and Audiences, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 46: 489-510 (view).

Seong, S. & Godart, F. (2018). Influencing the Influencers: Diversification, Semantic Strategies, and Creativity Evaluations. *Academy of Management Journal.* 61(3): 966-993 (view).

Seong, S. (2017). A Theory of Crowds in Time and Space: Explaining the Cognitive Foundations of a New Market. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 50, 223-252 (view).

Seong, S., Kim, Y., & Szulanski, G. (2015). Leadership, Innovation, and Strategic Change: A Conversation with Michael Tushman. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24(4), 370-381 (view).

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Askin, N., **Seong, S.**, & Szulanski, G. How Strategists Theorize: A Process Model of Disciplined Imagination. Ready to submit. *Strategy Science.*

Seong, S. The Social Architecture of Creativity: AI and the Sources of Surprise. Target: *Academy of Management Review.*

Seong, S. & Szulanski, G. Where Do Strategies Go? Rethinking the Fate of Strategic Directions. Target: *Academy of Management Review.*

Seong, S. Meaning Before Markets: The Co-evolution of Labels and Actors. Target: *Organization Science.*

Betting to Belong: Fandom, Recognition, and Price Formation in Sports Prediction Markets (with Cho, H.S.). Early-stage research; grant proposal submitted.

BOOKS & BOOK CHAPTERS

Seong, S. (2025) *Beyond AI: The Human Strategy.* The Square (view) (Google Books).

Seong, S., Hoefer, R., & McLaughlin, S. (2021) *NFT Revolution.* Gilbut (view) (Google Books).

Godart, F. & **Seong, S**. (2014). Is Sustainable Luxury Fashion Possible? In M. A. Gardetti & A. L. Torres (Eds.), *Sustainable Luxury: Managing Social and Environmental Performance in Iconic Brands*: 12-27. Sheffield Greenleaf Publishing (view).

SELECTED CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Conference, Chicago (USA), August 2024
- *Presenter. "*Complex Dynamics of Creative Industries in Advancing Organizational Theories." Symposium sponsored by OMT & TIM.

Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Conference, Boston (USA), August 2019
- *Presenter. "*The Evolutionary Story of Labels in a New Market Space: Through the Lens of Crowds."
- *Presenter. "*All that Rhythm of Identity Propagation: At the Nexus of Sensemaking Arenas."
- *Chair. "Category Dynamics: Emergence, Expansion, Adaption, Hybridization."*

Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Conference, Atlanta (USA), August 2017
- *Organizer & Presenter*. "Uncovering Crowds as Interstitial Spaces: Crowds that Influence and that Ought to be Influenced." *Showcase* Symposium sponsored by OMT & TIM.
- *Organizer.* "The Sound of Leadership in Shared Dynamics: An Evening with the GRAMMY-nominated A Far Cry." Professional Development Workshop (PDW) with a chamber orchestra, sponsored by OMT, OB, & ODC. (website)
- *Organizer.* OMT Café on "Shared leadership with the GRAMMY-nominated A Far Cry."

Strategic Management Society (SMS) Conference, Berlin (Germany), September 2016
- *Finalist*. *Best Conference Paper Award*. "Crowds' Hidden Meaning Structure in Market Emergence."
- *Presenter.* Strategy Research Foundation (SRF) Dissertation Scholar Final Presentation.

Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Conference, Anaheim (USA), August 2016
- *Organizer & Presenter*. "Novelty Ain't No Virgin Birth: Uncovering Novelty Emergence through Music, Time, and Technology." Symposium sponsored by OMT, TIM, & ENT.
- *Organizer.* OMT Café on "Crowd, Time, and Entrepreneurship."
- *Chair.* "Emergence of Categories & Networks."
- *Participant*. OMT Doctoral Consortium.

Strategic Management Society (SMS) Conference, Denver (USA), October 2015
- *Presenter*. "Bringing Process Back to Strategic Variation: Individuals' Navigation through Disciplined Imagination."
- *Participant.* Strategy Research Foundation (SRF) Dissertation Scholars Workshop.

Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Conference, Vancouver (Canada), August 2015
- *Organizer & Presenter*. "The Beginning of a New Beginning: Connecting with a Collective Mind in Form Emergence." PDW sponsored by OMT, TIM, ENT, MOC. (website)
- *Organizer & Presenter*. "Breathing Life into Technology: Socio-cognitive Paths towards Opening the Black Box." Symposium sponsored by OMT, TIM, & MOC.
- *Presenter*. "Semantic Constellations: The Impact of Subsidiary Naming on Parent Firms' Creativity."

Strategic Management Society (SMS) Annual Conference, Madrid (Spain), September 2014
- *Co-chair.* The Foundational Thinkers Interview Series with Michael Tushman (HBS). Sponsored by Knowledge and Innovation (K&I) Interest Group. (watch)

AWARDS & HONORS

- *Selected Title,* Digital Insight Outstanding Content, Digital Society, Ministry of Science and ICT, 2026
- *Selected Title,* Sejong Books, Social Sciences, KPIPA, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2026
- *Selected,* Top 50 Undergraduate Business Professor, Poets & Quants, 2020 (interview)
- *Nominee,* University of Washington Distinguished Teaching Award, 2020
- *Recipient,* Outstanding Author Contribution, Emerald Literati Awards, 2018
- *Recipient,* Rudolf & Valeria Maag Scholarship in Entrepreneurship (20K Euros), 2017-2018
- *Showcase Symposium*, TIM Division, Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 2017
- *Finalist for Best Conference Paper*, Strategic Management Society Annual Conference, Berlin, 2016
- *Recipient,* Strategy Research Foundation (SRF) Dissertation Scholarship (10K USD), 2015-2016
- *Recipient,* Doctoral Fellowship (full tuition and stipend), INSEAD, 2012-2017
- *Member,* The National Scholars Honor Society, USA, 2008
- *Certified,* Master class in violin performance, St. Petersburg State Conservatory, 2007
- *Recipient,* Full-ride Scholarship, Kwanjeong Educational Foundation (200K USD), 2005-2009
- *Recipient,* President's Education Award, US Department of Education, 2000

TEACHING & CASES

Selected Executive & Professional Learning Programs
Program Developer & Instructor

- Hunet, *CEO Insights Series*. Executive series on AI-era leadership and organizational change. 2026.
- Ubob, *The Human Code.* Corporate learning course on human capabilities in the AI era. 2026.

Foster School of Business, University of Washington
Instructor

- ENTRE 370: Introduction to Entrepreneurship (40+ undergraduate students per section)
  - Winter 2019 (**4.8**/5.0)
  - Spring 2019 (**4.8**/5.0, **4.6**/5.0)
  - Fall 2019 (**4.7**/5.0, **4.4**/5.0)

- MGMT 430: Strategic Management Capstone (50+ undergraduate students per section)
  - Winter 2020 (**4.7**/5.0, **4.9**/5.0)
  - Winter 2021 (**4.9**/5.0, **4.9**/5.0)
  - Spring 2021 (**4.9**/5.0, **4.8**/5.0)

- MGMT 499: Exploring SaaS Go to Market Strategy (Independent Study)
  - Spring 2021

- ENTRE 600: Independent Research (PhD Supervision)
  - Spring 2020

INSEAD
Teaching Assistant & Coach

- *Teaching Assistant*, MBA Program, New Business Ventures, Spring 2018
- *Coach*, Action Learning Projects (ALPs), INSEAD Executive Education, UNICEF Leadership Development Program, June-Nov 2013

Cases

- Anderson, P. & **Seong, S.** Biotopia. INSEAD Case 6309, June 2017 (view).

EARLIER EXPERIENCE

Biotopia (acquired by Huons Global in 2016) — Seoul, South Korea & Guangzhou, China
Marketing Manager — 2011-2012

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) — Seoul, South Korea
Protection Unit Intern — 2010

Prime Minister's Office (PMO) — Seoul, South Korea
Administrative Intern — 2009

African Leadership — Cape Town, South Africa
Field Coordinator (gap year) — 2004-2005

OTHER INFORMATION

Languages: Korean (native), English (fluent), French (intermediate), Chinese and Japanese (basic)
Interests: Faith, off-the-beaten-path travel, exploring new cities, making art, fitness, local food cultures