

## **Are the Twin Transitions Sustainable? A discourse analysis of digital technology development and the data industry in the news**

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**Abstract** The transition toward a sustainable future will inevitably involve sustainable digital media ecosystems. Digitalized societies view value creation within digital media ecosystems based upon the most available information sources in the burgeoning digital technology and data industries: policymakers and the industries themselves. The “twin transitions”, green and digital, are depicted as being in complementary alignment and even promoted as such in policy actions. This work explores the research problem of their potential misalignment as a question of relativism based on institutional logics. In a comparative discourse analysis, I examine industry and government leaders’ stated positions as depicted in journalistic texts in three highly digitalized countries (Germany, Norway, and the United States). This serves the aim of illustrating leadership in the twin transitions and the processes and practices behind it.

Problem representation and environmental discourse analysis methods are used here to understand value, institutional logics, and depictions of the alignment of the twin transitions. As the sustainability of data and digital technologies comes into question in developed countries, journalistic depictions of institutional and operational leadership roles in the twin transitions are key to driving public understanding and attitudes as well as practices both driving and resulting from policy.

On one hand, this work seeks examples of representations of digitalization as positive or negative for the environmental impact of digital technologies. On the other hand, I seek to find representations of capital to represent value in a digital media ecosystem. The way in which institutions frame capital and the alignment of the twin transitions reflect institutional values (not value). Statements and positions of elite actors (within industries supplying digital goods and services) as well as those of government elites are evaluated in the context of their institutional logics.

Preliminary results show American leaders address the twin transitions with technological solutionism, market logic, weak sustainability, and weak ecological modernization. Ultimately, those in the U.S. are growth-oriented, primarily concerned with digital capital and market capital, viewing sustainability as a means to an end. Norwegian results show a socio-technical approach to leadership, one using sustainable development logic skewed toward strong sustainability and strong ecological modernization. Here, natural capital is much more of a focus of the discourse. The German corpus is intermediate. Not only do these results reflect differences in institutional culture, but in the liberal and democratic corporatist media systems present. A scaling up of Norwegian leadership viewpoints in international regulatory bodies is worth investigation to address the research problem.