

# Getting a Dial Tone

Telecommunications Liberalization  
in Malaysia and the Philippines

Lorraine Carlos Salazar



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## Telecommunications Liberalization in Malaysia and the Philippines

By Lorraine Carlos Salazar



"Ninety-nine percent of Filipinos are waiting for a telephone and the other one percent for a dial tone ..."

Lee Kuan Yew, November 1992

A decade after the above quote, far-reaching reforms in the telecommunications sector has dramatically changed the situation in both the Philippines and Malaysia. By looking at the institutions and actors that drove these changes, this book examines state capacity, market reform, and rent-seeking in the two countries. In doing so, the study challenges conventional depictions of the Malaysian and Philippine states. It contends that despite the weakness of the Philippine state, reform occurred through a coalition that out-maneuvred vested interests. In Malaysia, although considered a strong state, patronage and rent-seeking played key roles in policy adoption and implementation. The study also demonstrates how the nature of groups supporting reform shapes policy implementation and its outcomes. Finally, while liberalization removes monopoly rent, this book shows that it can also create other types of rents.

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