

## Statement of Purpose

### Filiz Garip

I have always been good in mathematics and physics, yet Newton and his society interest me as much as his law of gravity. I have studied industrial engineering in the highest-ranking department in Turkey; having a technical career was the only way to survive in a developing country. Yet I have been skeptical of the rigid character of physical and mathematical laws, which disregard social reality. I pursued graduate study at Princeton University in order to acquire a scientific approach and critical thinking along with analytical tools to tackle mathematical complexity. Yet I want to use my skills to try to understand the organization of society.

During my highly quantitative education, I have been moved by an intellectual curiosity to different fields. I wanted to know and it was this desire that pushed me to meet new challenges instead of building upon previous knowledge. I studied art until I became a lecturer of photography in my university. I developed a critical view of photography, and co-founded a non-profit photography review, targeting art students and faculty. Distributed only to the university in the beginning, *Genis Aci*, soon reached a point of being the second best-selling photography review in the country. We have been honored by IFSAK (the biggest photography organization in Turkey) with a team award for “Best Contribution to Photography” in 1998. Now, *Genis Aci* is considered as one of the most prestigious reviews in Turkey.

The research that I have done as a writer of the review opened a new window for me. Illuminated by Walter Benjamin, John Berger and Susan Sontag, I started to see the void in my studies. The rigorous mathematical models I had studied were hardly applicable to social reality, which did not lend itself to a simple demonstration of functional relations as in the physical sciences. Although I had merely skimmed over the surface, accumulating fragments of facts as they related to photography, I was fascinated by the questions on culture, its creation and the way culture relates to systems of social regulation. These questions have stimulated me to ask and seek to answer further questions. For this reason, I have continued to study sociology during my graduate work, this time at an academic level.

Being a graduate student in the Operations Research and Financial Engineering department at Princeton University, I have been impressed by how the methodology of the physical sciences produces refutable hypotheses and tests these hypotheses with solid statistical techniques. However, seeking answers to more complex social questions, I have been equally frustrated by the simplifying assumptions that constrain analysis, narrow the focus and are hardly reconcilable with social reality. I have been interested in economics as a social science with rigorous methods. However, I found the methodology of economics - modeling the

society through the construction of rational individuals who engage in maximizing behavior, focused mainly on efficiency and equilibrium concepts- too restrictive to understand society. Being a student of Miguel Angel Centeno and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly at Princeton University, I have finally discovered sociology. I have been fascinated by the ability of a sociological approach to identify issues and offer a broad perspective unconstrained by mathematical considerations. Through my research on the interests of the faculty and the valuable suggestions of Bruce Western, I have been introduced to and inspired by the perspectives of Paul DiMaggio, Frank Dobbin and Alejandro Portes as an alternative to economic orthodoxy.

Now I have decided to dedicate my life to a future in sociology. As for my long-term goals, my ambition is to use my technical background and enthusiasm for the improvement and welfare of the society. I strongly believe that the methodology and the scope of sociology will give me the opportunity to do research on topics that my studies in engineering has not allowed me to. Being a member of a developing country, I am particularly interested in development and economic sociology with a focus on Turkey and Latin America.

I am confident that, with the opportunity to pursue my education in sociology at Princeton University, I will be able to acquire analytical skills and critical thinking in sociology, and to contribute substantially to the field. I believe that the skills that I have acquired during my highly quantitative education can be used to address a large variety of problems in sociology. Since rigorous data analysis is a natural companion and complement of sociological analysis in many domains, my analytical background would be an asset to the department. Moreover, my experiences as graduate student, researcher (for my master's thesis) and teaching assistant have sharpened my desire to be a scholar and to dedicate my time and efforts to the challenge of learning, discovering and teaching.

I can confidently say that four years of a very competitive education that I completed with honors at Bosphorus University have provided me with a sound knowledge of mathematics and statistics. Moreover, during my graduate studies in Operations Research and Financial Engineering Department at Princeton University, I have become proficient in time-series analysis (both in a classical and Bayesian perspective), panel data and cross-sectional analysis and non-parametric estimation. I have also been a teaching assistant for "Time Series and Regression," an upper-level course offered by Professor Rene Carmona at Princeton University.

I have chosen Princeton University because of the competitive program offered through an outstanding faculty. Princeton University will enable me to make the most of my engineering background in furthering research in sociology. I am very eager, enthusiastic and ambitious to further my prospective studies at Princeton University, and hope to be considered eligible for admission.