

# Meet the parents: Normative emotions in Finnish wolf politics

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## ABSTRACT

The reappearance of the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) in 2005 after a one-hundred-year absence surprised rural communities in Southwest Finland. Various social emotions emerged and began to shape how people thought about wolves and reoriented their daily practices. In this paper, we examine how emotional reactions and actions functioned in the presence of the wolf and the non-intervention wolf policy until 2014. We used written documents, interviews and focus group discussions as our primary materials. Our results indicate how normative emotions have played a role in influencing Finnish wolf policy.

**KEYWORDS:** grey wolf (*Canis lupus*), emotions, negative freedom, institutions, emotional regime

## 1 Introduction

The reappearance of grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) packs in Southwest Finland a decade ago after a hundred-year absence surprised rural communities. The presence of wolves was suddenly actualized as wolves or their tracks were observed in forests, roads, fields or house yards; the howling of wolves heard; pet or sheep depredated; or the remains of prey animals (carcasses) found in the forests or fields. The newly established existence of the wolf brought uneasiness and insecurity and forced many people living in wolf territories to alter some of their daily habits and routines (Hiedanpää 2013). Although some of the encounters were perceived as primarily enjoyable experiences, they also raised worry or threat. When asked in a survey about the level of threat to their own safety, approximately 46% of the young or adult citizens living in the four municipalities



containing wolf territories in Southern Finland considered wolf encounters to indicate a moderate or high wolf threat in 2012 (Turun Sanomat [TS] 3.2.2012). The wolves' presence also increased expectations that the authorities, either the police or the wildlife administration, would intervene by removing the problem animals.

The protection of the wolf has been a subject of constant debate since Finland joined the European Union in 1995. Since then, the wolf has been strictly protected by the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and by the National Hunting Act (1993/615) (Ratamäki 2008). However, despite some rather recent legislative efforts, the implementation and enforcement of wolf policy have not evinced the intended results: the species remains endangered (Rassi et al. 2010). In February 2014, the estimated size of the wolf population in Finland was approximately 150 individuals (RKTL 2014). In 2007, the number of wolves peaked at approximately 250 individuals. Since 2005, Southwest Finland has continuously sustained two or three wolf packs.

In 2001, a few years after the wolves re-entered western Finland, the European Commission initiated an infringement procedure because the Commission suspected that the Finnish wolf policy did not meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive. Because the proceedings did not, from the Commission's perspective, generate the desired administrative and management adjustments, the commission called Finland to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 2005. The ECJ rendered its judgement in June 2007. Finland was found guilty of the unselective hunting of wolves. The ECJ ordered the Government of Finland to rectify its failure to provide strict protection for wolves (Hiedanpää and Bromley 2011; Borgström 2012).

In response to that judgement, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has enforced three major formal institutional adjustments. The first legal adjustment was to multifold the nominal value of killed large carnivores (MAF Decree 2010). Second, a new penal category – aggravated hunting offence – was included in the Criminal Code of Finland (39/1889) in April 2011. The law allows for the tele-monitoring of suspects by the police, and a conviction leads to a prison term of 4 months to 4 years. Third, the government recentralized decisions concerning derogations from the strict protection (i.e., hunting licenses) to the national level from the regional level to the Finnish Wildlife Agency in 2011 (Wildlife and Game Administration Act 158/2011). The purpose of the first two adjustments was to establish disincentives to kill wolves illegally, and the third adjustment rendered it possible to separate wildlife administration from interest politics.

By adjusting the administrative division of labour, and particularly by creating disincentives to kill wolves illegally after the ECJ judgment in 2007, the government has

not actively intervened in the social or individual lives of ordinary people living in the wolf territories; instead, the government has adjusted the outer conditions of hunting to eliminate illegal rural hunting habits. The government has therefore actively valued what is known as the *negative liberty* of citizenry (Berlin 2006). The government has left the details of how to live with the wolves largely to civil society itself and hence not valued what is known as positive liberty.

The above-mentioned institutional adjustments have not decreased the fear and insecurity commonly felt by citizens. In fact, nationwide surveys conducted in 2009 and 2013 indicated that the percentage of Finnish citizens who were afraid of wolves increased from 32% to 47% (MT 24.6.2013). The prevalence of citizens reporting fear in 2013 was higher in the province of Western Finland, 55%, than in the other provinces. That the wolf population did not increase during those years indicates that the policy, in addition to the extensive coverage of the topic in newspapers, television and social media, allowed social and individual factors to amplify emotions and generate secondary effects (for details regarding the social amplification of risk perceptions, see SARF framework, Kaspersen et al. 1988).

We argue that the exercised policy and the social emotions associated with wolves and the entire emotional atmosphere – what we refer to as the *emotional regime* – have engendered new civil activity in Southwest Finland. Wolf-critical social action began gradually, after September 2011, when the parents' associations of Southwest Finnish primary schools joined for their first meeting. In spring 2012, the active members of the parental associations were influential in establishing a wolf-critical association called Taajamasusi (literally translated as “suburban wolf”). The association has communicated certain negative social emotions (anger, frustration) allegedly shared by rural people in wolf territories. Through its members, the association has maintained constant policy pressure on the wildlife administration and influenced the fine-tuning of wolf-related institutional scaffolding in many ways in Finland (Hiedanpää & Pellikka 2015). For example, for the first time, fear of the wolf – as a threat to humans – was deemed eligible to be a primary reason to derogate from the strict protection in January 2012. In February 2013, MAF issued to the Finnish Wildlife Agency the maximum quota of five extra licenses for hunters to be exempt from the strict protection of the wolf in Southern Finland (MAF Decree 162/2013). The decree has come to be known as the “*yard wolf decree*.” According to the decree, yard wolves are wolves that allegedly have changed their habits to adapt in problematic manners to humans and repetitively visit human settlements, posing a threat to people and domestic animals.

Our general research task is to empirically explore the functioning of social emo-

tions in civil society activism in the context of a government relying on a policy practice of negative liberty.

## 2 Institutions, emotions and freedom

Political activism and collective action have received considerable attention in environmental policy studies. For example, resistance has been studied at an international level (Mason 2012; Coleman and Tucker 2011), at regional levels (Choudry and Shragge 2011) and at the local level (Scott 1985; Glaesel 2000). In the environmental policy context, local resistance and activism have been studied in the context of global biodiversity protection (Hiedanpää et al. 2015), European environmental policy (Engelen et al. 2008) and country-specific policies (Skogen and Kränge 2003; von Essen et al. 2015). Some studies have focused on the role of civil society emotions in policy making at the local level (Hiedanpää 2002), the regional level (Pearlman 2013) and the global level (Norgaard 2013). With regard to wildlife and wolves in particular, the roles of negative attitudes and associated emotions, most often fear and hate (anger) of wolves, have played a particularly significant role (e.g., Bjerke et al. 1998; Williams et al. 2002; Ericsson and Heberlein 2003; Røskaft et al. 2001; Figari and Skogen 2011; Dressel et al. 2014).

However, literature focusing on institutions, social emotions and negative liberty does not exist. This observation motivates our work.

Conventionally, the concept of institution refers to a set of rules, norms, decision-making strategies and policies (Vatn 2005; Pierson 2006). The purpose of institutions is to regulate and coordinate human actions and behaviours in particular situations (Bromley 2006; Norberg et al. 2008). Interestingly, the definition of institutions is often dyadic. On one hand, institutions constrain, channel and coordinate the possibilities of agents (North 2005). On the other hand, however, institutions may liberate, encourage and empower agents to engage in activities that the government considers worthwhile. Institutions expand the possibility space by assigning actors new social positions and deontic powers (Commons 1990; Searle 2005).

This dyadic conception of institutions has a counterpart in the philosophy of freedom. Since the classical definition of freedom was proposed by Isaiah Berlin (2006), the concept of freedom has often been divided into two categories, negative and positive. Negative freedom is freedom *from* something. If the action of the individual can occur without interference or intervention from other actors, particularly the state, the conditions in question are conditions of negative freedom. Positive freedom, conversely, is subjective, something the actor has internalized, and thus is dependent on the hopes,

will, identity and autonomy of the actor. Positive freedom is freedom *to* something. It is the recognition and development of potential towards a shared conception of a good life (MacCallum 1967).

Theoretically, the intertwined relation between institutions and freedom brings us to the institutional theory developed by one of the founding members of classical institutional economics, John R. Commons (1990), and, from a different perspective, to the Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom (1990). In general, the auxiliary deontic verbs *can*, *may*, *must* and *cannot* characterize the processes of institutional design and policy formulation. This reasoning also applies to Finnish wolf policy. In recent years, the government has adjusted the institutional conditions of wolf protection for the sake of eliminating bad hunting habits, i.e., illegal killing of wolves. The government has instituted the regulation with the deontic verbs *cannot* and *must*. Conversely, the deontic verbs *can* and *may*, denoting freedom and liberty, respectively (Commons 1995), have not been used. The Finnish government or wildlife administration has not actively provided real options for co-existence in wolf territories, established new rights or erected enabling scaffolds to sustain or improve livelihoods. Examples of such positive interventions would include extra compensations from damages to enable measures that help prevent further damages (e.g., by building fences, see Karlsson and Sjöström 2011) or education about the alternative proactive measures.

Emotions are purpose-relevant activations in surprising or disturbing situations (Oatley 2004; Damasio 1999). Emotions arise from experience without our needing to consciously respond to experiences; however, the appearance of feelings (affects) made conscious demands reflection (Damasio 1999, 37; Cromby 2015, 3). More specifically, according to Antonio Damasio (2012, 110), “While emotions are actions accompanied by ideas and certain modes of thinking, emotional feelings are mostly perceptions of what our bodies do during the emoting, along with perceptions of our state of mind during the same period of time.” Emotions are social because their individual and collective emergence and directedness has grown in individual-environment transactions and social practice (Parkinson 1996; Dewey 1896; 1988).

Once they have emerged, emotions are powerful motivators of action (e.g., Lazarus 1994). As in the wolf case, it takes motivated people and groups to reap an advantage from the absence of active government and try to affect policy conditions. Hannah Arendt (1999), Ostrom (2000; Ostrom et al. 1994) and Dewey (2008) emphasized that the voluntary individual and social action of undoing and redoing prevailing institutional conditions is the general impetus of societal change. Not only Arendt (Kateb 1977) or Dewey (Fesmire 2003; Johnson 2013) but also Jonathan Haidt (2012)

has more recently considered that emotions play a vital role in voluntary morally motivated action.

William Reddy's (2001) concept of emotional regime completes our theoretical perspective. According to Reddy (2001, 128), emotional regime is "the set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices and emotives that express and inculcate them." Emotives differ from both performative and constative utterance because their expression has an exploratory and self-altering effect on the activated thought material of emotion (Reddy 2001, 127). An emotive is a piece of language that incites a certain type of collective feelings and social reactions, the purpose of which is to maintain or alter formal or informal positions, habits or social practices within a specific institutional context and its customary ways of emoting, i.e., practising official rituals.

### 3 Materials and methods

Our work is based on the methodology of ethnographic strategy (Wolcott 1999). Our research material is based primarily on ethnographic presence, thematic interviews, and focus group discussions in two wolf territories in Southwest Finland. Our epistemological purpose is to understand the *felt meaning* of the presence of the wolf and exercised wolf policy in wolf territories, especially in Southwest Finland (on felt meaning, see Gendlin 1997).

To support our argumentation, to validate our interpretations of the primary data, and to contextualize the findings in greater detail, we also use supplementary material. Our data include one written document (petition), two media appearances of the key representative of the Taajamasusi association in television and newspapers, news in the four local newspapers describing encounters with wolves (2004–2011), material provided on the website of the Taajamasusi association ([www.taajamasusi.com](http://www.taajamasusi.com)), and personal notes of an observer (the second author) at the meeting organized by parents' associations held in Nousiainen in 2011.

Since the beginning of our research project in the fall of 2011, we have interviewed approximately 40 adults. The thematic interviews were unstructured face-to-face discussions concerning the (i) emotional aspects, (ii) reactions and actions, acceptance or resistance in the face of the presence of the grey wolf, and (iii) the practical solutions to the policy and management problems. These three themes were derived from Peirce's philosophical categories: firstness (emotion), secondness (reaction) and thirdness (habit) (for a more detailed introduction, see Peirce 1934; Hiedanpää 2013). We applied snowball sampling in identifying and selecting the interviewees, who have

a multitude of roles, including parents, hunters, senior citizens who know local history, nature conservationists, administrators and teachers.

The thematic interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed into written form for further analysis. The authors themselves led all focus group sessions. The focus group sessions were conducted in Southwest Finland from 2012 to 2014. We conducted three focus group sessions: one with the elders, one with the parents, and one with educators. The sessions were based on themes such as (i) the history of the wolf in Southwest Finland, (ii) thoughts concerning the presence of the wolf and wolf policy, and (iii) participants' emotions, beliefs, values and reactions regarding the wolf.

## **4 Normative emotions in civil activism**

### **4.1 The surprising reappearance of the wolf**

The people of Southwest Finland were taken by surprise when the Yläne and the Köyliö wolf territories were established in 2004 and the first cubs were born in 2005. One informant, who lived within the wolf territory in Mynämäki, recalled in our focus group meeting how his first wolf encounter caused feelings of disbelief, surprise and even uncertainty regarding the species identification:

That time [2005] was emotionally terrible, because I had had no idea that such animals were present there, and suddenly one had visited there, leaving large tracks on the ground next to the mailbox. No one believed that then...

Feelings of excitement, curiosity and fear of wolves existed in the communities to some extent even before the wolves returned; however, the presence of wolves raised concerns regarding human safety. Much of the initial wolf-related news in the local newspapers at the time of the establishment of the first wolf pack tried to calm readers by stating that there was likely no reason to be afraid of wolves (TS 24.4.2005; TS 29.12.2005). Conversely, some voices emphasized that there was good cause to fear wolves. A large amount of publicity surrounded the "killer wolf", an old taxidermied wolf stored in the basement of the school (TS 27.10.2005). A conservator of the museum expressed doubts that the killer wolf had truly killed 22 children in the 1880s (for details, Teperi 1977). This comment provoked strong reactions and responses from many readers, including some wolf-critical historians (TS 28.10.2005), who made public

the names of the children killed, their ages, and detailed descriptions of the places involved. We heard local citizens share identical detailed memories regarding the tragedy in personal interviews, focus group discussions and in the public meetings. For example, when we asked the informants to show us the wolf-related places on the map where the claimed killing of the children had occurred, they had no difficulty in indicating exact sites. These memories had been passed on in some families from generation to generation, including some families who later became active in the wolf issue in Taajamasusi.

Not only the historical events but also the predation of the newly established wolf pack received infrequent publicity and increased concern. The wolves occasionally killed their prey, such as moose (e.g., TS 3.11.2005; TS 4.10.2006), white-tailed deer, and roe deer (e.g., TS 2.3.2006). The few cases of attacks on sheep (e.g., TS 12.7.2006) and calves in the region were systematically published in local newspapers after the return of the wolves in 2004. It was, however, the Yläne pack that received significant public attention in January 2007, leading to demands to remove the animals. A school-boy encountered a wolf within 20 metres of a bus stop (TS 30.1.2007). This encounter increased parents' demands for extended school transportation. Another case occurred in October 2007, when an 85-year-old woman reported that she had confronted a bold and aggressive wolf in the forest but survived by shouting loudly (Länsi-Suomi [LS] 23.10.2007). This news was followed by an affective opinion piece entitled "Soon We Will Have the First Human Casualty" (LS 27.10.2007).

Our data are consistent with the general interpretation that people living in wolf territory gradually become more sensitive to searching for and reacting to sightings, wolf tracks and dead prey animals, i.e., the carcasses of ungulates, particularly near houses, schools and farm yards. Attempts to identify evidence of the wolf presence not only served to mitigate the perceived risk but also maintained the awareness that wolves are worth fearing. One of the informants expressed the effect of sightings on fear in the following manner:

Yes... Generally when people tell about wolf sightings and have seen animal footprints near houses, it is all of this that particularly affects and increases feelings of fear. Usually wolves live in remote wilderness areas, and thus, they cause no worry, but now... they come too close and you may encounter them nearly anywhere. Especially when the wolf observations are made near humans' residence areas, and along the roads and at nearly any hour of the day... this affects people's fear towards wolves. (Eura municipality, 2011)

The reappearance of the wolf caused anxiety in some parents and worry over the safety of their children in their yards at home and going to and from school, particularly in wintertime when it is dark and when the wolf tracks in the snow reveal their presence. An interviewee reflected on her feelings of fear, stating that “the fear of wolves, during time periods when wolf observations are more common, may become so serious that it is fomenting a gloomy kind of fear even among the children in local village areas. In addition, now winter after winter when the number of wolves has increased, people are catching their breath” (Pöytyä municipality, 2014).

It was not only the belief in or awareness of the increasing number of wolves or the physical capability of wolves (e.g., high bite force, see Parents’ Association 2011) to harm humans that appeared to be fomenting the fear but also the assumed behavioural change in the animals. One of the informants described her beliefs:

I feel that a wolf is a wild animal and is afraid of human beings. But suddenly, the wolf is not afraid any more. I wonder why...wolves come in packs near to house yards and villages, although there are plenty of cars and people in that place. This must be a totally alien environment for the wolf, so that something strange must have happened... (Mynämäki municipality, 2012).

## 4.2 The problematic nature of the wolf

The key person in the Parents’ Association became chairman of the new association, Taajamasusi, in 2012. In addition to reiterating wolf- and policy-critical arguments that had been used for a decade in the public discussion in Southwest Finland, the chairman reviewed the available literature and the Internet content particularly addressing the potential risks to humans of wolf habituation. The focus of the reviewed literature was the conditions in which the wolves become highly dangerous (and remain so, based on the literature section mentioned on the website of the Taajamasusi association).

As previously stated, according to wolf critics, the wolves in southwest Finland are not behaving “naturally.” Wolves have become more dangerous and their behaviour unpredictable. The Taajamasusi association, and apparently many other wolf critics, posits that the protection of wolves has helped the animals become habituated in a problematic manner. For example, in a TV interview on 4 November 2012, the chairman of the association stated, “If a wolf would behave in a way characteristic of normal wolves, it should avoid humans.” In the same interview, the chairperson provided examples: Wolves had killed white-tailed deer near the village, and wolves had been

observed near a schoolyard by some children when other children were waiting for the bus in the same area. The wolf has apparently lost key aspects of its behavioural naturalness. This change, the reasoning goes, should incite fear in any normal person.

Not only the behavioural change, i.e., habituation, but also the purity of wolves becomes a concern for Taajamasusi. The colouring and the skull shape of the alpha female of the Yläne pack increased local suspicions that the wolves and their cubs may be wolf-dog hybrids. A photo of an alpha female (lying dead on the ground) was sent to Dr. Valerius Geist in the spring of 2012. Geist is Professor Emeritus of Environmental Sciences from Calgary, Canada, who is known for his studies on large mammals, mainly ungulates, and for his habituation model of wolf (Swan 2013). He began his response as follows:

I am still trying to comprehend: Is this reality or is this a spoof? Is this someone's idea of a joke? The canine pictured is a cute doggie, but not a wolf by any stretch of the imagination. If it is not a dog that belongs to someone, but is free ranging, then it's a feral dog. It might have some wolf in it, but neither the structure of its coat nor its colour are that of a wolf... (Taajamasusi 2012).

Because the alpha female had been fitted with a GPS collar and had been DNA-tested against a large set of reference samples from Finnish wolves (confirming that the alpha female was a typical Finnish wolf and descendent of another known pack), this response created public discussion regarding the quality of Finnish wildlife research and the hidden agenda motivating that research. Distrust as well as contempt are rather typical feelings towards wildlife science among wolf critics.

### **4.3 Failing wolf policy**

Thirteen parent associations from Southwest Finland submitted a petition to three key Finnish ministries and to the Finnish Wildlife Agency in December 2011 (Parents' Association 2011). This submission occurred after the parents (i) had approached the municipalities with demands for free and safe transportation for school children, (ii) submitted a petition for municipalities to apply for exemptions to kill wolves (e.g., municipality of Nousiainen 2011c) and (iii) arranged a public meeting with the parents, municipalities, politicians and administrators on 21 November 2011.

According to our interviews with key participants, documents sent by the parents' association to the municipality of Nousiainen, and observations made during the

public meeting, the activation of the parents was associated with the news describing how wolves had killed white-tailed deer near the village at the end of September 2011. The deer were killed in an area that is also used for school trips. The news came as a shock to parents, and the primary emotion associated with this case mobilized them to contact local hunters to verify the news and to explore options to address the situation (Parents' Association 2011). This event strengthened the coalition between the parents, who were now activating as a network in the wolf issue, and the hunters, who had organized their own regional network of sharing wolf sightings with each other in 2006 (Vakka-Suomen Sanomat 7.5.2013).

In the petition, the parents articulated their concerns and directed those concerns to the EU-driven national conservation policy and the Finnish wolf administration with its structures and procedures. According to the petition, the current wolf policy

allows and encourages the wolf to spread near human habitat... At this stage when wolves are visiting nearby yards of schools, nurseries, and caravan parks, they do not have the habits of normal wolves when they do not dodge humans. Instead, wolves have changed to the breed of 'the troublemaker wolf – a 'yard wolf'. It is at the moment when local house yards have to be electronically fenced and families have to acquire big dogs, like sheepdogs, for protection of children and pet animals, or children have to be transported to school by subsidized taxi, that something is amiss (Parents' Association 2011).

The petition was based on several concerns. One of the most severe sources of frustration is that the wolf is in the fourth appendix of the EU habitats directive; the wolf should be placed in the fifth appendix. Changing the appendix would impart more options and powers to the national wolf policy and management. In Finland, a wolf in the reindeer herding area belongs to appendix five. According to the petition, there should be more licenses to eradicate the wolves, and the decisions concerning the curbing of the wolves should occur at the local level. Such a change would foster hope.

Another source of frustration is the narrow interpretation of the suppression preconditions of the Habitats Directive (Parents' Association 2011). If non-lethal methods work, an individual wolf can be removed if it repeatedly causes significant damage or poses an imminent threat to human safety. In particular, if a license is granted to suppress strict protection in the summertime, it may be difficult to ensure that the specific animal that has previously acted and will likely continue to behave in a problematic manner will be removed. The consequent restrictions render it quite unlikely that the wolf will in fact be removed. There are many examples of licenses that were

considered too tight, including the exemption that occurred in Yläne in 2010 after the above-mentioned wolf attacks.

Two sources of anger are that the wolf has a stronger legal and social position than the rural people and the perception that people who live in cities are protected from wolf attacks. Some people felt humiliated because authorities did not consider the persistent fear of the wolf when designing wolf policy and implementation. In addition, the petition emphasized that the implemented wolf policy does not consider the perspective of rural civil society at all. An interviewee said:

One important thing that creates an experience of fear is how people appear to be left to themselves and have to trust to chance that they are not likely to encounter a wolf; the wolf seems to be more important than a human being... this attitude definitely increases emotions: feelings of aggression and powerlessness, even feelings of hatred.

Another source of anger is the wildlife administration. Some active sheep and cattle farmers are angry with the Finnish Wildlife Agency because the agency provides fencing materials for farmers but does not provide compensation for the erection of fences. Our interview data contain one case in which the farmers felt contempt for a nature conservationist who volunteered to help construct a large carnivore fence around pastures. Some of the farmers believed that after this volunteer work it would have been quite disturbing to owe a debt of gratitude to people they despise.

In our interviews, many parents questioned wolf policy. An interviewee stated, "Why have not our feelings such as fear, anger, anxiety and frustration been taken into account in the current wildlife policy?" (Mynämäki, 2012). She also noted parents' growing intolerance for the situation and asked openly, "For how long do people have to stand for this harm and worry caused by the wolf existence and observations in local areas?" Parents wondered why the wildlife policy has ignored rural southwestern people and their concerns. Parents demanded that their children's journeys to school by taxi (wolf transportations) be subsidized by state funds so that the expense does not burden municipalities.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Resistance and emotional energy

With respect to wolf issues, the government of Finland erected a space of negative freedom for civil society by the institutional adjustments enforced in 2011. There was no active intervening governmental wolf policy. There were typical administrative measures to compensate for the damages and provide fencing materials, but in response to the reactions to the presence of the wolf across Finland, the government did content itself to prevent illegal activities. The criticism was not so much about the inactivity of the government but the government's failure by allowing the wolf to enter habitual human space (Ojalampi and Blomley 2015). The wolf critics, the parents and families at the forefront in a coalition with the hunters, did *not* – and still do not – demand more governmental intervention. They wanted their concerns and reasons to be recognized and for the unnaturally habituated “yard wolves” to be legally hunted from their living spaces, i.e., granting of licenses to derogate from the strict protection, to feel free from the threat. The government should intervene by allowing local hunters to help people in wolf territories to kill wolves (for more information on the significance of wildlife coalitions, see Robbins 2006).

Wolf-critical parents and hunters have expressed critical constituents of positive freedom, i.e., the capacity and motivation to engage in civil society activities, collaboration in applying for licenses to deviate from the strict protection of the wolf, and, in some cases, the illegal killing of wolves. Fear, anger and frustration have motivated these activities. Over time, this articulated collective will, joint activities and embodied social emotions have become a form of preparedness for certain kinds of thoughts and actions. Dewey (1980, 155–156) would call this ordered organic motivation “emotional energy.” In the face of this emotional energy, the government tightened its institutional setup, triggering reactions against the wolf and wolf policy. Institutional adjustments tended to work against their purpose. The wolf-critical emotional regime strengthened.

### 5.2 Emotional freedom and creativity

The parents, Taajamasusi and the associates have opened the contested scene to discussion, deliberation and institution building. Notably, the wolf critics manage to constrain the discussion and debate so that the wolf-adverse habits of mind remain strongly present. There is little emotional space to navigate; one must take a position: “If you

are not against the presence of the wolf, you are for it.” This type of ultimatum leaves little emotional freedom to other civil society members with which to act on their own behalf. As we have indicated, the wolf-critical public use of reason by the wolf critics and the enacted emotional regime has had effect, e.g., the yard wolf decree in 2013. In Finland, the emotionally laden societal pressure led to institutional adjustments. There are, of course, also examples from different contexts in which the emotional energy is released against the unwilling government (Mason 2012) or the pathological emotional energy is released against other civil society groups and communities (Waller 2007).

The wolf critics have quite successfully exercised their freedom. To better understand what occurred in Finland, we may extend beyond the divide between negative and positive freedoms and more closely examine the anatomy of resistance and reactions. All actors – the parents, the hunters, and the wolf, but, to a certain extent, also the wildlife administration with their varying interpretations of the law – have participated in enacting freedom in their own environment. In our explanation, we follow Dewey and illustrate this third type with the concept of *creative freedom*. For Dewey, habits and conditions of freedom are environmentally constituted (1988, 38), and in a disturbing situation, individuals exercise their capabilities and freedom to adjust environmental features to compose a basis for problem solving. In these situations, “the public” may emerge and coordinate and channel emotional energy and collective creativity (Dewey 2008). Similarly, Arendt (1998, 199–247) proposed a conception of “the space of appearance” for this type of analytic purpose.

The foregoing discussion characterizes well what has happened. However, we have not witnessed any in-depth democratic deliberation on the wolf matters. Institutional adjustments have been piecemeal and reactive, executed in a step-by-step manner. This absence of democratic deliberation distances the creative freedom exercised in Finland from the Deweyan idea according to which democracy and the public are defined simultaneously. We will therefore incorporate the more critical stance of William Connolly (1996) and call the actualized type of creative freedom “the politics of disturbance” or, if we follow Vicky Bell (1996), “the performance of freedom.” In addition, the relationship between the Finnish wolf resistance and the government has been creative in one peculiar way. Here, we follow John Searle’s (2010, 27–28) idea of the world-to-mind direction of fit and claim that the wolf critics have made the world to change to better fit their mind, i.e., wolf policy fit better the wolf-critical intentions. The beliefs of the wolf critics have not changed to fit the world better.

### 5.3 Insecurity and the practice of rights

The purpose of societal rule adjustment is to channel and coordinate individual and collective actions, to reduce uncertainty related to societal change, and to guide change (Vatn 2005; Greif 2006). Paradoxically, adjusting the working rules of wolf policy and management have tended to increase the feelings of uncertainty. Recall that the deontic verb *can* implies that the state comes to your assistance if your lawful *rights* are threatened or violated. This means security (Bromley 2006; Commons 1990).

The wolf critics have claimed that the rights of the wolf have usurped the rights of people. According to critics, the government has been indifferent to the fact that the presence of the wolf violates the constitutional right of people to a safe environment and the basic right to economic enterprises such as animal husbandry. Furthermore, according to critics, people living in the wolf territory have to avoid wolves and show forbearance in their presence, not vice versa. According to the wolf critics, the only manner in which to enter the wolf's secured space is to apply for a license to derogate from the strict protection. However, as the critics have claimed, the conditions of the damage-based derogation are so narrow that, in practice, a successful hunt is nearly impossible. After the ECJ judgement in 2007, it has not been possible to exercise precautionary killings or to kill random individual wolves from a pack. In other words, although policy instruments existed (exemptions), the instruments were executed in manners that prevented their effectiveness in reducing the alleged threat – net effects being as they were before. The government has introduced purposeful friction in wolf management (for more information on the intentional policy friction, see Halpern 2015). The exercised practice of right has increased the frustration and anger of some wolf critics. Rights are, indeed, evaluated according to how they are practised and what are the effects of practice (Flathman 2010).

The situation has incited fear and anger towards the wolf and contempt towards people who stand up for the wolf. A fear of the wolf combined with anger emerging from one's rights being violated, the contempt and moral disgust towards people who favour the presence of the wolf, and frustration in the face of policy impotence have motivated the wolf critics to act on their beliefs and values. The wolf critics have recognized their opportunity to communicate and take control of the uncertain, insecure and unstable situation. Consequently, public pressure involving specific tactics has influenced consequent legal and policy adjustments. For instance, in the summer of 2013, the government loosened the constraints concerning how to derogate, if the actual rules defining the criteria to derogate were met. Now, the actual hunt has become

potentially more meaningful and successful in terms of being able to remove the problem animal (Hiedanpää and Pellikka 2015). The practice of rights has changed.

## 6 Concluding remarks

In this study, we have examined the functioning of social emotions in Finnish wolf policy, with a special focus on Southwest Finland. Rather than focusing on injustices and harm felt among local actors, we have focused on normative emotions and emotives in civil society activism, where the purpose had been to influence the practices of policy. This approach is a unique way of showing the significance of emotions, reactions and voluntary grass-roots participation in policy making.

Finnish wolf policy has been based on the practice of negative freedom. The non-intervening policy has provided a space for quite remarkable rural social activism. The purpose of critical wolf activism has been to influence the rules and administrative procedures of wolf policy, particularly concerning exemptions from strict protection. The two-pronged purpose has been to make the rules and practices fit better with both the alleged wolf problem and the customary livelihoods in the wolf territories.

As shown, the critics claim that their focus is not on the presence of the wild wolf. Instead, wolf critics are against the perverted breed of wolf that is called the “yard wolf”, i.e., either a semi-domesticated wild grey wolf or a hybrid of a grey wolf and a domestic dog. Because of its hybrid habits or the breed, the wolf repeatedly visits human settlements and acts in many respects as a proper wolf would not. Therefore, the critics hold, the only solution to the wolf problem has been to extirpate the wolves, mainly by applying for licenses to deviate from the wolves’ strict protection.

We can see that by exercising emotives, normative emotions and a particular kind of discourse about insecurity and rights, the purpose of wolf critics has been to maintain or strengthen wolf-adverse habits of feeling, action and thinking. The wolf critics have exercised certain discursive strategies on policy and habit formation. When thinking about future research needs, the intertwined use of the semiotics of Peirce and the discursive practices of Michel Foucault offer a way to move forward (for more information on Foucault and Peirce, see Garnar 2006).

By passing a “yard wolf decree” in 2013, the government admitted the existence of a problem, which shifted the wolf debate. Previously, the concept of damage was useful in justifying deviation from strict protection. Now, a novel justificatory category between damage and an immediate threat has been established: yard wolf. The social category (safety) for the derogation from the strict protection was indicated in the

Habitats Directive and in the Finnish Hunting Act, but now the actual practice of rights has started to be exercised in a novel way.

The long-term Finnish wolf strategy is still unknown, but the recent policy changes indicate that the policy practice may continue along current lines. In the renewed management plan for the wolf population in Finland that was prepared in 2014 and put in force 2015 (Anon 2015), the unit of managerial activities was established on the territory level, and many of the proposed projects addressed the wolf management directly or indirectly by means of hunting, which may come as a relief to the wolf-critical constituency of civil society. However, the offer of positive freedom of this kind does not please all. This discrepancy will certainly incite reactions and normative emotions and open the space for new publics and creative processes to emerge.

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