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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL SPACE AGENCY BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES

Abstract

Over the six decades of humans engaging in space activities, the primary actors have been a select few States pursuing their own ends. Today, the number and diversity of actors in space is growing rapidly to include new States and private companies from across the world employing new and innovative uses of outer space.

The growing number of States active in outer space exhibit a growing number of approaches to the bureaucratic organization of their principal space-responsible government entity. Often, these space agencies reflect the political means and desired-ends in their bureaucratic structure. Founded in 1958, the United States' National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) exists as a separate executive branch agency with the goal of a distinctly civil and peaceful space science and exploration mandate. NASA would initially be tasked with and funded for research and development in service of the goal of putting American astronauts on the surface of the Moon, at the height of the space race. The establishment of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), in 1969, reflected different goals but a similar structure. A high-level Department of Space contains ISRO with the mandate of using space technology and its application to various national tasks. As structure and mandate have been indicative of the outcomes from more established space agencies, an analysis of new, and newly active space agencies can elucidate the future.

This paper will compare four space agencies from New Zealand (2016), Sweden (1972), The Philippines (2019?), and The United Arab Emirates (2014) to examine how contemporary agencies are structured to meet their various goals. Based on a series of interviews and a literature review, these case studies will examine how different structures affect priorities, accomplishments, and international engagements among these agencies.