

BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)

Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Investment: The Macroscopic Perspective (3)

Author: Mr. Daniel Sagath

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands, d.sagath@vu.nl

Dr. Elco van Burg

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands, j.c.van.burg@vu.nl

Dr. Christina Giannopapa

European Space Agency (ESA), France, christina.giannopapa@esa.int

Prof. Joep Cornelissen

Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands, cornelissen@rsm.nl

ENTREPRENEURIAL PRACTICES IN HIGHLY INSTITUTIONALIZED EUROPEAN SPACE
SECTOR**Abstract**

The make-up of the space industry in Europe highly depends on decisions, practices and mechanisms situated at the macro-level in the national and supra-national space agencies and national governments. Yet, the individual actions of the entrepreneurs in interaction with the governments and space agencies ultimately influence the country's market share in the European space system, and as such the government and companies are closely interconnected. The main objective of this paper is to understand entrepreneurial action in the space sector, given the top-down influences from European Space Agency (ESA) and the national governments and space agencies. How do the institutional logic in a highly institutionalized setting influence entrepreneurial action and how entrepreneurs re-act to these institutional logics? Therefore, this paper first investigates prevailing institutional logics in the space sector, and second, what are the practices of entrepreneurs as responses to these logics. This paper investigates cross-level dynamics, and in particular the practices that constitute the entrepreneurs' responses to institutional logics of the space sector in four national cases: The Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It represents a cross-country case study to analyze and contextualize small and medium-size firm and entrepreneurial activity. The primary data of this study are semi-structured interviews conducted with multiple informants from space agencies, national governments and entrepreneurs. The theoretical narrative of this paper spins around the institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurship. This paper places particular focus at interplay between top-down, macro-to-micro processes with bottom-up reactions by the entrepreneurs to macro-institutional changes to support their strategic orientations. The results of inductive analysis indicate that there are three prevailing institutional logics in the European space sector: a) market logic, b) product development logic and c) company size and capability logic. As response to these logics, research contextualizes six micro-level entrepreneurial practices: 1) vertical collaboration with governments and ESA, 2) sheltering and business incubation, 3) joining forces via horizontal collaboration, 4) power lobbying, 5) complying to sector specific rules, and 6) knowledge gathering and horizontal networking.