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Digital Stakeholders and Sustainable University Governance: Extending Stakeholder Theory to Algorithms

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Introduction and research aim

AI now shapes university decisions
admissions · learning analytics · research evaluation · proctoring

THE GAP
Freeman's classical model recognises only humans and institutions

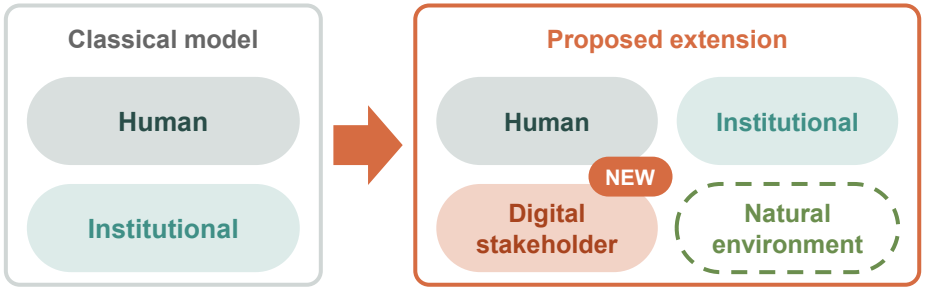
RESEARCH QUESTION
Can algorithms be conceptualised as digital stakeholders in sustainable university governance?

Research methods

Conceptual, theory-building study

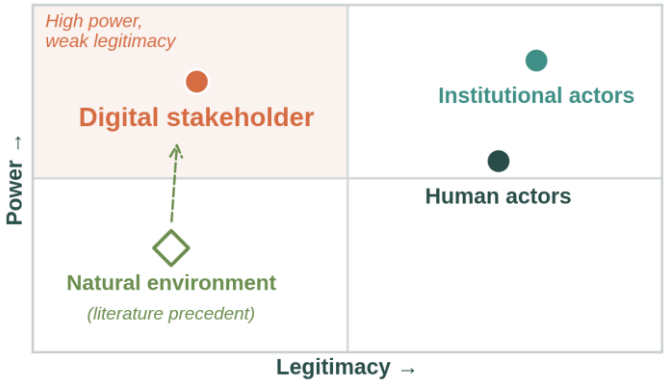
1. **Theory review**
   Stakeholder theory, salience model, USR
2. **Analogy**
   Natural environment as a stakeholder without voice
3. **Illustrative cases**
   Admissions, learning analytics, rankings, proctoring
4. **Conceptual model**
   Digital stakeholder + USR accountability tools

Results and discussion



Salience of a digital stakeholder (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997)

POWER	LEGITIMACY	URGENCY
High	**Weak**	**High**
automated scoring and ranking	no moral standing of its own	decisions fast and at scale



USR tools

- Impact checks
- Human review
- Public registers
- Algorithm audits

Conclusions

1. **A new stakeholder type:** algorithms influence decisions without voice.
2. **Salience reframed:** high power, weak legitimacy, high urgency.
3. **USR as the framework,** following the natural-environment precedent.

Limit: *conceptual paper; empirical testing is the next step.*

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