



# **International Conference**

# CALL FOR PAPERS

Religion's Evolving Role in the Secular Age: Challenges and Continuities Across the MENA Region

ÉCOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE

&

THE APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH LABORATORY (LSHA)

at

SIDI MOHAMED BEN ABDELLAH UNIVERSITY

FEZ, MOROCCO

DECEMBER 25-26, 2025

**Conference Coordinators** 

Prof. Lazrak Mohammed, ENS-Fez

Prof. Boutahar Youssef, ENS-Fez

Prof. Zakaria Othmane, ENS-Fez

Prof. Nour El Houda Belghita, ENS-Fez

Submission link:

https://forms.gle/fFxpwZTgwGkjZpxu8







جامعة سيدي محمد بن عبد الله بضاس +ه ١٠٥٨ ا ٥٤٨٤ اله ١٠٥٨ اله ١٠٥٨ اله ١٠٥٥ اله ١٠٥٥ UNIVERSITÉ SIDI MOHAMED BEN ABDELLAH DE FES



# Background

The notion of secularization has profoundly influenced understandings of religion's place in modern societies, especially through a Euro-American intellectual tradition that often presumed a linear decline of religious influence in public life. However, global experiences of religion in the modern age, and particularly those in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, reveal more complex, non-linear trajectories. Far from vanishing, religion in many MENA societies remains a central force—reshaped by modernity, colonial legacies, nation-building projects, globalization, and the contestations of political authority.

In the MENA context, secularization has taken diverse and contested forms: from aggressive state-led secularism and modernization drives, to enduring religious institutions and emergent grassroots religiosity. Political upheavals, transnational religious movements, and evolving debates on identity and governance continue to complicate secular-religious dynamics. Moreover, contemporary challenges such as the digitalization of religious discourse, the redefinition of public and private spheres, and the intersections of religion with migration, gender, and rights discourses add further layers to these developments.

This conference seeks to interrogate the complex and evolving relationship between religion and secularization in a global frame, with particular attention to how these dynamics manifest in the MENA region and comparable contexts. We aim to explore the multifaceted ways in which religion continues to shape, and be shaped by, contemporary social, political, and cultural realities.

We invite contributions from scholars across disciplines—including but not limited to religious studies, sociology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, history, and cultural studies—that engage critically with the theme of Religion's Evolving Role in the Secular Age: Challenges and Continuities Across the MENA Region

## Possible subthemes include, but are not limited to:

- Revisiting Secularization Theory in Non-Western Contexts
- Religion, Identity, and Belonging in the MENA Region
- State Formation, Nationalism, and the Role of Religion
- Public Religion, Law, and Political Authority
- Religion and Globalization in the Arab and Islamic Worlds
- Digital Religion and the Transformation of Religious Authority
- New Religious Movements and Contemporary Spiritualities
- The Sacred and the Secular in Art, Literature, and Popular Culture
- Migration, Diaspora, and Transnational Religious Identities
- Gender, Rights, and Religious Discourses
- The Future of Religion in Pluralistic and Post-Conflict Societies
- The Power of Religion in Arabic-Islamic Literature.

We welcome theoretical, empirical, and methodological papers, as well as interdisciplinary and comparative approaches.







#### **Submission Guidelines**

- Abstracts should be no more than 300 words, clearly outlining the research question, methodology, and main arguments.
- Please include a short biographical note (maximum 100 words) with your name, institutional affiliation, and email address.
- Abstracts should be submitted in Word or PDF format to religionsecularage@gmail.com
- Submission Deadline: September 30, 2025
- Notification of acceptance will be sent by October 15, 2025

Please note: Papers may be submitted and presented in Arabic, French, or English.

#### **Conference Format**

The conference will be held in-person at École Normale Supérieure, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco

A selection of papers may be considered for publication in an edited volume or special journal issue (details forthcoming)

# Scientific Committee

Members of the Applied Human Sciences Research Laboratory (LSHA) at ENS-FEZ

## **Key Dates**

- Deadline for Abstract Submission: September 30, 2025
- Notification of Acceptance: October 15, 2025
- Final Program Announcement: December 1, 2025
- Conference Date: December 25-26, 2025

# **Submission link:**

https://forms.gle/fFxpwZTgwGkjZpxu8

For further inquiries, please contact the Conference Coordinators at: religionsecularage@gmail.com