



# Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism

By Azar Gat

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What are the origins of nationalism and why is it capable of arousing such intense emotions? In this major study, Azar Gat counters the prevailing fashionable theories according to which nations and nationalism are modern and contrived or 'invented'. He sweeps across history and around the globe to reveal that ethnicity has always been highly political and that nations and national states have existed since the beginning of statehood millennia ago. He traces the deep roots of ethnicity and nationalism in human nature, showing how culture fits into human evolution from as early as our aboriginal condition and, in conjunction with kinship, defines ethnicity and ethnic allegiances. From the rise of states and empires to the present day, this book sheds new light on the explosive nature of ethnicity and nationalism, as well as on their more liberating and altruistic roles in forging identity and solidarity.

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### **Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #575692 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Cambridge University Press
- Published on: 2013-02-25
- Released on: 2012-12-20
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .83" w x 5.98" l, 1.59 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 447 pages

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"Nations is a stimulating and valuable addition to the canon on nationalism. Gat's work will be valuable for seasoned scholars as well as students prepared to engage deeply with their source material."

Reviews in History ([history.ac.uk/reviews](http://history.ac.uk/reviews))

"... the book provides a stimulating challenge, in particular in its historiographical survey of premodern nations ... Recommended. Upper-division undergraduate, graduate, and research collections."

P. J. Howe, Choice

"Gat's motivation for writing this important book was his 'deep dissatisfaction' with the portrayal of nations and nationalism in much scholarly literature as 'recent and superficial' ..."

Jack Snyder, Journal of Interdisciplinary History

#### **About the Author**

Azar Gat is Ezer Weitzman Professor and Chair of the Political Science Department at Tel Aviv University. His more recent publications include *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (2001), *War in Human Civilization* (2006), named one of the best books of the year by *The Times Literary Supplement*, and *Victorious and Vulnerable: Why Democracy Won in the 20th Century and How it is Still Imperilled* (2010).

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