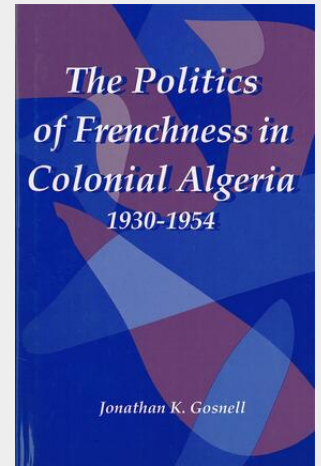


## The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria, 1930-1954

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An examination of French citizenship and cultural identity in Algeria during the last quarter-century of colonial rule. In recent years, a multicultural society and changing conceptions of French identity have been the source of considerable debate in scholarship, literature and the media in France. This book examines equally contested definitions of French identity from the past, but not those forged within the borders of the French 'Hexagon,' as French geographic space is sometimes called. It is the study of French sentiment in colonial Algeria of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, during the last quarter century of colonial rule in North Africa. It seeks to uncover elements of French identity that were generated past the Pyrenees and the Alps, beyond the bordering Atlantic Ocean, English Channel and Mediterranean Sea, outside the physical space so central to "Frenchness." It asks whether far-reaching state institutions could transform indigenous and settler populations in colonial Algeria -- Europeans, Jews and Muslims -- into French men and women. It examines what these individuals wrote of French sentiment in colonial Algeria. Did they articulate alternative definitions of French identity? The colonial "periphery" is clearly quite central to France's evolving postcolonial sense of self. Colonial Algerian heterogeneity and the country's unique relationship to France make it an especially rich site in which to study French national and cultural identities. French military conquest and the occupation of the North African coast established one of the oldest and largest settler colonies within the French Empire. Unlike other colonies, Algeria lay relatively close to metropolitan France, a daylong journey by ship from Marseilles. No colony other than Algeria was granted French departmental status. No other land administered under the auspices of the French Empire had as numerous a European settler population, many of whom became naturalized French citizens. This study suggests that although Algeria had become officially French, "Algerie française", even at the pinnacle of its acceptance, was more diverse and more contested than its title suggests.

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