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INTRODUCTION

NOT YET ANOTHER JOURNAL ON NATIONALISM?

Over the last thirty years studies into nationalism have considerably grown in number. The works of eminent scholars as Ernest Gellner, Miroslav Hroch, Anthony D. Smith and several others have sparked an interest among social scientists and historians, resulting in dozens of volumes and many hundreds of articles on the origins, forms and meanings of national movements, their successes and failures, their merits and dangers. The reality of the early twenty-first century, with the often joined themes of nationalism and ethnicity high on the political agenda, forces those studying nationalism to firmly support their research with critical reflection and analysis in order to prevent or refute suspicions concerning their true objectives. Notwithstanding this caution among a great deal of scholars, many methodological and subsequent research problems still remain to be solved.

This is certainly the case with the comparative study of national movements. Though these movements are pre-eminently transnational, both in inspiration and development, researchers commonly remain unaware of results from studies of other nations. Indeed, time and again case studies are carried out without a contextual or comparative dimension. Moreover, even theory formation is often insufficiently based on the results of comparative empirical research. Comparative studies tend to be complicated, particularly when dealing with European national movements: the language barrier is often insurmountable, most



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<http://snm.nise.eu>

(historical) information resides in often undisclosed archives, too much documentation remains unpublished and controlled, systematically presented data are rarely available. Until recently there was no coordinated effort to collect records, documentation and information on this subject, to conserve and disclose them for research on a European level. At the same time a need for advice and support for the conservation and disclosure of those sources was felt.

That is why in 2008 an international research, heuristic and archival platform of scholars and institutes was established: NISE, acronym for National movements and Intermediary Structures in Europe. Its main objective is to enable comparative and transnational studies on national movements in general and their intermediary structures in particular: political parties, cultural associations and social organisations, the people associated with these structures (persons in charge, activists, representatives, ideologists...), and the programmes and goals as articulated in their publications and archives. Mapping out personal and institutional relations between national movements also enables researchers to study political and cultural transfers. And theoreticians of nationalism are given the opportunity to make use of more controlled and structured empirical data than ever before.¹

In only a couple of years NISE has assembled leading academics and specialised research and heritage institutes. Geographically its network ranges from Sami Kautokeino to Catalan Barcelona, from Irish Mayo to Ukrainian Lviv. By means of services and advice, data sharing, collective projects and a series of workshops, conferences and other meetings, the platform has already proved to be a valuable tool for its members. By reaching out to people not (yet) involved, publications are equally important in NISE's mission of stimulating comparative nationalism research. After a series of *Proceedings* and *Monographies*, a scientific journal devoted to nationalism is the logical next step.

Though renowned titles like *Nations and Nationalism* or *National Identities* comprehensively cover the subject area, NISE discerned the need for yet another English language journal related to nationalism studies, so as to have a dissemination channel in accordance with its remit. This

contributes to the comparative historiography of national movements and subsequent theory formation of nationalism, encouraging transnational and transfer studies in the process. The scope of the journal includes (European) history, political sciences, sociology, geography, nationalism studies and cultural studies.

The new journal, *Studies on National Movements (SNM)*, however also provides space for aspects of nationalism studies that hitherto are dealt with in a haphazard way or are even being neglected. This goes in particular for heuristic and archival matters: bibliographies, catalogues, archival inventories are accompanied by contextual studies, providing the empirical basis for research and, ultimately, theory formation. Moreover, as studies on nationalism only tend to be noticed when written in English, the spotlight will be directed specifically to non-English theoretical works and case studies. In sum, each volume of *SNM* will have three distinct sections: articles, sources and reviews, as such offering both a state of play of recent research and building stones for future studies.

Finally, another operational option also distinguishes *SNM* from other subject-related journals. In an era where the taxpayer finances scientific research with the results subsequently all too often published in journals sustained by private enterprise, leading to university libraries spending half their budget on journal subscriptions, NISE, subscribing to the *Cost of Knowledge* petition, has deliberately made *SNM* freely available on the Internet.² This is achieved by means of the Open Journals Systems (OJS), a journal management and publishing system that allows for a reliable and comprehensive online environment, and this for authors, readers and editors alike. Combining the benefits of traditional durability and digital possibilities, OJS was developed as part of the Public Knowledge Project, an academic partnership aimed at the promotion of online infrastructure in the dissemination of scientific knowledge, and grants an unseen level of accessibility and editorial independence.³

The free availability of *SNM*, to be published once a year rather than as an ongoing series of separate articles, does not detract from its scientific quality by any means. All contributions are peer reviewed, a refereeing procedure in which NISE's International Advisory Board plays a key role.

After publication, moreover, the scientific debate does not finish. Apart from common citations in other publications, the online nature of the journal allows for rapid feedback and even debates with the authors: each article has its own space for comments. We look forward to the ensuing discussions and invite all of our readers to take part in them.

Considering *SNM's* objective of widening the perspective of historians of nationalism, it is only logical that this first issue pays ample attention to historiographical matters. The kickoff is duly given by Miroslav Hroch, one of the figureheads in the historical analysis of national movements and whose theories were among the first to be adopted by scholars on both sides of a, luckily, outdated line of political demarcation. In his essay, Hroch sharply formulates one of the key problems of our discipline: the important, and yet often neglected difference between officially authorised state nationalism and the awakening of national feelings in minority groups. In a similar vein, Philipp Ther investigates the special situation of border regions, with the inhabitants as the puppet of two (or more) competing nationalisms. The case of Upper Silesia sheds light on the often tragic conditions in which peoples and regions were torn apart, and the impact on their identity.

Four articles focus on the historiographical output in/on a number of European national movements, each with its own peculiarities. Bruno De Wever not only traces the development of a critical historiography of the Flemish movement and the main debates among historians, his article is also a manual for researchers, even the most precise currently available for scholars not reading Dutch. Tudi Kernalegenn and Yann Fournis show the dynamics between the nationalist movement, the historical profession and broad society in Brittany, a close interplay in which the historical debate about the movement's involvement in World War II plays a key role. The moral implications of history writing are also elucidated by Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, who dissects the close and ambiguous relationship, up to this day, of historians and the Catalan movement. Inevitable as this blending is, his article reads at the same time as a plea for a higher consciousness among scholars: considering the (im)possibilities of taking a neutral position, he explores the confusion that arises when historians

are fully engaged in their object of study. That historians have several options to choose from, is also the leitmotif in Darius Staliūnas's article on Lithuanian national historiography. He analyses the strategies used by several generations of historians, first when confronted with nationalist pressure from dominant neighbours, later when dealing with official paradigms determining the playing field.

The section on 'sources' in this first issue shows the variety of possible approaches. As an appendix to his article on Upper Silesia, but at the same time surpassing it, Philipp Ther presents a bibliography of recent works on the region's history, including some with an outspoken comparative intent. A second contribution, by Sophie Bossaert and Tom Cobbaert, deals with the archives of the Bayernpartei: an inventory of the files and documents belonging to the international collections of the ADVN in Antwerp is a first step to enable research into this especially during the 1950s successful Bavarian nationalist party. Finally, Xabier Macías and Manoel Santos discuss the goals and development of DILINAME, an online database offering access to documents relevant for a series of movements advocating the rights of European stateless nations. This first volume of *SNM* does not contain an (annotated) source publication, but that is something the journal will definitely offer in future issues.

The editorial staff is confident that *Studies on National Movements* will receive a warm welcome. Desiring to ensure an ongoing dialogue in the scholarly historical field, we invite readers to share their comments and authors to submit their contributions on instances of national thought and practices anywhere in Europe. Curious of the direction our journal will venture into, we are confident it will become a meeting ground for everyone involved in realising an innovative history of national movements.

Endnotes

¹ More on NISE at its website, <http://www.nise.eu>.

² R. Monvoisin, 'Recherche publique, revues privées', in: *Le monde diplomatique*, 59 (December 2012) 27; <http://thecostofknowledge.com> [accessed 23/4/2013].

³ 'Public Knowledge Project. About' at <http://www.pkp.sfu.ca/about> [accessed 25/4/2013].