

# International Journal of Advanced Research

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## REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 57556

Title: Kenyas Realignment of Migration Policy to the EAC Free Movement of Persons Protocol: From Commitment to Compliance

### Recommendation:

**Accept after minor revision**

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Abdul Haseeb Mir

### Detailed Reviewer's Report

The manuscript titled "**Kenya's Realignment of Migration Policy to the EAC Free Movement of Persons Protocol: From Commitment to Compliance**" provides an empirical evaluation of regional integration efforts within the East African Community (EAC). The study addresses the critical gap between treaty ratification and national implementation, focusing on how Kenya has harmonized its domestic immigration framework with the EAC Common Market Protocol. The scope is broad yet rigorous, utilizing a theoretical triad of Neo-functionalism, Liberal Intergovernmentalism, and Realism to examine the tensions between the "spillover" effects of economic integration and the persistent domestic concerns regarding national sovereignty and security.

The researcher employs a mixed-methods design grounded in a positivist paradigm, which adds significant weight to the findings. The study surveys 349 officials and practitioners from the EAC Secretariat, Kenyan governance institutions, and non-state actors, achieving 264 valid responses analyzed via SPSS alongside thematic qualitative analysis. The findings indicate a "moderate to high" level of policy realignment, particularly following the 2010 Constitution and the 2011 Immigration & Citizenship Act. Key data reveals that while legal frameworks are largely compliant, substantive compliance is often hindered by "securitization"—where migration is viewed through a lens of national threat—and bureaucratic inertia. Interestingly, the study identifies that the removal of work permit fees for EAC citizens represents a major milestone in tangible policy shift, yet administrative hurdles remain a primary barrier.

This manuscript offers a sophisticated analysis of the "commitment-compliance gap" in African regionalism. By applying multiple theoretical lenses, the author successfully demonstrates that migration

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policy is not merely a legal technicality but a site of intense political negotiation. The study's depth is enhanced by its focus on "Realignment," suggesting that integration is a non-linear process of adjusting domestic preferences to regional norms. The contribution to the field is substantial, as it moves beyond the Eurocentric models of integration to provide an indigenous assessment of how an African "anchor state" like Kenya navigates the complexities of the EAC protocol. The empirical data on official attitudes toward "free movement" provides a rare and valuable baseline for future policy adjustments.

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#### Suggestions for Improvement

- Specify the exact sampling technique used for the "349 officials and practitioners" to clarify how representativeness was ensured across different government tiers and non-state sectors.
- Provide a more detailed breakdown of the SPSS results, specifically the Cronbach's alpha or other reliability coefficients for the survey instruments used.
- Expand the "Theoretical Framework" section to better explain how "Realism" specifically accounts for the securitization of migration in the Kenyan context compared to Neo-functionalist expectations.
- Include a comparative table that lists the specific "Common Market Provisions" alongside the corresponding sections of the Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act of 2011 to demonstrate alignment clearly.
- Address the "Positivist Paradigm" more critically, acknowledging how the researcher accounted for potential "social desirability bias" among government officials answering questions about treaty compliance.
- The "Methods" section should clarify the timeline of the data collection to ensure the findings reflect the most recent geopolitical shifts in the EAC region.
- Incorporate a discussion on the "Informal Sector," as a significant portion of cross-border movement in the EAC occurs outside formal migration governance, which may impact compliance metrics.
- Elaborate on the "Non-state actors" included in the survey; specify if these include transport unions, cross-border traders, or human rights NGOs, as their perspectives on compliance may differ significantly.
- Strengthen the "Discussion" by linking the "sovereignty" concerns specifically to the recent security challenges in the Horn of Africa, which often dictate Kenya's border posture.
- Standardize the bibliography to ensure all entries, particularly the "WKA Advocates (2025)" and "NACOSTI (2023)" citations, follow a consistent academic format with full publication details.

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### Recommendation for Publication

I recommend this manuscript for **publication with minor revision**. The study is a well-constructed, empirically rich piece of scholarship that addresses a vital issue in African political economy and regional law. The mixed-methods approach provides a high degree of validity to the findings. By providing more granular detail on the statistical reliability of the survey and sharpening the comparative legal analysis, the authors will deliver a definitive study on Kenya's role in the East African integration project.