

UNIVERSAL SERVICE POLICY IN TAIWAN: A CASE STUDY OF  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN AN ERA OF LIBERALIZATION AND  
TECHNOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE

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## Abstract

Among the numerous telecommunications policies world-wide, universal service policy is a useful means to gauge the effectiveness of any given country's response to rapidly changing global conditions and its own social, economic, political, and technological conditions. This paper examines Taiwan's universal service policy in a telecommunications environment characterized by legal reforms, increasing competition, and technological advances. It first reviews the definition of universal service, its dynamic nature, the social and economic rationales that underlie this public policy, and commonly employed funding mechanisms in most developed countries. Based on these, it then comments on the relevance of universal service in Taiwan today. This paper further elaborates on the challenges confronting the continuous promotion of universal service in Taiwan, including the liberalization of telecommunications, the rise of the mobile phone, technological innovations, and the digital divide. In particular, inquiries are made as to how the weaknesses of institutions and politics in Taiwan may possibly negate the achievements of universal service policy. Finally, this paper concludes with suggestions for Taiwan's government concerning the implementation of universal service policy.

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