

Mars for All: Creating Humanity's First Global Community

Pro Argument

When people talk about inhabiting Mars, they often focus on science, technology, or cost. But another big question is: who gets to decide what we do there? For the first time in history, humanity has the chance to begin something new in space. Instead of one country or one group taking charge, Mars could be treated as a place where everyone has a voice. The Red Planet could be humanity's first true shared world, built on fairness and cooperation. Creating human outposts on Mars could be worth doing because it can become a project that unites humanity, gives all people an equal say, and helps us move beyond the mistakes of Earth's past.

Learning from Earth's History

On Earth, colonization usually meant that powerful nations took land and resources without asking the people already living there. This created unfairness, wars, and suffering that still affect many communities today. Space gives us the chance to do things differently. Mars has no people, and currently no land ownership, so we can design a system from the ground up that is more fair than anything before.

If we see Mars as a shared territory for all humans, we can avoid repeating the old patterns of conquest. Instead, we can set up new rules that guarantee everyone has a role in deciding what happens. This could mean that decisions about Mars are made by the whole world, not just a few rich countries or private companies.

Mars as a Global Commons

Many scientists, philosophers, and activists believe that Mars should be treated like a "global commons." This means it belongs to everyone equally, not to one nation. We already have some examples of this. The Antarctic Treaty, for instance, makes sure that Antarctica is used for peaceful science and not owned by any single country. The oceans and the Moon have also been described as "the common heritage of humanity."

Applying this idea to Mars could mean that all nations – big or small – have a seat at the table. A farmer in Kenya, a student in Brazil, a scientist in India, and a community leader of the Navajo Nation could all have a voice equal to those in the United States, China, or Europe. If we succeed, colonizing Mars could be humanity's first real experience of shared, democratic decision-making at the planetary level.

Building Fair Systems from the Start

One reason Mars is exciting is that it gives us a fresh start. On Earth, unfair systems have been in place for centuries and are hard to change. On Mars, we would need to build systems of government, economy, and culture from scratch. If people agree to focus on fairness, we could set up rules that protect equal rights, prevent exploitation, and honor all voices. For example, Mars

communities could create a council that includes representatives from every continent and major cultural group. Rules could be written to make sure smaller countries or Indigenous groups are not pushed aside. People could also use new technologies – like global online voting systems – so that decisions about Mars truly reflect humanity as a whole.

This would not be easy, but the effort itself could teach us valuable lessons about fairness and cooperation. It might even inspire better systems back on Earth.

A Chance to Unite Humanity

Building a human presence on Mars could bring people together in ways nothing else has. Working to survive on a distant planet requires teamwork, trust, and respect. If the world builds Mars colonies as a shared mission, people might learn to see themselves less as members of separate nations and more as members of one human family.

This could reduce conflict on Earth. Wars and fights often come from dividing the world into “us” versus “them.” But if all humans are united in caring for Mars, then “us” becomes everyone. The project could inspire a sense of global citizenship and shared responsibility. Just like the Moon landing in 1969 inspired millions, creating communities on Mars could give today’s young people a dream that unites rather than divides.

Protecting Cultural and Spiritual Perspectives

Thinking of Mars as a shared world also means respecting different cultural views of space. For many Indigenous peoples, the sky, the stars, and planets are not just rocks or resources – they are relatives and sacred beings. Including these perspectives on decision-making can help humanity treat Mars with care and respect, instead of seeing it only as something to exploit.

If Mars is governed as a shared territory, it can honor these traditions while also including scientific goals. Everyone – scientists, engineers, spiritual leaders, and everyday citizens – could have a say in how Mars is explored and cared for. This would show that humanity can finally balance technology with wisdom and cultural respect.

Conclusion

Establishing a human presence on Mars is more than a question of rockets and money. It is an opportunity to answer one of the biggest questions of our time: who gets to decide humanity’s future? If we approach Mars as a shared world, then the answer can be: everyone.

Treating Mars as the first truly global territory could help us avoid repeating the old mistakes of conquest, inspire fairness in decision-making, and unite humanity in a common mission. By building fair systems from the start, honoring all cultures, and including every voice, Mars could become not just another outpost, but a symbol of equality and hope for all people.

Mars: A New World, the Same Mistakes

Con Argument

The dream of building a human presence on Mars is exciting, but behind it lies a big problem: who gets to decide what happens? So far, space decisions have mostly been made by powerful governments, big companies, and wealthy individuals. Indigenous peoples, marginalized groups, and smaller nations have often been left out, even when space activities affect their traditions and beliefs. Establishing human outposts on Mars is not a good idea right now because the decision-making most likely will not be fair. Instead, it will likely repeat the same patterns of exclusion and inequality that have harmed people and the environment on Earth for centuries.

History of Unequal Decisions

On Earth, colonization often meant that Indigenous peoples were displaced, their lands stolen, their cultures targeted for erasure, and their communities devastated by violence. Sadly, something similar seems to be happening in space already. When a private company planned to charge customers to send their relatives' human ashes to the Moon, the Navajo Nation objected. For them, the Moon is a sacred relative, and sending remains there without consultation was deeply disrespectful. Navajo leaders asked the U.S. government and NASA to step in and stop the launch, but officials refused to intervene. The mission went forward – though ultimately, the Peregrine lander never reached the Moon, burning up during its re-entry into Earth's atmosphere in January 2024. This incident shows that decisions about space continue to be made without genuine respect for Indigenous voices or beliefs.

If this happens with the Moon, which is so close and important, why should we expect Mars to be different? Creating human outposts on Mars could simply repeat the same pattern: powerful groups decide, and others are ignored.

Who Really Has a Voice?

In theory, Mars could be shared by everyone. But in reality, space programs are run by a handful of wealthy countries and companies. Building rockets, life support systems, and human settlements takes billions of dollars. Poorer countries and less powerful countries and communities do not have that kind of power. That means they will likely be left out of decision making.

Even if international organizations like the United Nations are involved, the strongest voices usually belong to the richest nations. Rules may be written in ways that protect the interests of those with money and technology, not those with different cultural views or needs. As a result, Mars would not truly be a shared world – it would belong to those already in control.

Excluding Indigenous and Diverse Voices

Many Indigenous peoples see space as sacred. For example, some communities call the Moon “Grandmother Moon” and view it as a relative. Alvin D. Harvey, a Diné (Navajo) scholar, has

argued that space should be treated with respect and care, not as a place for exploitation. He points out that Indigenous voices can help guide space caretaking, but only if they are truly included.

Unfortunately, history shows that governments and companies often overlook these perspectives. When NASA once sent remains to the Moon without consultation, it caused deep pain. Even when apologies were made, similar actions happened again. This pattern shows that promises of inclusion are often broken. If Mars colonization moves forward, Indigenous and marginalized groups may once again find themselves ignored.

This is not just about feelings or symbolism. Excluding these voices means humanity loses valuable wisdom about how to live responsibly with nature and the cosmos. Indigenous knowledge includes deep traditions of caretaking and balance. Without these perspectives, Mars colonization risks being guided only by profit, competition, and power.

Risks of Repeating Colonization

The word “colonization” itself is troubling because it connects to painful histories of land theft and cultural destruction. Calling Mars a “colony” may hide the fact that it could become a project driven by the same unfair systems that harmed people on Earth. Marginalized groups worry that Mars will be treated as another resource to control, with decisions made by outsiders who do not share their values.

If human settlements are created on Mars without fair decision-making, the same inequalities of Earth will just be carried into space. Instead of becoming a shared world, Mars might become a new stage for exploitation and conflict. This would not solve humanity’s problems – it would spread them.

A Better Path Forward

Critics are not saying humanity should never explore Mars. Instead, they argue we must first fix how decisions are made. That means creating systems that truly include Indigenous peoples, marginalized communities, and smaller nations from the very beginning. It means respecting cultural views of space and making sure all voices matter, not just those with money or power.

Until this happens, colonizing Mars is likely to cause harm. It risks repeating painful histories of exclusion and disrespect. Rather than rushing to build a Mars outpost, humanity should focus on creating fair and inclusive governance first.

Conclusion

Creating a human presence on Mars sounds exciting, but the deeper question is about fairness: who gets to decide? Right now, the answer is mostly powerful governments and wealthy companies. Indigenous peoples and marginalized communities have already been excluded from important space decisions, even when their cultures and beliefs were at stake. If we create communities on Mars under the same system, it will not be a shared world for all humanity. It will repeat the unfair patterns of Earth’s colonization. To avoid this, humanity must first learn to include all voices equally. Until then, Mars habitation by humans should wait.