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Gender Diversity, Institutional Context, and Environmental Innovation: A European Patent Analysis.

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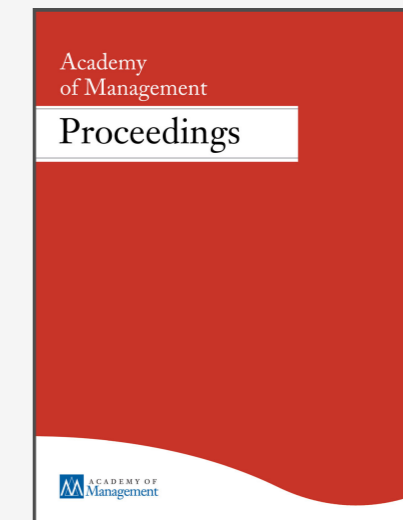
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Abstract

This paper investigates the role of institutional context as a key driver of the relationship between women's presence on the board of directors (BoD) and environmental innovation. Moving from extant research on critical mass (i.e., at least three women appointed to the BoD), and considering the influence the institutional context exerts on women and their role as directors, we build and test some hypotheses on how a cultural context more/less inclined towards the female figure in a top echelon position can enhance/hinder the contribution made by women to environmental innovation. Specifically, we argue that women on BoD may have a positive impact on environmental innovation only when critical mass is reached and that a favorable institutional context (i.e., low-masculinity) positively contributes to the beneficial influence of female directors on the implementation of environmental innovation. We test and find support for our hypotheses on a sample of 3,316 European firms across three specific environmental innovation categories (i.e., Air, Water, and Waste).

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