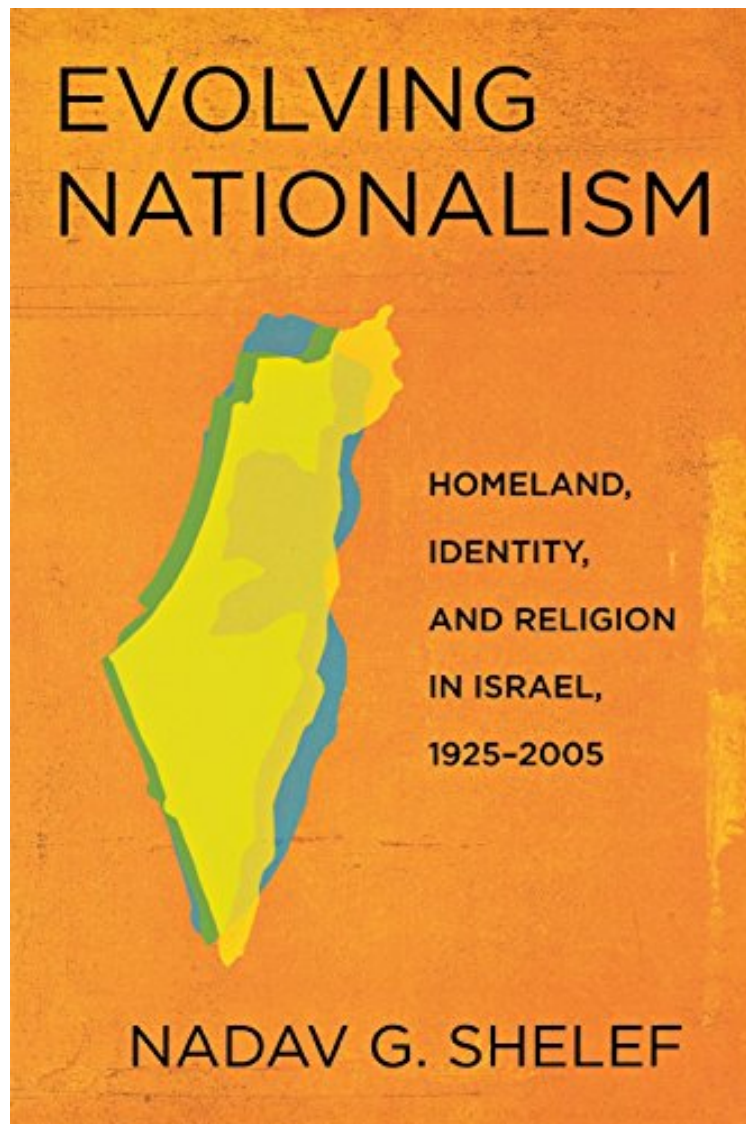


[Pdf free] Evolving Nationalism: Homeland, Identity, and Religion in Israel, 1925-2005

# **Evolving Nationalism: Homeland, Identity, and Religion in Israel, 1925-2005**

*Nadav G. Shelef*

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**Nadav G. Shelef : Evolving Nationalism: Homeland, Identity, and Religion in Israel, 1925-2005** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Evolving Nationalism: Homeland, Identity, and Religion in Israel, 1925-2005:

Evolving Nationalism examines how the idea of Israel as a nation-state has developed within Zionist and Israeli discourse over the past eight decades. Nadav G. Shelef focuses on the changing ways in which the main nationalist movements answered three distinct questions in their private and public ideological articulations between 1925 and 2005: Where is the "Land of Israel"? Who ought to be Israeli? What should the Zionist national mission be? Framed within broader debates about how and why changes in foundational definitions of the nation occur, Shelef's analysis centers on the mechanisms of ideological change and then subjects them to empirical scrutiny. He thus moves beyond the common but problematic assumptions that such transformations must be either a rare, rational adaptation to traumatic shock or a relatively constant product of manipulation by power-hungry elites. He finds that nationalist movements, including radical and religious fundamentalist ones, can and do change cardinal components of their ideological beliefs in both moderating and radicalizing directions. These changes have more to do with the unguided consequences of engagement in day-to-day politics than with strategic reaction to new realities, the use of force, or the changing incentives of leaders. Engaging with some of the most contentious debates about the nature of Israeli nationalism and the geographic, religious, and ethnic definition of the state of Israel, Shelef has made signal contributions to our understanding of Middle East politics and of the ideological underpinnings of nationalism itself.

"As presented by Shelef, who writes in an admirably lucid style that manages to be both sophisticated and coherent, this is undoubtedly a compelling thesis . . . he is to be highly commended for having opened up a new avenue of enquiry in a field that, because it has been so extensively ploughed by others, a less courageous scholar might have given a very wide berth." Stuart Cohen, *The Journal of Israeli History* (September 2012) "Evolving Nationalism is a delight. It will make a significant contribution to nationalist theory, moving it from some of its overdetermined and too-pat explanations and to an understanding of the history of Israel. I found Nadav G. Shelef's approach very persuasive and his use of evidence judicious and convincing." Joel S. Migdal, Robert F. Philip Professor of International Studies, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington "Evolving Nationalism is a terrific, even amazing book. It is well ahead of the disciplinary curve. Shelef joins granular case knowledge to well-conceived, theoretically rigorous social science. But what makes the book unique is his sophisticated and effective deployment of evolutionary theory to solve the problem of explaining how seemingly deeply held ideological beliefs change over time without being guided by elites or by direct adaptation to changing incentives. His story about the ideological trajectory of the Zionist right is fascinating, but his analysis reaches far beyond the story and will have an impact on the discipline as a whole." Ian S. Lustick, University of Pennsylvania, author of *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands* "Nadav G. Shelef very effectively points out that there are several different conceptions of 'nationalism.' He shows clearly that many forms of nationalism exist and thrive within Israel's different political movements, including Labor Zionist nationalism, Religious Zionist nationalism, and Revisionist Zionist nationalism." Gregory Mahler, Earlham College