

Dual governance: The contemporary politics of posts and telecommunications in Japan

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Abstrak

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) has jurisdiction over two policy areas which are significant in contemporary Japanese politics—telecommunications and postal business. In pursuing policy-making in these areas, the MPT has had distinctive policy goals which have produced dual governance. In its operation of postal businesses, the MPT has played an old-guard role by protecting inefficient and intrusive government operations and opposing reform attempts. In the telecommunications arena, particularly in its promotion of the Internet, the MPT has played the role of a vanguard, taking on the telecommunications giant NTT. I explain this dual governance by highlighting an important sectoral divide in the Japanese economy which separates it into developmental and distributive sectors. The MPT operation of postal businesses is an integral part of the distributive sector; thus the MPT needs to protect the current system of postal businesses. In contrast, telecommunications is part of the developmental sector and is thus a policy area in which the MPT tries to wield greater influence over private-sector activities through vanguard policy-making.