

Tactics of Sustainable Design

Asking the question; How do Sustainable Design students make sense of the wickedness of sustainability and how do they devise tactics of change accordingly? This study utilises qualitative methods to gather both ethnographic and digital data, to analyse the varied notions of sustainability in the study programme of Sustainable Design. Uncovering that the two groups of students have distinct takes on the concept of sustainability, directed the research to look further into how the students of Sustainable Design understands the wickedness of sustainability.

We will argue that the wickedness of sustainability has an ambivalent character: on one hand it is a great analytical tool for analysing the complex multifaceted system of how sustainability is constituted, but on the other hand it makes the students question their agency in regards to making the change that they find imperative. Furthermore, by using Botin's concept of Techno-Activism, we argue for bridging the gap between Feenberg's notion of tactics, and Verbeek's invitation for designers to take responsibility in the construction of artefacts. Thus exemplifying how designers with explicit normative goals working within technical domains indeed are able to formulate and employ tactics for challenging the politically and institutionally mediated technical codes.