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IMPACT OF ANTI-COLONIAL PRACTICE IN SPACE EXPLORATION ON THE SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT ON EARTH

Abstract

There is a widespread societal preconception that humanity's colonialist approach to space exploration has negligible impact on our lives on Earth. This paper challenges the idea by discussing the direct and detrimental consequences that colonial space initiatives can and will have on the ongoing anti-imperialist efforts on Earth. It begins by understanding how the colonial approaches in exploiting colonies further fueled the socioeconomic injustice within the historic and modern empires. Subsequently, the research draws parallels between the colonial history on Earth and the ongoing expansionist development in space. It completes the argument by suggesting how such colonial practices in space will circle back to Earth and regress our socioeconomic practices. Following an examination of existing anti-colonial frameworks, it presents how the strategies can be applied to space exploration. In addition, the paper discusses how such anti-colonial approaches could materialize within some of the notable current space exploration projects as examples.

Furthermore, the research proposes a systemic design where all, not some space missions, could be encouraged to seek tangible, positive impact on humanity and the Earth. It challenges the often one-off, performative efforts from the public and private sectors of space on implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and striving for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In other words, the research imagines a future in space where sustainable, equitable standards become a norm rather than an occasion, and subsequently introduces the tools for the space industry to achieve this.