

International Symposium

What is 'Moroccan Islam'?

Reflections on the History, Uses and Materializations of a Concept



Organizers:

Dr. Mehdi Sajid (Utrecht University) & Dr. Nina ter Laan (University of Cologne)

Sponsored by:



**Utrecht
University**

Departement Filosofie en Religiewetenschap



Religious Matters

In an Entangled World

June 8-10, 2022



3, Avenue Mohamed El Fassi (ex. Av. Marrakech), 10010 Hassan, Rabat

1. General description

The concept 'Moroccan Islam' is a product of the 'Moroccan colonial archive' (Burke 2014), i.e., a corpus of primary French texts written on Morocco and Moroccans between 1880 and 1930s. The label emerged as an attempt to: 1. describe what several European scholars and travelers perceived as heterodox and idiosyncratic elements in Moroccans' religious beliefs and practices, i.e., the 'lived Islam' of Moroccan society; and 2. contrast them with the 'standard Islam' advocated by Muslim scholars (Reinhart 2020). During the protectorate period (1912-1956), 'Moroccan Islam' was used and enforced by the French protectorate to question the 'authenticity' of diverging manifestations of Islam in the decentralized parts of the country and reconfigure the role of the Sultan and his central government as the only true guardians of 'authentic' Islam. This gave birth to several assumptions and stereotypes about Moroccan society, which, for decennia to come, had a deep impact on the way Moroccan affairs were perceived and interpreted by both native and non-native scholars. In the post-colonial period, it was mostly through the works of American and British anthropologists and historians that the existence of the label 'Moroccan Islam' was perpetuated before it was later officially co-opted by the Moroccan government. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 2003 in Casablanca, The Sharifian Kingdom used the notion of 'Moroccan Islam' to counter Islamic extremism and recenter the religious life of Moroccan Muslims around a unified nationalist understanding of Islamic authenticity. This official version of 'Moroccan Islam' was presented as the result of the continuous historical presence of four "immutable religious principles" (*al-thawābit al-dīniyya*) that shaped the Islamic identity of Morocco throughout the centuries: 1. the religious leadership of the monarch; 2. the Mālikī school of law; 3. the Ash'arite creed; and 4. the 'sober' Sufism of al-Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910). This new doctrine became in the following years an important instrument to strengthen the Kingdom's claim as guardian of a 'moderate' and 'authentic' Islam, both domestically and worldwide.

In the light of current global and local developments, the notion of 'Moroccan Islam' appears to be at the center of numerous political, religious, and intellectual entanglements. But, despite its long and complex history, the use of this label has received little academic attention in contemporary scholarship. We argue that the notion of 'Moroccan Islam' cannot be taken at face value but needs to be critically assessed as a historically rooted and ideologically charged concept which served different agendas at different points in time. What are the boundaries of 'Moroccan Islam'? How is it mobilized and contested? What are its material mediations? How does these manifest and express themselves in the public and private domains? To which extent does 'Moroccan Islam' differ from other 'Islams' (e.g., 'Turkish Islam', 'Saudi-Wahhabi Islam')? And finally, how is it reflected in public discussions and religious practices in and beyond Morocco? These and other questions will be at the center of our upcoming discussions during the symposium.

2. Program

Each presentation will be allotted a total time of *30 minutes*: 20 minutes for the oral presentation, followed by 10 minutes for the Q&A.

Day 1: Wednesday 8 June

13:30 – 14:00 **Walk-in, coffee & tea**

14:00 – 15:00 **Welcome, opening remarks & introduction round**

Mehdi Sajid & Nina ter Laan

Panel 1: Historical Perspectives (moderator: Etty Terem)

15:00-15:30 ***Islam and Law in Morocco: A Social History***

Léon Buskens (NIMAR / Leiden University)

15:30- 16:00 ***Rational Faith for Modern Muslims: Reconciling Islam with Science in Interwar Morocco***

Etty Terem (Rhodes College)

16:00 – 16:30 ***The Making and Re-Making of Islam during the 'Alawite Reign (19th-21st centuries)***

Mehdi Sajid (Utrecht University)

16:30-18:30 **Walking seminar**

Presentation & Visit to the Mohamedian League of Religious Scholars, guided by Courtney Erwin.

20:00 **Dinner**

Restaurant Dar Naji (near Bab el-Had)

Day 2: Thursday 9 June

09:00 – 09:30 **Walk-in, coffee & tea**

Panel 2: Veneration, Blessing, and Saints (moderator: Nina ter Laan)

09:30-10:00 ***The Living and the Dead: Connecting the Two Worlds through Islamic Bodies and Sufi Sainthood in Morocco***

Ellen Amster (McMaster University)

10:00-10:30 ***The Private and the Public in the Activism of the Būtshīshiyya Brotherhood***

Aziz Hlaoua (Mohamed V University, Rabat)

10:30-10:45 **Coffee break**

Panel 3: Moroccan Islam & the State (moderator: Mehdi Sajid)

11:00-11:30 ***Women in a Man's Pulpit: Morocco's Religious Reform and the Fashioning of 'Securo-Feminism'***

Meriem el Haitami (Columbia University)

11:30-12:00 ***Seeing and hearing the book: a Moroccan edition of the Quran***

Anouk Cohen (CNRS/CJB) – via Zoom.

12:00-12:30 ***Beyond Islam and the Culturalist Interpretation of the Moroccan State: The Question of Violence***

Driss Maghraoui (Al Akhawayn University)

12:30-13:30 **Lunch break**

13:30: 16:00 **Walking seminar**

Guided visit to Al-Mowafaqa Ecumenical Institute of Theology

20:00 **Dinner**

Restaurant Cosmopolitan

Day 3: Friday 10 June

09:30 – 09:00 **Walk-in, coffee & tea**

Panel 4: Ethnographic and Philosophical Explorations of Moroccan Islam (Moderator: Léon Buskens)

09:00 -09:30 ***Global Conditions, Local Traditions: On Moroccan Islam and the Commodity Form***

Emilio Spadola (Colgate University)

09:30-10:00 ***“Our last fqih came from M’Gouna”: (Re)turning Moroccan Islam to the countryside***

Nina ter Laan (University of Cologne)

10:00-10:30 ***Is temporary marriage part of Moroccan Islam? An exploration of a ‘modern’ Islamic sexual and relational ethics for halal dating among young pious Moroccan Belgian men***

Iman Lechkar (Free University Brussels)

10:30- 11:00 Coffee break

11:00- 11:30 ***Deconstructing the Epistemic Nexus of Ideas in al-Jābirī’s Reading of turāth***
Abdelkader Al Ghouz (Bonn University) - via Zoom.

11:30- 12:00 **Closing Remarks**
Birgit Meyer (Utrecht University)

12:30-14:30 **Lunch (Couscous)**

14:30- 15:30 **Open discussion (roundtable)**

3. Abstracts

Léon Buskens: *Islam and Law in Morocco: A Social History*

The Moroccan constitution of 2011 opens with the declaration that the kingdom of Morocco is an Islamic state. During the past century and a half, a specific configuration of Islamic, customary, and modern, positive norms has evolved. The formation of a modern, centralized nation state went together with the evolvment of a legal system in which the role of Islamic norms gradually shrunk. In the nineteenth century the classical manner of writing down Islamic norms that scholars had developed in Morocco changed the presentation of local customs, in relation with an encroaching state. Positivation of norms and standardization of their administration increased tremendously during the French and Spanish protectorate rule (1912-1956), which formalized a situation of legal pluralism. The period after independence resulted in a further marginalization of Islamic norms inside the national legal system, where they were mainly confined to the domains of family law, real estate and some aspects of proof. In the presentation I would like to highlight some episodes in this process, demonstrating that a history of Islamic law in Morocco might be practiced as a history of Moroccan society.

Etty Terrem: *Rational Faith for Modern Muslims: Reconciling Islam with Science in Interwar Morocco*

In 1936, Muḥammad al-Ḥajwī (1874-1956), the minister of education in the French Protectorate and an avid reformer of Islam and Moroccan society, wrote a very long and complex essay entitled “The Firm Cooperation between Reason, Science, and Religion (*al-ta’āḍud al-matīn baina al-‘aql wa’l-‘ilm wa’l-dīn*).” In it, al-Ḥajwī argued that science and Islam were uniquely compatible and that there could be no conflict between modern scientific knowledge and scripture. More importantly, for al-Ḥajwī a collaboration between science and Islam was essential for social advancement and progress. He maintained that despite the advance of modern sciences and technology, they have not improved man’s conditions of life. Religion, he insisted, was a necessary ally to reason and science. In this presentation, I analyze al-Ḥajwī’s text, while paying close attention to his ideas on the compatibility of Islam with reason and science and his conception of social progress. I specifically examine his reasoning and the precedents in Islamic law and history that he cited in order to support his vision. In confronting the meaning of al-Ḥajwī’s ideas, I argue that his essay was intended as a defense of Islam by refuting secularist views that he considered the greatest challenge to Islam and Muslims. His defense was a response, not to a European Orientalist or a colonial critic, but to the popular and charismatic president of the new Turkish state Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and to Darwin’s Arabic translator, the Egyptian intellectual Ismail Mazhar, who popularized the idea that Islam was a barrier to reason and science. For al-Ḥajwī, proving Islam’s harmony with reason and science was a means not only to social progress and modernization, but also to protect modern Muslims against blind imitation of the West.

Mehdi Sajid: *The Making and Re-Making of Islam during the 'Alawite Reign (19th-21st centuries)*

The paper will offer a discussion in the *longue durée* of the various attempts initiated by the makhzan in the modern period to re-define the concept 'Islam' in Morocco. I argue that these efforts must be interpreted in the light of an old unfulfilled dream of the Alawite rulers which consisted in subjecting all competing fields of religious charisma and leadership to their authority. It was only through the military and administrative assistance of the French colonial authorities that the idea resurfaced once again in Morocco as a political imperative. The goal was to back up the religious and political claims of the Sultan, especially in his portrayal as the political ruler and spiritual leader of a modern nation. During the turbulent course of the 20th century, the *makhzan* will then experiment with a variety of conceptions of 'Islam', all designed to neutralize political and religious rivals questioning its absolute authority.

Ellen Amster: *The Living and the Dead: Connecting the Two Worlds through Islamic Bodies and Sufi Sainthood in Morocco*

Nineteenth-century French visitors to Morocco remarked that pilgrims in North Africa visited the tombs of Islamic "saints" (*awliyā'*) searching for healing from a variety of mental, physical, and moral afflictions. These were dead who brought healing to the living—through touch, prayer, or cures performed at the shrine. The Moroccan jurist Hasan al-Yūsī (d. 1691) called these saints "a medicine and a cure," for the saint "connects the various layers of reality to one another;" he is an axis around whom reality revolves (*qutb*) and a *murābit* (marabout, lit: he who binds men to God). Saint tombs also have political significance. In visiting graves, Moroccans constructed a topographical map of the collective past, a geographical representation of the Islamic political community (*umma*) and God's presence in the world, a political imaginary yet contested in the contemporary world. The key connecting the living to the dead is knowledge, a knowing that realizes the potentiality of the human body as an isthmus between the "oceans of God and the Cosmos," as the Qur'an describes, and a station for the Lord of the Two Worlds to reside. In this paper, we consider the hagiographical compendium of Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Kattāni *Salwat al-Anfās* and the city of Fez. In Morocco, we see how this knowing operated in physical space and time, and how French colonial interventions and science impacted Moroccan understandings of death and life.

Aziz Hlaoua: *The Private and the Public in the Activism of the Būtshīshiyya Brotherhood*

This presentation discusses the importance of the network of the Būtshīshiyya Sufi brotherhood in the history of Morocco. A mystical quest for closeness to God, as is central within Sufism, exists in all religions and metaphysical beliefs, and consists of both very intimate and concrete forms, as well as philosophical and purely religious sources. The flexibility which has marked the roles of Sufism in the history of Islam, - ranging from economy, education, art, and politics- shows the implication of Sufism in the life of Muslims. This opposes the idea, that reduces religion, including Sufism, to a mere utilitarian ideological tool, devoid of its anthropological, educational, and historical dimensions. Yet, the delineation of

Sufism towards universal mysticism, shared by many specialist researchers, does not exclude local embeddedness of some Sufi paths within the Islamic world. In this way, Sufism in Morocco is strongly developed in relation to sainthood and its local political origins. Instead of presenting a hagiographic map of all the saints, I will mention a few iconic figures of sanctity and their places of worship, to better understand the strength of Sufi brotherhoods back at the time and today. Such a historical overview serves to outline the fundamental role of the political dimension in the construction of Sufi orders in Morocco and ultimately allows a better understanding of the case of the Būtshīshīyya brotherhood in Morocco.

Meriem El-Haitami: Women in a Man's Pulpit: Morocco's Religious Reform and the Fashioning of 'Securo-Feminism'

This paper builds on the argument that Morocco's religious reform is a fashioning of an "Islamic state feminism" (Eddouda, Pepicelli 2010) that conceptualizes women's role as providers of 'spiritual security' who contribute to countering extremism and bolster the state's authority. The article therefore focuses on feminism, in relation to the state, and to the "spiritual security" narrative and the deployment of women in leadership positions in the field of counter-terrorism and explores the ways the state subsumes the struggle for equality, the agency of diverse social groups and political histories under security imperatives. The argument draws on Lila Abu Lughod's concept of "securo-feminism" that examines the collusion between global women's rights advocacy and the CVE enterprise, and the underlying risk of perpetuating tropes surrounding violent extremism, women, and Islam. The article therefore looks at how the state's re-appropriation of both religion and feminism is a continuity of the 20th c nationalistic themes of women as the 'bearers of the nation' and co-opts their claims and activism under such projects as 'state feminism' and 'spiritual security'.

Anouk Cohen: *Seeing and hearing the book: a Moroccan Edition of the Qur'ān*

The year 2010 witnessed the creation of a Moroccan edition of the Qur'ān distinguished by its method of recitation of *Warsh* and its calligraphic *Maghribī* style. Under the watchful eye of institutional clerics, a whole team of calligraphers, illuminators, and graphic designers is dedicated to producing a strictly 'Moroccan' material sensorial book. In this regard, studying the Moroccan *muṣḥaf*'s creation process can shed light on how the monarchy uses the Qur'ān's material specificities to create a sensorial relationship between the Muslim faithful and the Holy Book of Islam in the Moroccan context. In fact, and based on memorization practices, Qur'ānic learning mainly relies on vision and hearing to facilitate practitioners' absorption of the text. This paper will present the results of a research project conducted in Morocco between 2010 and 2017. It will delve into how the book "mediates" personal and social relationships with God, and how its materiality is designed to build a unique connection with the divine realm: through and by the monarch.

Driss Maghraoui: *Beyond Islam and the Culturalist Interpretation of the Moroccan State: The Question of Violence*

This paper seeks from a historical perspective to explore and analyze what Pierre Bourdieu once called “*la violence ouverte*” of the Moroccan state in the *longue durée*. I intend to examine violence from two different but interrelated perspectives: First I am interested in the actual practice of violence in its physical sense, a kind of “hard violence” that is exercised on the body. Second, I think of violence and its execution here as part of a performative act by the state and within the public sphere. I argue that the pre-colonial Moroccan state was violently inserting itself into the public realm. It is in this public realm that the state violence is best performed, and domination is most effectively played out as part of a political act. In this sense the use of excessive punishment and the performance of “hard violence” were part of the continuation of politics by other means. Physical violence is not seen here as an abstract element of a power structure, but as a constitutive element of daily life. The political existence of the Moroccan state depended not only on the construction of some form of cultural and religious legitimacy but more importantly on the ability of the sovereign's intermittent and extravagant displays of savage cruelty, a form of violence affecting the bodies that were displayed and the minds of the Moroccan subjects as the targeted spectators. In this sense organized state power in the form of physical violence affected a broad spectrum of society and may have undoubtedly been an important factor in the disciplining of habits. My ultimate goal is to identify specific moments, locales, cases and practices through which the state made use of “hard violence” in order to establish its authority.

Emilio Spadola: *Global Conditions, Local Traditions: On Moroccan Islam and the Commodity Form*

The early 20th century designation of “Moroccan Islam” partook of a broader colonial effort to identify particular and particularistic types of Islam. What implications does this hold for understanding the history, uses, and materializations of “Moroccan Islam” in particular? To formulate a response, this paper examines the distinctly modern global origins and preconditions of “Moroccan Islam” from the early 20th century through the early 21st. More specifically, while tracing the changing geopolitical and domestic political forces and concerns which marked the concept’s materializations and deployments in the colonial, postcolonial, and contemporary contexts, the paper emphasizes what is common across these, namely, the *commodity form* and its global infrastructures and logics of exchangeability. Focusing on the globalized commodity form and commodity relations as crucial mediating conditions of contemporary Islam, including Moroccan Islam, offers three benefits. First, scholars can better grasp the relationships between contemporary (post-Cold War) Islam and global capital. Second, scholars can move beyond predominant theories of that putatively secular modern state that have little if anything at all to say about modern capital to which states are themselves beholden. And third, scholars of Morocco in particular can better grasp the historically specific concerns undergirding the claims of “Moroccan religiosity” [*at-tadayyun al-maghribi*] of the Mohammed VI era.

Nina ter Laan: “Our last *fqih* came from M’Gouna” (Re)turning Moroccan Islam to the countryside

This paper explores the influence of state-promoted ‘Moroccan Islam’ on religious practices in the Moroccan countryside. Recent scholarship on ‘Moroccan Islam’ focuses mostly on urban environments where most of the official religious policies are developed and implemented. Less attention has been given to the implementation of these religious policies in the rural zones of Morocco. This is remarkable, because the contemporary notion of ‘Moroccan Islam’, referring to the syncretistic mingling of Sufi-mysticism, saint veneration, and belief in magical powers, is rooted in colonial ethnographic descriptions of *rural* religious practices. Nowadays, this notion of ‘Moroccan Islam’ is being re-used in contemporary nationalist discourses and presented as a ‘tolerant’ and ‘authentic’ safeguard against a foreign ‘radical Islam’ in the context of the global War on Terror and national religious reforms. This idea of a specific Islam, that is Moroccan Islam is now being promoted by the state in anti-radicalization policies, and is also having an impact on rural areas. This paper raises the question of what happens when ‘Moroccan Islam’ travels back to rural communities, through state-implemented deradicalization programs. How do these programs interact with local practices and beliefs? Using examples from preliminary ethnographic fieldwork in the High Atlas and the Rif, I would like to map out some possible implications and propose to analyze ‘Moroccan Islam’ as a discursive tool used to manage religious diversity and state presence in both urban and rural settings, rather than a defining point of ontological difference.

Iman Lechkar: Is temporary marriage part of Moroccan Islam? An exploration of a ‘modern’ Islamic sexual and relational ethics for halal dating among young pious Moroccan Belgian men

The presentation explores the role of temporary marriage in the formation of a ‘modern’ Islamic sexual and relational ethics for ‘halal’ (religiously permissible) dating. Based on ethnographic research on the Shiitization (at-tashayyu’) of Moroccan Belgian Sunni Muslims, the paper argues that temporary marriage is endorsed by young pious Muslim men who want to date in a religiously observant way. The paper illustrates how temporary marriage figures as a site for private relationships and a framework for a modern sexual and relational ethics that permits halal dating for young Muslims. The call of young pious Muslim men to a general Muslim endorsement of temporary marriage brings together both their secular and religious sensibilities whilst simultaneously endeavoring to undo the Sunni-Shia divide in terms of sexual and relational ethics. By drawing on Joan W. Scott’s notion of ‘sexularism’, the paper not only deflates the sharp opposition between Islam and secularity, but also provides analytical insights that disentangle commonplace tropes surrounding Islam and the (sexual) oppression of women.

4. Speakers

Ellen Amster is the Jason A. Hannah Chair in the History of Medicine at McMaster University, and Associate Professor in the Departments of Family Medicine and Department of Religious Studies. She received her B.A. from the University of Chicago and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. A historian of North Africa and France, her research on Islam and French colonialism was first a book, *Medicine and the Saints: Science, Islam, and the Colonial Encounter in Morocco, 1877-1956* (University of Texas Press). She works also in women's health, which was first a global health field course for students in Morocco and now she created a Morocco-Canada Network for Maternal and Infant Health, bringing together Canadian and Moroccan health professionals. Her recent articles include the history of medicine and public health, Muslim midwifery, a history of the body, traditional pharmacology, and women's histories. Her next book project is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, called "Colonial Drag: Transvestism, Hybridity, and Cosmopolitan Identities in Colonial and Postcolonial North Africa."

Léon Buskens has a chair for Law and Culture in Muslim Societies at Leiden University and is at present the director of NIMAR, the Dutch institute in Morocco, based in Rabat. He studies law and culture in Muslim societies from an anthropological and historical perspective, with a particular interest for the history of the European understandings of Islamic and customary law. Two recent publications are "Dutch Anthropologists in Morocco. From Exoticism to Islam at Home", in: *Hespéris-Tamuda* 55(2020) no. 2, pp. 347-390; and, edited with Jan Just Witkam and Annemarie van Sandwijk, *Scholarship in Action. Essays on the Life and Work of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936)*, Leiden: Brill, 2022.

Anouk Cohen is an anthropologist and researcher at the CNRS / LESC. Her expertise lies mainly in the fields of the book, its producers, and its users. Her research has dealt with the multiplication and diversification of the Qur'ān as book in Morocco and its role in modifying the relationship between the faithful and the text. Currently she is a research associate at Laboratoire de Recherche sur les Transformations Économiques et Sociales / Université Cheikh Anta DIOP De Dakar (LARTES-IFAN / UCAD), where she is investigating the production of Sufi texts, which constitute the largest book production in the country. Anouk Cohen is the author of *Fabriquer le livre au Maroc* (Karthala, 2016); she co-edited issues of the journals *Gradhiva*, *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, *Material religion* and published numerous book chapters and articles (*Terrain, Techniques & Cultures*, *Ethnologie Française*, *Cahiers d'études africaines*, *L'Année du Maghreb*).

Abdelkader Al Ghouz studied in Morocco (University of Fes), Germany (University of Mainz and Bonn) and the US (Yale University) specializing in the history of philosophy in the Islamic World and its entanglement with philosophical trends in Europe. In 2014, he received his PhD in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Bonn. The title of his PhD thesis, published in

German, is “Reason and Canon in Contemporary Islamic Philosophy”. He published different articles in peer-reviewed journals and three volumes. He is the editor of the book “Islamic Philosophy from the 12th to the 14th Century” discussed in four different journals. The foci of his research and teaching lay on (1) Moḥammad ‘Ābid al-Jābirī and Taha ‘Abdurrahmān, (2) epistemic transitions in the history of Islamic Philosophy, (3) codicology (esp. para-textual evidences of Arabic manuscripts), (4) ethics. Currently, he is the Managing Director of the Cluster of Excellence “Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies” at the University of Bonn and Senior Lecturer for “Ethics and Smart Systems” at Cologne University of Applied Sciences.

Meriem El-Haitami is a visiting fellow at Columbia University specializing in Gender and Religion, and the Morocco-based PI for a multi-institutional project entitled « Gender, Politics and Critique in the MENA: Towards a Critical History of Feminism, 1970s until Today ». Her research explores trends of Islamic feminism in post-2003 Morocco, gender perspectives in preventing and countering violent extremism and the role of women in state religious policy and Islamic scholarship.

Aziz Hlaoua is a professor at the university institute of African, Euro-Mediterranean, and Ibero-American studies, at the Mohamed V University in Rabat. He holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University EHESS in Paris. His research interests focus on Sufism, cults of saints, religious authority in Islam, and politico-religious movements in Morocco and visual anthropology. His dissertation focused on the production of hierarchy in the Butshishiyya Sufi Order. His publications include: Spreading a “Moderate Islam”? Morocco's New African Religious Diplomacy (with Cédric Baylocq, 2016) and “Un comité islamiste de lutte contre la débauche à Aïn Leuh” in *Le Maroc au Présent* (Centre Jacques Berque, 2018).

Nina ter Laan is a cultural anthropologist and postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Cologne and the Collaborative Research Center ‘Media of Cooperation’ (CRC) on a project focusing on Digital Public Spheres and Social Transformation in Morocco (led by Martin Zillinger). Her research focuses on Islam, media and aesthetic practices, politics of belonging, and mobility. She holds a PhD in Religious Studies from Radboud University, for which she examined the political usages of Islam-inspired music in Morocco. Between 2016 and 2020 she was a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of Utrecht University. There, as a member of the Religious Matters research team (led by Birgit Meyer) she studied home making practices and belonging among Dutch and Flemish Muslim converts who made *hijra* to Morocco. She has taught at the Departments of Cultural Anthropology and Middle Eastern Studies at Leiden University and at the Department of Religious Studies at Utrecht University.

Iman Lechkar is Professor of Islam and Gender and Fatima Mernissi Chairholder in the Political Science Department of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and RHEA, the VUB research Centre on Gender, Diversity and Intersectionality. She teaches a course on Islam and Gender and organizes public activities and lectures on the nexus of Islam, gender, and power. She is currently supervisor of the FWO research project Islam in Brussels Prisons: an ethnographic study on prison policies, experiences and masculinities and Coordinator of the BESLPO- BRAIN-be 2.0 research project REGUIDE: a holistic, restorative, and gendered approach to guiding returnees to their home countries. Iman is frequently invited as a guest speaker and publishes in national and international journals and books.

Driss Maghraoui is an Associate Professor of history and international relations at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. Maghraoui is a founding member of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences and of the Rabat Social Studies Institute in Morocco. He is the co-editor of *Reforms in the Arab World: the Experience of Morocco, Mediterranean Politics* (2009) and the editor of *Revisiting the Colonial Past in Morocco* (2013, Routledge) and more recently co-editor of *L'immigration au Maroc : les défis de l'intégration*, (2017, Fondation Heinrich Böll & Rabat Social Studies Institute). His most recent publications include: *"Searching for Normalization: The Party of Justice and Development in Morocco"*, in Julie Chernov and Mecham Quinn Mecham (Ed.) *Strategies and Behavior of Islamist Political Parties: Comparative Lessons from Asia and the Middle East*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, and "Morocco: Obedience, Civil Resistance, and Dispersed Solidarities" in *Civil Resistance in the Arab World, Triumphs and Disasters* edited by Adam Roberts, Oxford University Press, 2016.

Birgit Meyer is professor of religious studies at Utrecht University. Trained as a cultural anthropologist, she studies religion from a material and postcolonial angle, seeking to synthesize grounded fieldwork and theoretical reflection in a multidisciplinary setting. Her research is driven by an urge to make sense of the shifting place and role of religion in our time, and to show that scholarly work in the field of religion is of eminent concern to understanding the shape of our world in the early 21st century. She has written extensively on mission and colonialism in Africa, modernity and conversion, the rise of Pentecostal churches in the neoliberal era, the relationship between media, religion, and identity, and material religion and the role and place of religion in 21st century Africa. In addition to her research in Ghana, she is interested in broader conceptual issues related to the multiple manifestations of religion in the past and present and the coexistence of people from diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Characteristic of her work is her engagement with the corporeal, material, and political-aesthetic dimensions of religion from an anthropological perspective. Visual culture and religious images and objects play a central role in her work. Awarded with the 'Academy professor prize' and the 'Spinoza prize' in 2015, Meyer initiated the comprehensive research programme *Religious Matters in an Entangled World* (www.religiousmatters.nl) which she currently is conducting.

Mehdi Sajid is Assistant Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Utrecht University. He studied Philosophy and Islamic Studies at the University of Bonn (Germany), where he earned his Ph.D. in 2015. His research has dealt with various aspects of Islamic intellectual history, modern encounters between East and West, the history of Christian-Muslim relations, and the transformation of Islamic religious and intellectual discourses in the modern era. His current project investigates the history and uses of the concept Islam in modern Morocco.

Emilio Spadola (PhD, Columbia University 2007) teaches anthropology, Islamic studies, and media studies at Colgate University (NY, USA). His book, *The Calls of Islam: Sufis, Islamists, and Mass Mediation in Urban Morocco* (Indiana, 2014), received honors from the Society for the Anthropology of Religion and the American Institute of Maghrib Studies. His current book project, "The Event of Islam," reframes Islamic studies around the material conditions of mediation and mediability.

Etty Terem is Associate Professor of History at Rhodes College. She is the author of *Old Texts, New Practices: Islamic Reform in Modern Morocco* (Stanford University Press, 2014). Her articles have been published in journals, including *Islamic Law and Society*, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, *Mediterranean Studies*, *French Politics, Culture & Society*, and *Journal of North African Studies*. She is currently working on a second book, exploring reformist thought in colonial Morocco.

5. Practical information

Accommodation

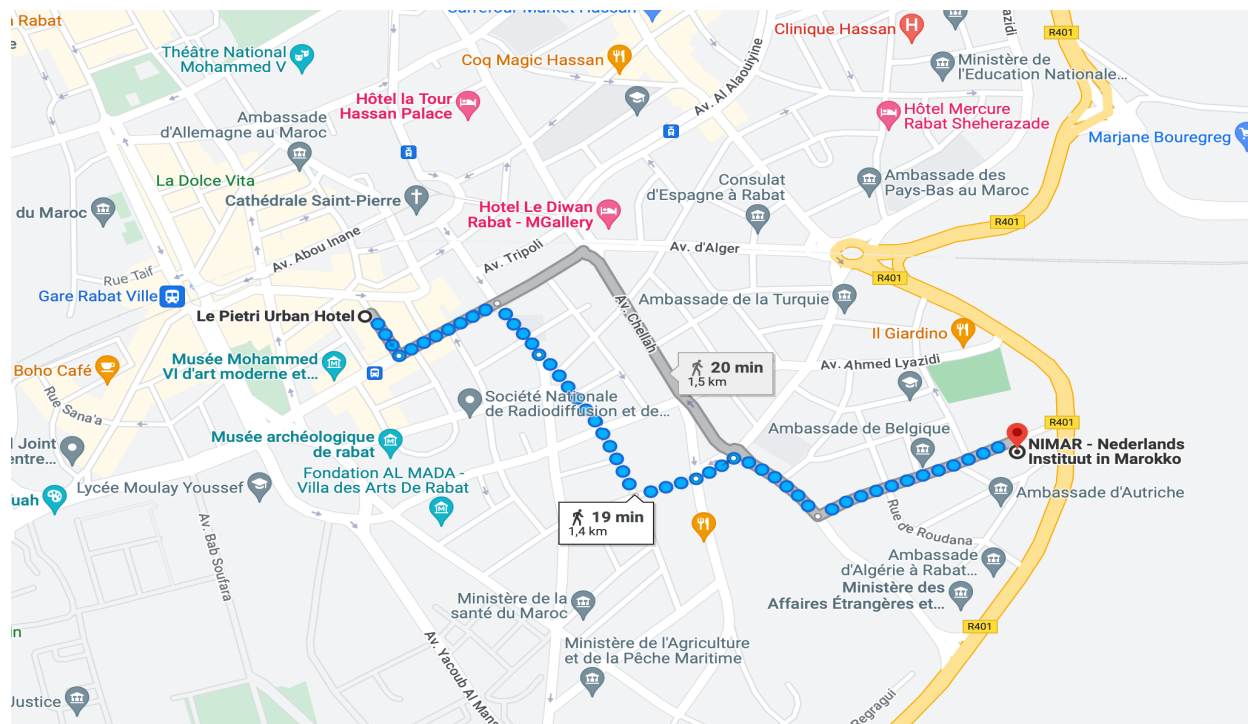
Urban Hotel Le Pietri

Address: 4, Rue Tobrouk, Quartier Hassan/ Place Pietri/ Rabat, Morocco/+2125377-07820

Check-in is from 02:00 PM, and check-out is until 12:00 PM.

Conference venue

NIMAR (Nederlands Instituut Marokko), 3, Mohamed El Fassi (Ex. Av. Marrakech), 10010 Hassan, Rabat, Marokko/ +212 537668500



Required Travel Documents

(For those coming from abroad)

You must have a valid passport with at least one blank page for an entry stamp. For EU and US citizens, visas are not required for visits lasting less than 90 days.

Health certificates

Morocco has lifted the vaccination and PCR requirement. You now need either a valid vaccination pass or a PCR test less than 72 hours old. Make sure that you print these out (multiple copies) on paper. In addition, the Moroccan government asks all visitors upon entry to fill out this health form.

<https://www.sante.gov.ma/PublishingImages/2021/protocole/FSP%20avion.pdf?csf=1&e=2iw7FK>

Restaurants

Dinner 1. Dar Naji

6, Avenue Jazirat Al Arabe, Rabat (Next to Place Bab el-Had).

Dinner 2. Cosmopolitan

Avenue Ibn Toumart, Rabat.

Taxi's

Small taxis (petit taxi) are blue run within the city and should count the rate with a meter. Grand taxis are usually white or beige. You share them with others and run between cities, town, and villages (you won't need them except maybe for the airport).

Reimbursements

For reimbursements we will send you a separate email with a link through which you can submit the costs you made, that you would like to have reimbursed by Utrecht University.