



## **Special Issue *Journal of Management and Organization* Dynamic Capabilities: New Ideas, Microfoundations, and Criticism**

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**Deadline 30<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

### **Background to the Special Issue**

The dynamic capabilities framework “was created with an ambitious agenda in mind, namely, to provide a general framework to help scholars and practitioners understand the foundations of firm- level competitive advantage and associated enterprise value creation and maintenance” (Teece 2014, p. 328). We have seen much progress to come closer to this vision including a healthy and critical debate on the theoretical underpinnings of dynamic capabilities, their microfoundations, their measurement and policy implications.

In this special issue, we call for papers of conceptual or empirical nature that advance our thinking on dynamic capabilities. We invite research that tackles pertinent issues in relation to the theoretical underpinnings of dynamic capabilities and their microfoundations. One of these theoretical issues has been triggered by DiStefano, Peteraf, and Verona (2010) with their bibliometric analysis that revealed a divide of the intellectual camps around Teece and Eisenhardt discussing dynamic capabilities (see also Peteraf, DiStefano, Verona, 2013; Arndt and Pierce, 2018). We need to better understand and show the empirical implications of their findings.

Other recent contributions to the dynamic capabilities literature have applied a microfoundations approach (Hallberg & Felin, 2020; Kurtmollaiev, 2020), linking explanatory mechanisms at the micro- level to macro-level organizational processes and outcomes (Barney & Felin, 2013; Devinney, 2013; Felin et al., 2012, 2013; Foss & Pedersen, 2016). In the context of dynamic capabilities, a microfoundational approach would involve unpacking the processes by which dynamic capabilities are created, expressed and transformed within organizations. What is the role of dynamic managerial capabilities in this context (Adner and Helfat, 2003)? We are in need of innovative empirical approaches to tackle these issues.

There is a dearth of research outlining the policy implications of dynamic capability research. With the exception of work by Teece and Helfat and co-authors, there are few inquiries showing the value capturing potential of dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2018; Helfat and Raubitschek, 2018) and their implications for anti-trust (Sidak and Teece, 2009). We attest that there is more room for inquiries exploring these themes.

The dynamic capabilities framework has received criticism and in particular regarding the clarity of its main constructs (Kurtmollaiev, 2020) as well as the difficulty of specifying initial conditions (Hallberg & Felin, 2020). As recent contribution to this ongoing conversation illustrate, the multi-level and dynamic nature of phenomena the dynamic capabilities framework seeks to explain has been insufficiently acknowledged. Possibly, work from specific dynamic capabilities such as absorptive capacity or ambidexterity could help closing these gaps.

### **Aims and Scope of the Special Issue**

The objective of this timely special issue is to provide a collection of papers that advance theory and empirical evidence on pertinent issue within the domain of dynamic capabilities. We have no preference towards multi-level studies per se. We invite work on the microfoundational processes of dynamic capabilities, whether they concern the creation, manifestation or transformation of dynamic capabilities. Studies that attend to cross-level interactions and address the less studied issue of aggregation from the micro to the macro are particularly welcome. Furthermore, we welcome work that considers less explored firm, industry, national and multi-national contexts (Contractor et al., 2018; De Massis & Foss, 2018).

We welcome quantitative and qualitative investigations as well as conceptual contributions. Specific research questions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. How do dynamic capabilities promote digitalization, and the technologies around industry 4.0?
2. How do dynamic capabilities differ in their nature?
3. How can the dynamic capabilities theory, operationalization of dynamic capabilities concepts based on multidisciplinary approaches be developed as well as provide insights into the dynamic capabilities and firm superior performance relationships?
4. How does the dynamic capabilities view benefits from the knowledge of the other disciplines dealing with the explanation of the firm competitive advantage and superior performance?
5. What are the policy implications of dynamic capability research?
6. What are major theoretical issues with dynamic capabilities and how can they be addressed?
7. In what sense are managerial dynamic capabilities a specific, distinct category within dynamic capabilities (Adner & Helfat, 2003; Helfat & Martin, 2015) and how would considering them from a microfoundations point of view enrich our understanding of dynamic capabilities?
8. What is the relationship between dynamic capabilities, agency and microfoundations (Kurtmollaiev, 2020)?
9. Is absorptive capacity a dynamic capability and how can it be understood from a microfoundations perspective (Lewin et al., 2011)?

**Important dates:**

Pre-Submission Workshops (not mandatory for submission to the special issue): We offer two Pre-Submission workshops, both online, one based on European time, one based on Australian (Perth) time.

- 1) The European-based workshop will take place online in conjunction with the planned EURAM Conference from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> December. The exact timing will be announced once the schedule of the Conference is released.

Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> October to:  
[farndt@uoquelph.ca](mailto:farndt@uoquelph.ca) or [Gerardus.Lucas@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Gerardus.Lucas@nottingham.ac.uk) with subject "Pre-Submission Workshop EURAM"

- 2) The Australian-based workshop will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> December in the morning before the ANZAM conference begins.

Submission Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> October to:  
[p.galvin@ecu.edu.au](mailto:p.galvin@ecu.edu.au) or [farndt@uoquelph.ca](mailto:farndt@uoquelph.ca) with subject "Pre-Submission Workshop ANZAM"

**Submission Deadline for the Special Issue: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

The submission does not require attendance at any of the Pre-Submission workshops

Expected timeframe: 1<sup>st</sup> Decision in April/May 2021 including an invitation to a paper development workshop in conjunction with the EURAM Conference (June) in Montreal.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Revision due in July 2021
- Feedback in September 2021
- Special Issue is planned to be published in Summer 2022

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