

# A Concept of Culture Space and Its Possible Application to Achieving Durable Peace

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**Abstract.** In religions, three basic questions are: Who Am I? Where does I come from? Where am I going to? And, Buddhism has further raised the following three specific questions: Why do we become old? Why do we become sick? Why do we die? Since thousands of years ago, the quest to the answers to these questions has not yet brought durable peace on Earth at the world-wide scale. This situation motivates us to deepen investigations on solutions to durable peace on Earth. In this paper, three new questions are raised, which are: Who is the designer of a human being? Who is the maker of a human being? Who are the users of a human being? The quest to the answers to these new questions leads to the discovery of the concept of culture space. After the explanation of the new concept of culture space, this paper sheds light to the details of the culture space's three principal axes for referencing values which are the ultimate causes behind all social and individual activities as well as behaviors. And, these three references for gauging values stipulated in this paper are: people-centric reference for values, family-centric reference for values, and customer-centric reference for values. The culture space is the domain in which all individual minds and social minds evolve and develop. All the differences of behaviors among people, populations and countries are reflected by the paths or trajectories of their cultures in the culture space.

## 1. Introduction

Today, we are living in a modern world with abundance of goods and facilities. However, we are still facing huge challenges of all kinds of conflicts and violence among countries as well as people of different races [1]. Even within a same population, there are many different types of visible and invisible violence or abuses [2,4]. Then, the fundamental questions are:

1. How to make people co-exist peacefully within the common physical space on Earth?
2. How to make people co-exist peacefully within the common time space forever?

Today's science and technology have reached a level, which enables us to invent powerful tools and machines [5,8,9]. However, it seems that these tools and machines do not really help us diminish conflicts and violence on Earth, but sometimes to make them even worse. Then, what is missing endeavor in our journey of making societies to be more civilized? [3,4,5]

With the aim of finding the answers to the above-mentioned questions, it is worth re-examining the behaviors of people from the angle of right settings of people's minds and cultures.

## 2. Social Systems and Cultures

The world, that we are living in, is physically divided into continents, which in turn consist of entities called as countries. Within each country, the space is further divided into provinces, villages, and cities, etc. Most importantly, the spatial configuration of the world supports and grows the dynamics of all kinds of social systems such as economic systems, political systems, education systems, transportation systems, and defense systems, etc. Within these social systems, there are many types of relationships and interactions. In addition, the dynamics of social systems are

primarily characterized by exchanges of foods, goods, thoughts, sympathies, cares, friendships, and many other things. Moreover, such exchanges are governed by value systems which are also called as cultures. To some great extents, the conflicts within or among social systems are basically due to the differences of value systems or cultures. And, we believe that the durable solution to overcome the conflicts within or among social systems is to evolve different value systems or cultures into commonly respected value systems or cultures.

### 3. Culture and Its Definition

Within a social system, a human being is a complex system which is a combination of sub-systems such as biological system, chemical system, mechanical system, electrical system, control system, information system, motion systems and knowledge system, etc [6,7,8,9]. In addition, a human being lives within a population which is also a super complex system on its own. Therefore, the fundamental question will be:

1. What is the key element which dictates the group behaviors in a society or within a population?
2. What is the key element which dictates the individual behaviors of a human being living in a society?

Everyone knows that the answers to the above questions are the brains of a society and human beings. In control engineering terms, we also know that it is the controller which dictates the behaviors of a system under control. However, these answers are too superficial. For example, we could continue to raise the following two questions:

1. What is the core module inside the brain of a society, which influences the operations?
2. What is the core module inside the brain of a human being, which influences the behaviors?

Clearly, the ultimate answers to these two questions are: a) the mind of a society and b) the mind of a human being [3,5]. The mind of a society is a complex system, which has been extensively studied under the social sciences of economics, finance, history, literature, arts, music, psychology, cognition, and so on [6,7,9]. However, the aspects of culture in a society, a population, or a country have been considered only in a fragmented way. There is no systematic study of culture at the level of a stand-alone science. In some countries, culture is regarded as being primarily arts and literatures. Here, we define culture as value systems rooted in the minds of societies, populations, and countries.

### 4. Culture Space and Its Axes

Like some others [1,2,4], we advocate that culture is the foundation for the study of the behaviors and activities in a society, a population, or a country. Moreover, culture forms the basis for us to better understand the principles underlying economics, finance, history, literature, arts, music, psychology, cognition, etc.

Furthermore, we think that the science of culture could be established from three references which could universally guide the formations of value systems employed in other social sciences. Refer to Figure 1, these three fundamental references for values are:

1. People-centric reference for values or P axis: Many countries are largely built on the value systems which are people-centric. People in such countries believe that we are all sisters and brothers, and that we should have equal rights and opportunities. This reference for values gives the answer to the question: Who is the designer of a human being? In short, all human beings on Earth are the products of a same blueprint which comes from a same designer, or God. The profound respect of this reference for values will certainly make people of the whole world to co-exist peacefully forever. This is because all of us are the results of the same blueprint of the same designer. In the face of the same designer, all people on Earth must love each other, instead of causing conflicts among them. Hence, the respect of this reference for values will be the basis of achieving durable peace on Earth.

2. Family-centric reference for values or F axis: Some countries are largely built on the value systems which are family-centric. It is interesting to take note that in some countries, a nation simply means a nation-like family. Hence, people in such countries live in multiple hierarchies which are under the control of heads of families in a broad sense. This reference for values gives the answer to the question: Who is the maker of a human being? In short, all human beings on Earth are produced by their parents, which follow the same blueprint of our common designer, or God. Therefore, all human beings must show the highest level of all respects to their parents. And, the respect of this reference for values will certainly enhance the basis of achieving durable peace on Earth.
3. Customer-centric reference for values or C axis: Commercial world is largely dominated by the value systems which are customer-centric. The engine of creating wealth is the mechanism of exchange. And, the long-lasting activities of exchange are only possible with the customer-centric mindset. Interestingly, this reference for values gives the answer to the question: Who are the users of a human being? In short, a human being in a civilized society will only play one, or the combination, of these two roles: a) the role of supplier to users, and b) the role of user in front of suppliers. The first role is very important. Without any provider of services or products in the world, there will be no society or civilization on Earth. Hence, everyone must have the willingness of serving customers, or users, in any modern society. And, the respect of this reference for values will certainly make human activities to stay in harmony.

From the above discussions of references for values, it is obvious for us to define the culture space as being the space in which the above-mentioned three references for values form the three axes of the culture space's coordinate system. In addition, we can say that the construction of civilization depends on both the design and construction of cultures (i.e. paths and trajectories in culture space) among individuals, societies, populations, and countries. Mathematically speaking, the degree of conflict among societies, populations or countries is proportional to a function of distances between the points in the culture space. Durable harmony or durable peace will be achieved when the points of all cultures converge toward the vertex with the maximum values of the coordinates along P-axis, F-axis and C-axis.

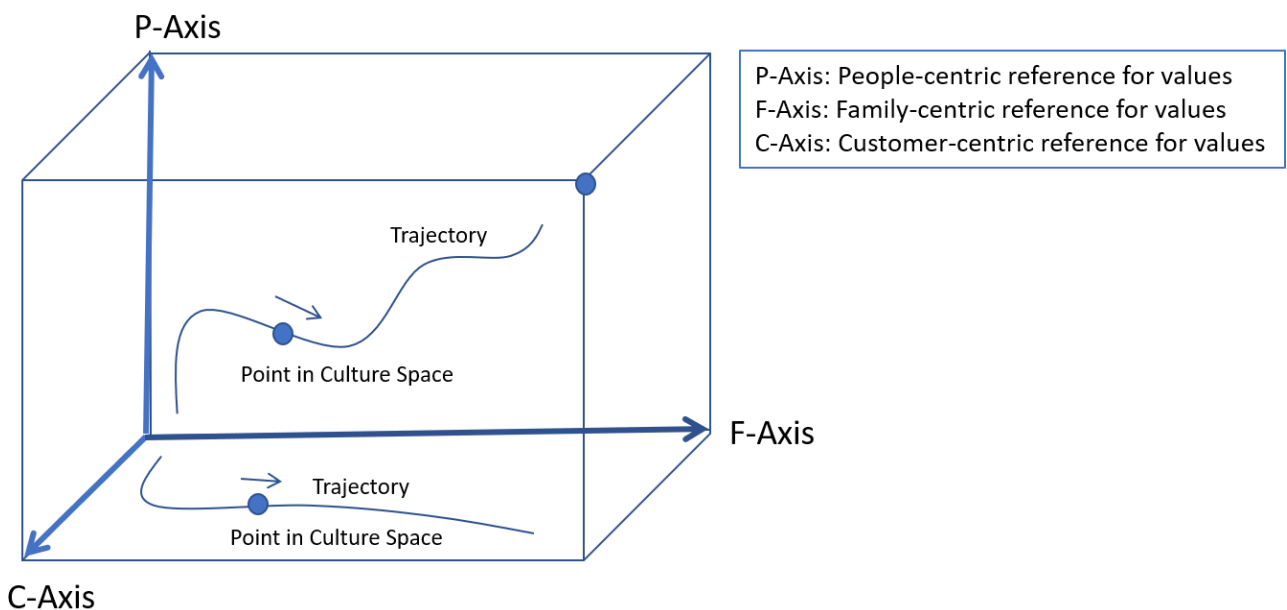


Fig. 1. A three-dimensional culture space in which the culture of a society, a population or an individual is a point, which evolves in time and results in the so-called cultural trajectory.

## **5. Existence of Culture inside Each Human Being**

We often talk about cultures at the levels of corporations, schools, cities, and countries, etc [2,4]. Interestingly, at the level of an individual, the so-called “culture of a human being” do exist. This is because the culture of a human being also has three references for values, which are: a) people-centric reference due to the education received from religions, b) family-centric reference due to the doctrine learnt from Confucianism or the education received from family science as well as consumer science, and c) customer-centric reference due to experiences learnt from markets.

Although the mind of a human being is less complicated than the mind of a society, it has the executive power which could generate two conflicting outcomes such as creation and destruction.

With the notion of “the culture of a human being”, it will be easier for us to explain why creation and destruction occur. We can go straightforward to point out the following two facts:

1. Creative energy of an individual will be released if “the culture of a human being” aligns largely with the culture of a society, a population, or a country.
2. Destructive behaviors will appear if “the culture of a human being” mismatches with the culture of a society, a population, or a country.

Knowing the existence of culture at the level of each human being, it becomes relevant for us to raise the following question: How to build more civilized societies through the effort of designing and evolving better cultures at all levels on Earth? We will provide the answer in the next section.

## **6. Design of Better Cultures for Achieving Durable Peace**

Good design in accordance with universal principles is the root of all great works [8,9]. As mentioned above, culture has three basic references for values. These three references for values define the so-called culture space. Within the culture space, we can find the location of an individual’s culture, a society’s culture, a population’s culture, or even a country’s culture. Most importantly, the location of an individual’s culture, a society’s culture, a population’s culture, or even a country’s culture in the culture space is not a single point, but a path or trajectory over a time span in history. A path or trajectory in the culture space defines the so-called path or trajectory of civilization followed by an individual, a society, a population, or a country. As a result, the culture space is an important tool which could guide policy-makers to design, and to build, a more civilized society or country.

Refer to Figure 1, the culture of a human being has its own path or trajectory in the culture space. Although each individual has the freedom to design, or build, his or her own path or trajectory in the culture space, the harmony or non-conflicting situation is only possible if the effort of an individual is to evolve his or her path or trajectory in the culture space so as to make it to be as close as possible to the path or trajectory of a society’s culture or a country’s culture. And, the individual effort of designing better cultures (i.e. to plan, or to build, better paths or trajectories in culture space) could not solely depend on the individual’s own resources or abilities. A society or a country must help such individual’s design effort through the deployment of dedicated classrooms of teaching the concept of culture and culture space [4].

From the perspective of culture and culture space, we believe that the basic concept (or theory) presented in this paper could help people to gain a better understanding of the differences among the holistic educational systems (which include the teaching of values advocated by religions, family sciences, social sciences and natural sciences) in the world, and to guide the policy-makers to design better educational systems in future.

## **7. Conclusions and Remarks**

This short paper has explained the new concept of culture space and has advocated that culture is a science which defines a new and important space for us to study and analyze the journey of civilization by societies, populations, countries, and individuals. Moreover, this paper has emphasized that the concept of culture space could be served as the design tool as well as the foundation for the value systems in other social sciences such economics or politics.

On the other hand, the design and development of better cultures largely depend on education which embraces either the process of learning assisted by teaching or the process of teaching aimed at inspiring learning. And, the primary goal of education must be to help individuals to design and to align his or her culture (i.e. paths or trajectories in culture space) with the culture of a society or a country. This is because absolute freedom (i.e randomized paths or trajectories in culture space) means absolute conflict. Moreover, this primary goal of education must be put on top of other goals such as nurturing the technical skills and technical knowledge of individuals.

Finally, it is our belief that designing and creating better cultures are more important than inventing mechanized tools or humanized machines. And, the task of building better cultures among individuals, societies, populations, and countries could be accomplished by a design process which will certainly offer a better way, and a clearer direction, of upholding the best cultures attained in the world. In this way, we could avoid the current practices of chaotically letting an evolutionary process to gradually evolve the cultures into all possible directions on Earth.

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