

# Iranian Society of Futures Studies

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On Futures Studies

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For all of the members and who are interested in Futures Studies  
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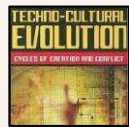
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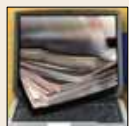
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# Editorial



The Technology Acquisition Indicator (TAI) has become relatively important compared with other conventional indicators such as Human Development Indicator (HDI) as it deals with the development of human skills in addition to the innovation and development of different technologies. In this sense, the development and evolution of technologies, especially cultural ones have come under futurists' studies who are forecasting future technologies. The turning point of that importance is the unprecedented convergence of "information" and "technology". It has crafted culture not just as a theoretical concept, but as an applied subject among the citizens.

On the other hand, the sustainable development cannot be separated from the culture. Different societies' efforts toward progress and development is an admirable mix of rationality, experience, motivation, sensation, survival, combat and effort that becomes meaningful under the light of culture and is reflected differently in every society. The identification of cultural industries adaptable with each society's needs for development through cultural foresight and comparing them with current and future cultural trends may help defining new goals and redefining past objectives.

According to cultural experts, culture has three layers in societies or organizations: basic assumptions (internal layer), values and norms (middle layer) and cultural products or goods (external layer). Social change process begins with cultural products and their methods of production, distribution and consumption. Today, world conditions are shaped in a manner so that technology is the beginning point of cultural revolution, because the manipulation of internal layer can be accomplished by changing external layer. Meanwhile, attaining cultural development goals can be practiced by altering middle and external layers of culture. Internet is a perfect example of this undeniable reality. Different applications of the Internet in external layers have made their inevitable positive and negative impacts on internal layers of many cultures.

Cultural futurists study the cultural trends, extrapolate them and develop cultural models that define the future application of cultural technologies in every society. The sound implementation of this process can facilitate the cultural revival of societies according to new conditions and also reflect the art of cultural foresight. Futures studies and culture have a friendly relationship. The cultural futurists never let themselves determine the people's cultural interactions. Instead, they respect the people's right of choice in choosing and using different cultural models and help them find proper and advanced cultural patterns and industries by developing relevant visions for themselves.

## Futures Studies And Culture

The importance and urgency of research on the future of culture in our contemporary world is no longer a friendly recommendation, but an undeniable necessity. Many countries that have concerns over the futures of their nation's culture either have developed comprehensive cultural studies programs or have begun to study the future of their nations' cultures. The effective factors of cultural futures, cultural trends, technologies and industries are studied in these programs and a set of useful policies are developed to make reliable opportunities available for building preferred cultural futures.

The futurists, who regularly observe alternative futures including cultural futures, devote a number of their efforts to the identification of cultural futures and helping the society's decision makers and planners to plan for desired cultural futures. What has introduced the research on the future of culture as an attractive field of study is the concept of "change". Culture is a changing and changer phenomenon. It is impressed by social factors, in turn. The futurists believe that a set of social change factors embrace the cultural change like: industrial and economic capabilities, enterprise market and job opportunities, "geographical, political and social conditions", natural resources and reserves, the society's scientific and technological developments, knowledge economy and the society's model of consumption in different fields.

The first question that is addressed in cultural futures studies is: "How can we determine the roles of aforementioned factors in cultural shifts?" The cultural futurists extract definite models from a huge amount of data and information. These models show how small and big cultural shifts can make different cultural futures and their final outcome tells us that the world is going toward a global joint culture.

According to the futurists, globalization is a phenomenon that is covering different aspects of humans' lives in a growing manner. Of course, the way of becoming affected by globalization is different in every society. However, globalization is a topic that should be studied in cultural futures studies. It can be said that the future of culture is hidden in the globalization. Cultural synergy, cooperation and competition become meaningful in the light of globalization.

Talking about the globalization, we may face with different points of view. Some regard it as a phenomenon conflicting with the survival of national and local cultures and others think that it can empower the promotion of local and ethnic cultures among other nations. Of course, the globalization is regarded as the facilitator of cultural interactions and thereby the cultural evolution in the eyes of academicians.

