# Columbia Round 3

#### I affirm Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.

#### First: Some Definitions

#### Appropriation of outer space

TIMOTHY JUSTIN TRAPP, JD Candidate @ UIUC Law, ’13, TAKING UP SPACE BY ANY OTHER MEANS: COMING TO TERMS WITH THE NONAPPROPRIATION ARTICLE OF THE OUTER SPACE TREATY UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LAW REVIEW [Vol. 2013 No. 4]

The issues presented in relation to the nonappropriation article of the Outer Space Treaty should be clear.214 The ITU has, quite blatantly, created something akin to “property interests in outer space.”215 It allows nations to exclude others from their orbital slots, even when the nation is not currently using that slot.216 This is directly in line with at least one definition of outer-space appropriation.217 [\*\*Start Footnote 217\*\*Id. at 236 (“Appropriation of outer space, therefore, is ‘the exercise of exclusive control or exclusive use’ with a sense of permanence, which limits other nations’ access to it.”) (quoting Milton L. Smith, The Role of the ITU in the Development of Space Law, 17 ANNALS AIR & SPACE L. 157, 165 (1992)). \*\*End Footnote 217\*\*]The ITU even allows nations with unused slots to devise them to other entities, creating a market for the property rights set up by this regulation.218 In some aspects, this seems to effect exactly what those signatory nations of the Bogotá Declaration were trying to accomplish, albeit through different means.219

#### Outer space

Lexico. Oxford Dictionary. Outer Space. https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/outer\_space

The physical universe beyond the earth's atmosphere.

#### Private entities

Law Insider. Private entity definition. <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/private-entity>

Private entity means any natural person, corporation, general partnership, limited liability company, limited partnership, joint venture, business trust, public benefit corporation, nonprofit entity, or other business entity.

#### The value is Justice, defined as giving each their due, because the only reason to value anything else is because humans value it, which concedes that humans are valuable and deserving. The presence of the word “just” in the resolution also indicates that questions of justice should come first on this topic.

### Structural Violence

#### To ensure a just system, we must first ensure the system is all-inclusive and provides equal treatment for all parties involved. Thus, I provide the criterion of Minimizing Structural Oppression.

**Winter and Leighton 99** (Deborah DuNann Winter and Dana C. Leighton. Winter: Psychologist that specializes in Social Psych, Counseling Psych, Historical and Contemporary Issues, Peace Psychology. Leighton: PhD graduate student in the Psychology Department at the University of Arkansas. Knowledgable in the fields of social psychology, peace psychology, and justice and intergroup responses to transgressions of justice) (Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology in the 21st century.  Pg 4-5)

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 not 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

#### Prefer my criterion for five reasons:

#### [1] Combatting structural oppression is a prerequisite to all other theories, as there must be total moral inclusion before a theory can be deemed legitimate – oppression is a necessary condition for an action to be just.

#### [2] Prioritizing oppressed peoples allows us to focus action on those who need it, as opposed to generally pursuing goods for all.

#### [3] Oppression is never permissible, regardless of the consequences, because it is incoherent to exercise your rights by oppressing, whilst simultaneously undermining the rights of the oppressed.

#### [4] Answers to this framework assume you have a voice in the first place, which is contingent on you not being oppressed. This means my framework is a lexical prerequisite to theirs.

#### [5] All other forms of violence and suffering are caused by structural violence.

Bourgois and Hughes 04

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Philippe I. Bourgois. “Introduction: Making Sense of Violence, in Violence in War and Peace.” Violence in War and Peace: an Anthology, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 1–31. [Scheper-Hughes, Professor of Medical Anthropology and Sociocultural Anthropology at UC Berkeley. Bourgois, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Social Medicine and Humanities in the Department of Psychiatry at UCLA.]This large and at first sight ‘messy’ Part VII is central to this anthology’s thesis. It encompasses everything from the routinized, bureaucratized, and utterly banal violence of children dying of hunger and maternal despair in Northeast Brazil (Scheper-Hughes, Chapter 33) to elderly African Americans dying of heat stroke in Mayor Daly’s version of US apartheid in Chicago’s South Side (Klinenberg, Chapter 38) to the racialized class hatred expressed by British Victorians in their olfactory disgust of the ‘smelly’ working classes (Orwell, Chapter 36). **In these readings** violence **is** located in the symbolic **and** social structures **that overdetermine and** allow[s] the criminalized drug addictions, **interpersonal** bloodshed**,** and racially patterned incarcerations that characterize the US ‘inner city’ to be normalized (Bourgois, Chapter 37 and Wacquant, Chapter 39).Violence **also** takes the form of class, racial, political **self-hatred and adolescent self-destruction** (Quesada, Chapter 35), **as well as of useless (i.e. preventable), rawly embodied physical suffering, and death** (Farmer, Chapter 34). **Absolutely central to our approach is a** blur[s]**ring of categories and** [the] distinctions between war**time** and peace**time violence.** Close attention to the ‘little’ violences produced in the structures, habituses, and mentalites of everyday life shifts our attention to pathologies of class, race, and gender inequalities. More important, it interrupts the voyeuristic tendencies of ‘violence studies’ that risk publicly humiliating the powerless who are often forced into complicity with social and individual pathologies of power because suffering is often a solvent of human integrity and dignity. Thus, in this anthology **we are positing** a violence continuum comprised of a multitude of ‘small wars and invisible genocides**’** (see also ScheperHughes 1996; 1997; 2000b) conducted in the normative social spaces of public schools, clinics, emergency rooms, hospital wards, nursing homes, courtrooms, public registry offices, prisons, detention centers, and public morgues. The violence continuum also refers to the ease with which humans are capable of reducing the socially vulnerable into expendable nonpersons and assuming the license - even the duty - to kill, maim, or soul-murder. We realize that in referring to a violence and a genocide continuum we are flying in the face of a tradition of genocide studies that argues for the absolute uniqueness of the Jewish Holocaust and for vigilance with respect to restricted purist use of the term genocide itself (see Kuper 1985; Chaulk 1999; Fein 1990; Chorbajian 1999). But we hold an opposing and alternative view that, to the contrary**, it is absolutely necessary to make just such existential leaps in purposefully linking violent acts in normal times to those of abnormal times**. Hence the title of our volume: Violence in War and in Peace. If (as we concede) there is a moral risk in overextending the concept of ‘genocide’ into spaces and corners of everyday life where we might not ordinarily think to find it (and there is), an even greater risk lies in failing to sensitize ourselves, in misrecognizing protogenocidal practices and sentiments daily enacted as normative behavior by ‘ordinary’ good-enough citizens. Peacetime crimes, such as prison construction sold as economic development to impoverished communities in the mountains and deserts of California, or the evolution of the criminal industrial complex into the latest peculiar institution for managing race relations in the United States (Waquant, Chapter 39), constitute the ‘small wars and invisible genocides’ to which we refer. This applies to African American and Latino youth mortality statistics in Oakland, California, Baltimore, Washington DC, and New York City. These are ‘invisible’ genocides not because they are secreted away or hidden from view, but quite the opposite. As Wittgenstein observed, the things that are hardest to perceive are those which are right before our eyes and therefore taken for granted. In this regard, Bourdieu’s partial and unfinished theory of violence (see Chapters 32 and 42) as well as his concept of misrecognition is crucial to our task. By including the normative everyday forms of violence hidden in the minutiae of ‘normal’ social practices - in the architecture of homes, in gender relations, in communal work, in the exchange of gifts, and so forth - Bourdieu forces us to reconsider the broader meanings and status of violence, especially the links between the violence of everyday life and explicit political terror and state repression. Similarly, Basaglia’s notion of ‘peacetime crimes’ - crimini di pace - imagines a direct relationship between wartime and peacetime violence. Peacetime crimes suggests the possibility that war crimes are merely ordinary, everyday crimes of public consent applied systematically and dramatically in the extreme context of war. Consider the parallel uses of rape during peacetime and wartime, or the family resemblances between the legalized violence of US immigration and naturalization border raids on ‘illegal aliens’ versus the US government-engineered genocide in 1838, known as the Cherokee ‘Trail of Tears.’ Peacetime crimes suggests that everyday forms of state violence make a certain kind of domestic peace possible. Internal ‘stability’ is purchased with the currency of peacetime crimes, many of which take the form of professionally applied ‘strangle-holds.’ Everyday forms of state violence during peacetime make a certain kind of domestic ‘peace’ possible. It is an easy-to-identify peacetime crime that is usually maintained as a public secret by the government and by a scared or apathetic populace. Most subtly, but no less politically or structurally, the phenomenal growth in the United States of a new military, postindustrial prison industrial complex has taken place in the absence of broad-based opposition, let alone collective acts of civil disobedience. The public consensus is based primarily on a new mobilization of an old fear of the mob, the mugger, the rapist, the Black man, the undeserving poor. How many public executions of mentally deficient prisoners in the United States are needed to make life feel more secure for the affluent? What can it possibly mean when incarceration becomes the ‘normative’ socializing experience for ethnic minority youth in a society, i.e., over 33 percent of young African American men (Prison Watch 2002). Iin the end it is essential that we recognize the existence of a genocidal capacity among otherwise good-enough humans and that we need **to exercise a defensive** hypervigilance to the **less dramatic,** permitted, **and even rewarded** everyday acts of violence that render **participation in** genocid**al acts and policies** possible (under adverse political or economic conditions), perhaps more easily than we would like to recognize. Under the violence continuum we include, therefore, **all expressions of radical social exclusion, dehumanization, depersonalization**, pseudospeciation, and reification which **normalize atrocious behavior and violence toward others.** A constant self-mobilization for alarm, a state of constant hyperarousal is, perhaps, a reasonable response to Benjamin’s view of late modern history as a chronic ‘state of emergency’ (Taussig, Chapter 31). We are trying to recover here the classic anagogic thinking that enabled Erving Goffman, Jules Henry, C. Wright Mills, and Franco Basaglia among other mid-twentieth-century radically critical thinkers, to perceive the symbolic and structural relations, i.e., between inmates and patients, between concentration camps, prisons, mental hospitals, nursing homes, and other ‘total institutions.’ Making that **decisive** move **to recognize the continuum of violence** allows us to see the capacity **and the willingness - if not enthusiasm -** of ordinary people, **the practical technicians of the social consensus,** to enforce genocid**al-like crimes against categories of rubbish people. There is no primary impulse out of which** mass violence and genocide **are born, it** is ingrained in **the common sense of** everyday social life. The mad, the differently abled, the mentally vulnerable have often fallen into this category of the unworthy living, as have the very old and infirm, the sick-poor, and, of course, the despised racial, religious, sexual, and ethnic groups of the moment. Erik Erikson referred to ‘pseudospeciation’ as the human tendency to classify some individuals or social groups as less than fully human - a prerequisite to genocide and one that is carefully honed during the unremarkable peacetimes that precede the sudden, ‘seemingly unintelligible’ outbreaks of mass violence. **Collective** denial and misrecognition are prerequisites for mass violence and genocide. But so are formal bureaucratic structures and professional roles. The practical technicians of everyday violence in the backlands of Northeast Brazil (Scheper-Hughes, Chapter 33), for example, include the clinic doctors who prescribe powerful tranquilizers to fretful and frightfully hungry babies, the Catholic priests who celebrate the death of ‘angel-babies,’ and the municipal bureaucrats who dispense free baby coffins but no food to hungry families.

#### In summary, the burden of the negative is to prove that the appropriation of outer space by private entities in just in ALL instances, and the burden of the affirmative is to prove that the appropriation of outer space is bad on balance

### Contention 1: Space Launches

#### The Private Space Industry is showing enormous increase in launches – that causes pollutants and warming – with massive amounts of chemicals entering the upper atmosphere.

Gammon 21 Katharine Gammon 7-19-2021 "How the billionaire space race could be one giant leap for pollution" <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/jul/19/billionaires-space-tourism-environment-emissions> (I’m an award-winning independent science journalist based in Santa Monica, California. My interests range from culture and nature in public lands to the lives of scientists to the complexity of baby brains. Before I became a professional journalist, I served in the Peace Corps in Bulgaria, and attended MIT and Princeton University.)//Jia Recut

Last week Virgin Galactic took Richard Branson past the edge of space, roughly 86 km up – part of a new space race with the Amazon billionaire Jeff Bezos, who aims to make a similar journey on Tuesday. Both very wealthy businessmen hope to vastly expand the number of people in space. “We’re here to make space more accessible to all,” said Branson, shortly after his flight. “Welcome to the dawn of a new space age.” Already, people are buying tickets to space. Companies including SpaceX, Virgin Galactic and Space Adventures want to make space tourism more common. The Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa spent an undisclosed sum of money with SpaceX in 2018 for a possible future private trip around the moon and back. And this June, an anonymous space lover paid $28m to fly on Blue Origin’s New Shepard with Bezos – though later backed out due to a “scheduling conflict”. But this launch of a new private space industry that is cultivating tourism and popular use could come with vast environmental costs, says Eloise Marais, an associate professor of physical geography at University College London. Marais studies the impact of fuels and industries on the atmosphere. When rockets launch into space, they require a huge amount of propellants to make it out of the Earth’s atmosphere. For SpaceX’s Falcon 9 rocket, it is kerosene, and for Nasa it is liquid hydrogen in their new Space Launch System. Those fuels emit a variety of substances into the atmosphere, including carbon dioxide, water, chlorine and other chemicals. The carbon emissions from rockets are small compared with the aircraft industry, she says. But they are increasing at nearly 5.6% a year, and Marais has been running a simulation for a decade, to figure out at what point will they compete with traditional sources we are familiar with. “For one long-haul plane flight it’s one to three tons of carbon dioxide [per passenger],” says Marais. For one rocket launch 200-300 tonnes of carbon dioxide are split between 4 or so passengers, according to Marais. “So it doesn’t need to grow that much more to compete with other sources.” Right now, the number of rocket flights is very small: in the whole of 2020, for instance, there were 114 attempted orbital launches in the world, according to Nasa. That compares with the airline industry’s more than 100,000 flights each day on average. But emissions from rockets are emitted right into the upper atmosphere, which means they stay there for a long time: two to three years. Even water injected into the upper atmosphere – where it can form clouds – can have warming impacts, says Marais. “Even something as seemingly innocuous as water can have an impact.” Closer to the ground, all fuels emit huge amounts of heat, which can add ozone to the troposphere, where it acts like a greenhouse gas and retains heat. In addition to carbon dioxide, fuels like kerosene and methane also produce soot. And in the upper atmosphere, the ozone layer can be destroyed by the combination of elements from burning fuels. “While there are a number of environmental impacts resulting from the launch of space vehicles, the depletion of stratospheric ozone is the most studied and most immediately concerning,” wrote Jessica Dallas, a senior policy adviser at the New Zealand Space Agency, in an analysis of research on space launch emissions published last year. Another report from 2019 penned by the Center for Space Policy and Strategy likened the space emissions problem to that of space debris, which the authors say creates an existential risk to the industry. “Today, launch vehicle emissions present a distinctive echo of the space debris problem. Rocket engine exhaust emitted into the stratosphere during ascent to orbit adversely impacts the global atmosphere,” they wrote. “We just don’t know how large the space tourism industry could become,” says Marais. A new market report estimates that the global suborbital transportation and space tourism market is estimated to reach $2.58bn in 2031, growing 17.15% each year of the next decade. “The major driving factor for the market’s robustness will be focused efforts to enable space transportation, emerging startups in suborbital transportation, and increasing developments in low-cost launching sites,” the report says. In the past, most space transportation has been focused on cargo supply missions to the International Space Station and satellite launch services, but currently, this focus has shifted to in-space transportation, planetary explorations, crewed missions, suborbital transportation and space tourism. Several companies, including SpaceX, Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic, have been focusing on developing platforms such as rocket-powered suborbital vehicles that will enable the industry to carry out suborbital transportation and space tourism. People have pointed out that the money these billionaires have poured into space technology could be invested in making life better on our planet, where wildfires, heatwaves and other climate disasters are becoming more frequent as the globe warms up in the climate crisis. “Is anyone else alarmed that billionaires are having their own private space race while record-breaking heatwaves are sparking a ‘fire-breathing dragon of clouds’ and cooking sea creatures to death in their shells?” the former US Labor Secretary Robert Reich tweeted last week. Marais says that there is always an element of excitement to new developments in space – but it’s still possible to be responsible while doing something exciting. She urges caution as the space tourism industry grows, and says there are currently no international rules around the kinds of fuels used and their impact on the environment. “We have no regulations currently around rocket emissions,” she says. “The time to act is now – while the billionaires are still buying their tickets.”

#### Squo launches are brinking – commercialization overwhelms alt causes and decks the o-layer.

Marais 21 Eloise Marais 7-19-2021 "Space tourism: rockets emit 100 times more CO₂ per passenger than flights – imagine a whole industry" <https://theconversation.com/space-tourism-rockets-emit-100-times-more-co-per-passenger-than-flights-imagine-a-whole-industry-164601> (Associate Professor in Physical Geography, UCL) //Jia Recut

The commercial race to get tourists to space is heating up between Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson and former Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos. On Sunday 11 July, Branson ascended 80 km to reach the edge of space in his piloted Virgin Galactic VSS Unity spaceplane. Bezos’ autonomous Blue Origin rocket is due to launch on July 20, coinciding with the anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing. Though Bezos loses to Branson in time, he is set to reach higher altitudes (about 120 km). The launch will demonstrate his offering to very wealthy tourists: the opportunity to truly reach outer space. Both tour packages will provide passengers with a brief ten-minute frolic in zero gravity and glimpses of Earth from space. Not to be outdone, Elon Musk’s SpaceX will provide four to five days of orbital travel with its Crew Dragon capsule later in 2021. What are the environmental consequences of a space tourism industry likely to be? Bezos boasts his Blue Origin rockets are greener than Branson’s VSS Unity. The Blue Engine 3 (BE-3) will launch Bezos, his brother and two guests into space using liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen propellants. VSS Unity used a hybrid propellant comprised of a solid carbon-based fuel, hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene (HTPB), and a liquid oxidant, nitrous oxide (laughing gas). The SpaceX Falcon series of reusable rockets will propel the Crew Dragon into orbit using liquid kerosene and liquid oxygen. Burning these propellants provides the energy needed to launch rockets into space while also generating greenhouse gases and air pollutants. Large quantities of water vapour are produced by burning the BE-3 propellant, while combustion of both the VSS Unity and Falcon fuels produces CO₂, soot and some water vapour. The nitrogen-based oxidant used by VSS Unity also generates nitrogen oxides, compounds that contribute to air pollution closer to Earth. Roughly two-thirds of the propellant exhaust is released into the stratosphere (12 km-50 km) and mesosphere (50 km-85 km), where it can persist for at least two to three years. The very high temperatures during launch and re-entry (when the protective heat shields of the returning crafts burn up) also convert stable nitrogen in the air into reactive nitrogen oxides. These gases and particles have many negative effects on the atmosphere. In the stratosphere, nitrogen oxides and chemicals formed from the breakdown of water vapour convert ozone into oxygen, depleting the ozone layer which guards life on Earth against harmful UV radiation. Water vapour also produces stratospheric clouds that provide a surface for this reaction to occur at a faster pace than it otherwise would. Space tourism and climate change Exhaust emissions of CO₂ and soot trap heat in the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. Cooling of the atmosphere can also occur, as clouds formed from the emitted water vapour reflect incoming sunlight back to space. A depleted ozone layer would also absorb less incoming sunlight, and so heat the stratosphere less. Figuring out the overall effect of rocket launches on the atmosphere will require detailed modelling, in order to account for these complex processes and the persistence of these pollutants in the upper atmosphere. Equally important is a clear understanding of how the space tourism industry will develop. Virgin Galactic anticipates it will offer 400 spaceflights each year to the privileged few who can afford them. Blue Origin and SpaceX have yet to announce their plans. But globally, rocket launches wouldn’t need to increase by much from the current 100 or so performed each year to induce harmful effects that are competitive with other sources, like ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and CO₂ from aircraft. During launch, rockets can emit between four and ten times more nitrogen oxides than Drax, the largest thermal power plant in the UK, over the same period. CO₂ emissions for the four or so tourists on a space flight will be between 50 and 100 times more than the one to three tonnes per passenger on a long-haul flight. In order for international regulators to keep up with this nascent industry and control its pollution properly, scientists need a better understanding of the effect these billionaire astronauts will have on our planet’s atmosphere.

#### Climate change disproportionately impacts minority communities, destroying homes, shelters, and stable living conditions. It is the epitome of structural oppression.

**Carmin Chappell 17** [Carmin Chappell. . “Climate change in the US will hurt poor people the most, according to a bombshell federal report”. 10-5-2017. CNBC. https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/26/climate-change-will-hurt-poor-people-the-most-federal-report.html. Accessed 12-27-2021]//Jia

Climate change will hit low-income communities the hardest as it takes a toll on the U.S. in general, says a blockbuster government report released on Friday. Low-income communities in both urban and rural areas will be disproportionately impacted by climate change relative to other communities, according to the assessment, which was created by a team of over 300 experts from the government and the private sector to analyze the impact of climate change on the country. Those communities already have higher rates of many adverse health conditions, are more exposed to environmental hazards and take longer to bounce back from natural disasters. These existing inequalities will only be exacerbated due to climate change, according to the report, which is known as the Fourth National Climate Assessment. We need to take climate change seriously, Richard Branson says The report made waves in Washington despite being released the day after Thanksgiving, which prompted speculation that the Trump administration was trying to bury the findings. The assessment is at odds with the views of President Donald Trump, who has historically denied evidence of climate change. Last year, he announced that the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, which aims to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Earlier this month, he tweeted, “Brutal and Extended Cold Blast could shatter ALL RECORDS – Whatever happened to Global Warming?” On Monday, Trump rejected the report’s findings about climate change’s economic impact. “I don’t believe it,” he told reporters on the White House South Lawn, as he was departing to hold campaign rallies in Mississippi. Several politicians seized on the report’s release as an opportunity to promote their own plans for mitigating climate change. On Twitter, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a Democrat who was elected to represent part of New York City in Congress, touted her Green New Deal proposal, which aims to create a committee in the House that would develop a plan to generate all of the country’s electricity from renewable energy. “People are going to die if we don’t start addressing climate change ASAP,” she said in the tweet. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a potential 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, also tweeted about the Climate Risk Disclosure Act she introduced in September, which would require publicly traded companies to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions. Health and jobs at risk Heart and lung disease, heat stroke and bacterial infections are just a few of the health consequences associated with climate change. Low-income populations “typically have less access to information, resources, institutions, and other factors to prepare for and avoid the health risks of climate change,” the report says, leaving them especially vulnerable. Lack of health insurance among the poor will also intensify the risks of illnesses caused by climate change. In urban areas, which produce 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in North America, the poor “live in neighborhoods with the greatest exposure to climate and extreme weather events,” the report says. This includes living near pollution sites and in housing developments without sufficient insulation or air conditioning. Additionally, disruptions to infrastructure during natural disasters can have an outsized impact on city residents who rely on public transportation. Rural areas often have agriculture-dependent economies, so the livelihoods of low-income residents are more vulnerable to changing environmental conditions. Many rural households also suffer from energy poverty, the report states, meaning they “are not able to adequately heat or provide other required energy services in their homes at affordable cost.” As average temperatures continue to rise, people who cannot affordably cool their houses will continue to feel financial strains. Disasters and ‘green gentrification’ Recent storms like Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Harvey, which brought record levels of flooding to coastal areas, also exposed inequities in disaster preparedness as poorer communities struggled to rebuild. “Some property owners can afford to modify their homes to withstand current and projected flooding and erosion impacts,” write the report’s authors. “Others who cannot afford to do so are becoming financially tied to houses that are at greater risk of annual flooding.” Even climate change prevention efforts can reflect existing inequalities, according to the assessment. “Better-resourced communities have created climate offices and programs, while response has lagged in smaller or poorer communities,” the report says. Infrastructure improvements to protect against climate change can lead to what the report calls “green gentrification,” in which property values rise and low-income residents are pushed out. To combat these inequalities, the report emphasizes the need for government officials to involve residents when developing solutions to climate change. “Decisions about where to prioritize physical protections, install green infrastructure, locate cooling centers, or route public transportation,” should be made with low-income communities in mind, according to the report.

#### Warming also causes mass destruction – things like wildfires, tsunamis, and other natural disasters, with huge promoted shortages of food and water.

Kareiva 18, Peter, and Valerie Carranza. "Existential risk due to ecosystem collapse: Nature strikes back." Futures 102 (2018): 39-50. (Ph.D. in ecology and applied mathematics from Cornell University, director of the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA, Pritzker Distinguished Professor in Environment & Sustainability at UCLA)//Recut Jia

In summary, six of the nine proposed planetary boundaries (phosphorous, nitrogen, biodiversity, land use, atmospheric aerosol loading, and chemical pollution) are unlikely to be associated with existential risks. They all correspond to a degraded environment, but in our assessment do not represent existential risks. However, the three remaining boundaries (climate change, global freshwater cycle, and ocean acidification) do pose existential risks. This is because of intrinsic positive feedback loops, substantial lag times between system change and experiencing the consequences of that change, and the fact these different boundaries interact with one another in ways that yield surprises. In addition, climate, freshwater, and ocean acidification are all directly connected to the provision of food and water, and shortages of food and water can create conflict and social unrest. Climate change has a long history of disrupting civilizations and sometimes precipitating the collapse of cultures or mass emigrations (McMichael, 2017). For example, the 12th century drought in the North American Southwest is held responsible for the collapse of the Anasazi pueblo culture. More recently, the infamous potato famine of 1846–1849 and the large migration of Irish to the U.S. can be traced to a combination of factors, one of which was climate. Specifically, 1846 was an unusually warm and moist year in Ireland, providing the climatic conditions favorable to the fungus that caused the potato blight. As is so often the case, poor government had a role as well—as the British government forbade the import of grains from outside Britain (imports that could have helped to redress the ravaged potato yields). Climate change intersects with freshwater resources because it is expected to exacerbate drought and water scarcity, as well as flooding. Climate change can even impair water quality because it is associated with heavy rains that overwhelm sewage treatment facilities, or because it results in higher concentrations of pollutants in groundwater as a result of enhanced evaporation and reduced groundwater recharge. Ample clean water is not a luxury—it is essential for human survival. Consequently, cities, regions and nations that lack clean freshwater are vulnerable to social disruption and disease. Finally, ocean acidification is linked to climate change because it is driven by CO2 emissions just as global warming is. With close to 20% of the world’s protein coming from oceans (FAO, 2016), the potential for severe impacts due to acidification is obvious. Less obvious, but perhaps more insidious, is the interaction between climate change and the loss of oyster and coral reefs due to acidification. Acidification is known to interfere with oyster reef building and coral reefs. Climate change also increases storm frequency and severity. Coral reefs and oyster reefs provide protection from storm surge because they reduce wave energy (Spalding et al., 2014). If these reefs are lost due to acidification at the same time as storms become more severe and sea level rises, coastal communities will be exposed to unprecedented storm surge—and may be ravaged by recurrent storms. A key feature of the risk associated with climate change is that mean annual temperature and mean annual rainfall are not the variables of interest. Rather it is extreme episodic events that place nations and entire regions of the world at risk. These extreme events are by definition “rare” (once every hundred years), and changes in their likelihood are challenging to detect because of their rarity, but are exactly the manifestations of climate change that we must get better at anticipating (Diffenbaugh et al., 2017). Society will have a hard time responding to shorter intervals between rare extreme events because in the lifespan of an individual human, a person might experience as few as two or three extreme events. How likely is it that you would notice a change in the interval between events that are separated by decades, especially given that the interval is not regular but varies stochastically? A concrete example of this dilemma can be found in the past and expected future changes in storm-related flooding of New York City. The highly disruptive flooding of New York City associated with Hurricane Sandy represented a flood height that occurred once every 500 years in the 18th century, and that occurs now once every 25 years, but is expected to occur once every 5 years by 2050 (Garner et al., 2017). This change in frequency of extreme floods has profound implications for the measures New York City should take to protect its infrastructure and its population, yet because of the stochastic nature of such events, this shift in flood frequency is an elevated risk that will go unnoticed by most people. 4. The combination of positive feedback loops and societal inertia is fertile ground for global environmental catastrophes Humans are remarkably ingenious, and have adapted to crises throughout their history. Our doom has been repeatedly predicted, only to be averted by innovation (Ridley, 2011). However, the many stories of human ingenuity successfully addressing existential risks such as global famine or extreme air pollution represent environmental challenges that are largely linear, have immediate consequences, and operate without positive feedbacks. For example, the fact that food is in short supply does not increase the rate at which humans consume food—thereby increasing the shortage. Similarly, massive air pollution episodes such as the London fog of 1952 that killed 12,000 people did not make future air pollution events more likely. In fact it was just the opposite—the London fog sent such a clear message that Britain quickly enacted pollution control measures (Stradling, 2016). Food shortages, air pollution, water pollution, etc. send immediate signals to society of harm, which then trigger a negative feedback of society seeking to reduce the harm. In contrast, today’s great environmental crisis of climate change may cause some harm but there are generally long time delays between rising CO2 concentrations and damage to humans. The consequence of these delays are an absence of urgency; thus although 70% of Americans believe global warming is happening, only 40% think it will harm them (http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us-2016/). Secondly, unlike past environmental challenges, the Earth’s climate system is rife with positive feedback loops. In particular, as CO2 increases and the climate warms, that very warming can cause more CO2 release which further increases global warming, and then more CO2, and so on. Table 2 summarizes the best documented positive feedback loops for the Earth’s climate system. These feedbacks can be neatly categorized into carbon cycle, biogeochemical, biogeophysical, cloud, ice-albedo, and water vapor feedbacks. As important as it is to understand these feedbacks individually, it is even more essential to study the interactive nature of these feedbacks. Modeling studies show that when interactions among feedback loops are included, uncertainty increases dramatically and there is a heightened potential for perturbations to be magnified (e.g., Cox, Betts, Jones, Spall, & Totterdell, 2000; Hajima, Tachiiri, Ito, & Kawamiya, 2014; Knutti & Rugenstein, 2015; Rosenfeld, Sherwood, Wood, & Donner, 2014). This produces a wide range of future scenarios. Positive feedbacks in the carbon cycle involves the enhancement of future carbon contributions to the atmosphere due to some initial increase in atmospheric CO2. This happens because as CO2 accumulates, it reduces the efficiency in which oceans and terrestrial ecosystems sequester carbon, which in return feeds back to exacerbate climate change (Friedlingstein et al., 2001). Warming can also increase the rate at which organic matter decays and carbon is released into the atmosphere, thereby causing more warming (Melillo et al., 2017). Increases in food shortages and lack of water is also of major concern when biogeophysical feedback mechanisms perpetuate drought conditions. The underlying mechanism here is that losses in vegetation increases the surface albedo, which suppresses rainfall, and thus enhances future vegetation loss and more suppression of rainfall—thereby initiating or prolonging a drought (Chamey, Stone, & Quirk, 1975). To top it off, overgrazing depletes the soil, leading to augmented vegetation loss (Anderies, Janssen, & Walker, 2002). Climate change often also increases the risk of forest fires, as a result of higher temperatures and persistent drought conditions. The expectation is that forest fires will become more frequent and severe with climate warming and drought (Scholze, Knorr, Arnell, & Prentice, 2006), a trend for which we have already seen evidence (Allen et al., 2010). Tragically, the increased severity and risk of Southern California wildfires recently predicted by climate scientists (Jin et al., 2015), was realized in December 2017, with the largest fire in the history of California (the “Thomas fire” that burned 282,000 acres, https://www.vox.com/2017/12/27/16822180/thomas-fire-california-largest-wildfire). This catastrophic fire embodies the sorts of positive feedbacks and interacting factors that could catch humanity off-guard and produce a true apocalyptic event. Record-breaking rains produced an extraordinary flush of new vegetation, that then dried out as record heat waves and dry conditions took hold, coupled with stronger than normal winds, and ignition. Of course the record-fire released CO2 into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to future warming. Out of all types of feedbacks, water vapor and the ice-albedo feedbacks are the most clearly understood mechanisms. Losses in reflective snow and ice cover drive up surface temperatures, leading to even more melting of snow and ice cover—this is known as the ice-albedo feedback (Curry, Schramm, & Ebert, 1995). As snow and ice continue to melt at a more rapid pace, millions of people may be displaced by flooding risks as a consequence of sea level rise near coastal communities (Biermann & Boas, 2010; Myers, 2002; Nicholls et al., 2011). The water vapor feedback operates when warmer atmospheric conditions strengthen the saturation vapor pressure, which creates a warming effect given water vapor’s strong greenhouse gas properties (Manabe & Wetherald, 1967). Global warming tends to increase cloud formation because warmer temperatures lead to more evaporation of water into the atmosphere, and warmer temperature also allows the atmosphere to hold more water. The key question is whether this increase in clouds associated with global warming will result in a positive feedback loop (more warming) or a negative feedback loop (less warming). For decades, scientists have sought to answer this question and understand the net role clouds play in future climate projections (Schneider et al., 2017). Clouds are complex because they both have a cooling (reflecting incoming solar radiation) and warming (absorbing incoming solar radiation) effect (Lashof, DeAngelo, Saleska, & Harte, 1997). The type of cloud, altitude, and optical properties combine to determine how these countervailing effects balance out. Although still under debate, it appears that in most circumstances the cloud feedback is likely positive (Boucher et al., 2013). For example, models and observations show that increasing greenhouse gas concentrations reduces the low-level cloud fraction in the Northeast Pacific at decadal time scales. This then has a positive feedback effect and enhances climate warming since less solar radiation is reflected by the atmosphere (Clement, Burgman, & Norris, 2009). The key lesson from the long list of potentially positive feedbacks and their interactions is that runaway climate change, and runaway perturbations have to be taken as a serious possibility. Table 2 is just a snapshot of the type of feedbacks that have been identified (see Supplementary material for a more thorough explanation of positive feedback loops). However, this list is not exhaustive and the possibility of undiscovered positive feedbacks portends even greater existential risks. The many environmental crises humankind has previously averted (famine, ozone depletion, London fog, water pollution, etc.) were averted because of political will based on solid scientific understanding. We cannot count on complete scientific understanding when it comes to positive feedback loops and climate change.

### Contention 2: Inequality

#### Private appropriation of space amplifies inequality on Earth. Stockwell 20

Samuel Stockwell, 7-20-2020, "Legal ‘Black Holes’ in Outer Space: The Regulation of Private Space Companies," E-International Relations, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/20/legal-black-holes-in-outer-space-the-regulation-of-private-space-companies/> //marlborough JH

On 30th April 2020, NASA – the US government’s space agency ­– awarded three private space companies a joint-contract worth $967m to complete a lunar mission by 2024, in what was celebrated as “the last piece that [America] need[s] in order to get to the moon” by NASA administrator Jim Brindestine (The Telegraph, 2020). Yet, whilst this development was widely covered in the media, less coverage has focused on the extent to which existing international legislation surrounding outer space endeavours appropriately applies to private entities. Indeed, the prospect of a corporate foothold within the extra-terrestrial domain has thrown up both a mixture of optimism and concern regarding the potential benefits of expanding capital projects into space (Adolph, 2006; Dickens & Ormrod, 2007). ¶By adopting the 1967 UN Outer Space Treaty (OST) as an analytical framework in relation to the rise of the so-called US ‘NewSpace’ actors, this essay argues that there are significant legal ambiguities regarding the status of private space companies in orbital space. Such loopholes allow the US government to circumvent its own obligations to the OST, whilst simultaneously undermining the notion of space as a ‘global commons’ through a commodification process. The lack of specificity within the OST surrounding private property rights over extra-terrestrial resources risks the prospect of reinforcing Earth-bound wealth inequalities and US dominance in space, by restricting the potential economic benefits for the broader global citizenry in favour of a narrow class of wealthy American investors. Moreover, the OST’s weak clause regarding the regulation of space surveillance risks the incentivisation of a ‘global panopticon’ network of US satellites. The rise of dual-use technology is blurring the boundaries between military and civilian observations, raising serious ethical concerns over the nature of US space-based data collection. Finally, the increasing number of private satellite constellations is facilitating the possibility of cataclysmic space debris collisions which could exacerbate geopolitical tensions. Such developments are also contributing towards the contamination of the broader space environment in ways that the OST had never envisioned. ¶The UN Outer Space Treaty and Rise of the ‘NewSpace’ Actors ¶Although ratified into international law in 1967, the UN Outer Space Treaty (OST) is perhaps still the most relevant piece of legislation for analysing state and non-state entity activity in outer space. Designed to prevent both the militarisation of space and national appropriation of celestial bodies at the height of Cold War tensions, the UN OST holds significant influence as a form of customary international law (Hebert, 2014: 6). Ratified by over 100 nations – including major spacefaring nations such as the United States, Russia and China – the treatyis widely accepted as an authoritative document and has formed the basis for all other space treaties that have succeeded it (Kramer, 2017: 129). This is in contrast to more recent legislation such as the 1972 Moon Treaty designed to promote cooperation in Moon exploration and development, which the US and other major space superpowers have refrained from signing (Adolph, 2006: 968-969).  ¶The type of American actors becoming involved in the realm of outer space has undergone significant diversification. Despite working alongside NASA since the 1950s, commercial enterprises were largely confined to the manufacturing of parts utilised in rockets and other equipment for space activities (Lal, 2016: 63-66). However, the continuous sharp decline in NASA’s overall budget that has occurred since the Apollo 11 moon landing, and the increasing trends towards the privatisation of government functions has drastically altered both the capabilities and the outlooks of private space companies. Indeed, although the space economy is growing overall, global government spending decreased by 1.3% between 2012 and 2013 while commercial-sector growth increased by roughly 7% (Conklin, 2017: 33). Central to the impetus behind this private sector space boom has been the emergence of the so-called ‘NewSpace’ actors – “a broad range of primarily US-based entrepreneurs… who, for more than 30 years, have aimed to commercialise space” (Valentine, 2012: 1046). Driven by a libertarian outlook of economics, and critical of NASA’s historical grip on space exploration, these individuals portray themselves as the pioneers of the ‘final frontier’ who will save humanity from extinction through privately-funded extra-terrestrial missions (Kearnes & van Dooren, 2017: 182). ¶Near-Earth Object and Lunar Resource Mining: US Private Property in Space ¶Lunar rock samples from the Apollo missions containing rare Earth resources, such as Helium-3 which produces more power and less waste than traditional nuclear reactors on Earth, have since fuelled incentives for extra-terrestrial resource mining (Brearley, 2006: 44-46). This was further facilitated by suggestions that near-earth objects (NEOs) like the so-called ‘Anteros asteroid’ could comprise of over five trillion dollars’ worth of magnesium silicate and aluminium (Kramer, 2017: 131). ¶Envisaging appropriation concerns that might arise from the future extraction of space assets by spacefaring nations, Article II of the UN OST declared that: “Outer space is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means” (UN, 1967). The emphasis on claims of national sovereignty were intimately tied to the Cold War context at the time, where space activities were under the exclusive monopoly of governmental agencies and initiated for goals of military dominance or national prestige (Sachdeva, 2017: 210). However, the privatisation of the space industry that has occurred since the 1980s has meant that the legislation leaves an enormous amount of legal ambiguity and interpretation regarding the regulation of private resource mining in space. As Shaer (2016) demonstrates, the Article II provision fails to address either the exploitation of space for financial gain or the property claims of commercial enterprises (Shaer, 2016: 47). ¶Nevertheless, Article VI of the UN OST asserts that: “States shall be responsible for national space activities whether carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities” (UN, 1967; own emphasis). Some scholars have suggested that this clause significantly restrains the activities of private space corporations by incentivising states to regulate their domestic organisations for fear of liability concerns (Abeyratne, 1998: 168). However, the US government recently enacted a piece of legislation which exploited this clause, in order to circumvent its own restrictions and strengthen US economic influence in space. The passage of the 2015 SPACE Act enabled US citizens to privately “possess, own, transport, use, and sell the resources” they obtain in outer space, whilst making careful consideration to deny national sovereign claims over such materials (Leon, 2018: 500). ¶Yet, regardless of whether it is an American private company or public venture, the US is still satisfying its geopolitical interests; by exclusively siphoning off extra-terrestrial resources for American gain, the nation’s soft power is thereby extended at the expense of spacefaring adversaries such as China (Basu & Kurlekar, 2016: 65). Indeed NewSpace actors cleverly played on these strategic concerns prior to the bill’s passage, with billionaire space entrepreneur Robert Bigelow asserting that the biggest danger wasn’t private enterprises on the Moon, but that “America is asleep and does nothing, while China comes along… surveying and laying claim [to the Moon]” (Klinger, 2017: 222). ¶The US government’s support for private space companies is also likely to lead to the reinforcement of Earth-bound wealth inequalities in space. Many NewSpace actors frame their long-term ambitions in space with strong anthropogenic undertones, by offering the salvation of the human race from impending extinction through off-world colonial developments (Kearnes & Dooren: 2017: 182). Yet, this type of discourse disguises the highly exclusive nature of these missions. Whilst they seem to suggest that there is a stake for ordinary citizens in the vast space frontier, the reality is that these self-described space pioneers are a member of a narrow ‘cosmic elite’ – “founders of Amazon.com, Microsoft, Pay Pal… and a smattering of games designers and hotel magnates” (Parker, 2009: 91). ¶Indeed, private space enterprises have themselves suggested that they have no obligation to share mineral resources extracted in space with the global community (Klinger, 2017: 208). This is reflected in the speeches of individuals such as Nathan Ingraham, a senior editor at the tech site EngadAsteroid mining, who claimed that asteroid mining was “how [America is] going to move into space and develop the next Vegas Strip” (Shaer, 2016: 50). Such comments highlight a form of what Beery (2016) defines as ‘scalar politics’. In similar ways to the ‘scaling’ of unequal international relations that has constituted our relationship with outer space under the guise of the ‘global commons’ (Beery, 2016: 99), private companies – through their anthropogenic discourse – are scaling existing Earth-bound wealth inequalities and social relations into space by siphoning off extra-terrestrial resources. By constructing their endeavours in ways that appeal to the common good, NewSpace actors are therefore concealing the reality of how commercial resource extraction serves the exclusive interests of their private shareholders at the expense of the vast majority of the global population.

#### Private control of space inevitably leads to exploitation. Spencer ‘20

Spencer, Keith A. [senior editor at Salon]“Against Mars-a-Lago: Why SpaceX's Mars Colonization Plan Should Terrify You.” Salon, Salon.com, 7 Jan. 2020, https://www.salon.com/2017/10/08/against-mars-a-lago-why-spacexs-mars-colonization-plan-should-terrify-you/.

When CEO Elon Musk announced last month that his aerospace company SpaceX would be [sending cargo missions](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2017/09/29/elon-musk-says-his-next-spaceship-could-not-only-take-to-you-the-moon-and-mars-but-from-n-y-to-london-in-29-minutes/?utm_term=.85279aa2076a) to Mars by 2022 — the first step in his tourism-driven colonization plan — a small cheer went up among space and science enthusiasts. Writing in the New York Post, Stephen Carter [called](http://nypost.com/2017/10/07/elon-musks-inspiring-vision-for-reaching-mars-and-the-stars/) Musk’s vision “inspiring,” a salve for politically contentious times. “Our species has turned its vision inward; our image of human possibility has grown cramped and pessimistic,” Carter wrote: "We dream less of reaching the stars than of winning the next election; less of maturing as a species than of shunning those who are different; less of the blessings of an advanced technological tomorrow than of an apocalyptic future marked by a desperate struggle to survive. Maybe a focus on the possibility of reaching our nearest planetary neighbor will help change all that." The Post editorial reflected a growing media consensus that humankind’s ultimate destiny is the colonization of the solar system — yet on a private basis. American government leaders generally agree with this vision. Obama egged on the [privatization of NASA](http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/80beats/2010/02/01/obamas-nasa-budget-so-long-moon-missions-hello-private-spaceflight/) by legislating a policy shift to private commercial spaceflight, awarding government contracts to private companies like SpaceX to shuttle supplies to the International Space Station. “Governments can develop new technology and do some of the exciting early exploration but in the long run it's the private sector that finds ways to make profit, finds ways to expand humanity,” [said](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2012/03/08/nasa_private_space_nasa/) Dr. S. Pete Worden, the director of the NASA Ames Research lab, in 2012. And in a Wall Street Journal [op-ed](https://www.wsj.com/articles/america-will-return-to-the-moonand-go-beyond-1507158341?mod=e2fb) this week, Vice President Mike Pence wrote of his ambitions to bring [American-style capitalism to the stars](https://www.salon.com/2017/08/06/tacoma-the-next-video-game-from-gone-home-creators-imagines-the-gig-economy-in-space/): “In the years to come, American industry must be the first to maintain a constant commercial human presence in low-Earth orbit, to expand the sphere of the economy beyond this blue marble,” Pence wrote. One wonders if these luminaries know their history. There has be no instance in which a private corporation became a colonizing power that did not end badly for everyone besides the shareholders. The East India Company is perhaps the finest portent of Musk’s Martian ambitions. In 1765, the East India Company forced the Mughal emperor to sign a legal agreement that would essentially permit their company to become the de facto rulers of Bengal. The East India Company then collected taxes and used its private army, which was over 200,000 strong by the early 19th century, to repress those who got in the way of its profit margins. “It was not the British government that seized India at the end of the 18th century, but a dangerously unregulated private company headquartered in one small office, five windows wide, in London, and managed in India by an unstable sociopath,” [writes](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/04/east-india-company-original-corporate-raiders) William Dalrymple in the Guardian. “It almost certainly remains the supreme act of corporate violence in world history.” The East India Company came to colonize much of the Indian subcontinent. In the modern era, an era in which the right of corporations to do what they want, unencumbered, has become a [sacrosanct](https://www.salon.com/2017/09/19/trumps-interior-secretary-on-national-monuments-sell-em-and-strip-em/) [right](https://www.salon.com/2016/12/15/exxonmobil-ceo-and-trump-pick-rex-tillerson-my-philosophy-is-to-make-money_partner/) in the eyes of many politicians, the lessons of the East India Company seem to have been all but forgotten. As Dalrymple writes: Democracy as we know it was considered an advance over feudalism because of the power that it gave the commoners to share in collective governance. To privately colonize a nation, much less a planet, means ceding governance and control back to corporations whose interest is not ours, and indeed, is always at odds with workers and residents — particularly in a resource-limited environment like a spaceship or the red planet. Even if, as Musk suggests, a private foundation is [put in charge](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/02/mars-elon-musk-space-exploration-nasa-colonization) of running the show on Mars, their interests will inherently be at [odds with the workers](http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/5/5/1372730/-Skylab-and-the-Sit-Down-Strike-in-Space) and employees involved. After all, a private foundation [is not a democracy](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/11/philanthropy-charity-banga-carnegie-gates-foundation-development); and as major philanthropic organizations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation [illustrate](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/11/philanthropy-charity-banga-carnegie-gates-foundation-development), often [do the bidding](http://www.peterfrase.com/2011/08/the-decay-of-the-capitalist-class/) of their rich donors, and take an [important role in ripening industries](https://www.salon.com/2016/02/21/corporate_reformers_wreck_public_schools_billionaire_foundations_and_wall_street_financiers_are_not_out_to_help_your_kids_learn/) and regions for exploitation by Western corporations. Yet Mars’ colonization is a bit different than Bengal, namely in that it is not merely underdeveloped; it is undeveloped. How do you start an entirely new economy on a virgin world with no industry? After all, Martian resource extraction and trade with Earth is not feasible; the cost of transporting material across the solar system is astronomical, and there are no obvious minerals on Mars that we don’t already have in abundance on Earth. The only basis for colonization of Mars that Musk can conceive of is one based on tourism: the rich pay an amount — Musk quotes the ticket price at [$200,000 if he can get 1 million tourists](https://www.recode.net/2016/9/27/13081488/elon-musk-spacex-mars-colony-space-travel-funding-rocket-nasa) to pay that — that entitles them to a round-trip ticket. And while they’re on Mars and traveling to it, they luxuriate: Musk has [assured](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/06/21/elon-musk-create-city-mars-million-inhabitants/) that the trip would be “fun.” This is what makes Musk’s Mars vision so different than, say, the Apollo missions or the International Space Station. This isn’t really exploration for humanity’s sake — there’s not that much science assumed here, as there was in the Moon missions. Musk wants to build the ultimate luxury package, exclusively for the richest among us. Musk isn’t trying to build something akin to Matt Damon’s spartan research base in "The Martian." He wants to build Mars-a-Lago. And an economy based on tourism, particularly high-end tourism, needs employees — even if a high degree of automation is assumed. And as I’ve written about [before](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/02/mars-elon-musk-space-exploration-nasa-colonization), that means a lot of labor at the lowest cost possible. Imagine signing away years of your life to be a housekeeper in the Mars-a-Lago hotel, with your communications, water, food, energy usage, even oxygen tightly managed by your employer, and no government to file a grievance to if your employer cuts your wages, harasses you, cuts off your oxygen. Where would Mars-a-Lago's employees turn if their rights were impinged upon? Oh wait, this planet is run privately? You have no rights. Musk's vision for Mars colonization is inherently authoritarian. The potential for the existence of the employees of the Martian tourism industry to slip into something resembling indentured servitude, even slavery, cannot be underestimated. We have government regulations for a reason on Earth — to protect us from the fresh horror Musk hopes to export to Mars. If he's considered these questions, he doesn't seem to care; for Musk, the devil's in the technological and financial details. The social and political are pretty uninteresting to him. This is unsurprising; accounts from those who have worked closely with him hint that he, like many CEOs, [may be a sociopath](http://www.businessinsider.com/working-with-elon-musk-tesla-2015-5). Even as a space enthusiast, I cannot get excited about the private colonization of Mars. You shouldn’t be either. This is not a giant leap for mankind; this is the next great leap in plutocracy. The mere notion that global wealth is so unevenly distributed that a small but sufficient sum of rich people could afford this trip is unsettling, indicative of the era of astonishing economic inequality in which we suffer. Thomas Frank, writing in Harpers, once [wrote of](https://harpers.org/archive/2011/11/the-bleakness-stakes/) a popular t-shirt he sighted while picnicking in a small West Virginia coal town: “Mine it union or keep it in the ground.” The idea, of course, is that the corporations interested in resource extraction do not care whatsoever about their workers’ health, safety, or well-being; the union had their interests at heart, and was able to negotiate for safety, job security, and so on. I’d like to see a similar t-shirt or bumper sticker emerge among scientists and space enthusiasts: “Explore Mars democratically, or keep it in the sky.”