

# Introduction

---

**KAS SWERTS**

*NISE/University of Antwerp*

In the absence of live sporting events in recent months, people have turned their gaze to the past, as attested by the popularity of *The Last Dance*, the documentary narrating the career of the basketball player Michael Jordan and his team, the Chicago Bulls, during the 1990s. Unsurprisingly, sports podcasts, TV shows, and websites were once again flooded with the most illustrious question concerning sports and its history: why do certain teams succeed and establish themselves as an immemorial dynasty (like the Bulls), and others – though so similar – fail?

While the question will forever remain unanswered (hence its appeal), we can assess certain patterns that help to set the stage for possible success. One of these is the continuous effort to learn, expand, and improve to make sure that the fundamentals are as sound as possible, inducing further growth and improvements. The Chicago Bulls did not stumble into greatness: it took years of effort and gradual improvement in order to ultimately establish themselves as one of the greatest teams in the history of basketball and sports in general.

In the last year, *Studies on National Movements* has been emulating this tenet, hoping to improve the foundations of the journal. As a result, the journal is now able to present to its readers two new sections which, we hope, will continue to grow and flourish in the following years. In addition to its continuing heuristic section, edited in interaction with the



Kas Swerts, 'Introduction',  
in: *Studies on National Movements* 5 (2020).

international review *State of Nationalism* – and in this volume includes contributions on nationalism and social class, and nationalism and collective trauma – this journal now includes a section devoted to book reviews. We encourage readers that, if they are interested in reviewing books on nationalism and corresponding themes, they consider contacting us and helping us to further expand the section and the journal.

The second section corresponds with NISE's objective to devote attention to intermediary structures and form a bridge between archival institutions and researchers across Europe. In this new archival section, the journal wants to grant archival institutions a platform to present their institution, collections, and research projects to a wider audience. In this way, the journal hopes to facilitate further cooperation between different regions and institutions and make it easier to conduct comparative and transnational research on a plethora of cases. In this volume, two institutions present themselves and their collections: the Herder Institute and the Institute of Cornish Studies. We hope that these initial contributions can spark a further development of the section, making it a key pillar of the journal's future.

In addition to the novel sections, there are two extra announcements. First of all, *Studies on National Movements* will henceforth appear twice a year, in June and December. Secondly, a physical edition of the volume will become available via printing on demand, and we will keep everyone informed on the ongoing process. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information, and we will post all the necessary information as quickly as possible.

This volume – the result of the NISE annual conference in Warsaw in 2019 – is focused on the relation between (sub)nationalism and diversity, with its focal point the year 1919. 1919, to return to our sports example, constituted to some degree a political 'last dance', as old

institutions – most notably the different empires in Central and Eastern Europe – had ceased to exist following the end of the First World War, and new states were formed.

One of the questions that gained prominence following the end of the war was the issue of minority rights. Although empires and states dealt with ethnic minorities and related inequalities long before 1919, minority rights became urgent issues of (international) concern in the formation of new states after the First World War. The contributions in this volume illustrate the multitude of questions that surround the complexity of minority rights, ranging from the history of the legal precedents that came to underpin the Minority Treaties after the First World War, to specific cases in Central and Eastern Europe that highlight how the practical conversion of the principle of self-determination could result in heightened political and social tensions in the postwar world. The contributions in this volume underpin the complexity of the relation between diversity, minority rights, and nationalism before and after 1919, and it is without a doubt that these valid analyses can induce further research to enhance our grasp of the subject. This research subject, unlike the 1990s Chicago Bulls, has thus not yet performed its last dance.