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INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS AND INDUSTRIAL DYNAMICS IN THE DUTCH SPACE SECTOR

Abstract

Understanding sectoral and contextual challenges are crucial for bringing new products to the market and for entrepreneurs to be competitive with other outfits. The purpose of this paper is to bring a comprehensive contribution to understanding complex relations that form and influence current and future participation of organizations, firms, entrepreneurs and governments in the Dutch space sector activities. Nonetheless it is a traditional public driven sector, over the last decades, entrepreneurs and private business ventures have been emerging. Thus, the European space sector, as a heavily regulated and highly institutionalized setting, is also seen as a unique context and opportunity for entrepreneurial activity. This paper represents a mixed method study approach as a combination and triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data sets. This approach provides a unique opportunity to triangulate different type of data and to identify a causal and effectual relations between the institutional context, entrepreneurial action and legitimacy. We found that the entrepreneurship in the Dutch space sector is under influence of five sectorial logics defined by collaboration, established market, project management processes, company size and technology readiness of products. Shaped by supra-national actors like ESA, as well as national governments, the space sector privileges well-established actors by a number of different logics, whereas new start-ups primarily only have the option of conforming or self-selecting themselves into a different sector or (commercial) space market. As a result, the identification, creation and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities is radically different for new entrepreneurs compared to those well-established companies. For policy makers, the identified logics and practices provide a landscape of opportunities for action where they can act upon and limit the constraining and strengthen the enabling factors for entrepreneurship and innovation in the space sector.