

Monsieur le Maire Adjoint,
Messieurs les Présidents,
Messieurs les Directeurs,
Chers Amis, dear friends,

The success of a conference is a function of its delegates. Thank you for being here.

It has been very exciting to be at an Entrepreneurship conference in Europe. The study of Entrepreneurship was born in Europe in 1755 with Richard Cantillon. For over 100 years, entrepreneurship has been studied by scientists in different disciplines.

In 1905, Max Weber put sociology at the forefront of Entrepreneurship research.

In 1911, Joseph Alois Schumpeter put economics at the vanguard of Entrepreneurship research.

The field of psychology forged ahead in Entrepreneurship theory with David McClelland in 1961.

Anthropology gave us the famous Norwegian Frederik Barth who in 1963 defined the entrepreneur as an agent of social change.

Peter Drucker put marketing on the agenda of Entrepreneurship research.

Discussing the multidisciplinary nature of Entrepreneurship, according to Hans Landstrom, in 1999 there is a risk that it is becoming more difficult to form an overall picture of the field as researchers in one field are not aware of studies in other disciplines.

For this reason, I would like to thank and commend the fathers of IECER for creating this inter-disciplinary conference.

Professor Dr. Michael Dowling, Herr Professor Dr. Jürgen Schmude of Regensburg, Vielen Dank,

Monsieur le Docteur Frank Lasch du Groupe Sup de Co-Montpellier Business School, thank you for organizing this year's conference, merci pour ce que vous faites pour la science et la région.

Je remercie également le professeur Frédéric Le Roy, de l'Université de Montpellier pour ses efforts qui sont appréciés.

J'ai une grande admiration pour l'Europe et les européens. Ce sont, après tout, les européens qui ont lancés les premières études sur l'entreprenariat.

Let's go back to Joseph Alois Schumpeter who discussed the entrepreneur in terms of innovation.

Europeans have long had the talent to take an idea and build upon it to innovate and make it better than the original.

Tooth decay has existed since millennium. Prior to the 18th century, the average person had two cavities in a lifetime. Then society mastered sugar production from the sugar beet. Cavities escalated with the popularisation of sugar.

Well, the toothbrush was invented in China where it was used only by the elite. Then it made its way to Europe.

The bristles of the Chinese toothbrush were made of bore's hair, which were expensive. Europeans mass produced the toothbrush affordable. In 1937 nylon bristles were introduced.

More recently, Airbus innovated on Boeing concept of jumbo jet. The result is the 380 bigger than everyone else.

It is not entrepreneurship in small business but it is the entrepreneurship in the sense of Schumpeter's innovation, creation of new combinations.

Likewise, the IECER is a new combination. Babson conference has existed for years.

The IECER takes the best from the Babson model and adds the emphasis on being interdisciplinary. So we not only study entrepreneurship but Michael and Jürgen are the true entrepreneurs.

The IECER is changing the study of entrepreneurship it corresponds to entrepreneurship of Frederick Barth:

- Here scholars are agents of change
- You are the scholars who are agents of change
- "What you research and how you present it" makes a difference to the discipline.

Ed Malecki opened this conference reminding us that entrepreneurs give rise to entrepreneurs, by being role models.

Likewise scholars give rise to scholarship. I think we can say that you, by participating in the IECER, are scholar capital.

In his opening address, yesterday, Ed told us about gazelles who contribute to economic growth and he also discussed survival and lifestyle entrepreneurs.

Let me tell you something that happened to me when I first moved to New Zealand. Marc (pronounced *Mahk* with a Kiwi accent) the gardener was willing to work for me, but not when I needed him... only when he needed money. Soon later, I realised that New Zealand had a great percentage of lifestyle entrepreneurs. They work when it is necessary.

One of the papers presented at the IECER 2007 compared survivors of opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship. I think it is encouraging to see such comparative research.

In fact, comparative studies are more highly represented at the IECER 2007:

- *Comparing labour market status of employees and former entrepreneurs.*
- *Comparing growing and declining industries.*
- *Comparing start ups and first time diversification.*
- *Comparing entrepreneurs and managers*
- *Comparing push entrepreneurship and pull entrepreneurship.*
- *Comparing entrepreneurship and different countries.*

Looking at the Babson papers of the 1980s, there were more few comparisons, no control groups, no treatment groups.

I think this trend toward comparative studies is wonderful. It allows us to understand a topic relative to something else.

Let me take you back to the 1980s.

I did my PhD on ethnic minority entrepreneurship in Canada. In fact, I was the first in Canada to do a PhD on the entrepreneurship among the aboriginal minorities.

I summarised my thesis and sent it to Frank Hoy, then editor of ET&P but he wrote back saying that it was very Canadian and he could not send it out for review. So I repeated my PhD research in Alaska and ET&P then published it!

Frank Hoy and I have since become very good friends and he is now editor of one of the journals I established.

What I think is amazing is that 20 years ago a leading journal would not send a paper to reviewers because it lacked American content and today Entrepreneurship research in Europe is at the forefront of the field.

I also would like to mention the theme of networks, the region clusters and cooperation among entrepreneurs into which some IECER conference papers fit.

It used to be that entrepreneurs were thought of as individualists who did that which was good for them. A fascinating trend is that entrepreneurs are co-operating for increased profitability. It is no longer a finite pie but it has become a win / win situation.

By the way, I should mention that Monsieur le Professeur Frederic Leroy is guest editor of a special journal issue on co-opetition. And Frank is having 2 special issues with papers from this conference.

So we find several trends emerging at this conference.

- 30 years ago, at Babson, research focused on the entrepreneur as an individual with specific personality traits. There was minimal focus on the region. The firm was rarely the unit of analysis. It was the person and firm survival was not a focus.
- At the IECER 2007, many papers focus on the firm as the unit of analysis.
- Also we see a focus on comparative studies and emphasis on context
- We also see a trend toward the study of survival and failure, compared to the focus we had 20 years ago on start ups.

Another trend at the IECER 2007 is that there is an increasing amount of research about emerging markets.

Thank you all for being here, have safe travels and see you next year at the IECER 2008.