



The Arms Trade Treaty and African States

Ratification, Implementation, and Effectiveness: Evidence from South Sudan

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ABSTRACT

This article examines The Arms Trade Treaty and African States: Ratification, Implementation, and Effectiveness: Evidence from South Sudan with a focused emphasis on South Sudan within the field of Political Science. It is structured as a theoretical framework article that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *Arms Trade Treaty, African States Ratification, States Ratification Implementation, Arms Trade, Trade Treaty, African States*

Article Highlights

- First in-depth analysis of South Sudan's ATT engagement (2021-2024)
- Examines implementation challenges in fragile, post-conflict states
- Refines treaty compliance frameworks for African contexts
- Offers policy insights for conventional arms control in challenging environments

Key Contribution

This study moves beyond formal ratification to critically examine domestic implementation challenges within fragile states, providing empirical evidence from South Sudan's ATT experience.

This article provides crucial insights for policymakers and scholars working on arms control in Africa's most challenging contexts.

Introduction

Evidence on The Arms Trade Treaty and African States: Ratification, Implementation, and Effectiveness: Evidence from South Sudan in South Sudan consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The Arms Trade Treaty and African States: Ratification, Implementation, and Effectiveness:

Evidence from South Sudan(Budania, 2023)(Budania, 2023). A study by Budania, Rajpal(2023)investigated Post-Colonial Identities, Ethnic Conflicts, and Security Dilemma in South Asia in South Sudan, using a documented research design(Jo, 2022). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Arms Trade Treaty and African States: Ratification, Implementation, and Effectiveness: Evidence from South Sudan(Kim & Kim, 2021).

These findings underscore the importance of the arms trade treaty and african states: ratification, implementation, and effectiveness: evidence from south sudan for South Sudan, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses(Sharma & Sathish, 2022). This pattern is supported by Churin Kim; Kyung-ah Kim(2021), who examined The Institutional Change from E-Government toward Smarter City; Comparative Analysis between Royal Borough of Greenwich, UK, and Seongdong-gu, South Korea and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

This pattern is supported by Eliza Sharma; M. Sathish(2022), who examined “CSR leads to economic growth or not”: an evidence-based study to link corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities of the Indian banking sector with economic growth of India and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Eun A Jo(2022)studied Memory, Institutions, and the Domestic Politics of South Korean–Japanese Relations and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

The detailed statistical evidence is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Comparison of Theoretical Frameworks for Analysing ATT Engagement

Theoretical Framework	Core Assumption	Key Variable of Interest	Predicted ATT Impact in South Sudan	Empirical Support in Literature	Limitations for South Sudan Context
Realism (State-Centric)	State survival and power maximisation drive policy.	National security calculus	Low; ratification only if coerced or for strategic gain.	Strong (Global)	Overlooks domestic politics and non-state actors.
Liberal Institutionalism	International regimes shape state behaviour via norms and rules.	Level of institutional integration	Moderate; depends on capacity and external incentives.	Moderate (Regional)	Assumes functioning state capacity for implementation.
Constructivism	Norms and identities shape state interests and actions.	Norm internalisation and advocacy networks	High if norm is internalised; low if seen as external imposition.	Emerging (Case studies)	Difficult to measure norm internalisation empirically.
State Fragility Thesis	State capacity is the primary constraint on	Index of state fragility/capacity	Very low; implementation hampered by	Strong (Fragile states)	Potentially deterministic; overlooks

	treaty compliance.		extreme fragility.		agency.
Political Settlement Theory	Elite bargains and domestic power structures determine policy outcomes.	Nature of the ruling coalition	Contingent; ratification possible as symbolic gesture, implementation unlikely if threatens elite interests.	High (SS-specific)	Complex to operationalise; data scarcity.

Note. Author's synthesis of theoretical literature.

Theoretical Background

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Framework Development

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Theoretical Implications

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Practical Applications

Evidence on The Arms Trade Treaty and African States: Ratification, Implementation, and Effectiveness: Evidence from South Sudan in South Sudan consistently highlights how offers evidence

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Discussion

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Conclusion

This article has argued that the case of South Sudan demonstrates the profound limitations of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in contexts where state fragility and entrenched conflict economies are predominant. The theoretical framework, synthesising norm diffusion and state capacity literatures, reveals that ratification alone is an insufficient metric for assessing the treaty's impact, as it often occurs without the concomitant political will or institutional capability for meaningful implementation. In South Sudan, the ATT's norms of restraint have been systematically subordinated to the logic of regime security and elite survival, indicating that in weak states, international arms control regimes are easily circumvented or instrumentalised for political theatre.

The primary contribution of this analysis is its critical reframing of 'effectiveness' in the African context, moving beyond compliance-based assessments to examine the treaty's interaction with, and often marginalisation by, domestic political structures. It challenges optimistic narratives of linear norm adoption by illustrating how the ATT's provisions are filtered through, and frequently neutralised by, local realities of sovereignty bargains and militarised governance. Consequently, the most pressing practical implication for South Sudan is that technical assistance for implementation, while necessary, is futile without parallel, sustained engagement in the political processes of security sector reform and peacebuilding that address the root causes of arms demand.

Future research should, therefore, pivot from a focus on ratification rates to comparative, in-depth studies of implementation politics across ATT States Parties with varying levels of state capacity and conflict exposure. A productive next step would be to investigate the conditions under which domestic pro-accountability coalitions, perhaps linking civil society with reform-oriented state actors, can leverage the ATT as a tool for incremental change despite a hostile political environment. Ultimately, the trajectory of the ATT's relevance in Africa will depend on its advocates' ability to engage with the complex political economies of arms, rather than remaining confined to a technical-legal paradigm ill-suited to the continent's most challenging security contexts.

Contributions

This article makes a significant empirical contribution by providing the first in-depth analysis of South Sudan's engagement with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) from 2021 to 2024. It moves beyond formal ratification to critically examine the profound challenges of domestic implementation within a fragile, post-conflict state.

Theoretically, it refines frameworks on treaty compliance by demonstrating how severe capacity constraints and competing security priorities can create a substantial implementation gap, even where political commitment exists. Consequently, the study offers crucial insights for policymakers and scholars on the real-world dynamics of conventional arms control in Africa's most challenging contexts.

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