

Cooperation and colonization. Future geopolitical relations in space.

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Adam Nettles: Comparison of European trade colonies and modern corporate plans for outer space colonization

This paper compares the strategies of modern corporations for outer space colonization and governance with historical examples of similar efforts in colonial ventures of the past. It does so with a focus on the institutional structure proposed by modern corporations for governing their interplanetary colonies. These are characterized by heavily idealistic and often libertarian ideals of self-government, often eschewing the authority of Earth-based states. These models will be compared with corporate colonies that that existed in various forms during Europe's colonial period. This paper will analyze these cases from a neoinstitutionalist lens and will offer useful insights as to what can be expected if these proposed corporate colonies do indeed become reality in coming years.

Jana Fey The Politics of International Cooperation in Deep Space Exploration and Human Settlements: Geopolitical Realities and the Hope for Common Values

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With humans having ventured into space for over six decades, we have witnessed several phases of international cooperation in space science and exploration, much of which has been driven by space agencies and the national security objectives of their respective governments. As the space sector is growing rapidly, a more diverse set of stakeholders has emerged, including emerging space nations and the private sector. To achieve highly ambitious goals in deep space, such as sending humans to Mars, international cooperation is seen as an essential element of successful missions. However, the shifts and risks associated with geopolitical tensions on Earth raise important questions about the form future international cooperation will take and the logics informing collaborative endeavours. This project seeks to understand how international cooperation in deep space exploration and human settlements will evolve given a complex landscape of organizations and stakeholders. Drawing on an interdisciplinary body of literature, including International Relations, Space Policy, and STS, and a set of expert interviews, this project traces a genealogy of international cooperation in deep space exploration to make sense of the (geo)political dynamics underpinning contemporary and future collaboration in space.

Dr Kehinde Abolarin and Dr Laura Cashman: Nigeria's space collaborations through a postcolonial lens: How racialised hierarchies are reproduced in the space technology sector

The international system is racialised. Hierarchies persist in terms of access to power, resources and opportunities. This has deep roots in the colonial experience. It is enacted in interpersonal relations and reinforced through political and social institutions. In this paper we argue that Nigeria's space programme and in particular the agreements reached with international partners (Surrey Satellite Technology Limited, UK, and the China Great Wall Industry Corporation) reflect these racialised hierarchies and assumptions about Nigeria's capacity to be an equal partner. In both cases, but in different ways, there were limits to the sharing of knowledge, data and training. This kept Nigeria dependent on external expertise and hindered the development of a fully autonomous space programme – a pattern we see reproduced in many postcolonial interactions.

Dr Sarah Lieberman: Space Station and State Lines.

The nation state is the core actor in studies of International Relations and security. Some hoped that globalisation would dent its primacy, but a resurgence in populist politics and politicians in the 2000s and 2010s meant that territorially tied national statehood has increased, rather than decreased in importance.

In outer space we have no state lines. No state can claim sovereign right to celestial bodies, and the parameters set to designate 'airspace', do not apply to outer space. Moreover, the prevalence of commercial actors in space reduces the role of the nation state in space further.

Nonetheless, as we see the International Space Station reach the end of its natural life in orbit, we must again address the means by which nations and states seek representation in space. Using primary documentation, this paper will discuss state lines on board the international space station and its use as a tool of USA soft power. China already has Taikonauts onboard its Tiangong space station, and as other states seek to join the low earth orbit party, this paper asks, what will be the impact on geopolitics?

Track Classification: Astropolitics Working Group