



THE GLOBAL CENTRE FOR POLICY AND STRATEGY
Research | Knowledge | Influence



GLOCEPS Webinar Series

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

Week 7: Wednesday 6th May 2026 | Time: 9:00am - 12:00pm

Meeting ID: 849 319 057 22 | Passcode: 156951

Article 1: Institutionalising the Legacy and Leadership of Raila Amolo Odinga: Democracy, Constitutionalism, and Africa's Transformation ~ *Osano Kute*

Article 2: Charisma, Coercion, or Strategic Misjudgment: Personal Traits in Contemporary Mass Leadership in Africa and the Political Dynamics of Dr. Raila Amolo Odinga ~ *Amb. Dr. Akinyi Odinga Walkowa, PhD. & Otieno Aluoka*



Dr. Caroline Sambai, PhD.
Chair



Osano Kute
Author



Amb. Dr. Akinyi Odinga Walkowa, PhD.
Author



Mr. Otieno Aluoka
Author



Prof. Daniel Orwenjo, PhD.
Moderator



Amb. Tom Amolo, EBS
Discussant



Prof. Fred Jonyo, PhD.
Discussant



Prof. Maurice Amutabi, PhD.
Discussant



Dr. James Olela, PhD.
Discussant



Mr. Samuel Otieno, CBS, MBS
Vote of Thanks



THE GLOBAL CENTRE FOR POLICY AND STRATEGY
Research | Knowledge | Influence

GLOCEPS Webinar Series

Abstract

Institutionalising the Legacy and Leadership of Raila Amolo Odinga: Democracy, Constitutionalism, and Africa's Transformation

Osano Kute

Raila Amolo Odinga is one of the most consequential and paradoxical architects of Africa's contemporary democratic evolution and continental transformation. Across more than six decades, he has combined roles as democrat, reformist, economic visionary, educator, mediator, entrepreneurial catalyst and family patriarch, defying attempts to contain him within a single discipline or political label. His leadership has been marked by a rare outcomes-driven pragmatism: repeatedly building bridges across Kenya's political divides, forging coalitions with former adversaries such as Mwai Kibaki, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, and advancing a pan-African vision of peace, unity and shared prosperity grounded in institutional reform rather than personal rule. The paper interrogates Odinga's legacy through three interlocking themes. First, it examines his central role in institutionalising constitutional reform and democratic progress in Kenya, culminating in the 2010 Constitution, deep devolution and the country's contribution to the African Union's Agenda 2063. Second, it analyses his transformative impact on peacebuilding, youth empowerment, MSME growth, continental trade, digital and infrastructure integration and resource governance, with particular focus on his AfCFTA advocacy and mediation roles from Kenya to Côte d'Ivoire, South Sudan and other regional flashpoints. Third, it advances an agenda for African-driven scholarship and educational innovation that both critically evaluates leadership and secures legacy, excellence and continuity, including reforms to postgraduate training, mandatory documentation of African achievers and deliberate capacity-building outcomes. Using documentary evidence, policy analysis, firsthand accounts and contemporary case studies, the manuscript argues that Odinga's enduring significance lies less in electoral outcomes than in the durable institutions, norms and networks that his leadership has helped entrench. It concludes that properly understood, his story reframes debates on African responsibility, agency and visionary leadership at a moment when the continent's transformation sits at a strategic crossroads.



THE GLOBAL CENTRE FOR POLICY AND STRATEGY
Research | Knowledge | Influence

GLOCEPS Webinar Series

Abstract

**Charisma, Coercion, or Strategic Misjudgment:
Personal Traits in Contemporary Mass Leadership
in Africa and the Political Dynamics of Dr. Raila
Amolo Odinga**

Amb. Dr. Akinyi Odinga Walkowa, PhD. & Otieno Aluoka

Upon his passing, both allies and critics have acknowledged the nuanced complexities of Raila Odinga's political influence in East Africa, recognizing that his leadership will leave a lasting legacy. Raila Odinga, a prominent figure in populism and social justice, passed away in India on October 15, 2025, where he had sought medical treatment. His final wish was to be interred within 72 hours of his death, a request that was honored. However, his unexpected departure from the regional political scene he had dominated for years also underscored the intricate role of personal characteristics in shaping political ideology and support. Raila Odinga was renowned for his vigorous and dynamic approach to ideas and work. He encountered relatively few legal challenges in a political landscape rife with public scandals and corruption. He was known for his assertive public stance on political matters and appeared largely unmoved by conventional political choices. While he was often accused of inciting violence to maintain political control, he also garnered a substantial following as a dedicated peacemaker. How can scholars of leadership define Raila Odinga's leadership style, identity, and public perception? What psychological factors influenced Raila's leadership approach and dominance? This paper aims to explore and present the psychological aspects of leadership that characterized Raila Odinga's rise to power. The evident themes of his persistent struggles, modest lifestyle, and commitment to local communities will serve as frameworks for discussing the scholarship of Raila Odinga's politics before and after 1992, the year of Kenya's first multi-party general elections. The analysis will broadly cover his political leadership within parties, particularly the ODM, as well as his public campaigns and influence in national political events. A literature review of existing works and primary interviews will be essential for gathering relevant information and conducting a collaborative analysis.