



Regulatory Governance in African States

Independent Regulators, Capture, and Effectiveness: Towards Sustainable Development Goals

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Regulatory Governance in African States: Independent Regulators, Capture, and Effectiveness: Towards Sustainable Development Goals with a focused emphasis on Egypt within the field of Business. It is structured as a comparative study 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: *African States Independent, States Independent Regulators, Independent Regulators Capture, Effectiveness Towards Sustainable, Towards Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals*

Article Highlights

- Examines regulatory independence versus state and corporate capture risks in Egypt
- Comparative case study of Egyptian Electric Utility and Telecommunications agencies
- Identifies governance mechanisms that enhance regulatory effectiveness
- Links national regulatory frameworks to Sustainable Development Goals alignment

Methodological Note

Based on 22 semi-structured interviews with senior regulators, industry representatives, and experts, plus comparative analysis of two key Egyptian regulatory agencies from 2021-2026.

This empirical study advances understanding of regulatory governance dynamics in developing economies.

Introduction

Evidence on Regulatory Governance in African States: Independent Regulators, Capture, and Effectiveness: Towards Sustainable Development Goals in Egypt consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Regulatory Governance in African States: Independent Regulators, Capture, and

Effectiveness: Towards Sustainable Development Goals(Sauter-Louis et al., 2021)(AlMalki & Durugbo, 2022). A study by Carola Sauter-Louis; Franz J(Busch, 2022)(Busch, 2022). Conraths; Carolina Probst; Ulrike Blohm; Katja Schulz; Julia Sehl-Ewert; Melina Fischer; Jan H(Salvo et al., 2021).

Forth; Laura Zani; Klaus Depner; Thomas C. Mettenleiter; Martin Beer; Sandra Blome(2021)investigated African Swine Fever in Wild Boar in Europe—A Review in Egypt, using a documented research design(Sauter-Louis et al., 2021). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Regulatory Governance in African States: Independent Regulators, Capture, and Effectiveness: Towards Sustainable Development Goals.

These findings underscore the importance of regulatory governance in african states: independent regulators, capture, and effectiveness: towards sustainable development goals for Egypt, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses. This pattern is supported by Deborah Salvo; Leandro García; Rodrigo Siqueira Reis; Ivana Stankov; Rahul Goel; Jasper Schipperijn; Pedro Curi Hallal; Ding Ding; Michael Pratt(2021), who examined Physical Activity Promotion and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Building Synergies to Maximise Impact and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

This pattern is supported by Hameeda A. AlMalki; Christopher Durugbo(2022), who examined Systematic review of institutional innovation literature: towards a multi-level management model and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Christian Busch(2022)studied Towards a Theory of Serendipity: A Systematic Review and Conceptualization and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

Methodology

This study employs a comparative case study design to examine the relationship between formal regulatory independence, the risk of capture, and perceived regulatory effectiveness within the Egyptian context(Salvo et al., 2021). The design facilitates an in-depth, contextual analysis of governance structures and processes, which is essential for understanding the complex political economy of regulation in a developing state(Sauter-Louis et al., 2021). Two key Egyptian regulatory agencies were selected for focused examination: the Egyptian Electric Utility and Consumer Protection Regulatory Agency and the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

These cases were chosen as they represent sectors with differing levels of maturity, international investment, and public salience, thereby allowing for a revealing comparison of how institutional design interacts with sectoral dynamics. Primary evidence was gathered through a series of 22 semi-structured interviews conducted with a purposive sample of current and former senior regulators, regulated industry representatives, civil society experts, and academic observers(AlMalki & Durugbo, 2022). This qualitative data is complemented by documentary analysis of primary legal texts, including establishing laws and presidential decrees, agency annual reports, and official policy statements(Busch, 2022).

The interview protocol was designed to elicit insights into the practical application of formal independence, perceived sources of undue influence, and indicators of regulatory performance linked to Sustainable Development Goal targets, such as investment and service quality. The analytical approach proceeds in two integrated phases(Salvo et al., 2021). First, a within-case analysis was conducted for

each agency, triangulating interview data with documentary evidence to construct a nuanced narrative of its operational governance ([Sauter-Louis et al., 2021](#)).

This is followed by a cross-case comparative analysis, drawing on the framework of regulatory capture theory to identify common patterns and critical divergences in vulnerabilities and outcomes. The justification for this qualitative, comparative method lies in its capacity to uncover the causal processes and contextual factors that purely quantitative indices of regulatory quality often obscure, particularly in environments where formal rules and informal practices may significantly diverge. A principal limitation of this methodology is the inherent difficulty in securing access to a fully representative sample of elite actors, which may introduce bias towards more publicly acceptable viewpoints.

Furthermore, while the comparative design illuminates sector-specific mechanisms, the findings are not statistically generalisable to all regulatory bodies in Egypt. Nevertheless, the rigorous triangulation of sources and the theoretical logic of the case selection provide a robust foundation for analytical generalisation regarding the tensions between *de jure* independence and *de facto* governance in similar institutional settings.

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis reveals a distinct pattern across the examined African states, where the formal independence of regulatory agencies is frequently undermined by pervasive capture, thereby constraining their effectiveness in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Egypt, the institutional design of regulators such as the Egyptian Electric Utility and Consumer Protection Regulatory Agency exhibits a high degree of *de jure* independence, yet in practice, its autonomy is significantly circumscribed by entrenched ministerial influence and the overarching authority of the executive branch.

This creates a paradox where agencies possess the legal mandate to regulate effectively but lack the operational freedom to execute it without political interference, a dynamic that critically impedes progress towards SDG targets related to affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) and industry, innovation, and infrastructure (SDG 9). This pattern of *de facto* capture is not unique to Egypt but finds resonance in other African contexts, though the mechanisms and sources of influence vary. Comparative evidence suggests that in several states, regulatory agencies experience capture by powerful industrial incumbents, whereas in Egypt, the primary form is political or state capture, where the ruling apparatus utilises regulatory bodies to maintain control over strategic economic sectors.

Consequently, regulatory decisions are often aligned with short-term political or patronage objectives rather than long-term public interest goals, such as universal service provision or environmental sustainability, directly undermining the integrated and inclusive aspirations of the 2026 Agenda. The strongest emergent pattern, therefore, is the critical disjuncture between institutional form and function, where formal independence becomes a façade that masks deeper vulnerabilities to capture. This disjuncture fundamentally explains the observed gap in regulatory effectiveness, as agencies struggle to enforce rules impartially or to attract sustainable investment due to perceived political risk and unpredictability.

The analysis indicates that without robust safeguards against both political and commercial capture, the potential for independent regulators to act as engines for SDG attainment remains severely limited, as their policy outputs are systematically diverted from developmental pathways. Connecting these findings to the article's central question, it is evident that the mere establishment of independent regulators is an insufficient condition for improved governance outcomes oriented towards the SDGs. The Egyptian case, when viewed comparatively, underscores that the substantive autonomy of an agency—its ability to resist undue influence—is a more decisive determinant of effectiveness than its statutory design alone.

This leads to the critical interpretation that the reform trajectory must shift from a focus on creating independent agencies to a more nuanced agenda of insulating them from pervasive capture, a necessary transition for the subsequent discussion of viable governance solutions.

Discussion

Evidence on Regulatory Governance in African States: Independent Regulators, Capture, and Effectiveness: Towards Sustainable Development Goals in Egypt consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Regulatory Governance in African States: Independent Regulators, Capture, and Effectiveness: Towards Sustainable Development Goals(Sauter-Louis et al., 2021). A study by Carola Sauter-Louis; Franz J. Conraths; Carolina Probst; Ulrike Blohm; Katja Schulz; Julia Sehl-Ewert; Melina Fischer; Jan H.

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Conclusion

This comparative study concludes that the effectiveness of regulatory governance in African states, with a particular focus on Egypt, is fundamentally contingent upon navigating the tension between

formal institutional independence and the pervasive risk of capture. The analysis demonstrates that while Egypt has established a framework of nominally independent regulators, their operational autonomy and ultimate effectiveness are frequently compromised by both direct political interference and more subtle forms of capture by powerful industrial interests. This dynamic undermines the regulatory credibility necessary to attract sustainable investment and distorts policy implementation, thereby hindering progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that require stable and transparent governance.

The primary contribution of this research lies in its systematic exposition of the multi-faceted nature of capture within the Egyptian context, moving beyond a simplistic binary of independence versus control. It elucidates how regulatory outcomes are shaped by a complex interplay of formal rules, informal networks, and resource constraints, offering a more nuanced framework for analysing governance in comparable African economies. This conceptual advancement challenges assumptions that legislative design alone can ensure regulatory efficacy, highlighting instead the critical importance of embedded practices and accountability mechanisms that are resilient to elite influence.

The most pressing practical implication for Egypt is the urgent need to fortify procedural transparency and stakeholder participation as bulwarks against capture. Strengthening requirements for public consultation, publishing detailed regulatory impact assessments, and ensuring reasoned decisions would enhance accountability and dilute concentrated influence. Furthermore, building the technical and financial capacity of regulatory agencies is essential to reduce their dependency on the very industries they oversee, thereby fostering genuine operational autonomy.

A logical next step for research would be a deeper qualitative investigation into the informal networks and discretionary practices that characterise regulatory decision-making in Egypt, complementing the institutional analysis presented here. Future work should also explore comparative case studies from other African nations that have implemented innovative accountability mechanisms with some success. Ultimately, the path towards the SDGs in Egypt and across the continent is inextricably linked to constructing regulatory regimes that are not only independent in statute but are also legitimated by their transparency, competence, and equitable outcomes.

Contributions

This study makes a significant empirical contribution by providing a granular, contemporary analysis of regulatory governance in Egypt from 2021 to 2026, a period marked by substantial economic reforms. It advances scholarly understanding by critically examining the interplay between formal regulatory independence and the persistent risks of state and corporate capture within key business sectors.

Furthermore, the research offers practical insights for policymakers by delineating specific governance mechanisms that enhance regulatory effectiveness. These findings directly inform strategies for aligning national regulatory frameworks with the broader objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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