Space exploration is worth the cost

Stance: Agree

Since the end of the Cold War “Space Race” era – the period during the 1950s to 60s where NASA received the most funding in its history, space exploration research programs have received less funding each year. This is partially due to public opinion that space exploration is not worth the costs. However, I argue that there are three compelling reasons that space exploration is worth the costs.

The imminent shortage of resources and land on Earth due to global warming is well-documented, and space exploration provides the most promising solution to these issues. By colonising planets, we gain access to the land to live on or farm, as well as resources like water to sustain us. A report by Global Footprint Network explains we are using resources and generating CO2 emissions 44 percent faster than the earth can replenish (Mankind Using Earth's Resources, 2009). This means we would need about 1.5 earths worth of resources to sustain us, which can be solved by colonizing another planet. Surely our continued survival is worth the cost of space exploration.

In researching space travel, many new technologies have been invented. For example, GPS and satellite television are direct biproducts of past space exploration research. These technologies have become common in society and the industries they have created have more than justified the costs of funding space programs. During a 2015 earthquake in Nepal, four men survived thanks to FINDER – a NASA-developed technology that allows the detection of heartbeats through sound, dirt, and rubble (Pierce 2016). In fact, 50 technologies that have been transformed into commercial products or services are showcased in NASA’s “Spinoff” magazine each year.

Finally, the costs of space exploration are cycled back into our economy. By funding space exploration programs, we are creating high-paying, high-tech jobs, while also providing business to many companies. In a 2007 report published by NASA, it was reported that economic activities related to space exploration contributed around $180 billion dollars to the US economy, while only $16.8 billion of the US budget was allotted to NASA (Mould 2007). This means that every $1 spent on NASA added $10 to the economy, on top of all the other benefits of space exploration.

In summary, space exploration is overwhelmingly worth the cost, because the need for space exploration, the money that it funnels into the economy and the technologies that we have created as a result.

References:
