

WHY DID YOU SWITCH YOUR MAJOR?

Betül DOĞAN¹

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I have received my BS degree in Econometrics from Suleyman Demirel University, obviously a more quantitative field than sociology, my current major in a BA program at Anadolu University. This brand new field forced me to reflect back on my experience during my first undergraduate studies. As a result of that, I have been focusing on the sort of emotions and contemplative opportunities I am finding are new to me. Having said that, this letter will not adopt any stance against quantitative studies or harbor anything negative for my prior field of study. My purpose is to write about what benefits sociology gave me and what has changed in my position as an individual and my way of thinking about the things that happen around me.

First of all, studying econometrics has definitely laid the foundations of my identity and thinking discipline in my current job at an insurance agency. With the knowledge and skills that I gained from my professors, I can dig deep into the issues related to the economy with statistical strategies and an approach to possibilities. Rather than watching economic news on Bloomberg TV directly and only having a binary point of view, I attempt to interpret events as part of a gradual process from multiple perspectives. For example, the possibility that Catalan protests in the streets of Barcelona will cause some fluctuation in the economy of Spain or the whole European Union is an issue that can draw debate. However, it is also a possibility that the level of the competition in La Liga, the Primera División in Spain will increase, and a result of which will be the quality of the football and the amount of foreign investment will increase accordingly. All of these hypothetical stories are possible to advocate for and show differences between individual points of views. Accordingly, one does not and cannot prove his or her opinion even after the resolution of the event. After all, there is always a possibility that a third variable might be in play, and have had an impact on the result, which might trigger a larger discussion about the other invisible possibilities. However, having a social perspective and interpreting events through sociological theories gives the researcher a more holistic view. Thus human factor is brought into the game, and we are faced with the need to interpret the visible impacts on certain events that are caused by human-human interaction. In this case, while reading about the political unrest in Barcelona, I involuntarily start to think about the social, political, historical and linguistic components of the Catalan crisis as a sociology researcher with a background in econometrics. The theory of Freire (2005) which specifies ‘the oppressor’ and the dehumanized oppressed’ comes in handy when I need to speculate about the background of the unrest. The practices of the status quo are taken into consideration, and the structure of the Catalan culture in terms of flexibility to accept change and welcome integration or assimilation turns into a possibility that needs to be taken into account. That is to say that the act of putting forward an idea regarding the possible results of an event is supported through social perspectives, which transforms our struggle for finding the best answer within the boundaries of possibilities into a systematic and holistic analysis.

To conclude my argument, I would like to rethink the answer to the question “Why did you switch your major?” My answer is simple and straightforward. I am not leaving the field of econometrics but empowering my perspective through the theories in sociology. This change is a golden opportunity for me to look at different layers of the event, but not only through the window of econometrics. After all, interdisciplinary study is a norm in modern academia, so ‘switching’ sounds like a term that requires a binary change. However, avoiding this binary approach, I think of research or learning as a never-ending experience that needs to be carried out through diverse perspectives such as psychology, sociology and politics. In sum, I believe in the power of life-long learning and benefiting from neighboring domains of research for a richer analysis of my data. As an insurance agent, I have not suffered from studying sociology but have always utilized my learning in building bridges with customers and understanding the dynamics of customer loyalty.

¹ Undergraduate student, Faculty of Open Education, Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey,
betuldx@gmail.com

Reference

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