

The GLOCEPS

Webinar Series | Week 4 Report

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

Overview and Analytical Framing

The Global Centre for Policy and Strategy (GLOCEPS) convened the fourth session of its ten-week webinar series on 15th April 2026 to examine how reformist political legacies can be institutionalized within Africa's governance systems.

The session was anchored on two interlinked thematic concerns. First, the embedding of constitutionalism and democratic reform within durable governance systems aligned with the African Union Agenda 2063. Second, the role of reform leadership in advancing gender-responsive governance within political institutions.

The central analytical question guiding the session was: **How can reformist political ideals be transformed into enduring institutional practices that survive beyond individual leaders?**

The discussions reaffirmed that democratic consolidation in Africa requires a decisive shift from personality-driven politics toward legally anchored, institutionally enforced, and system-resilient governance frameworks.

Strategic Context and Opening Reflections

The session was opened by **Dr. Caroline Sambai, PhD**, on behalf of **Brig. (Rtd) Wilson Boinett**, Chair of the GLOCEPS Council of Advisers. She situated the dialogue within Kenya's constitutional trajectory and broader continental governance reforms.

Dr. Kenedy Asembo, Executive Director of GLOCEPS, framed the webinar within the Governance and Ethics Pillar, emphasizing that the

series is entering a consolidation phase focused on analytical rigor, conceptual clarity, and policy relevance. Outputs from the series will contribute to the forthcoming GLOCEPS Eastern Africa Journal for Policy and Strategy.

The session was moderated by **Mr. Michael Owuor**, who ensured structured engagement and analytical focus across presentations and discussant interventions.

Summary of Key Insights from Papers

Paper I: Institutionalising Raila Odinga's Legacy

Author: Serah Wangeci Gachunga

The paper shifts from biographical narration to institutional analysis, examining how political legacies can be embedded within governance systems.

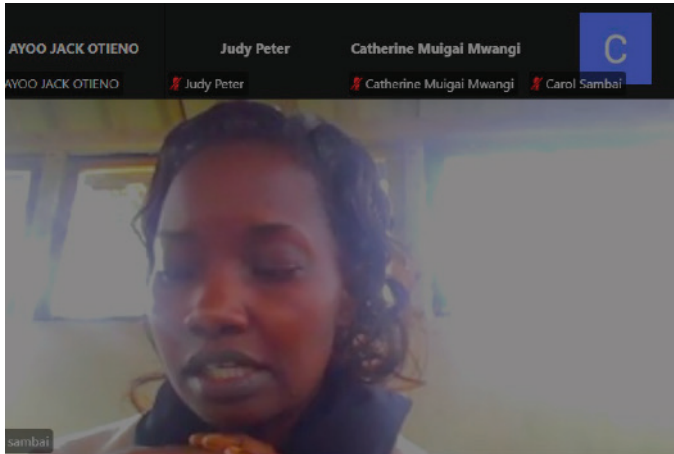
Key insights include:

- Devolution remains a central mechanism for addressing historical inequality, but is constrained by weak implementation and recentralization tendencies.
- Institutionalisation of political legacy requires strengthened county autonomy, independent oversight institutions, and enhanced civic constitutional literacy.
- Raila Odinga's African Union engagement (2018–2021) contributed to continental integration priorities, including AfCFTA and Agenda 2063 alignment.





- Persistent gaps remain in electoral reform, constitutional enforcement, and institutional independence.



Paper II: Gender Parity and Political Transformation

Author: Dr. Gloria Nyambura Kenyatta

The paper applies feminist institutionalism to examine gender reform dynamics in Kenya's political system. Key insights include:

- Odinga's advocacy aligns with gender equity frameworks such as the one-third gender rule.
- Implementation gaps demonstrate the limits of leadership-driven reform without institutional enforcement mechanisms.
- Women-led counties demonstrate improved governance and service delivery outcomes.
- Structural barriers persist, including weak party compliance and entrenched patriarchal norms.

Discussants' Reflections and Critical Engagement

Paper I

Discussants: Amb. Catherine Mwangi & Dr. Peter Kirui

Amb. Catherine Mwangi

Amb. Mwangi noted that while the paper is relevant, it remains under-theorised and structurally weak.

Key concerns:

- Absence of a clear research question undermines analytical direction
- Weak academic structure and narrative coherence
- Limited critical engagement with Odinga's legacy
- Overly celebratory tone reducing analytical neutrality
- Weak linkage between Agenda 2063 and empirical governance outcomes

She further emphasized the need to:

- Critically interrogate what institutional transformation means for Africa's governance trajectory
- Move beyond description toward structural analysis of governance systems
- Translate "institutionalising legacy" into measurable institutional indicators
- Reinterpret "Handshake politics" through elite bargaining theory

Conclusion: The paper is promising but requires stronger conceptual clarity and empirical grounding.





Dr. Peter Kirui

Dr. Kirui emphasized deeper theoretical engagement, particularly Weberian charisma and populism. Key observations:

- Charismatic authority raises sustainability questions for institutional durability
- Populism creates tension with liberal democratic consolidation
- The “Handshake” should be treated as both stabilizing and institutionally disruptive
- Internal party contradictions remain underexplored
- Lack of reflection on post-leadership legacy sustainability dynamics

Key gaps:

- Missing a balanced critique of key political episodes
- Over-descriptive analytical structure
- Weak linkage between findings and policy implications

Paper II:

Discussants: Dr. Susan Mwangi & Prof. Daniel Orwenjo

Dr. Susan Mwangi

Dr. Mwangi called for stronger conceptual, theoretical, and methodological grounding.

Key concerns:

Need to shift framing from “gender parity” to ***gender-responsive political transformation***

- Weak application of feminist institutionalism
- Absence of the Gender Parity Index and quantitative indicators
- No integration of gender-responsive budgeting analysis
- Weak historical contextualization (Beijing 1995, UN frameworks)

- Limited integration of broader feminist literature
- Narrow conceptualization of gender discourse

She further recommended:

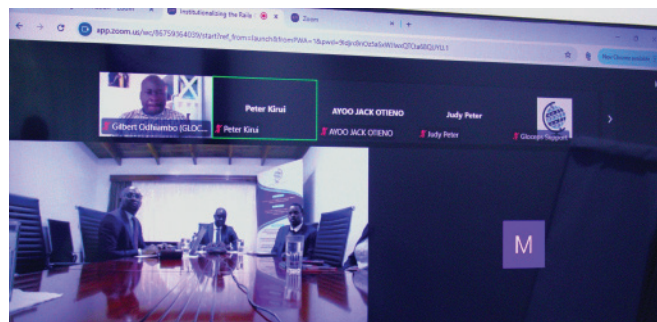
- Integrating institutionalisation of gender within political parties beyond numerical representation
- Incorporating political philosophy contributions relevant to gender inclusion, including support mechanisms for women aspirants (e.g., reduced party fees and nomination reforms)

Prof. Daniel Orwenjo

Prof. Orwenjo provided a comprehensive critique across structure, theory, methodology, and academic writing.

Key issues:

- **Title:** Misleading and overbroad relative to analytical focus
- **Abstract:** Does not follow standard academic structure (background, objective, methods, findings, conclusion)
- **Language:** Inconsistent tense, reflecting proposal-stage writing
- **Problem Statement:** Contains unnecessary content, weakening precision
- **Literature Review:** Requires a stronger focus on Odinga-specific scholarship and broader feminist literature
- **Theoretical Framework:** Underdeveloped and insufficient



Key recommendations:

- Adopt **Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991)** alongside feminist institutionalism
- Capture overlapping inequalities (class, ethnicity, geography, gender)
- Include multi-actor contributions beyond Raila Odinga
- Strengthen the justification of theoretical choices and link them to findings
- Address differential marginalization among women in politics

Methodological weaknesses identified:

- No clarity on document selection criteria
 - No sampling logic or corpus definition
 - No data extraction procedure
 - Lack of temporal framing and dataset structure
- Conclusion:** The paper requires fundamental restructuring in theory, methodology, and analytical depth.

Plenary Reflections

Cross-cutting issues emerging from plenary discussion included:

- Weak conceptualisation of "institutionalising legacy."
- Predominance of descriptive over analytical writing
- Limited engagement with institutional vs charismatic leadership tensions
- Weak operationalisation of Agenda 2063 frameworks
- Absence of primary data weakens causal claims
- Structural weaknesses in the title, theory, abstract, and methodology

A central concern was the need to elevate analytical rigor across both papers.

Key Areas for Improvement Paper I

- Define and operationalise "institutionalising legacy" as a measurable governance concept.
- Strengthen theoretical grounding (Weberian charisma, populism, elite bargaining theory)
- Shift from descriptive narration to analytical explanation
- Integrate a balanced critique of political legacy
- Strengthen empirical grounding and evidence linkage
- Reframe Handshake politics within elite settlement frameworks
- Align recommendations with actionable policy reforms

Paper II

- Revise title for conceptual precision
- Fully restructure abstract (standard academic format)
- Correct tense inconsistencies and remove proposal-style language
- Strengthen literature review (Odinga-specific and feminist governance literature)
- Expand the theoretical framework to include Intersectionality Theory
- Fully revise methodology with clear data logic, sampling, and corpus definition
- Demonstrate explicit application of theory in analysis
- Introduce the Gender Parity Index and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) analysis
- Broaden analytical scope beyond a single political actor
- Strengthen causal reasoning and balance normative framing
 - Deepen historical contextualisation (Beijing 1995, UN frameworks)





Cross-Cutting Analytical Insights

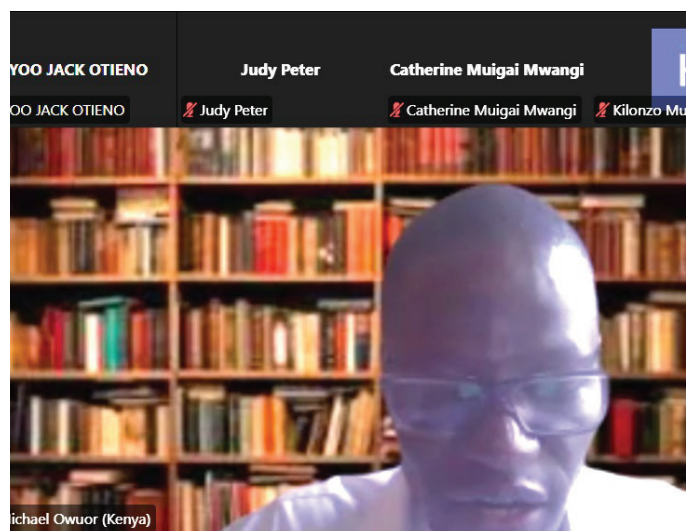
- Institutional strength is decisive for sustaining political legacies
- Informal political systems constrain formal constitutional reforms
- Institutionalisation is inherently political, not merely technical
- Gender equality remains a key indicator of democratic consolidation
- Agenda 2063 provides a relevant but underutilised governance framework
- Analytical credibility requires a balance between critique and interpretation
- Methodological transparency and theoretical depth are essential for validity

The webinar series will continue strengthening analytical rigor and policy relevance, contributing to the forthcoming GLOCEPS Eastern Africa Journal for Policy and Strategy.

Both papers require substantial revision before publication consideration, particularly in strengthening conceptual clarity, theoretical depth, methodological transparency, and empirical grounding.

Conclusion and Way Forward

In closing remarks, **Dr. Kenedy Asembo** noted that while Kenya's governance reforms reflect significant constitutional progress, persistent gaps remain between formal institutional design and practical implementation.



THE GLOBAL CENTRE FOR POLICY AND STRATEGY
(GLOCEPS)
Research | Knowledge | Influence

Runda Drive 100, Nairobi, Kenya
P. O. Box 27023 - 00100, Nairobi.
Telephone: 0112401331
Email: info@gloceps.org
Web: www.gloceps.org

