

Numerous space actors have announced their intentions for returning to the Moon and settling on the lunar surface for a variety of economic, technological, scientific, and cultural reasons. Despite the widespread interest in lunar habitation, all currently available roadmaps lack a consolidated rationale for why the average person should be invested in humans returning to the Moon.

President Kennedy famously said “We choose to go to the Moon [...] not because it is easy, but because it is hard” when attempting to gather public support for the Apollo program in 1962. He appealed to everyday Americans’ sense of national pride, which was heightened during the Space Race with the Soviet Union. However, despite this overriding sense of competition, the American populace expressed concern about the opportunity cost of going to the Moon amid more pressing Earthly problems (Chaikin, 2007). After several decades, the dwindling lack of public and governmental support for space culminated in the cancellation of the Space Shuttle program in 2011 (Forbes, 2017).

Given the lack of robust rationale that preceded the first lunar missions, a critical overview of the rationales for future lunar ventures is necessary in order to garner widespread public and political support. To lay the groundwork for the report to follow, we shall first examine the diverse rationales that exist for returning to the Moon through six key lenses: economics, technology, science, culture, security, and policy, as shown in Figure 2.1.

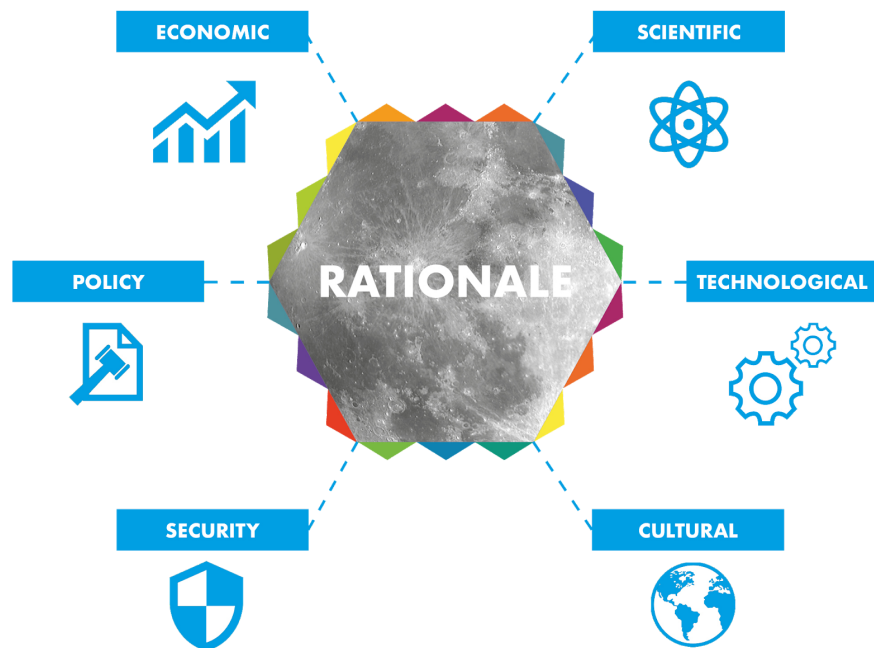


Figure 2.1. Purpose section Categories

We seek to address the reasons to go to the Moon, as well as the reasons against returning to the Moon, which are particularly underrepresented in current literature. Our goal is to show that while there are valid reasons to hesitate before supporting agency-led or commercial missions to the Moon, the most pressing concerns could be mitigated through the implementation of policy, the development of technology, and the establishment of international cooperative frameworks. While returning to the Moon would require significant investments of time, money, and effort, this section seeks to demonstrate that the value derived from future lunar missions makes the investment worthwhile.