

# Review of: "Recognition Ambiguity! Kenya's Foreign Policy Towards Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Isreal, And Palestine Under Moi Era (1978-1990)"

Silvio Labbate<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University Of Salento

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This study focuses on Moi's foreign policy towards Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Israel, and Palestine during the cold war (1978-1990). The author's stated goal is to assist scholars and the public, to discern and understand the trends and articulation of Kenya's recognition policy during this period. This is because Kenya is geopolitically and strategically placed and therefore has remains a key player in international affairs. Then, the outcome of the study is intended to be an eye opener to scholars who want to research Kenya's recognition policy towards the Middle over time. Alternatively, the study is intended to be a revelation into the most crucial but difficult component of Kenya's foreign and recognition policy.

With these motivations, the author begins the article by analyzing the history of both Kenyan foreign policy and the figure of Daniel Toroitich arap Moi: the second President of Kenya – after the death of the founding father of the republic of Kenya President Kenyatta in August 22, 1978 – and the key figure for this study. Next, the author enunciates the motivation and objective of his research and describes the evolution of U.S. recognition policy as an explanatory model for Kenya's foreign policy during the cold war (1978-1990). The article continues with the research parameters used, an explanation of the importance of the study, the conceptual framework, a description of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and a literature review. Through the latter, the author explains how Moi's foreign policy was born and how he ended up personalizing it. Moreover, during the period under consideration several issues shaped Kenya's recognition and non-recognition practice as tools of foreign policy practice. Amongst these were the ideological, geographical and strategic rivalries amongst the super-powers. Based on this scenario, as Moi took office in 1978, his immediate task was to entrench himself both domestically and internationally. Then the author surveyed Kenya's recognition policy under Moi's regime in reference to International Law.

As admitted by the author himself, the research materials for this study are mostly from secondary sources, though with a few personal statements from people that he contacted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Nation newspapers. Mainly the information gathered are from Magazines, Weekly's, Newspapers, Books and Journals. This clearly appears to be a limitation for the value of the article. Although the topics discussed are fairly recent, it would be interesting to check for archival documents to support the theses set forth. Moreover, again based on the author's statements, although he tried as much as possible not to be biased, he clearly appears to be involved in some judgments. Although this appears plausible in personal evaluations, in a historical analysis it is a stretch.

Finally, it is argued that the issue of legitimacy of governments towards Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Israel, and Palestine was closely examined and discussed. In fact, some passages seem to be treated with condescension, probably because they are taken for granted. Some regional dynamics little known to most would probably have been better described.

In any case, the article deals with an entirely new and complex topic, helping to shed light on the issue. It therefore represents an important starting point on which the author is encouraged to insist.