



African Leadership Excellence Academy

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Center for Political Culture Transformation

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1. Introduction

The center will have strategic partners for its quality, relevant, and timely research and training programs on the political cultures in Ethiopia and Africa. Accordingly, the center will make agreements with institutions and think-tanks that are working on the same issue in Ethiopia and Africa. These can have local, continental, and international bases.

However, today's world politics, especially those of Ethiopia and Africa, are not stable and predictable. The reason is mainly the result of Africa's own internal problems and the world's power alignment. For example, in the past, Africa suffered from the slave trade, exploited by colonizers in the latter eras, and is now being affected by neo-colonialism. Africa was supposed to be a continent as strong as the European Union after colonial independence, but it could not be. Historically, European manufacturing plants have moved to Asia, where there is a large population. Although Africa had a large population and cheap labor, it missed that chance because of the fragmented population created by the colonizers. Asia, on the other hand, is a continent with a large population, a comparatively developed country with developed politics and economies, and a future in which the balance of power is developing.

As a result, Asia, especially Russia and China, has become a powerful force, challenging Europe and the United States. Developing countries, such as African countries, are reluctantly maintaining the balance between the two superpowers. Africa in particular seems to be ready for a new scramble. The Saudi Arabia and African Leaders' Summit, the Russia and Africa Leaders' Summit, the China and Africa Leaders' Summit, the European and African Leaders' Summit, and the U.S. and African Leaders' Summit are indicators for this. As you know, in the past, the world's power alignment was between Europeans. Now it's close to being transitioned to being between the United States and Asia. If political tensions continue in the current situation, the world could face World War III. The war is more damaging to Africa. This is because the military preparations in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, including the Horn of Africa, can be seen as a demonstration. Therefore, Africa's past traumas must not be repeated now, and its political culture must be developed so that Africa has its own strong position and plays an important role in world politics.

For this purpose, this document has been prepared, containing explorations of the processes of world political culture development for the establishment of a viable political cultural transformation center at the African Leadership Excellence Academy.

2. What is political culture?

From the point of view of political science, political culture refers to the common perception that a people hold regarding the political system, how they view the political system, and their belief in its legitimacy. American political scientist Lucian Pi defined political culture as a combination of fundamental values, feelings, and knowledge that form the basis of the political process. Thus, political culture is the property of a society. For example, it means a country, region, class, or party.

However, most political culture studies conducted in the past have focused on ethnic cultures, while some have focused on units in sub-national regions. For example, the U.S. territories, Canadian provinces, or Italian territories are political cultures. Other studies have focused on the political and cultural characteristics of social groups such as political elites, the working class, and so on.

In contrast, Gabrielle Almond and Sydney Verba, American political scientists, based on studies conducted in the United States, Britain, Italy, and Mexico in 1963, sought to identify a political culture in which liberal democracy can develop and strengthen. The arguments of these researchers are based on the differences between three political cultures. They are parochial, subject, and participant. In a parochial political culture, citizens clearly know something about the existence of the central government. In a parochial political culture, citizens clearly know something about the existence of the central government. In political culture, citizens are treated as subjects of the state, not participants in political integration. In participant political culture, citizens believe that they can contribute to the system and are influenced by the system.

In general, political culture refers to the common attitudes and codes of conduct by which people judge the political system, including citizens' beliefs, opinions, and feelings about their government. Political culture takes into account the attitudes, values, and beliefs of people in a society about the political system. Political culture is defined as how culture influences politics, and every political system is embraced within a political culture. Thus, political culture is a matter of public psychology, not political activity

Elements of Political Culture

As W. Lance Bennett wrote in his 1980 book *News: The Politics of Illusion*, the elements of political culture can be hard to analyze. “They are rather like the lenses in a pair of glasses: they are not the things we see when we look at the world; they are the things we see with.”

Political culture can be thought of as a nation’s political personality. It encompasses the deep-rooted, well-established political traits that are characteristic of a society. Political culture takes into account the attitudes, values, and beliefs that people in a society have about the political system, including standard assumptions about the way that government works.

Political culture helps build community and facilitate communication because people share an understanding of how and why political events, actions, and experiences occur in their country. In his 1994 book *The American Mosaic*, Daniel Elazar wrote that political culture includes formal rules as well as customs and traditions, sometimes referred to as “habits of the heart,” that are passed on generationally. People agree to abide by certain formal rules, such as the country’s constitution and codified laws. They also live by unwritten rules: for example, the willingness of people in the United States to accept the outcomes of elections without resorting to violence—the so-called “peaceful transition of power.” Political culture sets the boundaries of acceptable political behavior in a society.

Aspects of public life that contribute to a country’s political culture and national identity go beyond voting in elections and include working on political campaigns, donating money to candidates or causes, contacting public officials, petitioning, protesting, and working on issues with other people.

Importance of Political Culture:

Political culture helps build community and facilitate communication, because people share and understand how and why political events, actions, and experiences occur in their country.

- It shapes a population's political perceptions and actions.
- It takes into account the attitudes, values, and beliefs that people in a society have about the political system, including standard assumptions about the way that government works.
- It denotes how people view the political system and their belief in its legitimacy, efficacy, and ability to endure challenges.
- It makes explaining the political past and predicting the political future more logical.

To reach this level of values, a national political culture has to be built.

3. National Political Culture and Characteristics of Political Culture

As noted above, a political culture is considered to have reached a stable level if it is a national political culture, which is beyond neighborhood and villages or a few politicians and leaders or activists. Among the countries that have developed such a strong national political culture are the United States, China, and India. The experience of these countries helps to point out the relationship between political culture and ethnic identity and the characteristics of political culture.

3.1 Political culture of the United States

The historical origins of American political culture stem from the American Revolution and the struggle for freedom. Among the major events that affected America's success and sense of national pride were the Industrial Revolution, World War II, and the events of September 11, 2001. American political culture can be defined by some basic and commonly shared beliefs, such as a commitment to democracy, equality, capitalism, and individualism, and some fundamental and shared beliefs. The concepts that American political culture is based on individual rights, nationalism, and reliance on an agent legislature, not individual domination, are only mentioned in the political culture of the United States.

3.2 Political Culture in China

With its people indoctrinated into the collectivist perspective of the Chinese Communist Party as children, the political culture of China is tied closely to political socialization. This early teaching is thought to explain the delayed growth of secularism in Chinese culture, especially during the Chinese Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976. Chinese political culture views the relationship between government and citizens to be a hierarchy. Because of this, there is little pushback from individuals during policy and regulatory changes. The political culture also shows a trend against confrontation, which decreases the frequency of social conflict. Both of these qualities stem from traditional Chinese values embedded during the age of Confucianism. When the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1948, Mao Zedong unsuccessfully attempted to remove these traits from the culture, instead opting for revolutionary values and priorities.

3.3 Political Culture of India

India's years of colonization by the British Empire influenced the country's modern political culture by introducing Western ideals that had not been present before. The ideals include democracy and parliamentary systems, two institutions that stood ideologically opposite of the hereditary caste system that had dictated Indian society for more than 2000 years. Because of India's multicultural demography, the political culture varies by group and region. As a result of democratization, political power in India is now shared by the urbanized and well-educated class who focused on national appeal, as well as more traditional, rural, and lower-class political players. The ancient Indian caste system is slowly breaking down, with members of lower classes now entering higher political and economic positions. This is especially true for lower-economic-class women, who had historically been excluded from political activity.

Political culture often leads to the formation of different viewpoints of people towards their national identity—the sense of one's belonging to the nation and the extent to which people believe being a member of that nation is important. Extensive research has found that citizens' relationships with their nation overlap to varying degrees with their political

views. What makes the members of a given society assume a unique identity for themselves, is mainly their culture and its symbolic aspects.

Since Sidney Verba wrote *The Civic Culture* in 1963, national identity has been considered to be a central component of political culture. Irish political scientist Brian Girvin, for example, asserts that political culture is split into three levels: the “macrolevel,” consisting of a core of national identity and rarely questioned; the meso-level consisting of long-term but contested political “rules of the game,” such as limited government, free markets, low taxes, individuality, and self-determination; and the micro-level, at which “normal political activity,” such as elections, occurs.

3.4 Political Culture of European Union: Many scholars point out that most Europeans cannot support the European Union because the EU is currently in crisis. This crisis arose because each of the 27 member states had its own social protection system. As a result, the EU does not make much sense. It is said that this crisis stems from the limited funds to force the implementation of the Union's programs. Most of the money the organization provides to member states comes from structural funding funds. This is not enough to ensure adequate social protection. Thus, while social policy is often a defining feature of the state, the legitimacy of the union is questioned until the union is unable to provide viable social policy.

3.5 The state of Asian political culture

To understand the culture of Asian politics, it is important to divide Asia in to East and South. East Asia is a cultural sector characterized by the lasting impact of Confucianism on political and socioeconomic life. Educational interest in East Asian political culture is mainly shaped by the great diversity in the economic and political landscape of this region. The systemic differences between Confucianism and its Western philosophical allies in prescribing how to organize associations and manage intergovernmental-societal relations are central to understanding the diversity of this region's political culture.

Access to high-quality environmental studies has empowered them to more effectively examine East Asian political culture and explore the so-called "foundation of Asian values" in a much broader context. They have a broader view of Asian ethical standards. However, the scholars do not have agreement regarding East Asia. This has prevented a more fruitful discussion among scholars about the differences between imaginary tools and equivalent theories, as well as the lack of adequate research design to fit the various translations of the Bible called "Asian moral theory."

As we conduct future research, investigating such issues can lead to more effective knowledge gathering and greater results

South Asia (South Asia) is the southern subregion of Asia. This region is known for its geographical and ethno-cultural expression. As usual, modern South Asian states include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and, in some cases, Iran. The South Asian Association for Environmental Cooperation (SAARC) is an economic cooperation organization established in 1985 and comprising all eight countries that make up South Asia. The mainland countries of South Asia have an area of 10% of the skin area of the Asian continent. The local population is 1.9 billion, or about a quarter of the world's population, according to a broad definition. This has made this area the most densely populated geographical region in the world.

Locally, India has become a major geopolitical power, and in the area is largely comprised of land, population, economic and military expenditure. India is a major economy, a member of the G4, has the world's third-largest military budget, and exerts a strong cultural and political influence on the region.

3.6 African Political Culture

Although the current map of Africa was originally drawn by European colonial powers, its territories and borders of its countries remained man-made. Just as many have strong attachments to linguistic, regional, or religious identities, Africans have also developed a strong affinity with

their national identity. They also say they want their African countries to be governed democratically. On the other hand, they state that their trust in other citizens, or at least in people who do not share a common ethnic or local identity, is very low. However, citizens have high levels of membership in community organizations and are often involved in local politics. While most Africans express a strong interest in politics, they have low political effectiveness. But while Africa is not a country, these aspects are often very different across the continent. Indeed, in many places, it is uncertain whether citizen support will be enough to sustain the multi-party system and democratic rule seen in the 1990s.

As a result, many African countries, including Ethiopia, are characterized by war, hatred, lack of civilization, demolition and renewal and lack of strong and sustainable political culture. Hence, the problem of institutionalization, nation-state, peace, development, democracy, etc., both at the African level and in Ethiopia It can be concluded that the primary source is the problem of political culture. Thus, it can be concluded that the main source of the problem of institutional, nation-state, peace, development, democracy, etc., both at the African level and in Ethiopia is the problem of political culture. The Center for Political Culture Transformation at the African Leadership Excellence Academy will be a center that will solve this.

A useful summary of political culture is people's values, knowledge, and evaluations of their political community, political regime, and political institutions, as well as how they see themselves and others as citizens.

4. Center for Political Culture Transformation in AFLEX

The Political Culture Transformation Center in AFLEX is responsible for studying the status of political culture, devising strategies, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of political culture transformation in Ethiopia and Africa.

4.1 The Objective

The African Leadership Excellence Academy will establish a political culture transformation center that will formulate political culture strategies for Ethiopia and Africa to solve their problems through ideation, research, publication, dialogue, and debate.

4.2 Specific Objectives of the Center

- To Establish a Centre of Excellence for the study and practice of political culture transformation in Ethiopia and Africa.
- To conduct innovative research on matters relating to the status of political culture in Ethiopia and Africa.
- To develop a historically sound, geopolitically nuanced understanding of political culture that engages a wide array of cultural, political, medial, ideological and social problems and challengers pertaining to political cultures in Ethiopia and Africa.
- To devise viable strategies for the transformation of political cultures in Ethiopia and Africa.

4.3 Activities of the Center for Political Culture Transformation

- a) Diagnoses the status of Ethiopian and African political culture,
- b) Devises viable strategies to transform political culture in Ethiopia and Africa,
- c) Ideates and generates ideas on the political culture of Ethiopia and Africa through research, discussion and debate;
- d) Implements the political transformation strategies in the political culture frameworks.
- e) Sponsors researches on political culture transformation in Ethiopia and Africa.
- f) Disseminates ideas on political culture transformation through media outlets, publications and dialogues;
- g) Monitors the process of implementation of strategies to evaluate political culture transformation,
- h) Provides trainings on political culture management, political culture psychology and political culture communication,
- i) Organizes events of ideation, debates and dialogues on political culture building and societal development through the media, in a transparent forum where people gather, in print and so on:
 - With scholars from the field and various sectors of society,
 - With political elites and leaders,
 - With stakeholders and democratic institutions,
- j) Collects the resources needed for the achievement of its mission in a coordinated manner from donors and partners; according to the center's financial system, it uses the resources properly.

5. Expected Outcomes

- The status of African political culture is diagnosed and explored.
- Political culture-building strategies that will be implemented at the Ethiopian and African levels are formulated.
- The African Political Culture Transformation Center has been established and is equipped with the necessary physical infrastructure, staff, and resources.
- Ethiopian and African political cultures have been transformed.

6. Operational Strategies of the Center

The Center for political culture transformation in AFLEX carries out the following strategies:

6.1 Trainings programs

The center will deliver tailored training programs for governmental and non-governmental leaders on Political Management, Political Psychology, Political Communication and related issues.

6.2 Research programs

The center will conduct researches on Africa's pressing political and geopolitical issues and advocate for solutions so that, the Center can make the continent politically modest. Based on the research outputs the Center will develop strategies and policies, advise leaders, inspire the next generation of leaders.

6.3 Partnership and Cooperation

The center will have strategic partners for its quality, relevant, and timely research and training programs on the political cultures in Ethiopia and Africa. Accordingly, the center will make agreements with institutions and think-tanks who are working on the same issue in Ethiopia and Africa. These can have local, continental and international bases.

7. Infrastructural and manpower requirements of the center

To achieve the objectives outlined above, the center for political culture transformation will have the following arrangements:

7.1 In terms of manpower, the center will have:

- one general director who can effectively manage the operations of the center and has the best leadership skills in the field.
- two co-directors—one from the natural sciences and another from the social sciences;
- 11 high-caliber professors and researchers in the same field of study.
- The directors and co-directors will be selected through a competition based on merit.
- The professors and researchers will be selected based on their experience and educational background in Ethiopia and other African countries.

7.2 In terms of infrastructure, the center will have:

- a modern building equipped with resources to carry out its operations efficiently,
- a research center to conduct studies on political culture transformation activities,
- a fully equipped conference hall that can accommodate 300 people at a time;

Likewise, it will have six modern syndicate rooms, each of which can accommodate 50 people at a time. Apart from this, the center will have:

- 300 modern dormitories that can accommodate 300 people at a time,
- 14 offices for 1 director, 2 co-directors, and 11 professionals,

Salaries and benefits for the staff will be covered by the academy from project resources.

7.3 In terms of technology and resources:

- The center will have complete ICT infrastructure and broadband internet service;
- It will be equipped with modern electronic resources (laptop, computer, CCTV cameras and so on),
- Will be equipped with necessary furniture, utilities, facilities, etc.

8.Stakeholders

The political culture transformation center of AFLEX will enhance the experience of working in collaboration with local, continental, and international stakeholders that have a high stake in the successful achievement of its objectives.

Accordingly:

8.1 From institutions in the country

- FDRE House of Peoples' Representatives,
- the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia,
- Ethiopian Human Rights Commission,
- Institute of the Ombudsman of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia,
- African Study Center, Addis Ababa University.

8.2 From the continent

- African Union (AU),
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD),
- ISSA,

8.3 From international institutions

- United Nations (UN)
- Frederic Ebert Foundation
- UNDP
- USAID
- Norwegian Embassy (NORAD)

