

# FEYZA AKOVA

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## EDUCATION

**PhD, Sociology** Expected 2023

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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.

## 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

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

#### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

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<b>William V. D’Antonio Award for Graduate Student Excellence in the Sociology of Religion</b> , <i>Center for the Study of Religion and Society at the University of Notre Dame</i> (\$1100)	2022
<b>Excellence in Teaching Award, Midwest Region Teaching Award Competition in Doctoral Category</b> , <i>Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS)</i> (\$750) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>University Nominee for the Teaching Award, Doctoral Category</b>, nominated by University of Notre Dame for the <i>Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) Teaching Award Competition</i></li> </ul>	2022
<b>Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Award</b> , <i>Kaneb Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Notre Dame</i>	2022
<b>Striving for Excellence in Teaching Certificate</b> , <i>Kaneb Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of Notre Dame</i>	2022
<b>Emerging Scholars Award</b> , <i>Muslim Philanthropy Initiative at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy</i> (\$1,000)	2022
<b>Robert J. McNamara Student Paper Award</b> , <i>Association for the Sociology of Religion</i> , “Implications of Treating Religion as a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity Constructions” (\$500)	2021
<b>Mary Ellen Konieczny Best Graduate Student Sociology of Religion Paper Award</b> , <i>Center for the Study of Religion and Society</i> , “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

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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

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

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

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting* (Los Angeles, CA)  
“Transcending Selves and Society: Sufi Mystics, Self-transcendence, and Social Change,” presented at session panel entitled *Ideology, Ideas, and Information in Social Movements*  
August 2021

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

*Annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association* (cancelled due to COVID-19)  
“When Religion Becomes a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity Constructions”  
October 2020

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting* (virtual)  
“Implications of Treating Religion as a Personal Choice: Possibilities and Dilemmas in Turkish Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity Constructions”  
August 2020

*American Sociological Association Annual Meeting* (virtual)  
“Transformative Interventions: Assessing Cultural Technologies for Personal and Systemic Change” (presented by co-author Ann Mische)  
August 2020

*Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting* (New York, NY)  
“The Meaning of Modernity in Everyday Life”  
August 2019

*Istanbul Conference Center, Invited Panel Presentation* (Houston, TX)  
“Brave New World: Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment”  
March 2014

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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- University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, IN  
*Research Assistant* for Professor Kraig Beyerlein Fall 2020–Spring 2022
- Assisted with coding of The National Study of Protest Events (NSPE)
- University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, IN  
*Research Assistant* for Professor Ann Mische Fall 2016–Spring 2019
- Collected data and created a database for Ann Mische’s book
  - Assisted with coding and categorizing data
- University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, IN  
*Research Assistant* for Global Religion Research Initiative Fall 2017
- Evaluated grant applications
- Inspiring South Asian Youth (I-SAY) Non-Profit Organization Fort Lee, NJ  
*Research Intern and Program Evaluator* 2014–2016
- Created program evaluation survey for the Teach and Travel Program
  - Collected and analyzed program evaluation data for the Youth Development Program
  - Assisted with grant applications

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES

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- Participant**, Notre Dame Press Publishing Boot Camp for Academic Book Publishing, University of Notre Dame Summer 2022
- Undergraduate Student Mentor**, Grad Guidance Mentorship Program, University of Notre Dame Spring 2022
- Advisory Board Member**, Routledge Handbook of Islamic Ritual and Practice 2020–2022
- Chair**, Jack Shand International Travel Grants Committee, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting 2021–2022
- Committee Member**, Jack Shand International Travel Grants Committee, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting 2021–2020
- Moderator**, Mentoring Panel “Developing as a Teacher,” American Sociological Association/Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASA/ASR) Aug 11, 2021
- Mentor**, Department of Sociology’s Graduate Mentoring Program University of Notre Dame. Fall 2018–2021
- Mentor**, Northeast Turkish American Scholars Association (NETA) 2016–2020

**Organizer**, “Tradition Reading Group” Graduate Reading Group, University of Notre Dame Fall 2020

**Student Ambassador**, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting 2020–2019

**President**, Turkish American Women Student Association, University of Houston 2013–2014

**Treasurer**, 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  
4032 Jenkins-Nanovic Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556  
(574) 631-4531 (office)  
[christian.smith@nd.edu](mailto:christian.smith@nd.edu)

Ann Mische, PhD  
Kellogg Associate Professor, Department of Sociology  
111 Hesburg Center, Notre Dame, IN 46556  
(574) 631-7760 (office)  
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