



Nazgol Ghandnoosh
Graduate Scholarship Recipient

Nazgol was born and raised in Iran. Uprooted from her hometown in her teens, she and her family moved across the map to Canada, lived in New York for two years, and finally settled down in South Carolina. Attending four different high schools in four years, she was still able to excel academically and went on to pursue her bachelors in Economics at the University of Pennsylvania where she graduated magna cum laude.

Currently, she is pursuing her Ph.D. in Sociology. For her dissertation, she is developing an ethnographic account of individuals and organizations reacting to prolonged punishment for criminal offenses both during and after imprisonment. She is developing two dissertation chapters based on this research. First, through participant interviews at a legal clinic in South Los Angeles, she asks why, given the negative consequences of having a criminal record, some people refuse to offer the necessary redemption narrative to receive expungement. Instead of expressing guilt and rehabilitation, some of the clinic's clients insist that they were wrongfully convicted – jeopardizing their petitions. The paper contrasts how workers at the legal clinic interpret this resistance – as a failure to win trust – with how these clients explain their decision – as frustration with the criminal justice system.

Second, she is investigating efforts to organize communities to support life-term prisoners through a comparative study of two organizations involved in this work. Her hope is that this account of active and heterogeneous resistance will complement existing scholarship on how people are affected by mass incarceration.