## Consult Indigenous Peoples

#### Consult Indigenous Folks

**Neilson**, H., **& Cirkovic**, E. (**2021, July 28**). The Narratives of Space Exploration. Völkerrechtsblog. Retrieved December 16, 2021, from <https://voelkerrechtsblog.org/the-narratives-of-space-exploration/> //ear [Hilding Neilson](mailto:hilding.neilson@utoronto.ca) is a researcher at the David A. Dunlap Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics, University of Toronto. [Elena Cirkovic](https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/elena-cirkovic) is a researcher at the Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science (HELSUS), Helsinki University; a Research Affiliate at MIT Media Lab, Space Enabled Project; and a Fellow at the Law and Theory Lab, University of Westminster.

**The launch of Starlink by SpaceX has had a dramatic and damaging impact** on research in astronomy and astrophysics (Clery 2020, Kocifaj 2021). **These satellites have added to the amount of light pollution and future satellite constellations could have far greater impact depending on the legal requirements and the purpose of those satellites.** **Hamacher et al (2020)** **presented a compelling argument that light pollution is a form of cultural genocide** (please note that in the context of the Final Report of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission we will use the term Indigenous erasure instead). **In their article, the authors noted that a significant amount of Indigenous knowledge is based on star lore and observations of the sky**. Those observations are connected to Indigenous stories about the land and nature - for some peoples the sky is a reflection of the land (Cajete 2000). **Those observations, however, are based on a dark night sky without substantive light pollution**. **As such, light pollution acts to disconnect Indigenous peoples from the land they live, and as such, is a form of erasure. In the same vein, we argue that constellations of satellites are also a form of colonization, especially those that are bright enough to be visible from the ground.** **If light pollution results in an erasure of knowledges, then megaconstellations of satellites would also constitute an attempt to rewrite that knowledge**. There is a second issue that the CSA should consider with respect to space exploration and the impact of new satellites. That issue is at what height do treaties and agreements with Indigenous peoples, end? **It is understood that treaties have impact on Indigenous rights and responsibilities with respect to mining, water resources, hunting, etc. but Indigenous communities should be consulted with the impacts on the skies above. This is especially true for satellites that contribute to light pollution, but also satellites that are designed to offer services to communities** (such as wireless internet), **satellites designed for groundbased or remote imaging such as mapping satellites and LIDAR imaging.** **The CSA has an obligation to consult with Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led organizations with respect to the legalities of how satellites that impact communities operate.**

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