

# **Regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities in the context of binary perspectives on gender diversity**

## **Abstract**

Dynamic managerial capabilities are considered essential qualities and skills that managers have in order to conduct their jobs well and contribute to firm's competitive advantage in dynamically changing sectors. Yet, the interplay between gender and dynamic managerial capabilities is not well studied in the extant literature. We set out to explore how dynamic managerial capabilities, as prized qualities in the job market, are framed in gendered ways and how the gendering process disadvantages female and male workers for different reasons and harms the organisations, which use the managerial capabilities approach without proofing it for gender biases. Thus, we identify a number of ways dynamic managerial capabilities may be proofed for gender biases and how a gender balanced framing of dynamic managerial capabilities may be achieved. We contribute to the development of a new gender perspective, which we call regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities, which frees the concept from its binary frames of gender, assumptions of gender neutrality, with a view to capture gender diversity in a way which is closer to its nature in theory and practice of dynamic managerial capabilities.

**Keywords:** Diversity management, gender diversity, regendering, dynamic managerial capabilities, gender categories.

## **Introduction**

Dynamic managerial capability remains a well charted terrain and a theme with a focal concern on manager's human capital and related skills (i.e. Adner and Helfat, 2003; Coff and Kryscynski, 2011; Holcomb, Holmes and Connelly, 2009; Huy and Zott, 2019; Kurtmollaiev et al., 2018; Moliterno and Wiersema, 2007) which play a significant role in decision-making outcomes of organisations which pursue superior performance (Al Ariss, Cascio and Paauwe, 2014; Collings, Mellahi and Cascio, 2019; Kucukaltan, Irani and Aktas, 2016). Yet, the interplay of gender and dynamic managerial capabilities remain underexplored (Buil-Fabrega, Alonso-Almeida and Bagur-Femenías, 2017; Coleman and Kariv, 2013; Correa et al., 2019). Exploring the interplay of gender and the dynamic managerial capabilities

approach is particularly relevant as organisations, which increasingly operate in gender diverse environments and with new gender frames (Westbrook and Saperstein 2015) need to consider the unique implications of this interplay (Kor, 2006; Krishnan and Park, 2005; Quintana-García and Benavides-Velasco, 2016). Furthermore, there are theoretical and methodological considerations for scholars if gender is considered more seriously in researching dynamic capabilities.

Since the day Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997) introduced the concept of dynamic capabilities as “the firm’s abilities to integrate, construct and reconfigure internal and external competences to address the rapidly changing environments” (p. 516), a large body of strategic management research (i.e. Adner and Helfat, 2003; Helfat and Martin, 2015; Huy and Zott, 2019; Kor and Mesko, 2013) has focused on the role of skills and qualities of managers, namely managerial capabilities in developing firms’ dynamic capabilities. The importance of managerial capabilities “as the key mechanisms to achieve congruence between the firm’s competencies and changing environmental conditions” (Kor and Mesko, 2013, p. 233) was frequently highlighted since most of the critical decisions in relation to resource and capability orchestration leading to strategic change and firm performance are made by managers (Kunc and Morecroft, 2010; Nyberg et al., 2014; Sirmon et al., 2011). Dynamic managerial capabilities are defined as “capabilities with which managers build, integrate, and reconfigure organisational resources and competences” (Adner and Helfat, 2003, p. 1012). Dynamic managerial capabilities comprise managerial skills such as managerial cognition, managerial human capital, and managerial social capital (Correa et al., 2019), thus the concept “provides a singular focus on managerial impact on strategic change” (Helfat and Martin, 2015, p. 1282).

Scholarly interest in the field of dynamic managerial capabilities (i.e. Fainshmidt, Nair and Mallon, 2017; Helfat and Martin, 2015; Hodgkinson and Healey, 2011; Sirmon and Hitt, 2009) has shifted away from external forces to firm’s behavioural, cognitive, and social processes as the underpinnings of internal competencies to refine understanding of how firms sense (and shape) opportunities and threats, seize opportunities, and reconfigure resources and structures to maintain evolutionary and economic fitness.

Gender diversity could play a pivotal role in meeting organisational requirements for creative and innovative managerial and leadership skills (Solarte, Perez de Lema and Guijarro, 2018; Moreno-Gómez, Lafuente and Vaillant, 2018). Yet, gender diversity and removal of traditional gender barriers across many industries is not considered as a serious solution to address the shortages of managerial skills, which result from changes in industrial compositions and a mismatch between supply and demand for skilled labour (Cascio and Boudreau, 2016; Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011; Tatli, Vassilopoulou and Ozbilgin, 2013). Thus underemployment of workforce from diverse backgrounds across many industries remains a curious phenomenon in the context of espoused needs for labour. The main rationale of this curiosity hinges upon the expected potential of gender diversity that could help firms develop dynamic managerial skills in many instances (Bernile, Bhagwat and Yonker, 2018; Buil-Fabrega et al., 2017; Coleman and Kariv, 2013).

In this paper, we examine a supposedly gender neutral concept, i.e. the dynamic managerial capabilities, and demonstrate its gendered nature and the way its theorisation and practice generates gendered outcomes. Gender in the dynamic capabilities literature suffers from three distinct flaws which culminate the field of acquire its unique form of gender blindness: First, it is treated an essentialist construct, often confused with sex. Studies on gender in dynamic managerial capabilities reduce gender to binary categories of women and men, as biological sex differences, rather than to explore gender as socially constructed meanings. Second, the concept of gender is not studied in its full range, including notions of masculinity, femininity, motherhood, fatherhood, undefined, transgender, genderfluid and non-binary categories (Tate, Ledbetter and Youssef, 2013; Westbrook and Saperstein, 2015). Third, studies on dynamic managerial capabilities continue to draw on old frames and fail to capture revised gender norms and relations in advanced societies, which we frame in this manuscript as regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities. Lack of attention to and lack of legitimacy for studying gender relations and gender in general in any aspect of work may be framed as gender blindness (Martin and Phillips 2017). Our problematic in this manuscript is to reveal the gender blindness in the extant literature on dynamic capabilities with a view to propose a regendering of the field from a process relational perspective. The purpose of our gender analyses of the dynamic managerial capabilities is to foster a gender diversity and

inclusive approach which could improve the way we understand the interplay between gender and dynamic managerial capabilities and help us transcend the gender blindness in the field of dynamic capabilities.

## **Methods**

Authors of the manuscript are located in the field of strategy, gender theory and organisational behaviour. Discussions among the authors has revealed that the field of dynamic capabilities which is traditionally studied in the field of strategy lacks gender analyses and suffers from gender blindness as a result. This curiosity has led us to explore the extant literature using a number of techniques. We have conducted key word searches, examined key texts in the strategic management field in relation to dynamic capabilities and using gender theory as lens critically examined the available literature, remaining focused on the problematic of gender blindness.

Specifically, we ran searches in the web of science for the keywords dynamic capabilities, dynamic managerial capabilities, sensing, seizing, reconfiguring, gender, regendering and the combinations of keywords dynamic capabilities-gender, dynamic managerial capabilities-gender, sensing-gender, seizing-gender, and reconfiguring-gender. We excluded the papers which both remained out of scope (e.g. medicine, chemistry, agriculture) and published as different sources other than articles (e.g. book chapters). In order not to miss any related paper, we also conducted the cross-referencing technique while exploring example papers which have a similar scope to our research (Kucukaltan et al., 2016). Our search in the web of science yielded 1630 articles with the word “dynamic capabilities” in the abstract. Yet, there were fewer, 32 articles on “dynamic managerial capabilities”. Our search yielded only 2 papers with the combination of words dynamic capabilities-gender and dynamic managerial capabilities-gender. We have selectively read the relevant articles and identified gender blindness across three mechanisms of dynamic capabilities, i.e. sensing, seizing and reconfiguring. Our analyses revealed that dynamic capabilities literature has a gap in terms of gender analyses and it continues to use traditional binary measures and frameworks in exploring gender issues. In the section on regendering dynamic capabilities we illustrate how expanding gender diversity and promoting gender inclusive approach in dynamic capabilities literature could be achieved. In particular, we offer a process relational

model with antecedents, correlates and consequences of gender diversity in dynamic managerial capabilities and show how this could be achieved at the point of analyses and practice.

Although, this is mainly a literature review paper, our review offers some theoretical implications. Theory is an umbrella term that incorporates several words, such as supposition, guess, proposition, hypothesis, and the main objective of theories is to move beyond the approximation and guess (Weick, 1995). As Corley and Gioia (2011) highlighted, theory can be regarded as the currency of the academic realm and the theoretical contribution is generally delineated by two main dimensions, which are originality (incremental and revelatory) and utility (practical and scientific). For the use of these two dimensions, several authors discussed about the theory construction and contribution. For instance, Cornelissen (2006) emphasised particularly on the need of metaphorical imagination. In another study, Weick (1995) underlined that determining the interrelationships and explaining the motives of interplay between the concepts help advancing the academic knowledge towards the way of presenting theoretical contributions. Likewise, the interconnection between the theory and the practice was also pointed out by Corley and Gioia (2011) who especially advocated the importance of being both scientifically useful and revelatory for the satisfactory level of contribution. In this regard, our paper proposes revelatory approach in terms of advancing the knowledge with the “interesting” perceptions whereas presenting scientifically useful information in the light of the previous studies and concepts.

Our review offers possibilities of theoretical expansion to the field of dynamic capabilities, the theoretical vision of which is predicated on traditional rather than contemporary forms of gender diversity. Our findings also have practical implications as they call for management practitioners to use a wider range of gender and gender diversity measures in examining dynamic managerial capabilities, drawing on a process-relational method (Ozbilgin, 2006; Ozbilgin and Vassilopoulou 2018) for locating antecedents, correlates and consequences of regendering dynamic managerial capabilities.

### **Dynamic Managerial Capabilities and Gender**

Gender diversity relates to dynamic managerial capabilities in different ways. First, gender diversity influences the uniqueness and effectiveness of the micro-foundations of dynamic managerial

capabilities. The gender related micro-foundations which are the individual level antecedents of dynamic managerial capabilities (Schilke, Hu and Helfat, 2018) are often identified as sex differences between women and men's mental models and knowledge structures (Eggers and Kaplan, 2013), cognition-related constructs (Adner and Helfat, 2003; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015), emotion regulation actions (Huy and Zott, 2019), and managerial qualities as both human capital (Castanias and Helfat, 2001; Wright, Coff and Moliterno, 2014) and social capital (Blyler and Coff, 2003; Hernández-Carrión, Camarero-Izquierdo and Gutiérrez-Cillán, 2017). Misappropriation of gender as sex differences leads to essentialisation, reduction of gender to biological determinism, of women and men's dynamic managerial capabilities. In these pieces of research, gender is treated as a binary category without further elaboration of gender categories as listed above, reducing the complexity of gender differences to sex differences.

Adner and Helfat (2003) pointed out that managers encountered similar types of external challenges in the same industry and revealed that there is a significant relationship between corporate effects and managerial decisions, which can be attributed to managerial cognition. In a similar vein, Helfat and Peteraf (2015) and Huy and Zott (2019) explored the roles of cognitive and emotional bases of dynamic managerial capabilities in relation to gender (Hodgkinson and Healey, 2011), by considering the sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring mechanisms through which dynamic capabilities operate (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2007). Yet, what is often meant by gender in these studies is nothing more than the binary female and male categories. As such, studies capture and yet essentialise differences between women and men, without attending to the complexities of masculine domination (Bourdieu 2001), which remain concealed if gender is reduced to women and men and the complexities of power relations and the roles afforded to women and men are not called into question.

From the dynamic capabilities perspective, Rosenbloom (2000) showed the central role of top managers and leaders in changing strategic direction of a firm by making choices on which paths to follow and by reconfiguring the firm's current endowments which determine the position of the firm in business. The author argues that CEOs and other C level managers have dynamic capabilities that aid strategic change but their dynamic capabilities are likely to differ due to individual differences including gender

differences. The positive association between gender diversity and firm performance has a long standing tradition in the strategy literature (Bernile et al., 2018; Campbell and Minguez-Vera, 2008; Coleman and Kariv, 2013; Hoogendoorn, Oosterbeek and Van Praag, 2013). While Adams and Ferreira (2009) suggest that boards with greater gender diversity conduct their monitoring function better compared to male dominant ones, Bernile et al. (2018) find diverse boards more persistent in adopting less risky financial policies but fostering more efficient (real) risk-taking. According to Coleman and Kariv (2013), male and female top managers and/or firm owners use different financial strategies. Therefore, high-quality decision making as a dynamic managerial capability is largely influenced by gender and gender diversity appears as an important concept to be considered by organisations. However, in these studies the fact that gender relations are reduced to numbers of women and men without questioning power relations renders invisible the male domination which remain evident even in female dominated teams and male domination which is sometimes upheld by women (Yamak et al. 2016).

A number of gender-rooted psychological and social constructs such as perception and self-perception (Helfat and Peteraf, 2015; Rudman and Glick, 2001), emotions (Ashkanasy, Humphrey and Huy, 2017), attention (Feng, Spence and Pratt, 2007; Ocasio, 2011), problem solving and reasoning (Jeppesen and Lakhani, 2010), social engagement and social commitment (Buil-Fabrega et al., 2017), interpersonal relations (Alimo-Metcalf, 2010), and welfare and empathy for others (Eagly, Johannsen-Schmidt and Van Engen, 2003) which determine the nature of managerial and leadership skills, can largely influence the operationalisation of sensing, seizing and reconfiguring mechanisms for dynamic capability implementation. Again, what is meant by gender in these studies is the sex differences between women and men. The richness of masculinity and femininity as can be witnessed both among women and men which affords them different privileges and penalties according to social gender norms is missed out in these studies.

The main mechanisms of dynamic capabilities are identified as sensing, seizing and reconfiguring (Teece, 2007, 2018). These mechanisms require a wide variety of high-quality decisions such as; searching and exploring markets and technologies both local and international (Hodgkinson and Healey, 2011), making investment decisions in forms of selection of a particular business model, market

segments or product architectures (Teece, 2018), and reconfiguring and orchestrating firm's resource-base and transforming organisational structure in response to changing environments (Kor and Mesko, 2013; Sirmon and Hitt, 2009). The quality of strategic decisions is subject to unique sets of managerial and leadership skills that constitute the micro-foundations of dynamic managerial capabilities. We examine each of these mechanisms of in relation to gender diversity with a view to reveal the treatment of gender in the extant literature below.

### *Gender diversity and sensing*

Sensing refers to "a comprehensive understanding of the business environment and emerging opportunities and threats" (Schilke, Hu and Helfat, 2018, p. 401). Sensing capacity enables a firm "to proactively reposition to address yet newer threats and opportunities as they arise" (Teece, 2018, p. 43). Existence of rapid and discontinuous changes requires firms to sense precautionary signals and sound forecasts about a new market trend or concern of the society for developing scenarios guiding to the optimal strategic change (Kamasak, James and Yavuz, 2018; Nadkarni and Herrmann, 2010). The fierce challenges in business contexts increase the necessity of well-functioning effective boards where dynamic changes are thoroughly monitored. Some studies (e.g. Adams and Ferreira, 2009; Ferris, Jagannathan and Pritchard, 2003) show the differences between women and men in terms of the attendance. In these studies, for instance, it was highlighted that female board members are more attentive in the meetings than their male counterparts; however, male board members achieve better attendance records when they work in more gender-diverse boards. Thus, this indicates that the presence of female members tends to influence the attendance behaviours of male members positively and gender-diverse boards and other top management committees allocate more effort to their monitoring function which has significant effects on sensing environmental challenges and opportunities (Campbell and Minguez-Vera, 2008; Coles, Daniel and Naveen, 2014; Teece, 2018). The tendency in these studies has been to reduce the complexity of power relations to relations of numerical representation. In fact, studies which explore representation and power in the boardroom for example suggest that relations of power complicate gender and representation (Kakabadse et al 2015; Sayce and Ozbilgin 2014)



According to Campbell and Minguez-Vera (2008), “greater gender diversity promotes a better understanding of the marketplace by matching the diversity of a firm’s directors to the diversity of its potential customers and employees, thereby increasing its ability to penetrate markets” (p. 440). In a similar vein, Bernile et al. (2018) highlight the link between gender diversity and firm success in the context of dynamic managerial capabilities, as outlined by Coleman and Kariv (2013), and consider more prudent risk perception and less risky financial strategies of female managers as a balancing mechanism to neutralise aggressive growth ambitions of male managers resulting to lower firm volatility, sound investment decisions and better economic performance. Although these studies provide talent managers of organisations to build a business case for gender diversity, the relationship between workforce diversity and organisational performance does not have a linear or simplistic relationship as some of these studies supposedly demonstrate (Roberson, Holmes and Perry, 2017).

Greater social and ethical commitments of women managers derived from their concerns of welfare of both employees and society than that of men derived from the focus of financial performance were frequently mentioned in the literature (Larrieta-Rubín de Celis et al., 2015; Santos, Roomi and Linan, 2016). Women managers’ strong social and ethical commitments do not only contribute to corporate reputation of firm (Brammer, Millington and Pavelin, 2009) but they also improve sensing capacity of dynamic managerial capabilities since “women are more likely than men to identify situations in which judgements of ethical values are necessary” (Buil-Fabrega et al., 2017, p. 373). On the one hand, these studies, which flesh out the unique contribution that women in management, could possibly support the gender diversity in organisations. Yet, on the other hand, such framing of gender in terms of women and men’s essential differences in management fails to capture the socially constructed nature of these differences, possibly essentialising gender differences and fixing these dynamically changing differences with a sense of biological determinism.

#### *Gender diversity and seizing*

Seizing is defined as “making strategic choices among investment opportunities and business models” (Schilke, Hu and Helfat, 2018, p. 401). Seizing which comprises designing and refining rapid strategic actions, and making investments based on managerial competences (Teece, 2007) is also influenced by

gender diversity (Helfat and Martin, 2015; Ruiz-Jiménez and Fuentes-Fuentes, 2016). Sensing and seizing mechanisms are deeply interrelated and intertwined, thus drawing a strict line between them may not be possible (Teece, 2007, 2018). Although some theorists (i.e. Becker, 2004; Dionysiou and Tsoukas, 2013; Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000) regard organisational routines and managerial rules among the underpinnings of dynamic capabilities on the way of enhancing firms' reasoning, decisions making and problem solving qualities, turbulent and chaotic changes in business environments invalidate standard routines and regulatory rules (Kamasak, Yozgat and Yavuz, 2017; Teece, 2018), thereby increasing the need for innovative, creative and high-quality non-routine managerial interventions emerged from variety of perspectives (Kor, 2006; Østergaard, Timmermans and Kristinsson, 2011). Therefore, firms need to adopt a more inclusive approach for diverse groups of managers or leaders in order to address the requisite strategic change (Kor and Mesko, 2013; Sirmon and Hitt, 2009; Wright et al., 2014). The variety in perspectives, knowledge and other cognitive resources is subject to the availability of gender diverse groups where minority viewpoints and task conflict are generated. Minority viewpoints and task conflicts may “subsequently motivate the consideration of more creative and better quality alternatives and solutions” (Roberson et al., 2017, p. 198).

Krishnan and Park (2005) consider gender as a rich and complex demographic variable “since its effects originate in managers' socio-cognitive base” (Ruiz-Jiménez and Fuentes-Fuentes, 2016, p. 110). Social cognitive and gender theory researchers (i.e. Bandura and Bussey, 2004; Moskowitz, 2005) argue that men and women have different life, professional and social experiences (i.e. affiliation with social networks) which can generate diverse perspectives. Hence, gender diversity which can bring a broader view by different perspectives, skills and knowledge can provide a better understanding of the environmental complexities and opportunities and improve seizing capacity of firms. In a similar line, the quality of decision making as a dynamic managerial capability “depends as much on art and intuition as on science and analysis” (Teece, 2018, p. 43) which require diverse and creative mindsets. Therefore, gender diversity in top management organisations which incorporates women's perspectives can generate more novel decisions, greater creativity and encouragement for product, service and process innovations (Krishnan and Park, 2005; Quintana-García and Benavides-Velasco, 2016). Moreover,

strategy formulation which includes mixed strategic options may require different leadership styles i.e. an authoritarian and dominant leadership with an eagerness of power towards financial performance in combination with a leadership style based on social and environmental commitment towards creating a positive stakeholder perception. From a gender perspective, while a consensus in the literature associates men with an authoritarian and dominant leadership and management styles (Buil-Fabrega et al., 2017; Hindle, Klyver and Jennings, 2009), a transformational leadership style based on environmental and ethical values, empathy for others and social and interpersonal relations are generally attributed to women (Alimo-Metcalf, 2010; Aygün, Arslan and Güney, 2008; Buil-Fabrega et al., 2017). In this example, each gender repertoire adds value to the seizing mechanism of dynamic capabilities through offering unique sets of skills both from men and women. At this point, gender diversity acts as a natural mechanism to integrate idiosyncratic managerial and leadership skills in a complementary manner.

Furthermore, research (i.e. Cohen and Huffman, 2003; Konrad and Pfeffer, 1991) finds that female managers exhibit less gender segregation and inequality and support gender diversity in firms, and gender diverse firms can create a more favourable corporate profile which improves firms' image and reputation (Smith, Smith and Verner, 2006). The utility of these studies has been their ability to capture the contribution of gender diversity rather than the contribution of women and men per se. As such these studies transcend the binary to an extent and move towards a more sophisticated analyses of gender diversity and explore the utility of diversity in the context of dynamic managerial capabilities.

#### *Gender diversity and reconfiguring*

The significant role of gender diversity in dynamic managerial capability utilisation is not limited to improve their capacity to sense and seize dynamic environmental conditions but to enhance their reconfiguring capacity. The third leg of the dynamic capabilities triad (Helfat and Peteraf, 2015) involves altering, extending or modifying the firm's resources and capabilities in order to conduct successful strategies in accordance with the requirements of dynamic environments (Schilke, 2014; Teece, 2007; Teece et al., 1997). Given resource scarcity where bounded rationality principles work, firms need to create new resource bundles or shift limited resources for other courses of actions and find complementary resources'' (Wei, Yi and Guo, 2014, p. 837) in a quick and smooth manner, thus

reconfiguring its resource-base which consists an optimum orchestration of resources (Sirmon et al., 2011). Reconfiguration of resource-base may also require change and/or realignment of organisational structure and culture involving managerial choices and actions which result to a resistance to change coming from employees and rigid routines and processes (Helfat and Peteraf, 2015; Kaplan and Henderson, 2005). Breaking routine and process inertia, overcoming resistance to change, and adopting more flexible mechanisms (i.e. coordination flexibility and resource flexibility) and structures can benefit from dynamic managerial capabilities for reconfiguration (Helfat and Peteraf, 2015; Wei et al., 2014).

The specific micro-foundations of dynamic managerial capabilities for reconfiguring capacity are considered as communication, interpersonal skills and language, social cognition, and empathy for others that are influenced by gender diversity (Adner and Helfat, 2003; Helfat and Martin, 2015; Kor and Mesko, 2013; Ruiz-Jiménez and Fuentes-Fuentes, 2016). A number of studies (i.e. Cohen and Huffman, 2007; Ruderman et al., 2002) finds that women's interpersonal and communication abilities are enriched by the psychological benefits emerging from the multiple roles that women perform in their personal and professional life. These abilities can facilitate knowledge sharing and effective communication which encourages employee participation across the organisation. Knowledge sharing and communication are highly associated with new product and service development and process innovation (Easterby-Smith and Prieto, 2008; Kamasak et al., 2017).

Effective communication can play a greater role particularly in the processes of strategic change which consist resistance, conflict and adaptation related issues. Women managers' interpersonal and communication skills can create a good work environment and improve conflict resolution through interacting with more people and increasing the possibility of connecting with each member of the organisation in strategic implementations (Krishnan and Park, 2005; Ruiz-Jiménez and Fuentes-Fuentes, 2016). Furthermore, women managers express stronger support than men do for employees and have greater concern for value and welfare of their subordinates resulting from their own social characteristics of caring for others (Boulouta, 2013; Larrieta-Rubín de Celis et al., 2015). Greater concern of top management on employees is considered as a positive sign in the organisation thus, it can create

improved employee attitudes, motivation and organisational commitment which may affect employee response and support to change initiatives positively (Helfat and Martin, 2015). Therefore, employees who are more likely to produce positive feelings and attitudes in gender diverse organisations can be better motivated and convinced for change and show less resistance to strategic implementations.

Effective and quick reconfiguration of resource-base of an organisation is also contingent on coordinated practices and existence of cooperation among managers (Kor and Mesko, 2013; Teece, 2007). Coordination and cooperation help firms to alter their resource and capability combinations more easily for new purposes by relaxing routine and structural inertia (Matthyssens, Pauwels and Vandembemt, 2005; Zhou and Wu, 2010). Cooperation and coordination among managers can be fostered by their social cognitive capabilities which refer to “the capacities to understand the point of view of others, and therefore provides the potential to influence the behaviour of others” (Helfat and Peteraf, 2015, p. 844). Individuals differ with respect to gender in social cognitive capabilities since men and women have different patterns “in the deliberate use of non-verbal behaviour for self-presentation” (DePaulo, 1992, p. 221), in the speed with which they attribute mental states to others (Fletcher et al., 1995), “in the extent to which an individual took the knowledge and perspective of another individual into account” (Galinsky et al., 2006, p. 1068), and “in their capabilities to discern the meaning of non-verbal behaviour and their sensitivity to social norms” (Helfat and Peteraf, 2015, p. 844).

In a similar vein, Kor and Mesko (2013) who support gender diversity in boards find that the dominant logic of the firm which breaks routine inertia stems from social cognitive capabilities of top management teams and facilitates the execution of strategic options that require extending resource bases or creating new resource bundles. Therefore, gender based heterogeneity in social cognition which undergird dynamic managerial capabilities is likely to influence the effectiveness of resource and capability reconfigurations in organisations.

Finally, dynamic market conditions compel firms to conduct market and non-market strategies simultaneously (Kamasak et al., 2018; Liedong, Rajwani and Mellahi, 2017) where critical resources used for competition based market practices might need to be deployed for social activities or vice versa. Since women managers incorporate greater commitment to corporate social responsibility practices (i.e.

Cheah et al., 2011; Fernandez-Feijoo, Romero and Ruiz, 2014), more optimum resource allocations for strategic requirements can be achieved.

### **Regendering of Dynamic Managerial Capabilities**

Based on the above review, we propose regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities in a process relational framework. First, the antecedents of such an intervention are considered, i.e. preparedness of the leadership, top management team and the organisational structures and cultures. Second, regendering intervention for dynamic managerial capabilities is presented in two aspects. (a) the gender proofing of dynamic managerial capabilities may be carried out. (b) a gender impact assessment is conducted on dynamic managerial capabilities with new inclusive gender norms. Third, the outcomes of the regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities is presented. The figure 1 below outlines the regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities from a process relational perspective.

#### **FIGURE 1 INSERTED HERE**

Gender blindness of dynamic capabilities is well defined in the above three aspects of dynamic capabilities in sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring. In order for any regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities to happen, leadership and top management team should be supportive of this idea. Therefore, buy in needs to be achieved for the need and urgency of regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities. In a context where human resources are the key strategic assets of organisations, gender diversity appears as a significant global challenge for organisations to achieve. If leadership and management support is achieved, there should be also organisational readiness for regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities. This readiness may come in different forms such as readiness of organisational culture and readiness of organisational structures for gender diversity.

For regendering of dynamic capabilities, we propose two specific strategies. First is the gender proofing of dynamic capabilities. Gender proofing is defined as “the check carried out on any policy proposal to ensure that any potential gender discriminatory effects arising from that policy have been avoided and that gender equality is promoted” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Gender proofing is performed by solid analyses that investigate the current situation by the use of statistical measures and

other scientific data. The gender proofing process can be helpful to gather the root cause of the inequality (where inequalities exist). Bacchi (2010) warns that the analyses techniques such as gender proofing for mainstreaming gender in all activities at work should recognise the discursive power relations that give shape and content to them. The risk is often the dilution of any gender assessment as a tick box exercise. For gender proofing to be meaningful it should focus on the essence rather than the form or appearance of dynamic capabilities.

The second aspect of regendering of dynamic capabilities is an assessment of the impact of gender proofing and transformation of dynamic capability frames and activities along gender diversity lines. Gender impact assessment is a widely used tool for assessing the impact of gender interventions in organisations. Gender impact assessment is defined as “an ex ante evaluation, analysis or assessment of a law, policy or programme that makes it possible to identify, in a preventative way, the likelihood of a given decision having negative consequences for the state of equality between women and men” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Gender impact assessment considers the positive, negative or neutral impacts of any policy of activity implemented in terms of gender equality.

The outcomes of regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities are manifold as dynamic managerial capabilities has remained a gender blind field for a long time. One of the immediate outcomes of regendering attempts could be backlash against gender inclusive considerations for dynamic managerial capabilities. If such backlash and inertia in the field is overcome more positive outcomes such as a gender inclusive workplace. As dynamic managerial capabilities cuts across all frameworks of strategic activities of organisations from decision mechanisms to allocation of resources to marketing of goods and services, gender inclusive dynamic managerial capabilities approaches offer a wide range of benefits such as improved productivity, effectiveness, reduction in gender discrimination at work, moderation of risk taking behaviours, and sustainable practices which capture the growth of gender diversity and the need for gender inclusion.

Regendering helps firms to overcome the gender binary and reinstitute a fluid understanding which does not penalise women and men who transgress the traditional binary norms (McPhail 2004). Therefore, regendering which allows for female masculinities and male femininities (Gartzia and Van Engen, 2012)

enables firms to learn from across the gender spectrum, free gender norms and relax stereotypes, thus results to a richness in offering a variety of leadership types, skills and managerial perspectives that contribute to the specific mechanisms (i.e. sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring) through which dynamic capabilities become functional. Table 1 below outlines how research in the field of dynamic managerial capabilities may transcend the binary treatment of gender and numerical treatment of gender diversity with a view to adopt a socially constructed vision of gender. Specifically, traditional gender measures are invariably treated in a binary using categories of sex rather than gender such as women and men. The gender (sex) binary measures which are based on etic notions (Tatli and Ozbilgin, 2012) could be transcended with emic gender measures, which should be designed to capture own definitions, categories and identity categories of workers. This could be done with semi-structured questions with wider range of options such as female, male, genderfluid, nonbinary and other categories, masculine, feminine, power and status, relationships at work and an open category to capture emergent categories. The potential impact of this turn would be to move from reductionist treatment of gender as sex differences towards a recognition of gender as a social construct and transcending binary treatment of gender, with a view to reveal relations of power inherent in gender relations. When gender measures are constrained to biological sex categories their transformative potential is also reduced to a binary. In contrast, we envisage opening up of these categories in order to capture gender diversity and gender inclusive analyses techniques.

Gender diversity is also captured and measured in traditional ways as numbers of women and men alone in the dynamic capabilities literature. In line with gender theory, we posit that numbers are not sufficient to capture the complexity of gender diversity in dynamic capabilities. Instead, numbers are meaningful if gender diversity is studied also in terms of gender relations and power and resource bases, and gender diversity in access to positions of power and authority and decision making mechanisms. For such an approach to be garnered, gender diversity analyses in dynamic capabilities should capture both objective and subjective measures of diversity, relations of power which become implicit in headcount based approaches.

**TABLE 1 INSERTED HERE**



## Conclusions

The domain of research on dynamic capabilities is characterised by male domination in terms of authors and practitioners in this field. Furthermore, gender diversity in the context of dynamic managerial capabilities has received scant attention from scholars, with only a few exceptions (Roberson et al., 2017). Even in those rare cases when dynamic managerial capabilities are explored from gendered lenses, the treatment of gender in these studies suffered from some flaws: First, approximation of gender to sex, leading to essentialising differences between women and men in management. Second, the reduction of the complexity of gender to binary gender categories, i.e. women and men at the expense of ignoring complexity of a wider repertoires of gender. Third, gender frames in dynamic managerial capabilities research fail to capture the modernisation of gender relations. In order to transcend these flaws, we suggested expansion of gender measures in research to include categories beyond women and men.

Some organisational scholars still continue to discuss gender binary through basic binary categories. In fact, dualistic way of categorizing gender as “male” and “female” in recent researches is considered as outdated. It is advisable to include new gender categories to surveys in order to combat the dominance of biological gender dimorphism (Hughes and Dvorsky, 2008), which cannot capture the interplay between biological and socially constructed aspects of gender. However, it may not be sufficient to expand categories of gender in line with expansion of gender categories in law (Tate, Ledbetter and Youssef, 2013). Beyond expansion of gender categories, gender options in surveys may include rating scales such as femininity and masculinity instead of giving respondents only “men”, “women”, “genderfluid”, “nonbinary” or “other” categories. in order to outline regendering dynamic capabilities researches. Beyond these, we suggest building legitimacy for research based on traditions outside the positivist, quantitative paradigm that can capture feminist research interests in the field of dynamic management capabilities.

We suggest that the absence of gender diversity in dynamic management capabilities research stunts the development of this field. If gender diversity is considered seriously, research we outlined shows that firms are more likely to develop dynamic managerial capabilities that lead to superior firm performance.

Yet, lack of gender diversity persists despite countervailing economic and social rationales for gender diversity in many industries (Gartner Report, 2018; McKinsey Report (2017)). In order for organisations to benefit from gender diversity which has a significant yet untapped potential for contributing to their dynamic managerial capabilities, we offer a regendering framework that can help firms to become organisations that value feminine and masculine qualities on an equal level (Linstead and Pullen, 2006; Wilén and Heinecken, 2018).

We explained above how regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities requires a level of preparedness for leaders, managers and organisations. Further, regendering may be carried out as gender proofing and subsequently with gender impact assessment in order to yield a positive set of outcomes which could be garnered if backlash is overcome. We posit that regendering of dynamic managerial capabilities is in line with the spirit of changes across all fields of management in exploring gender relations and preparing for a gender diverse and gender inclusive future in organisations.

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