

# SEMINÁŘ ETNOLOGICKÉHO ÚSTAVU AV ČR / SEMINAR OF THE INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY CAS

7. 2. 2022 ONLINE

**Thorsten Gieser**

## Living with wolves in Germany – the affective side of coexistence and conflict

**Abstract:** The return of wolves to Germany is affectively charged. Various actors repeatedly call for a de-emotionalization of the debates and more 'objectivity'. However, with moderate success. In parliamentary debates, public lectures or demonstrations, people get indignant and angry. Livestock owners are frustrated and express their constant fear for their animals. Wolf opponents and wolf supporters meet each other (online and offline) irritably to aggressively. Hatred of wolves sometimes leads to illegal killings of wolves. Yet wolf advocates welcome the return of the wild with love and fascination for the wolf. And the majority population seems simply unsettled and may express their 'worries and fears', which they expect to be taken up and 'taken seriously' by politics and wolf management.

My talk examines these affectively charged relationships with the aim of providing a holistic view of the field of conflict surrounding the return of the wolves. I show how emotional responses are embedded in affective structures such as atmospheres, moods and sentiments (lasting emotional dispositions). The question I like to discuss is in how far the affective structures of this conflict concerning wolves are linked to larger societal, 'civilizational' disciplining processes of sensibility (Elias, Foucault), which have a special significance for social cohesion in times characterized as one of 'great irritability' (Pörksen).

**Discussant:** Alex Oehler, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology,  
University of Regina, Canada

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*ONLINE MS Teams: [ZDE / HERE](#)*



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