# The Ground Floor AC (LAY LOBBYISTS)

## Opening & Definitions

#### [Resolution] I affirm: “Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.”

#### [Gorove] Space Law Professor Stephen Gorove defines “appropriation of outer space” as: Gorove, Stephen. [Professor of space law and director of space studies and policy, 1991-1998, University of Mississippi] “Interpreting Article II of the Outer Space Treaty.” 37 *Fordham L. Rev.* 349, 1969. https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol37/iss3/2 CH

With respect to the concept of appropriation the basic question is what constitutes "appropriation," as used in the Treaty, especially in contradistinction to casual or temporary use. The term "appropriation" is used most frequently to denote **the taking of property for one's own** or exclusive **use with a sense of permanence**. Under such interpretation the establishment of a permanent settlement or **the carrying out of commercial activities** by nationals of a country **on a celestial body** may constitute national appropriation if the activities take place under the supreme authority (sovereignty) of the state**.** Short of this, if the state wields no exclusive authority or jurisdiction in relation to the area in question, the answer would seem to be in the negative, unless, the nationals also use their individual appropriations as cover-ups for their state's activities.5 In this connection, it should be emphasized that the word "appropriation" indicates a taking which involves something more than just a casual use. Thus a **temporary occupation of a landing site** or other area, just like the temporary or nonexclusive use of property, **would not constitute appropriation.** By the same token, any use involving consumption or taking with intention of keeping for one's own exclusive use would amount to appropriation.

#### [SSA] The U.S. Social Security Administration defines “private entity” as: United States Social Security Administration. [Independent agency of the U.S. federal government that administers Social Security] “Course 9: How to Determine an Entity’s Legal Status.” Social Security Administration, no date. https://www.ssa.gov/section218training/documents/course\_9.doc CH

Course 9: How to Determine an Entity’s Legal Status 1. What is the definition of a governmental entity? A governmental entity is that which is closely affiliated, generally by government ownership or control, with State and local governments. 2.What is the definition of a non-governmental or private entity? **A non-governmental entity** is that which is **not affiliated, through ownership or control, with State and local governments.**

## Framework

#### [Value] As the resolution prescribes, I value Justice, meaning actions that treat people as they deserve.

#### [Winter & Leighton] As no one is born with more worth than anyone else, systemic exclusion of particular groups arbitrarily denies due.

**Professors Deborah Winter and Dana Leighton write**: Winter, Deborah DuNann [Professor of Psychology, Whitman College], and Dana C. Leighton, Ph.D. [Assistant Professor of Psychology, Southern Arkansas University]. “Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology in the 21st Century.” New York: Prentice Hall, 2001. CH

Finally, to recognize the operation of structural violence forces us to ask questions about how and why we tolerate it, questions which often have painful answers for the privileged elite who unconsciously support it. A final question of this section is how and why we allow ourselves to be so oblivious to structural violence. Susan Opotow offers an intriguing set of answers, in her article Social Injustice. She argues that **our** normal perceptual **cognitive processes divide people into in-**groups **and out-groups.** Those outside our group lie outside our scope of justice. **Injustice** that would be instantaneously confronted if it occurred to someone we love or know **is barely noticed if it occurs to strangers** or those who are invisible or irrelevant**. We** do not seem to be able to open our minds and our hearts to everyone, so we **draw conceptual lines between those** who are **in and out of our moral circle. Those** who fall **outside are morally excluded,** and become either invisible, or demeaned in some way **so** that **we do n**o**t** have to **acknowledge the injustice they suffer.** Moral exclusion is a human failing, but Opotow argues convincingly that it is an outcome of everyday social cognition. To reduce its nefarious effects, we must be vigilant in noticing and listening to oppressed, invisible, outsiders. Inclusionary thinking can be fostered by relationships, communication, and appreciation of diversity. Like Opotow, all the authors in this section point out that **structural violence is not inevitable if we become aware of its operation, and build systematic ways to mitigate its effects.** Learning about structural violence may be discouraging, overwhelming, or maddening, but these papers encourage us to step beyond guilt and anger, and begin to think about how to reduce structural violence. All the authors in this section note that the same structures (such as global communication and normal social cognition) which feed structural violence, can also be used to empower citizens to reduce it. In the long run, reducing structural violence by reclaiming neighborhoods, demanding social justice and living wages, providing prenatal care, alleviating sexism, and celebrating local cultures, will be our most surefooted path to building lasting peace.

#### [Standard] Thus, the criterion is Promoting Social Equality. Promoting social equality means acknowledging that *all* people have a role in reifying structural violence. This criterion considers both *process* and *product* – if a policy undermines equality either way, we should reject it.

## Thesis

#### [Thesis] My thesis is that we must value *dignity* before *dollars*, and *conscience* before *commerce*. By rejecting a system that prioritizes *power* over *parity*, affirming promotes social equality and justice.

## C1: Process

#### [C1] My first contention is that since the process of private appropriation of outer space is exclusive, it inherently undermines equality and justice.

#### [Utrata 1] CASH IS KING – the private space industry spends billions lobbying politicians to benefit companies while sidestepping checks – it’s outsourced colonization.

**Political Scientist Alina Utrata 1 writes:** Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> MB

In the early years of Blue Origin, Bezos personally funded his company (by selling one billion of Amazon stock per year, he revealed in 2017) and initially focused on space tourism as a potential source of revenue, as well as a way—he claimed—to acclimate people to the idea of space travel. But Bezos watched as Musk’s SpaceX quickly eclipsed his company, both in size and success. Musk had funded SpaceX through a combination of venture capital investment and billions in government contracts. While Blue Origin has never launched a rocket that achieved orbit, SpaceX has been flying NASA cargo to the International Space Station since 2012. **Bezos and Musk spend millions** of dollars **lobbying Congress to** continue **fund**ing **their projects, which already receive massive** amounts of **public money through government contracts.** When Tesla received a $1.3 billion tax break to open a battery plant in Nevada in 2014, Bezos sent off an email to a fellow Amazon executive asking why Musk had been so successful at securing big government incentives. But now Bezos has nothing to complain about. Blue Origin routinely competes with SpaceX for contracts, and both companies spend millions lobbying Congress to continue funding these projects. **After SpaceX** initially **won a contract to build a lunar lander,** a short-lived amendment to **the Endless Frontier Act which would have authorized $10 billion to NASA’s moon program** and established a second award **was** even briefly **nicknamed the “Bezos Bailout.”** It is true that Musk has a particular talent for securing government funding across his business ventures. In her book The Entrepreneurial State (2013), Mariana Mazzucato debunks the notion that free markets and small states, rather than government investment in technological innovation, create economic success. She documents how Musk’s companies **SpaceX, Tesla, and SolarCity have received** billions in government support**, including grants, tax breaks, and subsidized loans**. On top of that, they have also secured billions more in procurement contracts and direct investments in new technologies from NASA and the Department of Energy. (This government support is not marginal. Tesla only had its first full-year profit in 2020, although Musk has accumulated much of his personal fortune through ownership of the company’s stock.) But **this outsourcing of colonization efforts to private corporations** is not just a feature of the neoliberal state; corporations **have long been embedded in the history of colonization.** In the early days of colonization, though companies’ home states often provided them money and legitimacy for their ventures overseas, governments did not always tightly control these endeavors. For instance, the British East India Company—a “company-state,” as coined by Philip Stern—maintained armed forces, waged and declared war, collected taxes, minted coin, and at one point “ruled” over more subjects than the British state itself. As J. C. Sharman and Andrew Phillips noted in Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World (2020), “in some cases, company-states came to wield more military and political power than many monarchs of the day.” Today states, not corporations, are perceived to be the truly dangerous actors in space exploration. But corporations have long been embedded in the history of colonization. **Company**-state**s were predicated on** an **understanding** of **sovereignty as divisible** and delegatory**,** **defying** what we today consider “public” and “private” power. Compared to company-states at their zenith, even the largest modern-day multinational corporation—and certainly SpaceX and Blue Origin—has significantly less authority, with absolutely no military might to speak of. The monarchies that first granted monopoly charters to these voyaging companies, having evolved into modern states, have also consolidated sovereign authority and gained far more power than their antecedents in previous centuries. Today states, not corporations, are perceived to be the truly dangerous actors in space exploration. Particularly in the context of worsening U.S.-China relations, the militarization of space by states is often posited as the most likely way that celestial encounters may become violent. On this view, if private U.S. companies were to extract commercial resources from asteroids, it would be a much more peaceful prospect than the U.S. Space Force establishing a military base on the moon. However, this framing ignores corporations’ violent histories and **the deep connection between private commercial pursuits and systems of** **cap**italism **and colonialism.** Moreover, though states may help create and participate in these systems, they do not always control the forces they unleash. For example, there was nothing inevitable about the fact that the East India Company came under the control of the British state. Even when it did, it caused devastating impacts on both the places it claimed to “rule” as well as the state that had chartered and owned it, ushering in the age of the British Empire. As historian William Dalrymple, author of The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company (2019), noted, “It was not the British government that seized India at the end of the 18th century, but a dangerously unregulated private company. . . [that] executed a corporate coup unparalleled in history: the military conquest, subjugation and plunder of vast tracts of southern Asia. It almost certainly remains the supreme act of corporate violence in world history.”

#### [Shammas & Holen] Further, private entities can’t appropriate space without state support – they’re inextricably linked together.

**Professors Victor Shammas & Tomas Holen show:** Shammas, Victor L. [Oslo Metropolitan University, Work Research Institute, AFI] and Tomas B. Holen [Independent scholar, Oslo, Norway]. “One giant leap for capitalistkind: private enterprise in outer space.” *Palgrave Communications* 5 (1), 2019. researchgate.net/publication/330712900\_One\_giant\_leap\_for\_capitalistkind\_Private\_enterprise\_in\_outer\_space MB/CH

What role, then, for the state? The frontiersmen of NewSpace tend to think of themselves as libertarians, pioneers beyond the domain of state bureaucracy (see Nelson and Block, 2018). ‘The government should leave the design work and ownership of the product to the private sector', the author of a 2017 report, Capitalism in Space, advocates. ‘The private companies know best how to build their own products to maximize performance while lowering cost' (Zimmerman, 2017, p. 27). One ethnographer notes that ‘politically, right-libertarianism prevails' amongst NewSpace entrepreneurs (Valentine, 2016, p. 1047–1048). Just as Donald Rumsfeld dismissed the opponents to the Iraq War as ‘Old Europe', so too are state entities’ interests in space exploration shrugged off as symptoms of ‘Old Space'. Elon Musk, we are told in a recent biography, unlike the sluggish Big State actors of yore, ‘would apply some of the start-up techniques he’d learned in Silicon Valley to run SpaceX lean and fast…As a private company, SpaceX would also avoid the waste and cost overruns associated with government contractors' (Vance, 2015, p. 114). This libertarianism-in-space has found a willing chorus of academic supporters. The legal scholar Virgiliu Pop introduces the notion of the frontier paradigm (combining laissez-faire economics, market competition, and an individualist ethic) into the domain of space law, claiming that this paradigm has ‘proven its worth on our planet' and will ‘most likely…do so in the extraterrestrial realms' as well (Pop, 2009, p. vi). This frontier paradigm is not entirely new: a ‘Columbus mythology', centering on the ‘noble explorer', was continuously evoked in the United States during the Cold War space race (Dickens and Ormrod, 2016, pp. 79, 162–164). But the entrepreneurial libertarianism of capitalistkind is undermined by **the reliance of the entire NewSpace complex on extensive support from the state, ‘a public-private financing model underpinning long-shot start-ups'** that in the case of Musk’s three main companies (SpaceX, SolarCity Corp., and Tesla) **has been underpinned by $4.9 billion dollars in government subsidies** (Hirsch, [2015](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR29))**.** In the nascent field of space tourism, Cohen ([2017](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR8)) argues that what began as an almost entirely private venture quickly ground to a halt in the face of insurmountable technical and financial obstacles, only solved by piggybacking on large state-run projects, such as selling trips to the International Space Station, against the objections of NASA scientists. The business model of **NewSpace depends on the taxpayer’s dollar while making pretensions to individual self-reliance.** The vast majority of present-day clients of private aerospace corporations are government clients, usually military in origin. Furthermore, **the bulk of rocket launches in the U**nited **S**tates **take place on government property, usually operated by the** US **Air Force or NASA.** [Footnote 13](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#Fn13) **This** inward **tension between state dependency and capitalist autonomy is itself a product of neoliberalism’s contradictory demand for a minimal**, “slim” **state, while** simultaneously (and in fact) **relying on a state** reengineered and **retooled for** the purposes of **capital accumulation** (Wacquant, [2012](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR68)). As Lazzarato writes, ‘To be able to be “laissez-faire”, it is necessary to intervene a great deal' ([2017](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR36), p. 7). Space libertarianism is libertarian in name only: behind every NewSpace venture looms a thick web of government spending programs, regulatory agencies, public infrastructure, and universities bolstered by research grants from the state. SpaceX would not exist were it not for state-sponsored contracts of satellite launches. Similarly, in 2018, the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)—the famed origin of the World Wide Web—announced that it would launch a ‘responsive launch competition', meaning essentially the reuse of launch vehicles, representing an attempt by the state to ‘harness growing commercial capabilities' and place them in the service of the state’s interest in ensuring ‘national security' (Foust, [2018b](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR18)). This libertarianism has been steadily growing in the nexus between Silicon Valley, Stanford University, Wall Street, and the Washington political establishment, which tend to place a high value on Randian ‘objectivism' and participate in a long American intellectual heritage of individualistic ‘bootstrapping' and (allegedly) gritty self-reliance. But as Nelson and Block ([2018](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR46), p. 189–197) recognize, one of the central symbolic operations of capitalistkind resides in concealing its reliance on the state by mobilizing the charm of its entrepreneurial constituents and the spectacle of space. There is a case to be made for the idea that **SpaceX and its ilk resemble semi-private corporations like the British East India Company**. The latter, “incorporated by royal charter from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I in 1600 to trade in silk and spices, and other profitable Indian commodities,” recruited soldiers and built a ‘commercial business [that] quickly became a business of conquest' (Tharoor, [2017](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR59)). SpaceX, too**,** is increasingly imbricated with **an attempt** on the part of a particular state, the United States, **to colonize** and appropriate resources derived from a particular area, that of **outer space; it**, too, **depends on the infrastructure**, contracts, and regulatory environment **that** thus far **only a state seems able to provide.** Its private character, like that of the East India Company, is troubled by being deeply embedded in the state. As one commentator has observed of SpaceX, ‘If there’s a consistent charge against Elon Musk and his high-flying companies…it’s that they’re not really examples of independent, innovative market capitalism. Rather, they’re government contractors, dependent on taxpayer money to stay afloat' (cit. Nelson and Block, 2018, p. 189).

#### [Utrata 2] Consequently, regulations on space companies fail – states won’t control the companies they’re working with, since that costs them profits.

**Alina Utrata 2 notes:** Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> CH

Particularly in the context of worsening U.S.-China relations, the militarization of space by states is often posited as the most likely way that celestial encounters may become violent. On this view, if private U.S. companies were to extract commercial resources from asteroids, it would be a much more peaceful prospect than the U.S. Space Force establishing a military base on the moon. However, this framing ignores corporations’ violent histories and the deep connection between private commercial pursuits and systems of capitalism and colonialism. Moreover, **though states may** help **create** and participate in **these systems, they do n**o**t** always **control the forces they unleash.** For example, there was nothing inevitable about the fact that the East India Company came under the control of the British state. Even when it did, it caused devastating impacts on both the places it claimed to “rule” as well as the state that had chartered and owned it, ushering in the age of the British Empire. As historian William Dalrymple, author of The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company (2019), noted, “It was not the British government that seized India at the end of the 18th century, but a dangerously unregulated private company. . . [that] executed a corporate coup unparalleled in history: the military conquest, subjugation and plunder of vast tracts of southern Asia. It almost certainly remains the supreme act of corporate violence in world history.” **As contemporary companies** set out to **colonize space, we should ask whether** modern **states have a** better **grasp on** how to control corporations **and the violence that may result from battles over who ought to rule** these settlers and **resources. Though Blue Origin and SpaceX are indebted to the U.S. government for funding,** U.S. **regulators’ ability to manage these corporations**—especially Musk’s—**already appears limited.** Musk’s remarks toward U.S. regulators, even those investigating him, are infamous for being outrageous and crude—and his behavior is no less intransigent. For instance, in December of **last year, SpaceX refused to comply with** Federal Aviation Association (**FAA**) **orders to abort a** high-altitude **test launch of its Starship rocket after the agency revoked its** launch **license due to atmospheric conditions.** And this was not the first time **Musk** defied government authority. In May 2020 he re-opened his Tesla factory despite an Alameda county health order to shelter in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, requesting on Twitter that police “only arrest him” if law enforcement took action. His **companies have been repeatedly** investigated and **fined for** various other **regulatory and safety violations.** (Reports have claimed that the Tesla factory does not have proper hazard signage because Musk “does not like the color yellow.”) **Is it** simply the case **that Musk**, like many powerful men before him, **receives preferential treatment from the state? Or are** the state and its r**egulatory agencies truly unable to control him? Colonial destruction was justified by a specific ideology that made a certain view of the world**, and humanity’s role in it, **appear natural** and inevitable**.** Musk, for his part, does not seem particularly cowed. After the December rocket launch incident, the FAA announced that additional measures, including having an FAA inspector on site, will be imposed on SpaceX during future launches. In response Musk tweeted on January 28 that the FAA “rules are meant for a handful of expendable launches per year from a few government facilities. Under those rules, humanity will never get to Mars.” For Musk, becoming an inter-planetary species is an existential matter for human civilization, far more important than rules and regulations. Both Bezos and Musk use the language of moral imperative when talking about space colonization: humanity must not merely explore space, but settle it, too. The two engineers can easily explain the technical dimensions of their plans to colonize the cosmos. Though these plans differ—Bezos wants to establish artificial tube-like structures floating close to Earth, whereas Musk wants to terraform Mars—the political philosophies underpinning them are remarkably similar. Both offer utopian visions of humanity in space that attempt to provide technological solutions to the political problems that colonialism and capitalism have caused.

**Thus,** since existing relationships between companies and states give the former an unearned political advantage, it denies equality and justice.

## C2: Product

#### [C2] My second contention is that private appropriation of outer space causes disproportionate harm to some groups and benefits to others, resulting in an unequal and unjust product.

#### [Utrata 3] Space companies often appeal to a threat of extinction to justify harming specific groups for profit.

**Alina Utrata 3 writes:** Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> MB/CH

In 1982 Bezos said in his high school valedictorian speech that “the Earth is finite and if the world economy and population is to keep expanding, space is the only way to go.” His views have not changed much since then. “[Within a few centuries] we’ll be using all of the solar energy that impacts the Earth,” he told a crowd at an event hosted by Blue Origin. “That’s an actual limit.” This Malthusian logic underpins his arguments about the inevitability of humanity’s growth and the necessity of expanding into space. There are short-term problems, he explains, such as poverty and pollution, and there are long-term problems, such as running out of energy. If we do not want to become “a civilization of rationing and stasis,” Bezos warns, we must expand to the stars where “resources are, for all practical purposes, infinite.” For Musk space colonization is also a means to preserve human civilization, albeit as a hedge against eventual extinction. “I don’t have an immediate doomsday prophecy,” he told an international conference in 2016, “but history suggests that there will be some extinction event. The alternative is to become a space-faring civilization and multi-planetary species.” Whereas Bezos emphasizes the cyclical logic of capitalist growth—we must expand, in order to keep expanding—Musk is more explicit in his plans for colonial settlement. One of his proposals—to allow individuals to purchase one-way tickets to Mars which can be paid off through promised jobs in the new colony— has been called Martian indentured servitude. “Mars would have a labor shortage for a long time,” Musk explained, so “jobs would not be in short supply.” And while Bezos imagines that humans will be able to travel between Earth and space often, Musk contends that the Mars colony should be self-sufficient, able “to survive if the resupply ships stop coming from Earth for any reason.” And while Bezos imagines that humans will be able to travel between Earth and space often, Musk contends that the Mars colony should be self-sufficient, able “to survive if the resupply ships stop coming from Earth for any reason.” Imperialist conceptions of ownership transform space into an “empty frontier” where certain individuals can project their political dreams. For two entrepreneurs whose businesses have been lauded as exceptionally visionary, their celestial utopias stand out for their lack of political creativity and awareness. Bezos’s notion that imperial expansion is the only way to support an ever-growing population is an old colonialist appeal, now repackaged for the stars. The infinite need for resources, as well as the “poverty and pollution” that Bezos dismisses as short-term problems, are deeply enmeshed in capitalism’s cycles of extraction and are currently causing Earth’s climate crisis. Given the green-orientation of his enterprises, Musk is presumably aware of the climate crisis—or at least the opportunities it presents for government funding. Yet he has not explicitly named climate change as one of the potential “extinction events” that a Mars colony might protect against. Putting aside the question of whether terraforming Mars is actually feasible—for the record, a Nature Astronomy article suggests it is not—settling space won’t be cost-free to Earth. As science writer Shannon Stirone pointed out in The Atlantic, “Mars has a very thin atmosphere; it has no magnetic field to help protect its surface from radiation from the sun or galactic cosmic rays; it has no breathable air and the average surface temperature is a deadly 80 degrees below zero . . . . For humans to live there in any capacity they would need to build tunnels and live underground.” The environmental and human destruction necessary to make space habitable would dwarf any technological or political response needed to stop the climate crisis now. And—like capitalism and climate change—the impacts of colonizing space will be far worse for some rather than others, particularly in the Global South. For example, when Indonesian president Joko Widodo offered SpaceX the island of Biak in Papua, home to an ongoing secessionist campaign, local communities protested that the building of the launch station would cause vast ecological damage and community displacement. They had reason to worry. This is precisely what happened in Boca Chica, a small town on the southern tip of Texas where SpaceX had built a previous launch site. After SpaceX moved into town, residents of the Texas community were pushed out from their homes as the area became unsafe due to rocket activity, which has since damaged a wildlife refuge in the area. SpaceX has offered to purchase residents’ homes, but below the price many think is fair. An email from SpaceX to Boca Chica holdouts stated, “As the scale and frequency of spaceflight activities at the site continue to accelerate, your property will frequently fall within established hazard zones in which no civilians will be permitted to remain, in order to comply with all federal and other public safety regulations.” SpaceX’s impact on the area demonstrated little concern for its displacement and damage of the local community. While we all may use, explore, or research space, no state can claim to own it—though this does not mean states will not try. Musk and Bezos rely on the notion that colonizing space somehow differs from colonizing Earth. Implicit in their arguments is the belief that it was not the systems of colonial-capitalism, but rather the context surrounding their implementation, that wreaked havoc in the past.

#### [McCann] Further, the benefits of private space appropriation ONLY go to the rich, leaving others behind on an uninhabitable planet.

**Journalist Jessie McCann shows:** McCann, Jessie. [Writer at The Lumberjack] “Billionaire space race: Leaving the planet in turmoil.” The Lumberjack,2021. https://www.jackcentral.org/opinion/billionaire-space-race-leaving-the-planet-in-turmoil/article\_f68a7462-27b5-11ec-b235-1f813b9f69ba.html JP/CH

Last July, we saw billionaires Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos engage in a private spaceship flight competition. Since the pandemic started, billionaires have seen their fortunes increase by tens of billions and are continuing to throw money into extravagant projects. Between the catastrophic state of our climate, the spread of diseases and the rates of poverty, any investment in less fortunate people could go a long way, but we have yet to see them go the extra mile toward that. Space travel has involved massive government projects throughout history, whereas recently, there's been a switch to private industry. This shift only worked to benefit these billionaires' companies, putting them at the forefront of scientific achievement. The point of this so-called race is said to be “making humanity multiplanetary.” However, framing this project to be for the good of humanity is a deceiving sentiment. In reality, it all comes down to billionaires’ potential profits from satellite launches and rocketry firms. With as unbelievable of a goal as this, their first step to achieving it is space tourism. **Reaching a culmination of waste, the companies are in the process of creating tourism programs with unthinkable costs that only cater to the richest.** The fact of the matter is that Earth is undeniably in a state of crisis, but space is much worse. **With barely liveable conditions, space inhabitance was not made for the human race;** it will take centuries, if ever, before the moon or any other planet can become a home to humans**.**  A fatal flaw of these plans is that billionaires are rooted in an idealistic way of thinking — they truly believe living in space is the answer to Earth’s rotting. Even then, that is if they are considering the environmental impact they have or if they are simply doing this for their own gain and glory. **With Bezos’ carbon footprint resting at 2224.2 tonnes and Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk estimated at 2084 tonnes in 2018, these men prove themselves to be more concerned with company profit than means of sustainability.** Due to the high amount of resources rapidly used, Branson’s and Bezos’ flight programs were only a few minutes long, a fleeting moment in space costing millions; I cannot see how this could be interpreted as a necessary endeavor, above all else. As far as the exact costs of the spaceships go, Musk’s SpaceX originally spent $1.2 million on lobbying in the first half of 2021, while Bezos gradually increased spending in hopes to beat SpaceX for the $2.9 billion NASA contract.Although NASA awarded SpaceX the contract for the moon landing project, it was promptly suspended due to legal pressure from Bezos’ company. Nothing screams boredom and greed more than a billionaire begging for billions more. Critics specifically called out Branson for his focus on self-image and commercialization of his spaceship program. He coined himself "Astronaut 001" and provides a spaceflight experience geared toward customers, but he is really only selling the company name. People are so fed up with financial elites that there is even a petition going around on change.org requesting Bezos not be allowed to return to Earth. Although intangible, the 150,000 signatures exemplify how citizens are reacting to the exploits of the rich. Instead of providing money and resources to better the planet we live on, these billionaires are preaching a future among outer space. NASA has previously funded earth science initiatives, but funding was repealed by congressional conservatives in an effort to focus on interplanetary exploration. Across the board, billionaires are leading the scene, and preserving the planet is the last thing on their agenda. The days when accomplished scientists ventured into space for exploration are long over and have been replaced by billionaires’ pursuits to treat space like a new toy. We are witnessing a dystopian future evolve now more than ever, wherein all we are meant to do is sit back and watch it unfold. The problems that plague the Earth have yet to be accounted for, and employing space as a method of escape is the least efficient use of spending. Addressing solutions for restoring Earth is much more viable than fleeing it.

#### [Utrata 4] Beyond that, the utilitarian logic of space colonization fails – it sacrifices some groups for others instead of benefiting all.

**Alina Utrata 4 shows:** Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> MB/CH

As Bezos and Musk extol the virtues of using public money to move humanity into the stars, we should ask: Who are these colonies for? The ideals guiding billionaires’ race to space are not new. Lofty utopian visions have often obscured violent processes that prioritize abstract visions of “human civilization” over some human lives. For his part, Bezos looks at this as a utilitarian calculation, a numbers game. If humanity expands into space, he urges, “trillions of humans” can prosper, “which means thousands of Einsteins or Mozarts.” He fails to acknowledge that the genius of those future Einsteins and Mozarts exists now, on Earth, but unrealized and unrecognized in the very cycles of poverty Bezos dismisses as a short-term problem. Furthermore, and more importantly, the value of human life should not be based on some arbitrary utilitarian calculation of humans’ intellectual contribution to “civilization” or their ability to replicate the legacies of two white men. Musk is more explicit about his willingness to sacrifice human life. Mars is “not for the faint of heart,” he has pronounced. There’s a “good chance you’ll die. And it’s going to be tough, tough going. But it’ll be pretty glorious if it works out.” In fact, his belief in the necessity of human sacrifice for this glorious future was openly celebrated in his Saturday Night Live skit “Chad on Mars” in which a Martian settler embarks on a suicide mission after a technical malfunction in the colony’s oxygen distribution systems. In the clip Musk remains safely in command back on Earth, thanking the doomed settler on behalf of humanity as his demise is broadcast live worldwide. When the settler perishes at the end of the skit, Musk shrugs his shoulders and walks away, nonchalantly reminding his team, “Well, I did say people were going to die.” While Bezos and Musk are right that colonizing space will not result in the genocide of nonexistent extraterrestrial populations, the colonial destruction of indigenous communities was but one component in a global regime of racial violence. Indeed, the labor needed to support the system of colonial-capitalism in the United States fueled the atrocities of the Atlantic slave trade. In pursuit of America’s “manifest destiny” along the Western frontier, white railroad company owners brutally exploited Asian migrants. One in ten Chinese laborers died building the transcontinental railroad. It is no coincidence that casual discussions of colonization are happening in an industry that is still dominated by white men. Bezos has said that he first became obsessed with space when he was five years old, watching the Apollo moon landing on television exactly fifty-two years before his plans to launch himself into space. Listening to Bezos and Musk speak about their childhood obsession with rocket ships to adoring crowds, one perceives another reason why two of the richest men on Earth are spending billions in public money to get to space: they think it’s cool. One wonders what the five-year-old Bezos would have thought upon learning that Wernher von Braun, whose work was foundational to the Apollo program, was a former Nazi, or that he used slaves to build his rockets in wartime Germany—20,000 of whom died in his factory. Utopian dreams, even in space, always have a human cost. Utopian dreams, even in space, always have a human cost. Remember that the labor needed to support colonial-capitalism in the United States fueled the atrocities of the Atlantic slave trade. Bezos and Musk’s technological visions of becoming an “interplanetary species” do not answer the political question of what kind of future awaits us (whoever “us” is) in space. Will we find, like the British East India Company, that SpaceX and Blue Origin’s space colonies are ultimately incorporated into an arm of the state, inadvertently transforming the United States into an intergalactic empire? Will space corporations, following the Virginia or Massachusetts Bay Companies, break free of their home states (and planets) and become independent governing entities on the moon or Mars? Or will Bezos and Musk, in the image of King Leopold’s horrifically violent Belgian Congo, wrangle their way into becoming personal kings of princely celestial estates? And will states be able to stop them? The language of inevitability that proponents of space colonization deploy obscures another, better option: that we do not colonize space at all.

## Underview

**As a brief underview:** to win the round, I need only show that private appropriation violates my criterion of promoting social equality – not that some other form of action is better. Even if alternatives to appropriation are flawed, the resolution only requires me to show that appropriation is unjust. Further, if I win either of my contentions, that’s sufficient to affirm, since any violation of the criterion is unjust. Thus, even if the *results* of appropriation are good, if the *process* is unjust, we still affirm.

## Extra

#### [Skibba] I defend implementation of the topic through a coordinated treaty that bars ownership of space for commercial gain, modeled on the Antarctic Treaty of 1961.

Skibba: Skibba, Ramin. [Space writer at WIRED Magazine; astrophysicist; science writer and freelance journalist based in San Diego] “It’s time for a new international space treaty.” Salon.com, July 26, 2021. <https://www.salon.com/2021/07/26/its-time-for-a-new-international-space-treaty_partner/> CH

The Biden administration has so far focused its space policy not on treaties but on "norms," non-legally binding principles that they hope will evolve into international agreements with teeth. But it's hard to imagine that enforceable international space policies will be adopted unless Biden explicitly and enthusiastically calls for them, while urging Russian and Chinese leaders to do the same. More likely, whatever endeavors the space industry and military decide to pursue will retroactively become policy. This is already playing out in debates about the private harvesting of resources from the moon and asteroids, the types of spacecraft companies can put in orbit, and the kinds of space and anti-satellite weapons militaries can develop. If we were to design a new space treaty that would preserve space primarily as a place for exploration and collaboration rather than for war and commercial gain, what would it look like? It would coordinate travel and limit traffic in busy orbits in the atmosphere while also taking steps to limit the creation of space debris. (Cleaning up the mess already clogging low-Earth orbit is another story entirely.) It would also build on the Moon Agreement, prohibiting the deployment and testing of weapons — including electronic weapons — in the atmosphere. And it would prohibit deploying and testing any weapons in space, not just on the moon or other celestial bodies. It would create an independent, international organization to review proposals for mining resources and establishing colonies on the moon, Mars, and beyond. This sounds ambitious — and it is — but it's achievable. The Antarctic Treaty of 1961 enshrines many of the same principles for activity on Antarctica, and it still works six decades later. Public opinion on space seems to be shifting, too, with growing calls to jettison colonialist views of space exploration in favor of more egalitarian approaches. If scientists, non-governmental groups, space environmentalists, and other stakeholders put pressure on the Biden administration, it could become politically feasible for the president to take a stand and jumpstart space diplomacy with the U.S.'s rivals. To the extent that it would help make space exploration sustainable, peaceful, and beneficial to all humanity, it would be worth the cost in political capital. We only have one atmosphere, one moon, and one night sky to cherish.