



**LAW, RELIGION AND WORK IN AFRICA**  
**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

**Ben Guerir, Morocco**  
**May 18-21, 2025**

The history, nature, and conditions of work in contemporary Africa have been shaped by various strands and enunciations of religious and legal regimes. Most notable are the international instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which envision work as integral to personhood and a prerequisite for human dignity. As citizens of the global community, every African is thus presumed to have a right to work, to decent conditions at work, and to form and join unions and to engage in industrial action, including the withdrawal of labor.

The 2025 ACLARS conference will focus on the multiple ways in which law and religion mutually shape our understandings of the value of work, the features that work should have if it is to be valuable, and the institutional, cultural, and other protections that workers need to ensure that their labor conditions reach minimum thresholds. Among the valuable human interests that work serves are the moral goods it delivers; the opportunities to develop and exercise productive abilities, including socializing with other persons in shared activities; the contributions it enables workers to make to the wellbeing of others; and most importantly, the promotion of self-esteem and self-respect.

We encourage contributions that address all dimensions, contexts, and types of work, religious and nonreligious, professional and artisan, including questions of access, eligibility, (in)security, and compensations. The [Pew Report on Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa](#) (2010) noted that many sub-Saharan Africans view unemployment as a greater problem than religious conflict. Therefore, we are interested in research presentations on the possibilities and challenges faced by Africans in finding and keeping meaningful and dignified work, in manifesting their religious identities in the workplace, in navigating the differences between religious, public, and private employers, and the shifting roles of law and religion in work and employment. We especially welcome submissions that address any aspects of the following sub-themes and research questions:

### ***Sub-themes and research questions:***

- **Religious freedom and accommodation of religion and spirituality** in the workplace, (e.g., protections for religious speech/expression, holiday observance, religious clothing/objects, prayer/meditation during work hours, religious holidays, etc.)
- Specific challenges involved with **religious employers and religious institutions**, including protections for hiring preferences for employees, laws protecting religious institutions' hiring of ministers/clergy, etc.
- Laws protecting **conscientious objections** of religious employees involving workplace required duties, etc.
- Adjudication of **competing interests of employers and employees**; landmark judicial decisions in national, regional, and international law (e.g. African Union, United Nations, etc.)
- Intersection of **religion with discrimination or differential treatment** based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, and other factors
- **Concepts and theories** of 'religion,' 'faith', 'spirituality' and 'custom/culture' in places of work
- Inclusion or exclusion of **religious minorities and indigenous/traditional religions** in work and the economy
- Impact of the increasing participation of **women in the workforce**, despite limited economic opportunities, unequal or no remuneration and lack of public recognition of informal or care work
- Religious and cultural ideas of **domesticity** undergirding gendered social relations in spaces of work and between the domestic and the public spheres
- **Religious reward** as a justification for voluntary and unpaid work
- Religious perspectives on **child labor** and legal regulation
- Legal and religious aspects of **forced labor**
- Settlement of **labor disputes** by/within religious institutions and intervention of state courts
- Migration, immigration and the employment of **foreign ministers/clergy and religious workers**
- **State regulation** of religious workplaces
- **Conflict** over religious/spiritual music/sounds, religious and cultural garb and manifestations of religious/spiritual/cultural identity in the work environment
- **Enforcement of religious codes/beliefs**, etc. at the workplace, e.g. deduction of tithes from salaries
- **Religious exemptions** from public obligations and general laws
- **Resistance of religious and cultural cooperatives** to the state and neoliberal markets
- **Anxieties** about the future of work, remote work, modern technologies, and artificial intelligence.

In sum, we seek papers that examine critically **the nexus of LAW, RELIGION, and WORK in the AFRICAN CONTEXT**, pertaining to questions of religious freedom, power, authority, hierarchy, and agency. *Proposals will be evaluated on their analytical clarity, empirical evidence, comparative value, and relevance to the conference theme.*

### ***Submission instructions***

In addition to the above-suggested topics, ACLARS is willing to accept contributions relevant to the field of law and religion from all interested persons for the 2025 Conference. Priority will however be given to proposals that are relevant to the overall theme of the conference. It is imperative that these contributions be placed in the African context. Abstracts (not exceeding 250 words) should be submitted by **30 September 2024**. To be considered, abstracts and author information must be submitted using the online process [\[link: Proposal Submission Form\]](#). Each individual author may submit only **one proposal**. The conference programme committee will notify successful applicants by **30 November 2024**.