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GLOCEPS Webinar Series

**Theme: Institutionalizing the Raila Odinga Legacy:
Constitutionalism, Democratic Reform, and the
Realization of African Union Agenda 2063**

Week 5 : Thursday 23rd April 2026 | Time: 9:00am - 12:00pm

Meeting ID: 870 813 646 58 | Passcode: 266573

*Article 1: Mirror for African Democracy: A Comparative Reflection from Kenya,
Tanzania and Senega ~ Elizabeth Adundo Yogo*

*Article 2: National Unity and Political Agreements: A Critical Analysis of the Handshake
as a Model for Conflict Resolution ~ Ogada Barrack & Obura Elizabeth*



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Abstract

Mirror for African Democracy: A Comparative Reflection from Kenya, Tanzania and Senegal

Elizabeth Adundo Yogo

Rt. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga's political life revolved around four major election cycles –2007, 2013, 2017 and 2022—with each occasion examining issues around electoral credibility, post-election institutional trust and constitutional legitimacy in the pursuit of democratic process in Africa. The paper captures reflections on what shaped Rt. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga responses to electoral challenge, which took varying forms from the 2007-08 post-election violence, 2013-2017 Supreme Court petitions and ultimately acceptance and reconciliation in 2018. The paper distills personal experiences, observations and insights from multiple failed elections in Kenya, comparative evidence from Tanzania and Senegal field work as an election observer as a frame to discuss the broad themes of electoral integrity and democratic renewal in African countries

For most African countries where multiparty democracy has been the order of the day for the last three decades, one critical question that remains unanswered is how electoral integrity is handled and what checks are in place to address disputes arising out of multiparty elections that have been marred by violence or acts of impunity. Elections are a reflection of national democratic will, yet how well they are run in terms of electoral legal framework, management of the electoral cycle and processes also test the integrity of democracy that underpins most of these electoral systems. This paper takes an approach that is likely to be replicated in different democracies in the African continent and offers the best practices as well as institutional reforms that will improve the conduct of elections on the continent.

The paper attempts to answer three important questions: how electoral contestation is played out in an election process, lessons from this contestation and how these may be constructively addressed across the continent using case studies and examples from Rwanda, Malawi and Ethiopia to offer new ways for electoral management and the legal space within the purview of AU agenda 2063. Election management bodies, civic participation, media reporting, political party financing and citizen observation of elections will be critical points of reference to outline why elections fail or pass in light of the expectation and standards of free, fair and credible elections.

Key Words: Electoral integrity, Raila Odinga, legitimacy of elections, election violence, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, AU agenda 2063



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Abstract

National Unity and Political Agreements: A Critical Analysis of the Handshake as a Model for Conflict Resolution

Ogada Barrack & Obura Elizabeth

Kenya's recurring episodes of electoral struggles have kept national unity and political stability at the centre of its democratic development. The 2018 Handshake between Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta emerged as an unexpected political agreement that momentarily pulled/steered the country out of its typical cycle of conflict. However, despite the attention it received, its real impact on conflict resolution remains underexplored. Current research often portrays the Handshake as a political event, overlooking its role as a governance tool. This study aims to fill this knowledge lacuna by analysing the Handshake as a framework for resolving political conflict and fostering unity in a fragile democracy. Using the lens of elite bargaining theory, the paper investigates how the Handshake contributed to national unity and political stability in Kenya. The study's objectives are to analyse the Handshake's immediate and long-term effects on national stability, examine whether the Handshake reduced elite-level and public polarisation, and evaluate lessons emanating from the same to inform future institutional approaches to political agreements. A qualitative desktop research design guides the analysis, focusing on both primary and secondary sources. The approach allows for tracing patterns of elite negotiation, public sentiment, and institutional responses before and after the agreement. The initial findings reveal that the Handshake significantly reduced elite conflict and fostered an environment more conducive to dialogue, thereby alleviating public tensions. However, its resolving effects seem inconsistent as it relies mainly on the personal goodwill and rapport between political actors rather than on institutionalised frameworks. The study concludes that while the Handshake offers valuable insights into Odinga's approach to conflict resolution, Kenya's long-term political stability depends on embedding these mechanisms within stronger, more reliable, and institutionalised structures.

Key Words: Conflict Resolution; Democratic Resilience; Elite Bargaining; National Unity; Political Agreements Raila Odinga