



Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity

Jonathan Wyrtzen

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How did four and a half decades of European colonial intervention transform Moroccan identity? As elsewhere in North Africa and in the wider developing world, the colonial period in Morocco (1912–1956) established a new type of political field in which notions about and relationships among politics and identity formation were fundamentally transformed. Instead of privileging top-down processes of colonial state formation or bottom-up processes of local resistance, the analysis in Making Morocco focuses on interactions between state and society.

Jonathan Wyrtzen demonstrates how, during the Protectorate period, interactions among a wide range of European and local actors indelibly politicized four key dimensions of Moroccan identity: religion, ethnicity, territory, and the role of the Alawid monarchy. This colonial inheritance is reflected today in ongoing debates over the public role of Islam, religious tolerance, and the memory of Morocco's Jews; recent reforms regarding women's legal status; the monarchy's multiculturalist recognition of Tamazight (Berber) as a national language alongside Arabic; the still-unresolved territorial dispute over the Western Sahara; and the monarchy's continued symbolic and practical dominance of the Moroccan political field.



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