

Nations

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.

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).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00785-7 - Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism

Azar Gat With Alexander Yakobson

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
 Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
 Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107400023

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First published 2013

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by the MPG Books Group

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Gat, Azar.

Nations : the long history and deep roots of political ethnicity and nationalism /
 Azar Gat ; with contributions by Alexander Yakobson.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-107-00785-7 (Hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-40002-3 (Paperback)

I. Nationalism. 2. Ethnicity—Political aspects. I. Yakobson, Alexander. II. Title.

JC311.G44 2013

320.54—dc23

2012025021

ISBN 978-1-107-00785-7 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-40002-3 Paperback

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While writing this book I constantly exchanged views with Alex Yakobson. The fruits of this exchange are scattered throughout the book and go much beyond the specific references mentioned in the text. In addition, Alex read each chapter after it was finished and made helpful comments. He also wrote Chapter 7. His wisdom and brilliance are unmatched.

My friends and colleagues at Tel Aviv, Yossi Shain and Uriel Abulof, read some of the chapters and made useful suggestions. So did also Aviel Roshwald and Steven Grosby in their capacity as (initially anonymous) readers for Cambridge University Press. The Ezer Weitzman Chair at Tel Aviv University, of which I am the incumbent, helped to sponsor this project. The Israel Science Foundation supported it with a grant. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation made possible my research stay at Konstanz. I am deeply grateful to them all.