

# FEYZA AKOVA

4007 Jenkins Nanovic Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556

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## EDUCATION

**PhD, Sociology** Expected 2024

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University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, IN

**Dissertation:** *Journeys to Traditional Sufi Islam in America: Self-transcendence, Tradition, and Social Change in the Contemporary Modern World*

**Committee:** Christian Smith (Chair), Ann Mische, Kriag Beyerlein, and Mahan Mirza

**Comprehensive Exams:** Religion (*passed with distinction*), Culture

**MA, Sociology** 2014

University of Houston Houston, TX

**BA, Sociology, Psychology (Double Major)** 2012

University of Istanbul Istanbul, Turkey

*Highest GPA in Sociology (among 70 students)*

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Theory, Religion, Culture, Social Change, Collective Action

## PUBLICATIONS

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Feyza Akova. [Forthcoming]. "Treating Religion as a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants' Religious Identity Constructions." *Sociology of Religion*.

\***Winner**, 2021 Robert J. McNamara Student Paper Award, Association for the Sociology of Religion Student Paper

\***Winner**, 2021 Mary Ellen Konieczny Best Graduate Student Sociology of Religion Paper Award, Notre Dame Center for the Study of Religion and Society

Feyza Akova. 2022. "Returning to God: Constructing Agency Through the Practice of Dhikr in Sufi Islam." In *Routledge Handbook of Islamic Ritual and Practice*, edited by Oliver Leaman, 200-209. New York, NY: Routledge.

## NEWSLETTERS AND ESSAYS

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Mentioned as "Emerging Social Theorist" in *Perspectives*, American Sociological Association Theory Section Newsletter, Fall 2022. (Accessible online: <http://www.asatheory.org/current-newsletter-online/emerging-theorist-spotlight-feyza-akova>)

"Becoming the Change," *Insights*, Lake Institute on Faith & Giving Newsletter. February 14, 2023. (Accessible online: <https://lakeinstitute.org/resource-library/february-issue1-2023/>)

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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Ann Mische and Feyza Akova. [First draft.] “Transformative Interventions: Assessing Cultural Technologies for Personal and Systemic Change.”

## GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

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- Lake Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship**, *Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy* (\$25,000) 2022–2023
- Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship**, *Muslim Philanthropy Initiative at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy* (\$5,000) 2022
- Dissertation Research Grant**, *Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts* (\$2,500) 2021
- Emergency Dissertation Grant** (referencing COVID-19), *Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts* (\$2,500) 2020
- Dissertation Research Grant**, *Center for the Study of Religion and Society* (\$1,800) 2019
- Professionalization Grant**, *Kellogg Institute for International Studies* (\$1,500) 2018
- Summer Seminar Fellow**, *The New School Institute for Social Critical Inquiry* 2018
- MA Scholarship**, *Turkish Ministry of National Education* (\$70,000) 2012–2014

## AWARDS AND HONORS

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### For Research:

- John J. Kane Memorial Award for Outstanding Graduate Student**, *Department of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame* (\$200) 2022
- William V. D’Antonio Award for Graduate Student Excellence in the Sociology of Religion**, *Center for the Study of Religion and Society at the University of Notre Dame* (\$1100) 2022
- Emerging Scholars Award**, *Muslim Philanthropy Initiative at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy* (\$1,000) 2022
- Robert J. McNamara Student Paper Award**, *Association for the Sociology of Religion*, “Implications of Treating Religion as a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity Constructions” (\$500) 2021
- Mary Ellen Konieczny Best Graduate Student Sociology of Religion Paper Award**, *Center for the Study of Religion and Society*, “Implications of Treating Religion as a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity Constructions” (\$250) 2021

**Best Paper Award in Social Sciences, Northeast Turkish American Scholars Association (NETA), “A Qualitative Study of Turkish Immigrants’ Approaches to Modernity” (\$1000) 2015**

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**For Teaching:**

**David L. Dodge Memorial Teaching Award, Sociology Department at the University of Notre Dame (\$100) 2022**

**Excellence in Teaching Award, Midwest Region Teaching Award Competition in Doctoral Category, Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) (\$750) 2022**

- **University Nominee for the Teaching Award, Doctoral Category**, nominated by University of Notre Dame Graduate School for the *Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) Teaching Award Competition*

**Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Award, Kaneb Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Notre Dame 2022**

**Striving for Excellence in Teaching Certificate, Kaneb Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Notre Dame 2022**

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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University of Notre Dame  
*Instructor* Notre Dame, IN  
Fall 2021  
SOC 30900-02: Foundations of Sociological Theory

University of Notre Dame  
*Teaching Assistant* for Professor Christian Smith Notre Dame, IN  
Spring 2020  
SOC 20666: Environment, Food, Society

University of Notre Dame  
*Teaching Assistant* for Professor Christian Smith Notre Dame, IN  
Fall 2019  
SOC 63911: Classical Sociological Theory (Graduate Level)

**PRESENTATIONS**

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*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting* (Los Angeles, CA) August 2022  
“Transcending Selves and Society: Sufi Mystics, Self-transcendence, and Social Change,” presented at session panel entitled *Ideology, Ideas, and Information in Social Movements*

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting* (virtual) August 2021  
“Freedom from the Inside: Islamic Cultivations of Agency and Selfhood Among Converts to Sufi Islam”

*Annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the* October 2020

<i>Religious Research Association</i> (cancelled due to COVID-19) “When Religion Becomes a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity Constructions”	
<i>American Sociological Association Annual Meeting</i> (virtual) “Implications of Treating Religion as a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity Constructions”	August 2020
<i>American Sociological Association Annual Meeting</i> (virtual) “Transformative Interventions: Assessing Cultural Technologies for Personal and Systemic Change” (presented by co-author Ann Mische)	August 2020
<i>Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting</i> (New York, NY) “The Meaning of Modernity in Everyday Life”	August 2019
<i>Istanbul Conference Center, Invited Panel Presentation</i> (Houston, TX) “Brave New World: Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment”	March 2014

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

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University of Notre Dame <i>Research Assistant</i> for Professor Kraig Beyerlein	Notre Dame, IN Fall 2020–Spring 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted with coding of The National Study of Protest Events (NSPE)</li> </ul>	
University of Notre Dame <i>Research Assistant</i> for Professor Ann Mische	Notre Dame, IN Fall 2016–Spring 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected data and created a database for Ann Mische’s book</li> <li>Assisted with coding and categorizing data</li> </ul>	
University of Notre Dame <i>Research Assistant</i> for Global Religion Research Initiative	Notre Dame, IN Fall 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluated grant applications</li> </ul>	
Inspiring South Asian Youth (I-SAY) Non-Profit Organization <i>Research Intern and Program Evaluator</i>	Fort Lee, NJ 2014–2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created program evaluation survey for the Teach and Travel Program</li> <li>Collected and analyzed program evaluation data for the Youth Development Program</li> <li>Assisted with grant applications</li> </ul>	

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

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<b>Editorial Board Member</b> , Review of Religious Research Journal	2023–Present
<b>Participant</b> , Notre Dame Press Publishing Boot Camp for Academic Book Publishing, University of Notre Dame	Summer 2022

<b>Undergraduate Student Mentor</b> , Grad Guidance Mentorship Program, University of Notre Dame	Spring 2022
<b>Advisory Board Member</b> , Routledge Handbook of Islamic Ritual and Practice	2020–2022
<b>Chair</b> , Jack Shand International Travel Grants Committee, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting	2021–2022
<b>Committee Member</b> , Jack Shand International Travel Grants Committee, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting	2021–2020
<b>Moderator</b> , Mentoring Panel “Developing as a Teacher,” American Sociological Association/Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASA/ASR)	Aug 11, 2021
<b>Mentor</b> , Department of Sociology’s Graduate Mentoring Program University of Notre Dame.	Fall 2018–2021
<b>Mentor</b> , Northeast Turkish American Scholars Association (NETA)	2016–2020
<b>Organizer</b> , “Tradition Reading Group” Graduate Reading Group, University of Notre Dame	Fall 2020
<b>Student Ambassador</b> , Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting	2020–2019
<b>President</b> , Turkish American Women Student Association, University of Houston	2013–2014
<b>Treasurer</b> , Turkish Student Association, University of Houston	2013–2014

## LANGUAGE AND SOFTWARE

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- Turkish (native)
- English (fluent)
- Stata
- Airtable Database Software

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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- American Sociological Association
  - Sections: Sociology of Religion, Theory, Teaching, Culture, Collective Behavior and Social Movements
- Association for the Sociology of Religion
- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

## REFERENCES

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Christian Smith, PhD  
Professor, Department of Sociology

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(574) 631-4531 (office)  
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