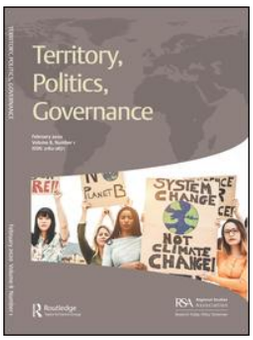


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# The emotional geopolitics of contested peace: the austerity crisis and the Danish minority of South Schleswig

William R. A. Hughes [a], Nick S. Megoran[b] and Matthew C. Benwell [c]

**ABSTRACT**

In 1920, the Treaty of Versailles attempted an innovative solution to the Danish–German boundary dispute, known as the 'Schleswig-Holstein question'. Two plebiscites asked the populations which state they wished to be governed by, and although the conflict was far from resolved by these votes, the subsequent century has witnessed the stuttering but gradual progression from war to a 'negative' and subsequently a 'positive peace'. However, austerity measures implemented by the German state in 2010 cut budgetary support for Danish minority schooling, threatening to undo decades of progress. This paper uses an ethnographic approach to the 2010 *årsmøde*, an important annual Danish cultural festival in German South Schleswig, which coincided with the announcement of the budget cuts. Drawing on work in geographies of peace and emotional geopolitics, it interrogates community singing at public meetings as a way to broaden narratives of responses to the budget cuts from just 'elite' political accounts, and to highlight the significance of everyday and emotional aspects of nationalism that serve to unsettle notions of 'successful' peace-making. Whilst acknowledging the achievements of peace-making in Schleswig-Holstein, it is argued that peace is not an end point, but rather a continual process subject to contestation.

**KEYWORDS**

Schleswig-Holstein; geography of peace; geopolitics; emotion; song; conflict; territory; nationalism

**HISTORY** Received 24 July 2019; in revised form 5 May 2020

## INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 marks the centenary of landmark post-First World War plebiscites held in the Danish–German borderlands. These attempted to resolve what had become known in the late 19th century as 'the Schleswig-Holstein question'. One hundred years on is a fitting moment from which to consider the legacy of the plebiscites in light of the recent growth of the geographies of peace literature.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that whilst the plebiscites successfully addressed the issue of militarized interstate conflict over the territories, rather than resolving inter-communal tensions, they reframed them in new ways that would not be properly addressed until half a

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century later by the 1955 Bonn–Copenhagen Declarations. These guaranteed the rights of minorities on both sides of the border and established a framework for not simply avoiding interstate war but for building coexistence and cooperation between minorities and majorities; or, to use the language of Martin Luther King Jr, Johan Galtung and others, a move from *negative* to *positive* peace. The resolution of the Schleswig-Holstein dispute is one of the most impressive achievements of post-War European peace-making, and since the early 1990s it has been held up as a 'model' for how to resolve the multiple ethno-territorial disputes that erupted with the demise of socialist states in East Europe.

However, peace is not a final outcome but a process that remains open and contested. This is demonstrated by a sudden crisis in minority–majority relations in 2010 in the Kiel-based northern German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein. To save money under an austerity budget, the conservative–liberal (Christian Democratic Union (CDU)–Free Democratic Party (FDP)) ruling coalition decided to reduce funding to Danish-language schools. This sparked animated protests from both Denmark and the Danish minority in Germany, and the cuts were reversed two years later following interventions by the federal German government and regional elections which saw the CDU-FDP forced from power. The cuts triggered what Kühl (2012, p. 170) described as 'the most severe and far-reaching crisis in Danish–German minority relations since the adoption of the Bonn–Copenhagen Declarations in 1955'.

Although apparently resolved relatively quickly, the episode is worth reflecting on for two reasons. First, it shows that peace should be theorized as a dynamic rather than a settled outcome that can serve unproblematically as a 'model' for other, more benighted places. Second, existing accounts of the crisis focus on elite political actors and negotiated outcomes, underplaying its emotional and affective significance. The emotional registers of the episode that can help us understand the fragility of peace have been overlooked in accounts that prioritize the perspectives of elite political actors over everyday experiences and activities such as communal singing (Šmidchen, 2014). It is these very experiences that help provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of what peace looks like in the context of ethno-territorial disputes. This paper is thus not a discussion of the historical processes leading up to the crisis, the political response to the crisis in general and its aftermath. Rather, the innovative contribution of this research is an ethnographic study of the immediate first four days of the crisis in 2010, to explore what it tells us about the state of the peace settlement.

The paper is structured as follows. It proceeds with an outline of the historical background to the 2010 dispute, before locating the study within literatures on the geographies of peace and emotional geopolitics. The ethnographic study (conducted by N. S. M.) of the reaction of the Danish minority of Flensburg to the austerity cuts in 2010 is then introduced. The discussion of our findings examines (1) the achievements of peace in Schleswig-Holstein; (2) the ambiguities of peace; and (3) the emotional geopolitics of the crisis. It concludes by arguing that peace is an ongoing, contested process rather than a successful final outcome, understood (in this context) as much by what non-elites *sing* (and where they sing it) as by what elites *say*. This demonstrates the important contributions that geographical perspectives can bring to the study of peace.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The 'Schleswig-Holstein question' was an archetypal European ethno-nationalist territorial dispute between competing Danish and German nationalisms, and its 20th-century resolution was an impressive achievement of post-Second World War diplomacy (Malloy, 2015). The conflict emerged after about 1830 (Rerup, 1982). Previously Danish, Friesian and 'high' and 'low' (*Plat*) German speakers lived in the same territory, but with the age of nationalism the Danish and German populations of the region became polarized around mutually exclusive territorial aspirations. Such aspirations pitted nationalistic Danish monarchism against a Schleswig-

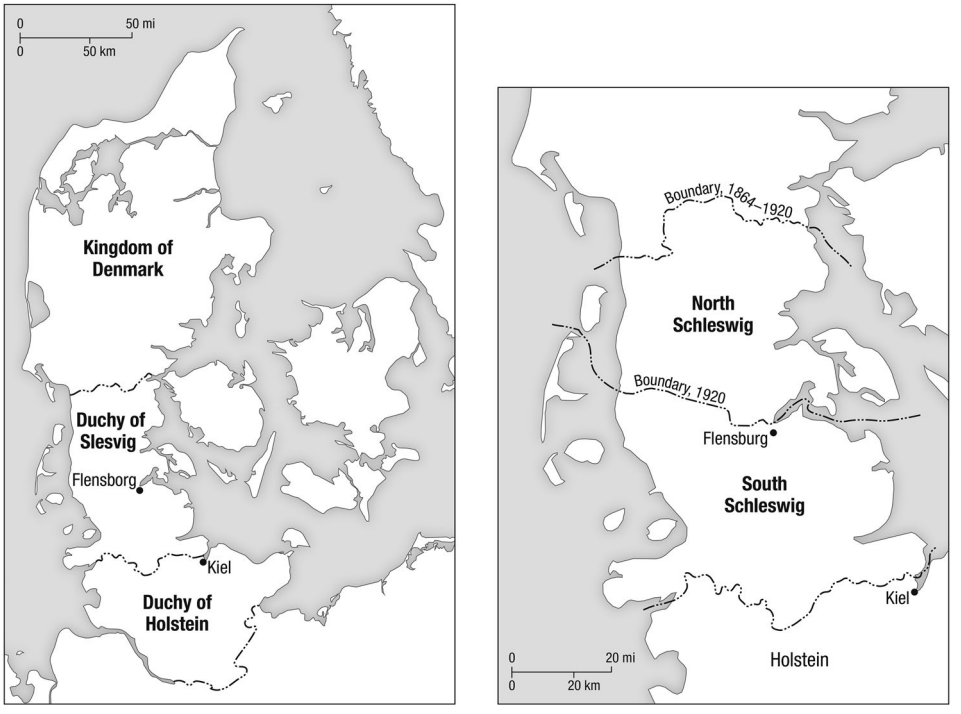


**Figure 1.** (left) Boundaries of the region between Denmark and Germany before the Second Schleswig War; and (right) the current post-1920 boundary.

Holstein regionalism that sought alignment with the German Confederation. The revolt that followed by German citizens triggered the First Schleswig War (1848–51). The victory of the Danish crown was short-lived, however, as in 1864 Prussia and its allies won a decisive victory in the Second Schleswig War bringing the whole territory under German control.

The boundary remained unchanged until 1920 (Figure 1), when the Treaty of Versailles declared that 'The frontier between Germany and Denmark shall be fixed in conformity with the wishes of the population' (Section XII, Article 109).[1] This led to separate plebiscites being held in North and Central Schleswig (Thaler, 2009, p. 40). Each referendum returned a decisive outcome, with Northern Schleswig voting in favour of joining Denmark (74.9%) and Central Schleswig, Germany (80.2%). Although the boundary was now delimited, both countries now hosted irredentist national minorities with smouldering grievances (Danes in what now became known as South Schleswig and Germans in Danish North Schleswig). Far from resolving the Schleswig-Holstein question, the 1920 plebiscites simply changed its form.

After the Nazi defeat in 1945, and an upsurge in pro-Danish sentiment amongst the German population of South Schleswig, Danes in the region petitioned the British occupation force for a boundary change to bring all Slesvig[2] under the Danish crown. The Danish parliament blocked this, and pro-Danish sentiment in Slesvig subsided as the region stabilized and as many German refugees were settled there from territories overrun by Soviet forces (Klatt, 2001). The formation in Flensborg of the irredentist political party Südschleswigscher Wählerverband (SSW) reflected the bitterness and sense of betrayal that many felt. The 1920 plebiscites might have resulted in a 'negative peace' by deciding the boundary between states, but were less successful at producing a lasting 'positive peace' of good inter-communal relations between mixed ethnicities on the ground (Megoran, 2011).

In 1954, the newly created Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) applied to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), requiring the approval of its members, including Denmark. Both governments agreed that negotiations should take place to deal with the national minorities present on either side of their boundary (Becker-Christensen, 2014). The resultant 1955 Bonn–Copenhagen Declarations attempted a decisive resolution to the conflict (Kühl, 2005). It assured each national minority equal civic rights, guaranteed cultural and linguistic rights especially in the crucial area of minority-language education, and recognized the principle of self-identification with a national/linguistic group (instead of a more complicated approach such as dual citizenship or a requirement to prove language competence).

In time, these declarations provided the framework for the development of trust between minorities and states in the borderlands. From the late 1960s the Danish minority organizations came to accept that they had a secure future in a democratic Germany, and the SSW, previously an irredentist party representing Danish nationalist interests, began to pitch its appeal to German voters by presenting itself as a party defending local interests. Thus, in elections to Schleswig-Holstein's Kiel parliament in 2000 they received over 60,000 votes, a total exceeding the Danish electorate (Kühl, 2017). Between 1971 and 1996 the SSW had only one representative in the Kiel parliament; in 1996 that doubled, with further progress at subsequent elections (Henningsen et al., 1998, p. 480). In this same year the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) was formed by the governments of Denmark, Germany and Schleswig-Holstein, with European Union and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) support (ECMI, 2016). The rationale was that the Schleswig-Holstein 'model' could be reflected upon and exported elsewhere, in particular the many ethno-territorial conflicts that had emerged in post-Socialist Eastern Europe.

In 2010, the coalition government of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, in an austerity-era cost-saving plan (Danish, *spareplan*), announced that funding of the private Danish-language schools would be reduced (relative to the cost per pupil of the state's German-language public schools) from 100% to 85% (Klatt, 2012). The announcement occurred during the *årsmøde*. Whilst the measures were overturned within three years when Schleswig-Holstein elections produced a coalition featuring the SSW for the first time, the *spareplan* caused a deep crisis in minority–majority relations (Klatt, 2012; Kühl, 2012). This shows the idea of an ethno-territorial issue as finally 'resolved' and a 'model' for others to follow as simplistic, and points to the need for a more sophisticated theorization of 'peace'.

## GEOGRAPHIES OF PEACE, EMOTIONAL GEOPOLITICS AND ETHNOGRAPHY

In this section, recent debates about geographies of peace and emotional geopolitics are set out as the two conceptual bases through which the events of the 2010 *årsmøde* are understood. In particular, we use the idea that peace is a contested process rather than a stable endpoint, but argue that the peace geographies scholarship has too often missed the vital everyday and emotional element. We suggest that ethnography is a highly apposite method to research these emotional aspects of everyday of peace.

### Geographies of peace

There has been considerable reflection on 'peace' within political science and (more recently) political geography, with two major conceptual advances of relevance for understanding what happened in Schleswig-Holstein in 2010. The first is the distinction, going back to J. Galtung's reworking of Martin Luther King, Jr, between *negative* and *positive* peace (Megoran & Dalby, 2018), and the second is viewing peace as a continual process rather than a static endpoint or outcome (Richmond, 2005). Negative peace refers to the prevention or suspension of violence, whereas positive peace emphasizes resorting and building good relationships, including ideas of

'tolerance, friendship, hope, reconciliation, justice, humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism, resistance, solidarity, hospitality, care and empathy' (Penu & Essaw, 2019, p. 91; see also Galtung, 1990). Traditionally, Megoran (2011) argues, geographers have been 'better at studying war than peace', although the recent advance of peace geographies heralds greater attention to the spatial and scalar aspects of peace-making and a critical interrogation of how different concepts of peace are embedded in power relations (Gusic, 2019; Harrowell, 2018; McConnell et al., 2015). Analyses of peace have more often reflected upon elite-level actors, whereas peace is experienced at the scale of 'daily lives, *on the ground*' (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004, p. 11, Original emphasis). This emphasis contrasts with the more elite-focused process of liberal peace-building (MacGinty, 2008; Richmond, 2006).

A positive peace approach is aimed at fostering relations marked by justice and reconciliation, unlike negative peace which merely focuses upon preventing violence. However, even places apparently exhibiting characteristics of positive peace-building may subsequently descend towards conflict and violence, as Penu and Essaw (2019) show in their account of the Alavanyo–Nkonya conflict in the Volta Region of Ghana. This body of scholarship therefore insists that peace should be conceptualized as a continual and at times fragile process instead of permanent achievement. What recent work on geographies of peace has arguably missed, however, is an engagement with the emotional and affective experiences of non-elites. To rectify this, we turn to recent literatures in cultural and feminist geography.

## Everyday and emotional geopolitics

Literature on the 2010 *spareplan* and its outcomes has tended to focus on party manoeuvring, political strategies and bargaining in line with classic political science framings (Klatt, 2012; Kühl, 2012). Although figuring as a background, the emotional elements of these events have been largely overlooked, as they had been more broadly in geopolitical scholarship until relatively recently (Pain, 2009). As Pain et al. (2010, p. 973) point out, 'Few studies have paused to critically reflect on *how* geopolitical events and discourses affect feelings. … Fewer still consider that emotions, in turn, may stimulate action and affect the practices, progress and shape of politics at different scales.' The recent turn to thinking seriously about emotion in political geography has been inspired by feminist geopolitics (Dowler & Sharp, 2001; Hyndman, 2001) and calls for increasingly embodied and grounded accounts that are 'more attentive to what is happening on "the ground" in the places and lives that people inhabit' (Pain, 2009, p. 467). Müller (2013, p. 61) advocates 'exploring the ways in which hegemonic meaning-making is always imbued with affective investment'. This joint consideration of affect and discourse facilitates 'more-than-symbolic ways of understanding why certain geopolitical discourses become hegemonic, while others do not' (p. 61).

There is, then, a growing body of work demonstrating why an interest in emotion and affect matters. In particular, work in conflict and post-conflict urban settings has shed a light on the 'affective landscapes of everyday life in ways that highlight politics as a process that is dynamic and grounded in corporeality' (Laketa, 2016, p. 662; see also Fregonese, 2017). In the context of Mostar, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, decisions young people make about how to negotiate the city (i.e., how to dress, talk and move around neighbourhoods) are intimately connected to sensory experiences and perceptions of their engagements with other people and the urban environment. These affective encounters with(in) the city play an active role in how lines of division are (re)produced and/or challenged by young people from different ethnic communities. Crucially, Laketa's (2016, p. 663) work emphasizes 'the political relevance of feelings. Emotion and affect shape and are shaped by politics, which makes this dynamic crucial in understanding the workings of power'.

Similarly, recent work on the constructions, contestations and lived experiences of (national) citizenship have productively examined the nexus of politics, power, emotion and affect (Bagelman, 2016). As Wood (2007, p. 208) persuasively argues, 'it is only by fully understanding the

emotional power of nations and nationalism, that we will be able to challenge the potentially divisive and violent consequences of these phenomena'. This work moves beyond the representational and symbolic elements of banal and everyday nationalism espoused by Billig (1995), to consider 'how the nation emerges from moments of affective encounter between different bodies and objects' (Militz & Schurr, 2016, p. 57). In challenging previously disembodied and abstract accounts of nationalism, these theorizations frame nationhood as dynamic, 'ongoing and emergent through our daily experiences' (Sumartojo, 2017, p. 199). Analysing the mundane (and not so mundane) practices, performances and routines associated with the nation manifest in practices such as dancing, marching, dressing up, eating and (especially pertinent for this study) singing, opens up possibilities to trace the 'feelings, thoughts and bodily and sensory experiences that emerge in our encounters with it' (p. 211; see also Closs Stephens, 2016; Wood, 2007, 2012).

In particular, scholars have examined the potential for music, song and the act of singing to stir emotion in relation to the nation and expressions of nationalism. Revill (2000) and Anderson et al. (2005) argue that music should not be analysed merely as text or representation, but that its power in moving embodied national subjects should be acknowledged:

> Attending to music and sound as they are lived, to what they do, enables us to recognise as legitimate the multiplicity of ways in which musics are experienced, produced, reproduced and consumed, and to foreground the relationships between the physical presence of sound and the flow of sensory impressions. (Anderson et al., 2005, p. 640)

There is recognition here that 'the phenomenal properties of sound are not fixed and universal; rather they are actively produced by the performative relations of making music' (Revill, 2000, p. 598). For instance, as Kuhn (1990, p. 4) emphasizes in the Danish context, songs have the potential to engender experiences of social communion and cohesiveness and can carry a greater 'emotional charge' when performed collectively. They provide the national citizenry with, 'common reference points, common idols, and often a common sense of "the enemy"' (Ramet, 1994, p. 1). While the performance of national songs is often associated with passionate or 'hot' expressions of ethno-national identity, Šmidchen's (2014) study exploring non-violent political action through the Singing Revolution in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (1988–91) is illustrative of how songs and their singing can engender a peaceful mass politics that eschews exclusionary and divisive nationalist tropes.

This work on song, singing and the nation remains sensitive to the spatial and temporal variations (Edensor, 2006; Revill, 2000) of these national feelings that often align with broader political events, retaining an 'attentiveness to the many varying tonalities and intensities of nationality' (Closs Stephens, 2016, p. 184). Political decisions made elsewhere, such as funding cuts to Danish schools, had very real implications for the practices and emotive performances of Danishness in South Schleswig during the 2010 Danish *årsmøde* in Flensborg, as we illustrate below. Attuning to the emotional and affectual expressions of nationhood – and, in particular, *singing* the nation – can, we argue, offer an insight into the contingencies and tensions inherent to the politics of seemingly peaceful and resolved borderland settlements.

## Ethnography

This article is based on ethnographic research conducted during the 2010 Danish *årsmøde* in Flensborg. Beginning in 1921, the *årsmøde* (literally, annual meeting) is actually a plethora of concurrent cultural, religious and political celebrations of Danishness in South Schleswig over four days, culminating in a parade through the city's streets and an open-air meeting composed of singing, speeches and entertainments including musical and dance performance. It is organized by the Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF, 'South Schleswig Association') the leading cultural institution amongst Danish-minded individuals in Germany. Rasmussen (2009, pp. 130–131) argues that

as 'the most important annual Danish manifestation in South Schleswig', the Flensborg *årsmøde* 'shows both the German majority population and Denmark that Danishness is still alive and well in South Schleswig'. In a rare scholarly study of the *årsmøde*, Pedersen (2004) interprets it as a national ritual rehearsing Danishness, reinforcing the connection to Denmark, and integrating new members into the minority. Rather than use this semiotic approach to the *årsmøde* as a window into national identification, we build here on Pedersen's work by interrogating the 2010 Flensborg *årsmøde* ethnographically for the everyday affective and emotional geopolitics of the 2010 crisis.

Recognizing that the term 'ethnography' has a variety of meanings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp. 1–2), following Jones and Watt we use it to refer to a research method marked by *participation* in the lives of the community being studied, *immersion* within their cultural setting, *reflection* during participation and writing up of field notes, and '*thick*' *description* which seeks to contextualize observed phenomena (Watts, 2008, pp. 7–9). Although primarily associated with social anthropology (Robben & Sluke, 2007), ethnographic methods have more recently gained credibility in political geography (Megoran, 2006; Page, 2019) and political science (Schatz, 2009). These authors argue that ethnography helps improve our understanding by illuminating actors' lived experiences of political dramas and processes.

As the largest public marking of Danishness in South Schleswig, the Flensborg *årsmøde* is an ideal object of ethnographic research into what it means to be Danish-minded in South Slesvig today. Further, because the 2010 *årsmøde* was overshadowed by the *spareplan* –announced on the day the meetings began – this was an ideal way to explore the emotional and affective elements of the political controversy itself, which are largely missing from the established political science accounts. Nick Megoran spent the *årsmøde* period in Flensborg, participating in both the principal public events and also various cultural activities in schools, churches, old peoples' homes and other venues. Having first attended the *årsmøde* to study it for an undergraduate dissertation in 1994, and having stayed in touch with both individual members of the Danish minority and also news feeds from Flensborg since then, Megoran was able to stay with a Danish friend, Per Østerbye, a retired priest in the Danish Church who acted as his gatekeeper to the minority since 1994.

All research was conducted in Danish. Because Megoran speaks Danish but has only weak German, this account only explores the everyday emotional reactions of the Danish-minded minority, not the German majority. This does not invalidate the research findings because it was only the Danish minority who were subject to these additional budget measures. This positionality is also reflected in a more sympathetic engagement with the Danish minority side of the argument than that of the Kiel government: he would not claim to be a dispassionate external observer, but rather to have some level of emotional involvement (Ferretti, 2019, p. 7). We argue that this facilitates the study of emotional geopolitics in this context.

Ethnography is also a style of writing, foregrounding everyday situated experiences as the starting point of reflection rather than using them as examples of some greater point. The substantive material is structured around three themes about peace that emerged during the research: that the *årsmøde* shows, first, the achievements of peace, the ambiguities and tensions of the settlement, and that the emotional, everyday geopolitics of the *spareplan* enable us to better understand that 'peace' is a contested process rather than an outcome. One of the most emotional activities that Danes take part in during the *årsmøde* is singing, and these sections thus foreground the emotional geopolitics of peace as experienced through common singing.

## GEOPOLITICS OF PEACE: FINDINGS FROM THE 2010 *ÅRSMØDE*

In this section ethnographic observations of the Flensborg *årsmøde* are used to interrogate, first, the achievements and, second, the ambiguities of the peace settlement in Slesvig-Holsten, and,

third, to explore the emotional geopolitics of the crisis brought about by the announcement of the *spareplan*.

## Achievements of peace

On a blustery Sunday May afternoon in 2010, I (Megoran) gathered with thousands of other people in Flensborg's Nørretorv district to begin the parade through the streets of the city to the athletics ground for the open-air meeting that is the high point of the Flensburg *årsmøde*. Scouts, Frivilligt Drenge- og Pige-Forbund (FDF/FPF) (the Danish people's church youth organizations), square-dancing formations, schools, kindergarten, folk dance troupes, bands and other groups took their place in the parade as it wound through the city streets.

The tagline of the 2010 meetings was 'Happiness at South Slesvig – share it with others'. The marchers seemed to be doing this successfully, for as we processed, many in the parade carried the Danish flag or dressed in its red-and-white-coloured clothes, while people lined the streets and stood at their balconies watching, waving and cheering. Some were no doubt self-identifying Danish-minded residents or visitors from north of the border, but the majority were German, smiling and waving German and Danish flags. Upon reaching the athletics ground, we gathered on the grass in front of a platform. The keynote address was given by Danish Minister for Education, Tina Nedergaard and other speeches were given by various leaders of the minority, the city's German mayor, Henning Brügemann, and the *Minderheitenbeauftragte* (the Schleswig-Holstein Prime Minister's minority issues representative), Caroline Schwarz.

It is worth underlining the significance of this. The city and region's Danish-minded population have the freedom to don folk costumes and bear Danish national flags through this once bitterly divided city, and be cheered by the German residents and greeted by their leaders because they are seen as making a positive contribution to the city rather than representing an irredentist threat, in what must be described as an astounding demonstration of positive peace. It is only since 1989 that it has become the custom to invite German politicians to address the meeting, a sign, suggests Pedersen (2004, pp. 34–35) of the self-confidence of the minority and also of the majority's wish to acknowledge their presence.

However, it was not just words spoken, but also songs sung on the *årsmøde* ground that demonstrated the achievements of peace. One of them was *Der er et yndigt land* ('There is a lovely land'), Denmark's national anthem which sits alongside the royal hymn, *King Christian*. The song concludes that 'Our old Denmark shall exist / as long as the beech trees reflect / their tops in the blue waves.' Written in the early 19th century by Adam Oehlenschläger, a poet of mixed Danish–German heritage, Adriansen (2003, p. 182) argues the song 'aims to embrace both the older princely-patriotism with the new national feeling, which was specially linked to landscape, history and the people'. Initially preferred in liberal circles to the more bombastic *King Christian*, it spread widely within Denmark and amongst the Danish-minded population of Slesvig, but not without problems under German rule. For example, in 1890 four Danish residents of the region were fined in the courts for singing it in a public restaurant. The judgement said that 'every German in North Schleswig would be agitated and offended to hear a song which glorified "Old Denmark"' (p. 186). Yet now it was being sung openly, with the German authorities in public attendance.

Singing on the *årsmøde* ground was neither an isolated nor an unusual event: song characterized the whole *årsmøde*, from the central gathering to the numerous events in clubhouses, churches and schools. For example, on the afternoon of Thursday, 27 May, I attended an *årsmøde*-related event at a Danish elderly care home in Flensborg. With traditionally decorated *kaffebord* (coffee tables) setting out *wienerbrød* (Danish pastries) and coffee in flasks, draped in miniature *Dannebrog* (Danish flags), it was the epitome of being *hyggeligt*, the 'cosiness' that Danish hosts aspire to create and which functions as an important symbol of Danishness. However, the essential ingredient of *hygge* that is often missed in its recent rise to international chic cultural status but which was the focus of the meeting and apparently much more enjoyable to the residents, guests and

visitors from Denmark than the speeches, was *fællesang* ('community singing'). Throughout the afternoon we sang a range of Danish songs from amusing modern ones such as *He Comes with the Summer* to 'national' or 'fatherland' songs such as *I Love the Green Groves*.

These examples of 'ephemeral, emotionally charged moments of musical performance' are interesting precisely because they 'allow for an active engagement with [national] identities in the making' (Wood, 2012, p. 196). For Wood (2007, p. 205), these musical performances offer 'a useful route to understanding how nations and nationalism gain their emotional power'. The common singing of emotive patriotic songs has an important place in the emergence of a modern Danish national consciousness, an emergence that is inherently geopolitical. Kuhn (1990) argues that its origins can be identified as a response to national humiliation during the Napoleonic Wars, but that it mushroomed particularly in reaction to rising German nationalism and the military threat to Danish rule over Schleswig. The towering figure of Nikolaj Grundtvig (1783–1872) is crucial here. Priest, poet, historian, folklorist, philosopher, educator and politician, he is regarded as the outstanding individual in the creation of modern Danish national consciousness (Rerup, 1993). He pioneered adult education through the Folk High Schools where, during the winter, farmers and other ordinary Danes learnt, amongst other things, to sing not only his songs that fused Christian faith with national belonging but also the Danish national/fatherland songs generally – often being folk songs drawing on broader Nordic mythology. In time, the canon of songs became established in the *Højskolens Sangbogen* first published in 1894 and now in its 18th edition (Folkehøjskolernes Forening i Danmark, 2006). A total of 81 of the 572 songs in this edition are written by Grundtvig.

Adriansen (2003) has shown how the community singing of national songs has a pivotal place in the development of the Danish national consciousness that continues up to the present day. She argues that 'It is during times of war and crisis that fatherland songs have been particularly used to a significant degree' (p. 68). She mentions two such moments in particular. The first was 1919–20 around the reunion of North Schleswig with Denmark, when many thousands of meetings of youth clubs, housewives' societies and activities clubs began and ended with singing of fatherland songs. The second was the Nazi occupation during the Second World War, with mass public gatherings to sing fatherland songs taking place all around Denmark (pp. 69–73). Such songs were sung at the old people's care home that afternoon, as well as in churches, political meetings and other events during the *årsmøde*.

The continued existence of a thriving minority with the right to sing these songs is a testament to the foundations laid by the 1955 Bonn–Copenhagen Declarations. Indeed, the fact of the *årsmøde* being able to take place in the way it does, being welcomed by the city's German residents and governors who no longer see the Danish minority as a threat, and representing the ability of residents to self-identify with the minority and not be penalized legally or socially for doing so, is an extraordinary historical development. A century on from the first attempt to peacefully address the Slesvig-Holsten question, the 2010 *årsmøde* was a window into achievements of peace-making in a once seemingly intractable ethno-territorial dispute. It is thus understandable why Pedersen might ask whether, in the context of a peaceful coexistence and increasing drift towards multilingualism, the *årsmøde* is shifting from a ritual to a festival, and may eventually become a broader celebration of fellowship of the two cultures in the border region (Pedersen, 2004, pp. 44–45). However, as the next section argues, Pedersen's optimism does not pay due heed to the ambiguities and tensions of the Schleswig-Holstein settlement that can be read from the *årsmøde*.

## Ambiguities and tensions of peace

As the open-air meeting was underway at the athletics ground, I mingled with the crowd who were variously paying attention to the speeches, chatting amongst themselves, or browsing the stalls in the blustery May Day. The programme unfolded beneath an array of flags: the *Dannebrog* flying centrally from the tallest mast, flanked by those of Sweden, Norway, the Åland and Faroe

Islands, Greenland, and the Friesians. The presence of Nordic banners and the absence of any from German-speaking lands was striking. Speeches, punctuated by folk songs and dances, were made in Danish, except those delivered by representatives of the German state in Flensburg and Kiel. This formal presentation depicted a minority who spoke and sang and danced in Danish, living under and with a German political authority. But the everyday reality belied this neat division. I spoke to a woman who had just taken part in a performance on the central stage of a song hymning Denmark's beauty. With a painted *Dannebrog* on each cheek, she seemed to embody a healthy, vibrant, Danish-speaking minority in a German state, still looking lovingly towards Denmark. But after I finished speaking to her, she went back to talking with the rest of her performance quintet – in German. Thus, the *årsmøde* embodies a tension and ambiguity about this supposedly resolved conflict. Pedersen writes that there have in the past been proposals to use both Danish and German in the *årsmøde*, but that the organizers (SSF) rejected this, apart from accepting official greetings in German from local officials – which of course reinforces the narrative of two different ethno-linguistic communities. As she astutely observes, '*Årsmøderne* are the marking of a Danishness with monolingualism as the ideal. But it is not a reflection of the linguistic reality in the Danish minority' (Pedersen, 2000, p. 49). This demonstrates the tensions and ambiguities of peace-making.

The continuing ambiguities at the heart of the Danish–German settlement were evident in the traditional intellectual and political highlight of the *årsmøder*, the 'open debate' hosted by SSF on the Saturday morning. Billed as the 'traditional information meeting for politicians, community-shapers, the press, and everyone else' (Sydslesvigsk Forening, 2010), it was held in Flensborghus, the headquarters of SSF and of various other minority organizations, at the heart of old Flensborg. It involved not only speeches and questions from the floor but also community singing and a *hyggeligt* buffet. Posters and displays around the walls declared that due to the Bonn–Copenhagen Declarations the Danish and German borderland communities had 'gone from against each other, to beside each other, to together with each other'.

But such clear verities of a successfully resolved ethno-territorial conundrum were unsettled by the discussions in the debate. Following a brief introduction and community singing of *I østen stiger solen op* (The Sun is Rising in the East), the debate was opened by Finn Slumstrup, chairman of the Grænseforeningen (GF, 'border society'), the Danish-government-funded body that supports the minority under the tagline 'for an open Danishness'. 'There are many Danes who don't know anything about the minority, they don't even know that it exists. We need to do a lot more to explain it to them,' he argued. He said we have moved from the 'old narrative' of conflict and we need a 'new narrative', one that is about coexistence, with Danish and German communities being for and with each other.

The panel and audience offered various suggestions as to what that new narrative might be, invoking a range of geopolitical imaginations of Denmark, Schleswig, Germany and Europe. Poul Erik Thomsen, editor of Denmark's *Jyske Vestkysten* newspaper, observed that it is sometimes said that Sydslesvig is Denmark's 'back-garden', but he asked, 'why can't the minority be seen as Denmark's front garden?' Challenging the dominant narrative of the Schleswig-Holstein resolution as providing a model of coexistence for Europe, he said bluntly, 'There is no point in having a minority if there is no difference, yet we have become afraid of articulating difference.'

Invoking a more explicit geopolitical lens Dieter Küssner, chairman of SSF, said we must accept that, regrettably, 'South Schleswig is no longer a part of the Danish consciousness.' He lamented a loss of peoples' fellowship in Denmark with not only South Schleswig but also Greenland and the Faroes, and argued – in response to a challenge from the floor – that 'We must strengthen our Danish identity and our connection with Danish society, because we are drifting further from it.' The relationship of Denmark to its self-governing former Atlantic colonies is fraught, and comparing South Schleswig with them and arguing for greater social 'fellowship' between them was a striking position, at odds with the Grænseforeningen's vision of 'open Danishness'.

Anke Spoorendonk,[1] chair of the SSW group in the Schleswig-Holstein Diet in Kiel since 1996, took issue with the 'back garden/front garden' framing, arguing that we are clearly 'part of the Danish family' and that the garden image 'misses out the positives of the life we have here in this society as a minority, and as one of Europe's national minorities'. This was a re-articulation of the idea of the minority as a 'model' of conflict resolution and coexistence for 'national minorities' across Europe. Spoorendonk's invocation of the idea of 'national minority' uses a term that had taken on a new resonance with the rightward drift of politics and growing anti-immigrant sentiment in both Denmark and Germany since the 1990s. Indeed, possibly the only thing that all panellists and contributors agreed on was that the Danish community in Germany should *not* be compared with 'immigrants'. Poul Erik Thomsen said, 'There is a big difference, too, between immigrants to Denmark and the national minorities (including the Germans in North Schleswig and the Danes in South Schleswig) – we can't compare the two.' Finn Slumstrup agreed, arguing that 'integration is not relevant to the national minorities, but to immigrants'. This discussion percolated throughout other events during the 2010 *årsmøde*, but it was one that I do not recall being a live issue in the 1994 one.

Thus, although a plethora of public-facing institutions such as the GF, SSV, and the German and Danish states present the Schleswig-Holstein issue as 'resolved' and as a model for others, the debate showed both the inadequacies of this framing and also the ongoing ambiguities about being Danish in modern Germany. However, a way to set aside these ambiguities and anxieties was to sing beloved songs about the (Danish) fatherland whilst drinking coffee and eating Danish cake in a *hyggelig* environment. For the session finished, as ever, not with a round of applause but with a song – *Danmark, nu blunder den lyse nat* (Denmark, Now the Light Night is Slumbering), written in 1914 and sung from the SSF songbook produced for the *årsmøde*. Other songs in the book, to be used over the course of the four days of the *årsmøde,* included those such as *Venner, ser på Danmarks kort* (Friends, Look at Denmark's Map). Written in 1889 by Christian Richardt, it was originally a geographical oversight of the Danish realm through an eyebrow-raising 72 verses, including an extended exhortation not to forget German-occupied Slesvig (the latest edition of the *Højskolens Sangbogen* reduces this to a more manageable four verses). Thus, during the course of *årsmøde* the minority repeatedly sang songs hymning Denmark as their fatherland, Danish as their mother tongue or challenging German rule over Slesvig. This does not reflect the lived experiences of many Danish-minded South Schleswigers but further, as the above discussion about the debate shows, it also points to ambiguities and tensions in the current situation that are brushed under the carpet in the presentation of the Danish–German borderland settlement as a model for others to draw on. Despite the positive spin of establishment organizations, there is no agreement about what Danishness means in Germany today. But the intellectual and affective registers are different. Members of the minority may not be able to spell out what Danishness means, but they do not need to: they act it out, live it out, eat it out and sing it out. As the next section demonstrates, the shock of the *spareplan* spotlighted these tensions – and it was in the reprisal of these songs from the era of the pre-1920 German/Prussian occupation of the region that these tensions could be articulated and witnessed.

## Emotional geopolitics of a crisis

Although there had been informal gatherings the night before, the four days of the official *årsmøde* began on Thursday, 27 May. As I stumbled bleary-eyed into the kitchen, my host, Per, standing in his pyjamas, greeted me with a mixture of anger and shock in his voice, with the startling claim that 'They're closing our schools!' He was brandishing the latest copy of *Flensborg Avis*, the

[1]Spoorendonk is known for her rejection of the idea of a particular 'South Schleswigian' identity that will transcend Danishness and Germanness in the border region. See her interview Lindsø (2011), 93.

daily newspaper that had long acted as the talking shop of the disparate Danish minority communities scattered across South Schleswig. Indeed, the headline across the front page was not about celebrating the *årsmøde*, but rather declared a 'Direct attack on the minority.' The article explained that the *Dansk* Skoleforening for Sydslesvig (Danish School's Society for South Slesvig) was called into a meeting in Kiel with the state's education ministry the day before and told that as part of an austerity savings plan they would receive 15% less funding – equal to €4.7 million per year. *Flensborg Avis* reckoned that this equalled 88 teaching posts of the 22 smaller village schools of the 48 Danish schools in South Schleswig, forcing them to close. The article cited Per Gildberg, chairman of the *Skoleforening*, as claiming that the measures would 'destroy a large part of the minority's life in the rural areas'. 'It has been established in school laws that the Danish minority schools shall have the same status as public German schools and shall not be compared to private German schools,' the paper raged; 'But it is exactly that that the government is doing in its austerity measures' (Krueger, 2010, p. 1). Its leader on the topic was even more striking in its militarized language. Describing the proposal as 'Kiel's frontal attack on the Danish minority', it said that the savings plan would force parents to send their children to German schools, making it hard to sustain Danish cultural life (Lønborg, 2010a, p. 2).

*Flensborg Avis*'s articles thus set the tone of shock and anger that would characterize all the minority debate about the savings plan over the coming days, eviscerating the SSF's theme of the 2010 *årsmøder* as 'Happiness at South Slesvig – share it with others.' The anger persisted and if anything became more intense, but the shock quickly turned to a determination to resist. This was undoubtedly facilitated by the coincidence of the announcement with the *årsmøde* when active members of the minority were all gathered together with their most ardent supporters from Denmark visiting. On the afternoon of Friday, 28 May, I spent time in the local studies collection of the Danish Central Library in Flensborg, the intellectual hub of Danishness in South Schleswig. I observed that activists were using the library to prepare and print protest posters against the proposed educational budget cuts.

The dominant reactions to the *spareplan* were anger and shock. The shock was not simply the unexpected nature of the announcement but, more profoundly, that it threatened to undo the understanding of the Schleswig-Holstein settlement as a peerless achievement of peace and as a model for others. On the Saturday morning 'open debate' at Flensborg House, Henry Bohm, a head-teacher from Bredsted, fumed that the issue 'has set a price on us, and that is something you just can't do. I thought that we had overcome this approach in Germany', whilst the GF's Finn Slumstrup, said that, 'This proposal is contrary to the bases on which this peaceful coexistence has been built: the current proposals from Kiel are contrary to the 1955 Bonn–Copenhagen Declarations,' adding that it 'shows us that there are problems'.

The focal demonstration of this anger was at the open-air meeting on the Sunday afternoon, the high point of the *årsmøde*. In his front-page leader for *Flensborg Avis* that morning, editor Bjarne Lønborg called on the minority to take 'to the barricades against historical discrimination' (Lønborg, 2010b, p. 1). As the minority paraded through the streets to the open-air meeting, they carried printed placards with the twin slogans of 'Discrimination: no thanks!' and 'We are also worth 100%' in Danish, as well as home-made banners with anti-discrimination slogans in German. Many people sported those slogans on T-shirts and stickers.

At the *årsmøde* ground itself, the welcome address to the open-air meeting was given by Preben Mogensen, priest of Ansgar church and the chair of the Flensborg branch of SSF. He set the tone for the event by saying that:

> the *årsmøderne* had become a protest this year about the proposals to save money. … We can't reckon that our fatherland can step in and pay. We must fight. As our placards say, we won't be treated as people worth only 85%.

With a nod to the bad weather, he added that 'even though there were the shadows both of the cuts and of the rainclouds, we would celebrate [our Danish life] here'.

The open-air meeting proceeded with the usual mixture of speeches interspersed with common singing and cultural performances, while participants drifted around the various activity and refreshment stalls that ringed the ground, greeting each other. In the meeting's keynote speech the Danish education minister, Tina Nedergaard, repeated the notion that 'This is a model for other territorial minorities in the rest of Europe', spoke of Denmark's commitment to supporting the Danish schools in South Schleswig, expressed concern about the proposals from Kiel and promised that Denmark 'would follow up on the issue'. The rain was getting heavier as the thinning audience was huddled under a panoply of umbrellas, but the crowd still cheered. Their mood changed, however, when Caroline Schwarz (see above) took the podium. She spoke of the great achievement of minority–majority relations in the state, and passed on greetings from various German politicians, but when she mentioned the name of Peter Harry Carstensen, Minister President of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, the crowd booed loudly and vigorously waved their banners. Far from 'sharing the happiness of South Schleswig with others', they were noisily proclaiming their anger. The meeting was concluded with the lowering of the *Dannebrog* to the singing of *Om din frihed vil vi værne* (We Will Defend your Freedom). Written by Carl Nielsen in 1921 at the height of national jubilation over the reunification of North Schleswig with Denmark, the song celebrates 'Denmark's free language / without the oppression of a foreign yoke' and concludes with the pledge that 'breathing the free Nordic air' we will 'lay all our deeds / on your altar, Denmark!' (Folkehøjskolernes Forening i Danmark, 2006, no. 371). The song is a potent mix of pan-Nordic and Danish nationalism melded with a fusion of Christianity and Norse mythology. It was striking to sing this paean to the Danish landscape, people and language with its barely concealed anti-German subtext, under an array of Scandinavian flags, having just booed the representative of the German ruling state. As we sang together, this did not feel like a successfully resolved conflict that is now a model for others – whatever the elites were saying.

## *'It has recently rained'*

If meteorologically the 2010 *årsmøde* was to be remembered for its actual precipitation, emotionally it was characterized by a song about rain. On Saturday evening Flensborg House hosted a typically *hyggeligt årsmøde* meeting with coffee, cake and flags. A choir from Sorø in Denmark performed in Danish, English, Swedish and various African languages. One speech was given by Henrik Hagemann of the two-times Nobel Peace Prize-winning *Foreningen NORDEN* (Nordic Association), established in 1919 in the aftermath of the First World War to promote cooperation amongst the Nordic states. But the greatest applause was for the speech of Kim Andersen, a Danish member of parliament and chair of its Committee on South Schleswig. He gave a rousing address about Denmark standing with the Danish community against the *spareplan*. It was music to the ears of the audience, who gave him an extended, passionate ovation. As he received the thanks and the cheering died away, the choir stood and led us in singing *Det haver så nygligen regnet* (It has Recently Rained in the Garden).

The song begins apparently innocuously, 'It has recently rained in the garden / it has stormed and lashed in our grove,' describing the effects of a devastating storm on a beautiful garden. But it becomes immediately apparent that this is allegorical, as the next lines say: 'Seed weeds have drifted over the fence, / A yoke on our necks, and a lock for our mouths.' This clearly refers to some sort of oppression, and indeed this song is the quintessential statement in the canon of Danish national song about the German occupation of Schleswig. It embodies the redefinition of emergent Danish nationalism in opposition to German rule and German culture. The demographic background to the song was the emigration of some Danes from Slesvig and the immigration of Germans under German rule (Andresen & Sorensen, 1989, p. 22), which is possibly the allusion behind 'weed seeds drifting over the fence'. The us–them construction of Danishness

is marked by the repeated use of 'we' to refer to Danes and 'they' to mean Prussians/Germans. It has been dubbed the 'battle song' of Danes in Schleswig (Adriansen, 2003, p. 76). According to the Graenseforening, which carries a special page about the song on its website, it was written in 1890 to mark the visit to Copenhagen of a group of Danes from German-occupied Slesvig, and was set to the tune of an older folk song. Because it looked to a future reunion of Slesvig with Denmark, its singing was forbidden by the Prussian authorities. However, songbooks produced by the Danish minority in this period left a blank page where *Det haver så nyligen regnet* should have been sung, for people to write the lyrics in by hand. Words from the song featured prominently in posters for the 1920 plebiscite campaign, and the song became popularized throughout the whole of Denmark during the Nazi occupation of 1940–45 when the entire nation found itself in the situation that North Slesvig had been in from 1864 to 1920.[2]

The song's overriding theme is a steadfast adherence to Danishness whilst under an occupation that the community refuses to accept as permanent, yet which is powerless to resist politically in the meantime. In his analysis of Bedouin resistance strategies under the modern Israeli 'ethnocracy', Yiftachel (2009) argues that, unable to organize politically, the Bedouin instead have cultivated a steadfast determination to maintain their life and culture in their historic lands, with a view to possibilities in the distant future. Similarly, the third stanza of the song says:

> And they believed, that the cords of love could be broken
> And they believed, that our rights could be forgotten!
> They shall know, they'll never see the last [of us]
> They shall see, that no one will tire.
> For, as the years went by
> They saw that the cords remained bound,
> New forces were born to replace those forces who passed away.

The 'cords of love' (*hjertebånd*) refer to the bond between Schleswig and Denmark. This is the song of an oppressed people, but a people cultivating the tenacious virtue of patient endurance with a stubborn determination not to leave their land, not to surrender their identity, not to forget their adherence to their true fatherland. In the moment of singing that song against the 2010 backdrop of the *spareplan*, the second line of this verse – that the German authorities 'believed that our rights could be forgotten' – took on a whole new affective resonance, not least for a gathering of people whose clothes were peppered with slogans against 'discrimination'. The troubling questions posed but not answered at the open debate the day before – Who are we? Where do fit in? What is the minority for? What is the narrative we should tell about ourselves? – were answered in that extraordinary, affect-filled moment, everyone singing from the same hymn sheet. As I wrote in my field notes that night:

> amazing pathos, sense of togetherness, resistance, after hearing all day and evening how threatened minority is. I really felt the power of this binding force, and what it stood for: being beleaguered again *som dansk i en tysk stat* [as Danish in a German state].

This emotion was ringing in our ears when we awoke the next morning, for the early flag-raising ceremony on the day of the parade and open-air meeting during which, as we saw, *Flensborg Avis* had called on its readers to take 'to the barricades against historical discrimination'. As is traditional, locals and visitors from Denmark attended church services in the Danish churches

[2]https://www.graenseforeningen.dk/node/4566 For an emotional depiction of this, see the well-known 1991 film about the emergence of Danish resistance to German occupation, *Drengene fra Sankt Petri*.

following the flag-raising. After the service at Ansgar church, which I attended, there was a lunch with Scandinavian-style preserved fish and a *hyggeligt* Danish *kaffebord*. At my table, some people were sporting the 'jeg er også 100% værd' stickers and discussing the *spareplan*. We engaged in the traditional community singing from the *Højskolens Sangbogen, Kærlighed til fædrelandet* (Love of the Fatherland), and then people were asked which they wanted to sing next (I joined in, requesting the apolitical lullaby *I skovens dybe stille ro*). Over lunch and coffee and between songs, people sitting around different tables were discussing the singing of *Der haver så nyglien regne*t the night before: one person said he had not remembered it being sung at the *årsmøde* for a decade or so, and another replied that it had suddenly become very suitable for today's crisis. The meeting was formally brought to a close by pastor Preben Mogensen, but as we were preparing to leave an older woman stood up and delivered an impromptu tirade against the *spareplan*, and how moving and appropriate it was that we had sung *Det haver så nyglien regne*t the previous night. She said it was again relevant to us as our rights were again being threatened, and we needed to resist this. As she concluded, people began to sing it spontaneously. The pianist returned to his piano to join in, others found it in the *Højskolens Sangbogen*, and the gathering gave a rousing rendering of it, infused with a determination to stand up to the savings plan:

> Shared language gives our thoughts expression.
> Shared will shall beautify the day of our battle;
> New warriors shall there,
> New warriors shall here,
> Gather round that banner we hold dear.

I had first sung *Det haver så nygligen regnet* at an *årsmøde* in 1994, and recall commenting to Per that it was odd singing this anti-German song in the now-peaceful borderlands. He retorted that this was nonsense, saying it was just an old song from a bygone age about the Danish landscape, and no anti-German sentiment should be read into it today. But in 2010 as we reached the final lines in our hearty rendition, it felt as though the pathos of the old struggle was reawakened as we sang:

> We shall not stray from the path
> For we know the saying:
> 'There is no hurry for those who believe.'

Significantly, we sang these last three lines twice. This tradition of repeating them is one that developed amongst the Danes of Slesvig under German rule as a statement of resistance. As we finished, a woman sitting at my table remarked, 'We need to go down to Kiel [i.e., the regional government offices] and sing that!' As Kuhn observed in expressing surprise at the neglect by scholars of politically charged songbooks in his study of anti-German patriotic songs in Denmark, 'Memorized and repeated in emotionally charged circumstances, they are bound to leave a lasting impression on the concepts and feelings of those who share them' (Kuhn, 1999, p. 171).

## CONCLUSIONS

In February and March 1920, the populations of much of the former Duchy of Schleswig voted in plebiscites designed to resolve once and for all what had become known as the 'Schleswig Holstein question'. These plebiscites resulted from Treaty of Versailles of 28 June 1919, the preamble to which declared that its purpose was 'to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations'. Whilst marking the end of a formal inter-

state dispute over sovereignty, however, the plebiscites failed to create the conditions for genuine trust and cooperation between the two ethnic groups in the borderlands. This was to be the achievement of the later Bonn–Copenhagen declarations. Writing about this at the start of the 21st century, Karen Pedersen effused that, 'The Danish–German border region has pioneered a model for the whole of Europe with regards to peaceful coexistence between majorities and national minorities' (Pedersen, 2003, pp. 48–49). Informed by literatures on the geographies of peace and emotional geopolitics, our ethnography of the 2010 budget cuts proposal as experienced through the Flensborg *årsmøde* leads us to strike a more cautious note. First, we accept that what has happened is indeed a remarkable achievement, a shift from war (1864) to negative peace (1920) to positive peace (post-1955). Second, however, peace is always a process rather than an irreversible outcome, and the 2010 budget crisis is a reminder that peace in the borderlands is more ambivalent and contested than some would claim. Finally, accounts of the current state of relations in Schleswig might not be so complacent if they attended more to the everyday and emotional geopolitics of being national, rather than simply examining the actors and spaces of formal elite politics. The emotive speeches, community singing and practices that characterized the *årsmøde* tell different stories about the shifting intensities and tonalities of nationalistic expression (Closs Stephens, 2016). For these reasons, we argue that future research should pay closer attention to everyday and emotional expressions of national sentiment that can reveal tensions sometimes hidden in political discourse. This might mean that researchers spend less time poring over written text and more time singing.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## NOTES

1. See https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partiii.asp/.
2. To reflect the status of Flensburg as being at the Danish–German interface, we refer to it variously by the Danish (*Flensborg*) and German (*Flensburg*) spellings, and likewise the region variously as *Slesvig* or *Schleswig*. For a discussion of the use of varied spellings of place names to avoid 'methodological nationalism' in ethnically contested places, see Megoran (2017, p. xv).

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