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CENTERING INDIGENOUS VOICES AND RESISTING COLONIALISM IN SPACE EXPLORATION  
AND POLICY

**Abstract**

Indigenous perspectives and an anti-colonial framework are essential to an equitable and genuinely sustainable future in space. Often imagined as an extension of manifest destiny and western expansion, space exploration requires a reframing if it is to achieve its potential to be a catalyst for ways of living and forming community that do not reproduce the same destructive systems of western capitalism.

By understanding the ways in which past and present systems of coloniality intersect with the space sector and centering the experiences of Indigenous peoples in space exploration, a new way of conceptualizing space exploration can potentially emerge. Centering these issues highlights both near-term policy questions around lunar exploration as well as longer term questions about how we envision our interactions with potential extraterrestrial life and sustained human communities on other worlds.

To explore these ideas, the authors led a series of webinars throughout 2021 hosted by the Space Enabled Research Group at the MIT Media Lab. The webinars addressed topics such as: 1) Indigenous perspectives on space exploration and the impact of a colonial mindset on the field; 2) near-term policy questions for lunar exploration; and 3) the role of astrobiology and opportunities for an anti-colonial perspective to open up new ways to imagine our futures in space, also through the lens of speculative fiction.

We present some of the key outcomes from the webinar series and the discussions it generated, and offer lessons learned from these concepts for the space community.