



# **Ecohealth and Interdisciplinarity: Exploring worthwhile linkages between the Ecohealth community and several other areas of study**

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Undergraduate Student  
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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
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Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies



The WolbPack since 2009



<https://wolbring.wordpress.com/about/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009238528243>

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## The WolbPack

- Ability Studies
- Ability expectation governance
- Aging well
- Anticipatory governance/Responsible Innovation/Participatory technology assessment/citizen science
- Autism
- Back to work
- BIAS FREE Framework (Eichler/Burke)
- Bioethics Issues
- Bionics
- Brain Machine Interface
- Communiy Based Rehabilitation/ Matrix
- Community Scholar
- Climate Change/Energy/water/food
- Cognitive/ Neuro/other Enhancements
- Conflict Studies
- Determinants of Health
- Disability Studies
- **Ecohealth**
- Education
- Eugenics
- Global Health

## Topics of engagement

- Health-Consumerism/promotion campaigns/Technology Assessment
- Lifelong learning
- Meaning of health/disability/impairment/ well-being/...
- Motivated Reasoning
- Nano scale technology
- Neuroethics issues
- Neurotechnologies
- Occupational Therapy
- Organ transplant
- Resilience
- Risk
- Physical Therapy
- Policy Literacy
- Science and Technology Studies
- Service and Social Robotics
- Social Responsibility
- Social Work
- Sport
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- Sustainability
- Synthetic Biology/Gene editing/IGEM



- Conceptual pieces
- Scoping reviews
- Media analysis
- Descriptive quantitative analysis
- qualitative analysis (Interviews/focus group/online survey)
- Policy and legal analysis
- Lens of Ability Studies
- Lens of Disability Studies
- Investigation of diffusion of concepts: Diffusion of concepts and conceptual borrowing ([Chakraborti, Raina, & Sharma, 2016](#); [Dogan, 2000](#); [Sigelman & Goldfarb, 2008](#); [Tilly, 2007](#); [Vertovec, 2003](#); [Whetten, Felin, & King, 2009](#)) exists between disciplines ([Dogan, 1996, 2000](#); [Rudman et al., 2008](#); [Sigelman & Goldfarb, 2008](#)) and often is part of interdisciplinarity ([Rudman et al., 2008](#); [Rumford & Murray, 2003](#); [Sanz-Menéndez, Bordons, & Zulueta, 2001](#)).



## Lens of Ability Studies

Wolbring, G., Ecohealth through an ability studies and disability studies lens. In Ecological Health: Society, Ecology and Health, Gislason, M. K., Ed. Emerald: London, UK, 2013; Vol. 15, pp 91-107



## Ability Studies

Ability Studies investigates the societal reality of ability expectations and their impact

Ability expectations are one factor that defines the relationship between humans, humans and animals and humans and nature

Ability Expectations can be based on skills, values and on how one expects ones life to be

Ability expectations are evident on the individual, social group, country, local and global level



## Ability Studies

Ableism was used to indicate the disablement disabled people experience

Ability expectations are used as tools to disable  
(see sexism, racism, ...)

Why NBIC? Why human performance enhancement? *European Journal of Social Science Research*, Vol 21, No.1, pp.25-4

Ability expectations can also enable (see concept of sustainable development)

Wolbring G and Yumakulov S (2015) Education through an Ability Studies Lens in *Zeitschrift für Inklusion* 10(2) no page number Special Issue on Ableism: Behinderung und Befähigung im Bildungswesen Editor Lisa Pfahl and Tobias Buchner



## EcoAbleism

## Eco-ableism

Wolbring, G., Ecohealth through an ability studies and disability studies lens. In Ecological Health: Society, Ecology and Health, Gislason, M. K., Ed. Emerald: London, UK, 2013; Vol. 15, pp 91-107



## Ecoableism

Eco-ableism is a conceptual framework to analyse enabling and disabling human ability desires for others including animals and the environment.

Different cultural understanding of the relationship between humans and nature (e.g. anthropocentric versus bio or eco-centric) comes with privileging different ability expectations

Players involved in the shaping of ecological discourses exhibit ability expectations that influence how they define ecological problems and solutions to the problem and therefore whom they invite to the table as stakeholders and knowledge producers (e.g. Shallow vs. Deep Ecology movement)

Wolbring Gregor (2014) Ability Privilege: A needed addition to privilege studies:  
In Journal for Critical Animal Studies Vol. 12, No. 2, p.118-141



## Ecoableism and EcoHealth

“Ecological feminism is rejecting the ability expectation of “dominance, competition, materialism, and technoscientific exploitation inherent in modernist, competition-based social systems” (Besthorn & McMillen, 2002, p. 226) and nourishing the ability expectation of “caring and compassion and the creation and nurturing of life” (Besthorn & McMillen, 2002, p. 226)”. Wolbring, G., Ecohealth through an ability studies and disability studies lens. In Ecological Health: Society, Ecology and Health, Gislason, M. K., Ed. Emerald: London, UK, 2013; Vol. 15, p 102



## **Lens of Disability Studies and EcoHealth**

Wolbring, G., Ecohealth through an ability studies and disability studies lens. In Ecological Health: Society, Ecology and Health, Gislason, M. K., Ed. Emerald: London, UK, 2013; Vol. 15, pp 91-107



EcoHealth



Lens of Disability Studies



Diffusion and use of concepts



Disability studies brings together insights from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities to address the societal situation of disabled people.

There are different ways to look at disability conceptually, with the two main ways being medical and social

.



EcoHealth



Lens of Disability Studies



Diffusion and use of concepts

The terms “disabled people”, “people with a disability”, “people with disabilities” showed up

rarely in relation to “environmental health” (Google Scholar)

not at all in Journal “EcoHealth” and Charon’s 2012 IDRC document

The term “disability” if present was used with a medical and not a social understanding of disability;

‘disability’ often linked to the phrase “disability adjusted life years” .

Wolbring, G., Ecohealth through an ability studies and disability studies lens. In Ecological Health: Society, Ecology and Health, Gislason, M. K., Ed. Emerald: London, UK, 2013; Vol. 15, pp 91-107



EcoHealth



Lens of Disability Studies



Diffusion and use of concepts



January 21, 2018

Looking at the 70 databases of EBSCO All “Ecohealth” in text of peer reviewed articles somewhere n=6516; in conjunction with “disabled people” somewhere in text (not references) n=3; “people with disabilities” n=3

Scopus which includes all Medline articles “Ecohealth” n=10367; people with disabilities n=3; disabled people n=5

Scopus: “Disability studies” or “Disability and Society” in journal name and Ecohealth all text n=0, disability in journal name, n=1 may be can not access)

Scopus: “Disability studies” and “ecohealth” all text n=5



**Our projects together**



Ability Studies

## Our project: Justice through an Ecoableism lens

- Aim
- to provide qualitative and descriptive quantitative data on how the roughly 300 English language Canadian newspapers covered by the Proquest Canadian Newsstream database frame “environmental justice”
- to provide qualitative and descriptive quantitative data on how 647 EcoHealth academic articles obtained from 70 databases covered by EBSCO ALL, Scopus which includes Medline, Science Direct and Web of Science engage with the concept of justice in relation to humans, animals, and nature.
- Wolbring G. and Lisitza A. (2017) Justice Among Humans, Animals and the Environment: Investigated Through an Ability Studies, Eco-Ableism, and Eco-Ability Lens in Weaving Nature, Animals and Disability for Eco-ability: The Intersectionality of Critical Animal, Disability and Environmental Studies, editors Anthony J. Nocella II, Amber E. George, JL Schatz, Lexington Books p41-62



- The incidence of the phrase “environmental justice” in the full text of the 300 Canadian newspaper articles from 1980-2016

| Mentioning of the phrase “environmental justice” in the 300 Canadian newspapers present in the Proquest Canadian newsstream database |           |
|--|-----------|
| years  | frequency |
| 1980-1989  | 2         |
| 1990-1999  | 57        |
| 2000-2009  | 199       |
| 2010-February 2016   | 264       |

- EcoHealth as a term was not mentioned once in the 534 articles mentioning environmental justice.
- January 21,2018 there are 68 articles mentioning the term Ecohealth in the Canadian newsstream



## Ability Studies

## Our project: Justice through an Ecoableism lens

Mentioning of justice related term in the n=534 newspaper articles containing the term "environmental justice" from the 300 Canadian newspapers present in the Proquest Canadian newsstream database

| Term  | Frequency of appearance |
|---|-------------------------|
| Justice   | 1149                    |
| Environmental justice                                       | 726                     |
| Social and environmental justice                            | 163                     |
| Social justice  | 107                     |
| ecojustice  | 79                      |
| Justice for   | 35                      |
| Justice issues  | 35                      |
| Injustice   | 28                      |
| Economic justice  | 16                      |
| Global justice  | 14                      |
| Climate justice   | 11                      |
| Water justice   | 6                       |
| Migrant justice   | 4                       |
| radical social and environmental justice dubbed Eco Madness | 4                       |
| Meaningful justice  | 2                       |
| Racial justice  | 2                       |
| Ecumenical justice  | 2                       |
| Food justice  | 1                       |
| Planet justice  | 1                       |
| Health justice  | 1                       |
| Spatial justice   | 1                       |
| Gender justice  | 1                       |
| Reproductive justice  | 1                       |
| Healing justice   | 1                       |
| Ecological justice  | 1                       |
| Criminal justice  | 1                       |
| Aboriginal justice  | 1                       |



## Ability Studies

## Our project: Justice through an Ecoableism lens

Mentioning of groups within the n=534 newspaper articles containing the term "environmental justice" in the 300 Canadian newspapers present in the Proquest Canadian newsstream database

| Group   | Hits within n=534 environmental justice articles |
|---|--|
| Green   | 576  |
| Church  | 425  |
| Women   | 353  |
| Religious   | 244  |
| First Nations   | 122  |
| Council of Canadians  | 82   |
| Aboriginal  | 77   |
| Sierra Club   | 64   |
| Unitarian   | 38   |
| Rotary  | 28   |
| Indigenous people   | 22   |
| Elizabeth May   | 9  |
| The Center for Public<br>Integrity for "Environmental Justice | 4  |
| Disabled people   | 0  |
| People with disabilities                                      | 0  |



- Justice related terms mentioned in more than 1% of the 647 ecohealth academic articles

| Term                  | Frequency or articles |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Justice               | 48                    |
| Social Justice        | 26                    |
| Environmental justice | 20                    |
| Injustice             | 9                     |

- Only the article “Contaminated Identities: Mercury and Marginalization in Ghana’s Artisanal Mining Sector” (Tschakert and Singha 2007) engaged with the term justice conceptually. These authors proposed that we ought “to extend the theoretical boundaries of political ecology by integrating novel ideas from the environmental justice debate and the EcoHealth approach” (Tschakert and Singha 2007).
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Ability Studies

## Our project: Justice through an Ecoableism lens

- Only one article each engaged explicitly with the connection of social justice and women (Vansteenkiste 2014), indigenous people with social justice (Wahbe et al. 2007), environmental justice and indigenous people (Wernham 2007), “environmental justice issues faced by the poor and minority communities living near hazardous waste facilities” (Vatovec, Senier, and Bell 2013).
- None looked at disabled people
-



Ability Studies

**Our project: Justice through an Ecoableism lens**

- Conclusion: Room for growth for how newspapers cover environmental justice and justice is covered within EcoHealth academic inquiry



## Our project: Sustainability and EcoHealth

Rational: Sustainability one pillar of EcoHealth; UN approved 2030 Agenda for sustainable development;

Research Approach: Diffusion of concepts

Sample: 647 academic articles containing EcoHealth and 198 sustainability terms

Lisitza, Aryn; and Wolbring, Gregor. (2016). "Sustainability within the Academic EcoHealth Literature: Existing Engagement and Future Prospects." *Sustainability* 8, no. 3: art. 202



## Our project: Sustainability and EcoHealth

**Table S1.** Total hit count and number of articles for all sustainability terms and phrases we found in the  $n = 647$  articles as well as sustainability terms that were present or not in the Brundtland report and the 2015 United Nations outcome document "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" [1, 2].

| No. | Term   | Hit Counts<br>(ATLAS-ti7@) | Number of<br>Articles<br>(ATLAS-ti7@)<br>( $n = 647$ ) |
|-----|--|----------------------------|--|
| 1   | sustain  | 2313                       | 305  |
| 2   | sustainable  | 985                        | 207  |
| 3   | sustainability   | 1002                       | 176  |
| 4   | unsustainable  | 40                         | 32   |
| 5   | sustainable development                                | 105                        | 28   |
| 6   | ecosystem sustainability and sustainable ecosystems    | 34                         | 20   |
| 7   | environmental sustainability/environmental sustainable | 23                         | 16   |
| 8   | sustainable use  | 25                         | 15   |
| 9   | health and sustainability                              | 26                         | 13   |
| 10  | sustainable management                                 | 14                         | 11   |
| 11  | long-term sustainability/longer-term sustainability    | 12                         | 10   |
| 12  | sustainable health                                     | 11                         | 10   |
| 13  | ecological sustainability/ecological sustainable       | 13                         | 10   |

Lisitza, Aryn; and Wolbring, Gregor. (2016). "Sustainability within the Academic EcoHealth Literature: Existing Engagement and Future Prospects." *Sustainability* 8, no. 3: art. 202



## Our project: Sustainability and EcoHealth

Conclusion:

Uneven diffusion of sustainability concepts;

Various sustainability concepts not engaged with

One could make a case that how any given sustainability term is discussed might impact EcoHealth as does how the 2030 sustainable development agenda is implemented



## Our project: Ethics and EcoHealth

Rational: Sherwin, an eminent ethicist, stated that “we [ethicists] lack the appropriate intellectual tools for promoting deep moral change in our society.” Sherwin, S. (2011). Looking Backwards, Looking Forward: Hope for Bioethics’ Next Twenty Five Years. *Bioethics*, 25(2), 75-82.

Research Approach: Diffusion of concepts  
Sample 647 academic articles containing EcoHealth

Lisitza, Aryn; and Wolbring, Gregor. (2016) in EcoHealth and Ethics: Where is the guidance? Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics 26(2) p 45-60



## Our project: Ethics and EcoHealth

| Term                      | Hit Counts (ATLAS-ti©) | Number of Articles (ATLAS-ti©) |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Kant                      | 21                     | 14                             |
| Socialist                 | 2                      | 2                              |
| Egalitarian               | 1                      | 1                              |
| Moral Relativism          | 0                      | 0                              |
| Individual Relativism     | 0                      | 0                              |
| Cultural Relativism       | 0                      | 0                              |
| Psychological Hedonism    | 0                      | 0                              |
| Psychological Altruism    | 0                      | 0                              |
| Female Care Based Ethics  | 0                      | 0                              |
| Virtue Theories           | 0                      | 0                              |
| Samuel Pufendorf          | 0                      | 0                              |
| Rights Theory             | 0                      | 0                              |
| WD Ross                   | 0                      | 0                              |
| Consequentialism          | 0                      | 0                              |
| Hedonism                  | 0                      | 0                              |
| Deontology                | 0                      | 0                              |
| Utilitarianism            | 0                      | 0                              |
| Preference Utilitarianism | 0                      | 0                              |
| Libertarian               | 0                      | 0                              |
| Feminist Approach         | 0                      | 0                              |



## Our project: Ethics and EcoHealth

Conclusion: Our finding suggest that indeed ethics theories which are one set of tools are rarely used in relation to EcoHealth .

Question: Is any ethical reasoning using ethical theories needed? Are other tools better suited to provide an ethical framework? Which would that be?