

The GLOCEPS

Webinar Series | Week 8 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 eighth session of its ten-week webinar series on 13th May 2026, focusing on the dual dimensions of Raila Amolo Odinga's legacy: (i) infrastructure diplomacy and Pan-African development thought leadership, and (ii) constitutionalism, democratic reform, and the broader institutional question of how political vision is sustained beyond personality.

The session was structured around two papers:

- **Paper I:** Amplifying Pan-African Voice: A Post-modernist Shift in Infrastructure Development for Africa by Prof. Edmond Maloba Were, PhD
- **Paper II:** Unfinished Dreams: Institutionalizing Raila Odinga's Vision for Kenya and Africa by Terry Ruth Wanjiku Muriithi

Guiding Questions

- How can Odinga's infrastructure advocacy be theorized within African development thought?
- What mechanisms can institutionalize political vision beyond personality?
- How can youth agency be structurally embedded in governance systems?
- What comparative lessons emerge from global infrastructure and democratic transitions?

A key analytical conclusion was that Raila Odinga represents a hybrid political figure combining continental infrastructure advocacy with domestic democratic reform leadership. However, both papers require stronger methodological discipline, clearer theoretical consistency, and more robust translation

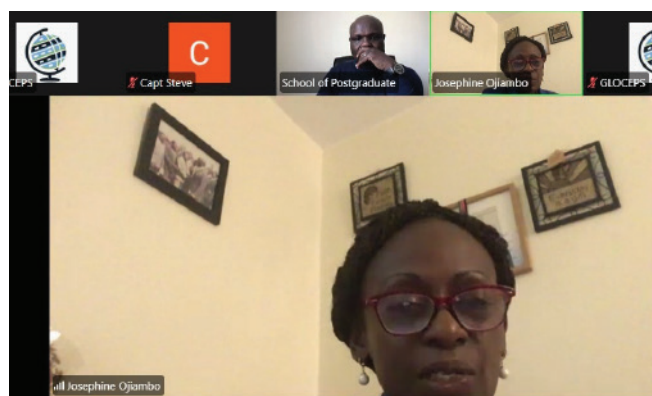
of normative claims into institutional design and policy mechanisms.

Strategic Context and Opening Reflections.

The session was opened by **Dr. K. O. Asembo, PhD, OGW, HSC**, Executive Director of GLOCEPS, who situated Week 8 within the broader series trajectory of moving from foundational governance analysis toward sectoral interrogation of leadership, infrastructure systems, and institutional continuity.

In his opening address, the **Week 8 Webinar Chair, DG (Rtd) Alexander M. Imbenzi, NDC (K), CBS, OGW**, emphasized that sustainable democratic transformation must be anchored in institutions rather than personalities. He cautioned against over-personalization of political legacy and reframed the central analytical question as follows: not merely what Raila Odinga achieved, but how his experiences in constitutional reform, coalition politics, democratic contestation, and Pan-African engagement inform institutional design for Africa's future governance systems.

The session was moderated by **Mr. Stephen Kiema**.





Summary of Key Papers

Paper I:

Amplifying Pan-African Voice: A Postmodernist Shift in Infrastructure Development for Africa

Author: Prof. Edmond Maloba Were, PhD.

The paper positioned Odinga's infrastructure advocacy within a postmodern critique of Eurocentric development paradigms and fragmented regional integration approaches. It argued that Africa's infrastructure transformation requires both technical planning and political narrative leadership capable of mobilizing continental consensus.

Key arguments included:

- Postmodernism enables a critique of linear, Eurocentric development models and opens space for plural African development trajectories.
- Odinga's AU role (2018–2022) strengthened continental coordination under PIDA and corridor-based integration frameworks.
- Flagship projects such as LAPSSET and trans-African corridors were framed as instruments of Pan-African connectivity and economic integration.
- The infrastructure paradox was addressed through PPPs, blended finance models, and regional capital mobilization strategies.

The paper concluded that political voice is a critical enabler of infrastructure integration, positioning Odinga as a continental infrastructure mobilizer whose influence extended beyond national boundaries.

Paper II:

Unfinished Dreams: Institutionalizing Raila Odinga's Vision for Kenya and Africa

Author: TerryRuth Wanjiku Muriithi

The paper provided an intergenerational reflection on Odinga's legacy, focusing on constitutionalism, democratic reform, and civic participation within Kenya and Africa.

Key arguments included:

- Odinga's role in the 2010 Constitution and devolution remains a foundational institutional legacy.
- His political trajectory reshaped discourse on accountability, inclusion, and democratic reform.
- His AU engagement aligned with Agenda 2063 aspirations on integration, peace, and people-centered development.
- Institutionalization requires civic education, constitutional literacy, and structured youth political participation systems.

The paper concluded that Odinga's legacy remains an unfinished institutional project requiring sustained reinforcement through governance systems rather than symbolic commemoration.

Discussants' Reflections and Integrated Analytical Strengthening

The discussants provided cross-cutting critiques that significantly shaped the analytical refinement of both papers.



Paper I: Infrastructure, Postmodernism, and African Agency

Amb. Dr. Josephine Ojiambo, PhD, emphasized that while the paper successfully elevates Odinga into continental development discourse, it remains weak in translating infrastructure advocacy into localized socio-economic transformation. She stressed the need to:

- Bridge infrastructure expansion with industrialization and employment creation outcomes
- Deepen analysis of Africa's agency in development financing and avoid overreliance on debt-driven models
- Strengthen county-level alignment with AU Agenda 2063 implementation
- Integrate gender dimensions, particularly the role of marginalized women in infrastructure economies
- Examine the institutionalization of AU High Representative roles beyond personalities
- Expand analysis of soft power as a tool for African-led development diplomacy

These insights underscore the need to move from infrastructure discourse to development impact analysis, particularly on inclusion, gender, and institutional sustainability.

Dr. Peter Kirui, PhD, raised methodological and theoretical concerns, highlighting:

- Lack of clear research design and empirical grounding
- Overextension and inconsistent application of postmodern theory
- Weak engagement with AU tenure outcomes and institutional limitations
- Absence of comparative geopolitical analysis

(including BRICS and global South power shifts)

He further posed critical questions on:

- Whether postmodernism adequately explains African development trajectories
- The risks and limits of postmodern theory in state-led development contexts
- Lessons African states can draw from colonial institutional legacies
- The evolving role of alternative global blocs, such as BRICS, in reshaping African development partnerships

These interventions call for stronger theoretical discipline, geopolitical contextualization, and integration of global political economy perspectives.

Paper II: Institutionalization, Contradictions, and Governance Pathways

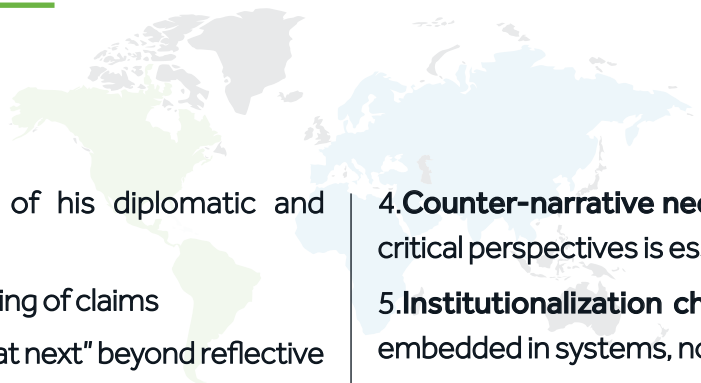
Dr. Evans Onyango, PhD, commended the reflective approach but noted:

- Weak alignment between the abstract and analytical structure
- Limited methodological clarity and underuse of secondary data
- Need to explicitly connect reflections to Agenda 2063 implementation pathways
- Overemphasis on personal reflection without structured analytical framing
- Insufficient engagement with the political language, ideology, and leadership style of Raila Odinga
- Absence of thematic depth on women, youth, and political accountability

He recommended integrating:

- Political communication analysis of Odinga's speeches and ideology





- Structured examination of his diplomatic and continental engagement
- Stronger empirical grounding of claims
- Clearer articulation of "what next" beyond reflective nostalgia

Maj. (Rtd) Beautah Mwanza Suba, SS emphasized critical balance and institutional realism, noting:

- Overly celebratory framing that masks contradictions in Odinga's political career
- Limited interrogation of handshake politics, coalition trade-offs, and devolution challenges
- Weak translation of normative claims into governance mechanisms
- Absence of actionable pathways for institutionalizing legacy beyond symbolic recognition

He further stressed:

- Need for explicit policy frameworks for institutionalizing constitutionalism
- Ensuring constitutional survival under political tension
- Deepening AU-level policy analysis of Odinga's contributions
- Moving beyond symbolic infrastructure naming toward structural governance reforms

Plenary Reflections

The plenary discussion generated six key analytical streams:

- 1.Infrastructure–industrialization disconnect:** Infrastructure development has not sufficiently translated into employment and industrial growth.
- 2.Theoretical contestation:** Debate between postmodernism and pragmatic Pan-Africanism as explanatory frameworks.
- 3.Youth agency gap:** Need for structured institutional pathways for youth participation beyond inspiration.

4.Counter-narrative necessity: Engagement with critical perspectives is essential for academic rigor.

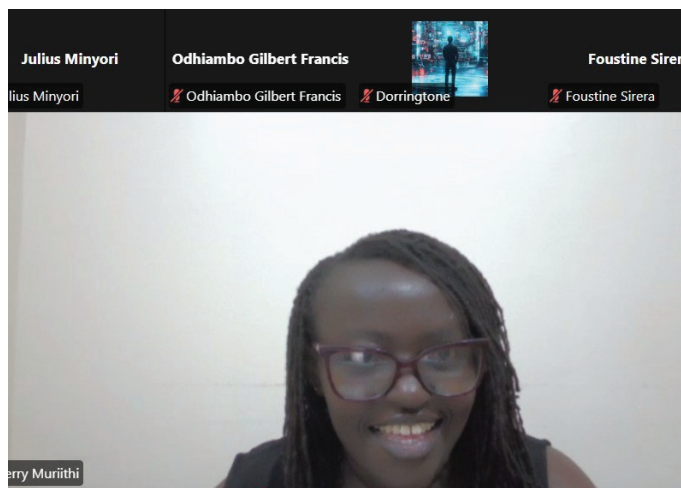
5.Institutionalization challenge: Legacy must be embedded in systems, not personalities.

6.Africa's agency question: Strong emphasis on Africa's self-determined development trajectory beyond dependency narratives.

Key Areas for Strengthening the Papers

Paper I: Strengthening Priorities

- Strengthen methodological clarity and empirical grounding
- Resolve theoretical tension between post-modernism and Pan-African developmental narratives
- Integrate gender and marginalized group perspectives in infrastructure analysis
- Deepen geopolitical context (BRICS, global South finance systems, colonial legacies)
- Reframe the AU High Representative role as an institutional system rather than an individual legacy
- Strengthen analysis of infrastructure-to-industrialization linkages
- Introduce soft power and policy entrepreneurship frameworks





Paper II Strengthening Priorities

- Integrate structured policy analysis rather than purely reflective narrative.
- Strengthen linkage to Agenda 2063 flagship programs and measurable outcomes.
- Incorporate political ideology, communication style, and leadership analysis.
- Add counter-narratives and contested interpretations of Odinga's legacy
- Define youth empowerment through institutional mechanisms (not inspiration alone)
- Expand gender and accountability dimensions
- Translate normative claims into concrete governance reforms (legal, civic, and institutional)
- Strengthen methodology using secondary data and structured analytical frameworks

Cross-Cutting Analytical Insights

- Both papers remain predominantly descriptive and require stronger theory-driven analysis
- Institutionalization of legacy remains under-theorized and under-operationalized
- Odinga's legacy reflects a dual identity: continental infrastructure advocate and domestic democratic reformer
- Youth engagement remains aspirational rather than

structurally embedded

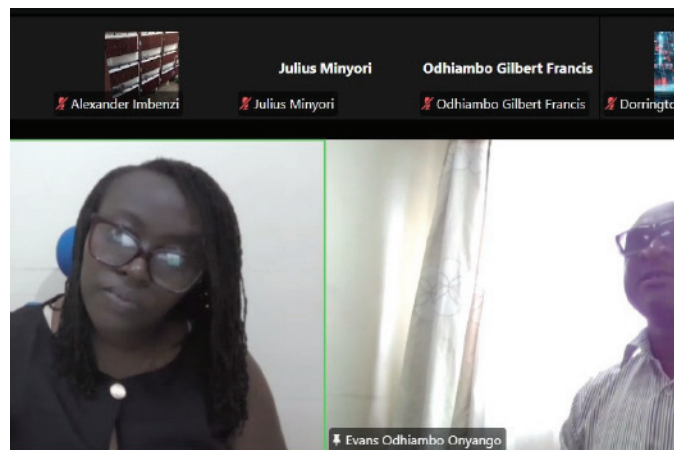
- Counter-narrative engagement is essential for scholarly credibility
- Infrastructure advocacy must be directly linked to industrial transformation for developmental relevance

Conclusion and Way Forward

The Week 8 session marked a significant deepening of analytical engagement with Raila Odinga's legacy, revealing both its transformative contributions and unresolved institutional challenges.

Three core conclusions emerged:

- 1. Legacy must be institutional, not personal:** Sustainable impact depends on embedding vision within governance systems.
- 2. Theoretical discipline is essential:** Analytical frameworks must be applied consistently and supported by evidence.
- 3. Critical balance strengthens scholarship:** Engagement with counter-narratives enhances intellectual rigor and policy relevance.



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