

SPACE EXPLORATION SYMPOSIUM (A3)
Interactive Presentations (IP)

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SOCIETY BUILDING IN SPACE: EXPLORING RATIONALES AND VALUES THAT WILL SHAPE
THE FIRST HUMAN OUTPOSTS OFF EARTH**Abstract**

As international coalitions begin planning the first large-scale human outposts in space, participating parties will take on the monumental task of deciding the social structures to be used in outer space. For decades, space settlement advocates have pointed to numerous reasons for humans to establish communities beyond the Earth's surface, the most common of these having to do with ensuring the survival of human life or intelligence. As humanity expands into the solar system, the first outposts – whether on the Moon or Mars or space stations – will determine what values the human species will preserve and how individuals and communities will evolve in the future.

Garnering and maintaining support for the development and operation of large-scale human outposts in space requires the use of compelling social rationales for extending human society beyond Earth orbit. This requires early considerations of what values and societal structures space architects will project with the first “space colonies.” Around the world, politicians, entrepreneurs, and other space advocates tend to use rather outdated rationales for space exploration that are placed in context of historical periods of imperialism and enlightenment, drawing on metaphors of the American Frontier and European colonialism.

In the early stages of planning for large-scale human outposts, designers will need to decide the purposes that the outpost crew and visitors will serve, the activities that the outpost will accommodate, and the cultural values that the outpost's design and operation will reflect. All of these considerations will be rooted in the original rationales and ideologies of those developing the outpost. These themes and rationales do not necessarily resonate well with younger generations, or with most people outside of the space industry. Thus, it is necessary to develop rationales based on modern social, political, and economic developments. Many of these developments oppose the continued and unquestioned expansion of capitalistic, Western ideologies into the Cosmos. Today, individuals dedicated to wealth and prosperity, humanitarian and environmental issues, or both, help to shape global communities. It is crucial to strike a balance between these considerations during early planning of international human outposts in space.