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Governance and government of an enlarged municipality after municipal amalgamation: Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan

Jun Nishihara and Shiro Fujii

Abstract:

Between 1999 and 2010, Japan's national government began actively promoting the merger of smaller municipalities. In 2005 as part of this policy, Hamamatsu City, a major regional manufacturing center in central Japan, merged 11 smaller municipalities under the leadership of its mayor. The resultant municipality had a population of 818,000 and a total area of 1,558 km². In April 2007, Hamamatsu City also received the status of *Ordinance-designated City*, or the status of administratively top-ranked cities, from the national government. However, a new mayor was elected in April 2007 and started different governing policies. To examine the government of a spatially large municipality after amalgamation, we got the data on its city governmental organizations and interviewed Hamamatsu City government officials as well as the community leaders of the neighborhood associations all over the city and distributed questionnaires to the residents of the city's central and peripheral areas. To clarify Hamamatsu City's governance, we also interviewed the leaders of community-based NPOs in the peripheral areas.

The following are our findings: 1) The new mayor changed the government by drastically reforming the administrative organization and reducing the city government branches in the former merged municipalities. 2) Seeking a new government, some community leaders in central Hamamatsu prefer the new mayor's plan called *One City with One Municipal Administration*, while community leaders in the merged municipalities prefer a return to the former mayor's plan called *One City with Multiple Administrations*. 3) People in the peripheral areas are strongly opposed to the government after the amalgamation and the new mayor's methods. 4) Seeking new governance, some people in the peripheral areas have established NPOs to begin restoring community activities and public service levels.

Keywords: Heisei pro-merger policy of municipalities, large municipality, municipal amalgamation, attitude of local people, local identity, government, governance

1. Introduction

Between April 1, 1999 and March 31, 2010, Japan's national government conducted a national policy advocating municipality mergers called the Heisei Pro-merger Policy of Municipalities. The following are its main purposes: (1) removing some authority from national governments to municipal governments, (2) upgrading the officials' expertise of municipal governments, (3) addressing the spatially expanded daily lives of people, and (4) improving the financial conditions of the national and local (prefectural and municipal) governments. Over this 11-year period, the number of municipalities in Japan decreased from 3,221 to 1,727.

The latest pro-merger program was the third such attempt since the beginning of Japan's modernization in 1868. The previous actions were known as *the Meiji Pro-merger Policy* in the 1880s and *the Showa Pro-merger Policy* in the 1950s. The number of municipalities decreased from 71,314 to 15,859 and from 9,868 to 3,453, respectively. The Meiji Pro-merger Policy established municipalities that had a municipal office, a municipal assembly, and a primary school to modernize the local administrations after the Meiji Restoration (1868). The standard target size of the new municipalities ranged from 300 to 500 households. Showa's policy reorganized democratic municipalities to provide full-fledged public services and especially to establish new middle schools for compulsory education after World War II (1941-45). The minimum standard municipality target size of the amalgamations was a population of 8,000. In the Heisei program, owing to the spatial expansion of people's activities, the newly enlarged municipalities were generally much larger. During such pro-merger actions, the national government didn't dare to clearly announce a standard target size; however, according to the guidelines for municipal amalgamations from the prefecture governments, the expected size was a territory organized by a central city for higher public services or as a commuting region of a central city.

Seeking large-scale action for municipal mergers all over Japan, the national government proposed two types of policies to the local (prefectural and municipal) governments: generous and harsh. As examples of generous policies, the government advanced the decentralization policy to assume some prefectural government authority to the cities in ascending order: *Special Status Cities* (TSUKUREI SHI), *Designated Mid-level Cities* (CHUKAKU SHI), *Ordinance-designated Cities* (SEIREI SHITEI TOSHI)¹. The national government also established such temporary policies as *the Special Merger Bond* for new development projects for the newly merged municipalities and temporary measures directed toward merged municipal assemblies related to the number of seats and the terms of members. Moreover, the National

Diet and the national government temporarily eased for cities the population requirements from 50,000 with conditions to 30,000 without conditions. At the same time, the national government also reduced the criterion for *Ordinance-designated Cities* from 900,000 to 700,000 to lure large municipal amalgamations.

As harsh policies, since 2003, under the strong leadership of Prime Minister Koizumi, the national government conducted a series of reformation policies called *the Trinity Reforms*. Their goals were to improve the finances of the local and national governments and to reorganize their administrative systems related to finance systems. As implied by its name, these reforms were composed of three main aspects: (1) reducing *the National Government's Disbursements* (KOKKO SHISHUTSUKIN) to local governments; (2) transferring national tax income resources to local governments to decentralize power; and (3) reorganizing *the Local Allocation Tax Grants* (CHIHU KOFU ZEI) to local governments. The Trinity Reforms urged municipal governments, especially small municipalities in the peripheral regions of Japan, to participate in the amalgamation agenda.

Looking at the consequences of the Heisei Pro-merger Policy, its characteristics were quite different than the two previous pro-merger actions. First, larger and extremely larger municipalities emerged that transcended the boundaries of the people's daily activities. 22 new municipalities were established whose areas exceeded 1,000 km². The spatially largest municipality, Takayama City in the mountainous region of Gifu Prefecture, only had a population of 92,000 in 2005, but its area was 2,177 km². Such municipalities with huge areas emerged as a consequence of the population requirements related to the three special city statuses: *Special City*, *Designated Mid-level City*, *Ordinance-designated City*. The second characteristic was the adoption of three spatial government systems by the new municipalities. Based on the negative experiences of the two earlier national pro-mergers, the national government provided three choices of spatial government systems to the newly established municipalities: a centralized headquarters system, a comprehensive branch system, or a multi-locational headquarters system. In Japan, especially in its peripheral regions, the allocation of the headquarters of municipal governments determines the frameworks of intra-area systems within municipalities. In the previous two pro-mergers, the former central areas, which lost municipal headquarters, declined drastically, and the intra-area systems greatly changed after the mergers (Tsutsumi, M 1971).

After the pro-merger actions of the municipalities, many different kinds of problems were highlighted by journalists and academics, especially owing to the spatially huge territories of the

municipalities. Even in its 2010 national government's formal report on the Heisei pro-mergers, the ministry of the internal affairs pointed out the expansion of the intra-differences in economic activities and the public services between the central and peripheral areas within the spatially large municipalities. In the peripheral areas of the newly formed municipalities, declines emerged in public services as well as an erosion of the local people's political power in municipal decision-making mechanisms.

Generally speaking, the former merged municipalities had quite different characteristics of population bases, industrial structures, cultural backgrounds, social organizations, and human communication networks. To govern the new, large municipalities by managing these small former municipalities, introducing intra-municipality autonomy institutions to the former small municipal areas was considered crucial.

Finally, we must examine some research questions related to the emergence of spatially large municipalities. How do they manage their governmental administrations? Did they adopt institutions for intra-municipality autonomy? Is the Ordinance-designated City System²⁾ beneficial to administrate spatially large municipalities? How seriously do the people recognize various intra-differences within a municipality?

In this paper, we selected Hamamatsu City as a representative of a spatially large municipality and examined its government and its governance. On July 1, 2005, it merged 11 smaller municipalities under the leadership of its mayor and became a spatially large city with a population of 818,000 and a total area of 1,558 km² (Fig. 1). At the same time, Hamamatsu City introduced the most solid and stable institution³⁾ of intra-municipality autonomy called *the Local Autonomous Districts (General)* and established 12 such districts. On April 1, 2007, Hamamatsu City became an Ordinance-designated City.

Hamamatsu City is located midway between two of Japan's largest metropolitan regions (Tokyo and Osaka) and is only 100 km from the third largest (Nagoya). It is the birthplace of the Honda and Yamaha Motor Companies as well as the headquarters of the Suzuki Motor

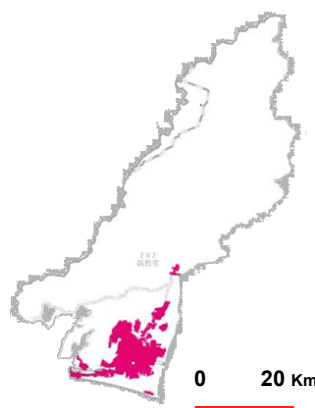


Figure 1 Hamamatsu City
(red blocks: urbanized areas)

Corporation and the Yamaha Corporation (musical instruments). After the territorial expansion from the amalgamation, the city became roughly divided between a highly industrialized, urbanized region on a coastal plain and a seriously depopulated mountainous hinterland (Fig. 1).

We define words of government and govern for this paper, respectively, as administration by municipal governmental organizations and as the various kinds of activities for the local people done by voluntary and local organizations, like neighborhood associations (neighborhood associations) and NPOs. Our research is composed of three parts. First, we investigate Hamamatsu City's government by examining the reformation of its administrative organizations. Second, we clarify the attitudes and the evaluations of the people, especially those in the peripheral areas, about the resultant government after the amalgamation. We interviewed Hamamatsu City government officials and the leaders of neighborhood associations from all over the city and distributed questionnaires to the residents of its central and peripheral areas. The neighborhood association leaders are critical actors of the governance of the new Hamamatsu City. Finally, we investigate its governance by examining the reactions of the people in the peripheral areas through NPOs activities that are seeking restoration of public services, whose levels lag behind pre-amalgamation levels, but are near the general expectations of the local citizens. We also interviewed NPO leaders in the peripheral areas.

2. Japanese local administrative systems and national government actions for municipal amalgamations

We briefly explained the Trinity Reforms conducted by Prime Minister Koizumi's cabinet in the previous chapter. In the beginning of this chapter, we explain the basic systems of local administrations and local governmental finances in Japan.

Japan has a two-tier local governmental system of prefectures and municipalities. As of April 1, 2012, she had 47 prefectural governments and 1,742 municipal governments. Municipalities are classified into three groups in terms of their legal status: cities, towns, and villages. As mentioned above, cities have three statuses: special, designated mid-level, and ordinance-designated. Among 790 cities in Japan, the numbers of special status and ordinance mid-level cities were respectively 40 and 42 as of January 1, 2014. Only 20 cities have received the special ordinance-designated status from the national government.

The sources of municipal government finances and municipal tax revenue (resident and property taxes, etc.) differ largely among municipal governments. In accordance with the national standard and the population scale of municipalities, the national government distributes

the Local Allocation Tax Grants to offset and balance the financial disparity among municipal governments. Other major subsidies for specified purposes are also granted to municipal governments through a system of *national treasury disbursements*. Under these schemes, the national government allocates part of its national tax revenue to local governments by shifting certain percentages of income, corporation, liquor, consumption, and tobacco taxes, etc. On average, in 2005 even though the percentage of municipal taxes to all municipal revenue was just 40%, the percentages of the Local Allocation Tax Grants and the National Treasury Disbursements reached 20% and 15%. These figures portray the weak financial base of the municipal governments and the importance of the amalgamation of municipalities. The Local Allocation Tax Grants and the National Treasury Disbursements account for a large share of the revenue of relatively poor municipal governments in Japan's peripheral zones. The total percentage of the Local Allocation Tax Grants and the National Treasury Disbursements in the revenue of the municipalities designated as underpopulated areas⁴⁾ reached 60% in 2005. However, some municipal governments in Japan's three largest metropolitan zones with solid tax bases do not receive any grants from the national government at all. Consequently, the municipal governments in other zones than the three largest metropolitan zones were strongly expected to respond to financial reform.

In the Heisei pro-merger action for municipalities, the national government gave both generous and harsh policies to municipalities seeking amalgamation. One harsh policy was to reduce the Local Allocation Tax Grants from the national government to the municipalities. One generous policy was the special municipal bonds for various kinds of development projects of newly merged municipalities called Special Bonds for Amalgamation. The newly enlarged municipalities could get huge loans from the national government for the development projects of their new municipality; 90% of such municipality debt must be paid off by the Local Allocation Tax Grants from the national government. Another generous policy were the special measures related to the municipal assemblies. This policy ensured additional two-year terms for all the members of the former municipal assemblies in the new municipal assemblies after the amalgamation. The national government encouraged the municipal assemblies to decide their own amalgamations.

In the Meiji and Showa amalgamation promotions, the former central areas, which lost municipal headquarters, declined drastically after the mergers. Before the start of the Heisei mergers, the national government anticipated the likelihood of the declines of the central areas of the former merged municipalities by introducing three spatial government systems to the

municipalities that would be merged:

1) Centralized headquarters system:

Basically, all of the administrative organizations of a municipality (municipal assembly, mayoral departments, and administrative boards) are deployed in a single facility. All of the mayoral departments are located in a headquarters (a central city office), and the small branches that deliver primary services (or minimum-level services) to the local residents are dispersed to each of the former municipalities. This system is expected to deliver relatively small government that can operate at a high level of efficiency. This enhanced a one-nuclear type of intra-area system.

2) Comprehensive branch system:

All of the administrative organizations of a municipality are geographically allocated in a single facility, as in system (1). The functions of the headquarters are characterized as the controlling and coordinating operations of the entire municipality. The branches, which are functionally different from those in system (1) and have almost the same functions as before the merger, are called comprehensive branches. Originally, the branches located in the territory of each former municipality shared some decision-making powers with the headquarters. These branches have the authority to make decisions about their own projects within their own territories within pre-planned budget limits. Such a governmental system might encourage intra-municipality autonomy in each former municipality.

3) Multi-locational headquarter system:

The former municipalities share all of the municipal government's mayoral departments as well as the municipal assembly and the administrative boards within the new municipality. In this system two or more departments are allocated to some of the former municipal offices as sub-headquarters. This unique multi-locational headquarters system might maintain administrative central places of the minimum-level in some former municipalities.

In the two previous promotions of municipal mergers in the 1880s and the 1950s, very few instances of systems 2) and 3) were implemented, even though both are proficient at preventing the emergence of large inequalities within municipalities. They are far less efficient, however, in terms of conducting administrative activities and cutting municipal budgets.

The last action of the national government was the introduction of institutions of intra-municipality autonomy for the merged municipalities. When the Heisei pro-merger action started, the national government passed laws related to the municipalities and the amalgamations to introduce intra-municipality autonomy institutions to support the local

governance of municipalities with enlarged areas and populations.

There are three levels of institutions from the viewpoint of implemented legislation: from the top to the bottom, the Local Autonomous Districts (General) for all municipalities (the valid term: no limit) by the Local Autonomy Act, the Local Autonomous Districts (Special) for the merged municipalities (the valid term: ten years after the amalgamation) by the former Municipal Merger Act (1997-2006), and the Special District of Merged Municipalities (the valid term: ten years after the amalgamation) by the new Municipal Merger Act (2006-2010).

In addition to such special measures, we confirmed that the national government reduced the population criterion for Ordinance-designated Cities from 900,000 to 700,000 to encourage large municipalities to adopt pro-merger actions.

3. Government of new Hamamatsu City from viewpoint of reformation of its administrative organization after amalgamation

In the first part of this chapter, we discuss the new Hamamatsu City government's after the amalgamation and focus on the reformation of its administrative organization. Then we discuss a trial of intra-municipality autonomy like the establishment of local autonomous districts (general) and local councils (CHIKI KYOGIKAI) as an analysis of Hamamatsu City's governance.

As part of the national pro-merger policy of municipalities, in 2002 Mayor Kitawaki of Hamamatsu City proposed a municipal amalgamation with neighboring municipalities, seeking its designation as an Ordinance-designated City. At that time, there were only 11 such cities in Japan. He sought this status for Hamamatsu City because a rival city in the same prefecture, Shizuoka City, was also seeking it.

These Ordinance-designated Cities enjoy special status and almost the same authority as prefectural governments, as mentioned in note 2). According to the Local Autonomy Act, Ordinance-designated Cities have to separate their territories into wards and establish ward offices, whose duties include managing family registrations, registering residents, and administering health care, social welfare, and municipal taxes. Some Ordinance-designated Cities additionally allocate the departments of civil engineering and construction from their headquarters to the ward offices. From the viewpoint of the three spatial government systems, the ward office system of Ordinance-designated Cities is considered the comprehensive branch system.

In Hamamatsu City's amalgamation to 2011, there were three reformation stages of the

governmental organizations into the new Hamamatsu City: Stage 1: one headquarters and 11 comprehensive branch offices from July 2005 to March 2007, and Stage 2: one headquarters with seven ward offices and 12 local branch offices from April 2007 to March 2012.

Stage 1 was governed by Mayor Kitawaki. At Stage 1, he established his governance concepts entitled One City with Multiple Administrations and his idea's areal structure of the city territory called Cluster Structured Areas. Mayor Kitawaki resembled a social reformer. In fact, after losing the mayoral election in 2007, he became a specially appointed professor of the Tokyo University of Foreign Languages. His policies helped the merged municipalities preserve their local institutions and cultures in the peripheral areas of Hamamatsu City.

When the new Hamamatsu City started on July 1, 2005, Mayor Kitawaki established eleven of the local autonomous districts (general) to the 11 merged municipalities in accordance with the amalgamation agreements. These institutions were the most solid among the three kinds because they were based on the Local Autonomy Act. He also adopted the comprehensive branch system from the three spatial government systems and deployed 11 comprehensive branch offices with about seven or eight branch divisions, one each for the local autonomy districts. At the same time, he established 11 local councils (mentioned below) for each of them.

He also established an automatically allocating system for part of the city funds, which equaled half of the local allocation tax grants of the 11 former merged municipalities by the national government before the amalgamation. The directors of these comprehensive branches had the authority to make decisions about allocating funds with the agreement of their local councils.

Looking at the governmental structure of Hamamatsu City during Stage 1 (Fig. 2), its headquarters consisted of a three-tier hierarchical organization: divisions, departments, and sections. The 11 comprehensive branch offices had two-tier organizations, departments and sections, which were too large to ease the deleterious effects of the municipal amalgamation in the 11 former merged municipalities.

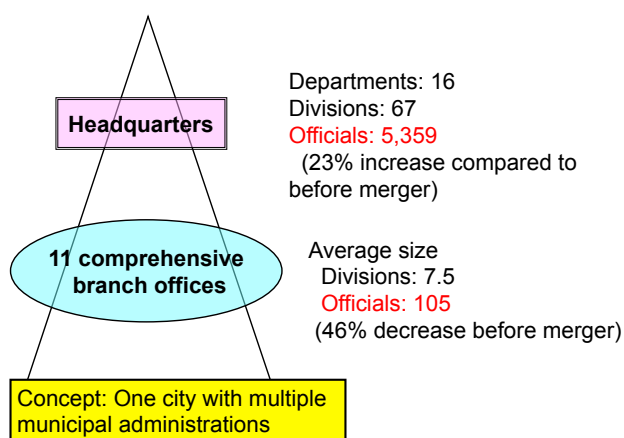


Figure 2 City government of Mayor Kitawaki in 2005 at start of new Hamamatsu City (Stage 1)

In 2006 at the end of Stage 1, even though Hamamatsu’s City government continued the comprehensive branch system, it relocated a large part of the officials from the comprehensive branch offices to headquarters. The number of officials of the headquarters of the new Hamamatsu City increased from 4,350 before the amalgamation in 2002 to 5,360 in 2006 after the amalgamation. The 11 comprehensive branches had 1,150 officials, greatly reduced from 2,140 before the amalgamation. 45% was the average rate of decrease between the former municipal offices in 2004 and the new city’s comprehensive branch offices in 2005. The additional 1,000 officials in the city headquarters were relocated from the 11 former municipal offices.

At that time, the comprehensive branches had departments and officials in accordance with the volume of the former administrative organizations of the 11 merged municipalities. The number of departments and officials in the comprehensive branches varied from 12 departments (in former Hamakita City) to three (in former Tatsuyama Village) and from 281 officials to 26. The averages of the deployed departments and officials in the 11 comprehensive branches were 5.8 and 105. The people in the former municipalities, even in the peripheral areas, enjoyed almost the same level of public services through these comprehensive branches.

In Stage 1 of 2005, to prepare for its start as an Ordinance-designated City, a Hamamatsu City taskforce discussed the number of wards and their territories. The seven wards and their spatial territories were determined in favor of the 11 former municipalities by the taskforce, based on the agreement of the former Hamamatsu City and the 11 municipalities of the amalgamation in 2004. For instance, none of the 11 merged municipalities was separated into different wards. The former

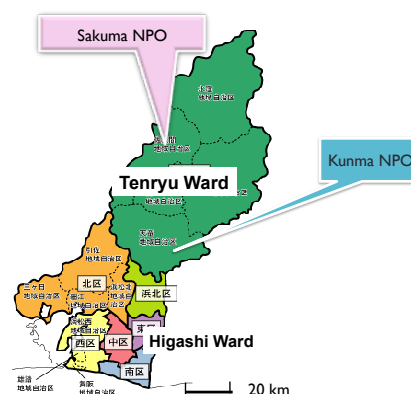


Figure 3 Territories of seven wards and locations of NPOs of our interviews in Tenryu Ward

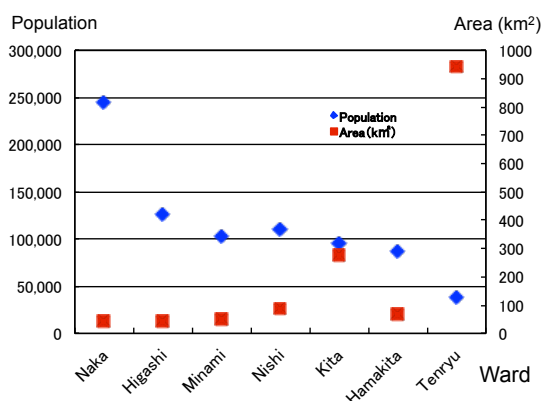


Figure 4 Population and area by ward in Hamamatsu City

Hamakita City established a new ward by itself. Consequently, there were large differences in population and area among the seven wards, and the relationship of the populations and the areas of the seven wards was linearly negative (Figs. 3 and 4).

Stage 2 was overseen by Yasutomo Suzuki, who was elected mayor in 2007 of the Ordinance-designated Hamamatsu City by running on a governing concept called One City with One Municipal Administration. He got strong support from the local economic leaders of the big companies in Hamamatsu City. Actually, Stage 2 should be classified into two sub-stages. The first part of Stage 2 was 2a, the latter part was 2b. Hamamatsu City's administration in Stage 2a was based on the plans of ex-Mayor Kitawaki. The new mayor fully conducted his governance in Stage 2b, about one year after the 2008 election.

At the start of its status as an Ordinance-designated City in April 2007 of Stage 2a, Hamamatsu City's government was composed of three-tier organizations, such as headquarters (4,580 officials), seven ward offices (totally 1,350 officials), and ten local branch offices (totally

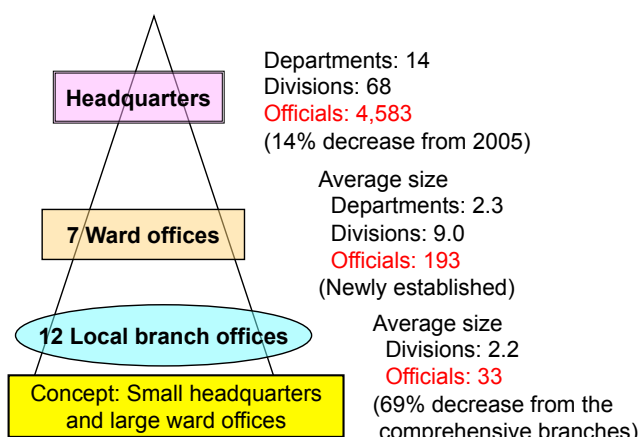


Figure 5 City government as Ordinance-designated City of ex-Mayors Kitawaki and Suzuki in 2007 (Stage 2a)

260 officials) (Fig. 5). The reduction of the headquarters, based on the former mayor's administrative organization concept called Small Headquarters and Large Ward Offices, is quite impressive. However, administration through the ward offices was very difficult because a large work difference emerged among the ward offices, mentioned above.

In Stage 2a, the intra-organization of ward offices had a three-tier structure (divisions, departments, sections). A typical ward office like Tenryu's, which governed the underpopulated and mountainous areas of the former city, three former towns and one village, with a total area of 945 km² and a total population of 37,500, had three divisions, 12 departments, and 190 officials. In comparison with other ward offices, Tenryu ward office had a relatively larger organization in terms of the ward's population.

Under seven ward offices, 12 local branch offices were deployed in the ten former municipalities (except the former Hamakita City) and in the two areas of the former Hamamatsu City. There were seven relatively large local branches with 20 officials and over 20, and five very small local branches with fewer than 12 officials. Of course, the very small branches were

those (only for their former municipalities) attached to the ward offices and those for the parts of the former Hamamatsu City. These seven large branches with two or three departments were dispatched to each former municipality and averaged 32.7 officials as well as the right to deliver intermediary (gateway) service functions to the residents and between them and their wards. The five other small branches had only one department and an average of 5.8 officials.

In Stage 2a, the entire organization of the new Hamamatsu City was very complicated. The former municipalities with ward offices had an extra branch office because the local autonomous districts were established in every former municipality in the new Hamamatsu City. The Local Autonomy Act automatically expected local autonomous districts to have their own administrative branches.

This organization was reformed and the ward offices and the local branch offices were reduced by the new mayor in 2008

of Stage 2b. The new and present Mayor Suzuki drastically changed his government from the ex-mayor's policies and started a centralized governing system called One City with One Municipal Administration. First, he closed four tiny branch offices except the branch office for the former Tenryu City. Second, he

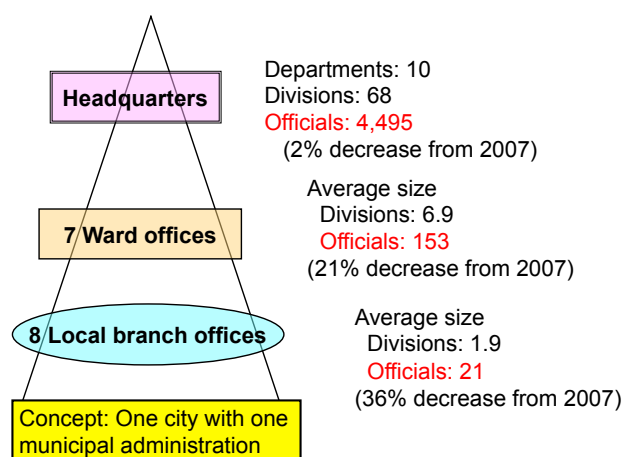


Figure 6 City government under Mayor Suzuki in 2011 (Stage 2b)

changed from a three-tier organization (division-department-section) to a two-tier organization (department-section) in the ward offices to excise the redundancy from its organization. Third, he reduced the number of departments and officials in the ward offices and in the local branch offices. During the restructuring of the administrative organization without headquarters by Suzuki, the total number of departments in all seven ward offices dropped from 63 in 2007 to 49 by 2011 (Fig. 6). The number of departments in all eight branch offices also decreased from 26 in 2007 to 15 by 2011. In 2011, there were only two departments with an average of 22.6 officials in the seven local branch offices, except the Tenryu local branch office with one department and six officials.

As a result, owing to the re-organization of the ward and local branch offices, the number of officials for the headquarters of the new Hamamatsu City increased from 4,580 in 2007 to 4,495 in 2011. Conversely, the total number of officials in all the ward and local branch offices

decreased from 1,350 in 2007 to 1,068 by 2011 and from 258 in 2007 to 164 by 2011. The reformation of the city government in Stages 2a and 2b, especially for the local people in the peripheral areas of the new Hamamatsu City in Stage 2b, caused difficulty receiving many public services.

We examined the establishment of the local autonomous districts (general) and the local councils to analyze the governance of the new Hamamatsu City. After the amalgamation, in addition to the city assembly, in 2005 the former Mayor Kitawaki established 11 local councils in the 11 former merged municipalities. After its designation as an Ordinance-designated City, it added seven ward councils based Kitawaki's plan. Although Kitawaki should be praised for supporting intra-municipality autonomy, 18 ward and local councils were excessive. In 2012, Mayor Suzuki abolished the local councils. The administration of Hamamatsu City by Mayor Suzuki is pursuing a small government concept. He also believes that Hamamatsu City has too many wards compared with other Ordinance-designated Cities with similar populations. For instance, in the same prefecture, Shizuoka City's population is 700,000 but it has only three wards.

4. Attitudes of community leaders and local people toward new Hamamatsu City's government after amalgamation

This chapter addresses the people's attitude about the actual government of the new Hamamatsu City after the amalgamation. We adopted two research methods: interviews with the community leaders of the neighborhood associations and questionnaires of local people. We interviewed the local leaders of the neighborhood associations because a large part of the city's governance that is related to the people's daily lives is conducted by the neighborhood associations in co-operation with the city government. The neighborhood association leaders are probably the most influenced by the change of the administration caused by the amalgamation and might have firm opinions about it.

In the former Hamamatsu City and the 11 former merged municipalities, the neighborhood associations established municipal federations before the amalgamation. During the amalgamation, these municipal federations were unified into new city's federations called *the Hamamatsu City Federation of Neighborhood Associations*, which were formed in a three-tier organization (ward federation, regional federation, basic neighborhood association) under itself. There are totally seven ward federations, 44 regional federations, and 734 basic neighborhood associations in Hamamatsu City. Although neighborhood associations in Japan are organized by

a voluntary participation system, the percentage of households that are members was 96% in Hamamatsu City, and the average number of households in one association is 402. The local leaders of the neighborhood associations are actually very important actors of the governance of the new Hamamatsu City.

However, there is a large difference in the scale of the neighborhood associations, from a minimum association of three households in the underpopulated area to one with 6,605 households in an urbanized area. 322 resident households among 734 have the juridical personality to manage themselves as a formal organization. In the 11 merged municipalities, especially in the mountainous areas, even though a few associations exist, they take their responsibilities seriously.

We selected 21 local leaders who represented the regional federations of the neighborhood associations from all over the city. From September 2008 to January 2009 (Stage 2b), we interviewed nine leaders from the regional federations of the former Hamamatsu City and 12 local leaders from the regional federations of the 11 former merged municipalities. Our questions addressed their attitudes about the amalgamation's plan just before the amalgamation and the current results after it and evaluated the current public service conditions and their local identity before and after the amalgamation.

We identified a large difference in the attitudes among the local leaders toward the amalgamation. For attitudes about the amalgamation plans just before it, only about 20% of the leaders of the former Hamamatsu City positively or passively agreed with it; 65% of the leaders' opinions were neutral. 65% of the leaders of the 11 merged municipalities agreed passively with the amalgamation's plan. The local leaders of the former Hamamatsu City expressed concern about the merger with the municipalities suffering fiscal difficulties and the other leaders of the 11 merged municipalities wanted to accept the amalgamation plan because they were worried about the serious conditions of their own former municipal finances.

When we asked about the administration conditions through the ward offices, 55% of the local leaders in the former Hamamatsu City had positive evaluations. Because they lived in the areas directly serviced by the ward offices, they felt that the relationship between the residents and the officials of the ward offices had improved, and they praised the "better services" and the "quick responses" of the ward offices in comparison with those of the former headquarters of the former Hamamatsu City. On the contrary, over half of the leaders of the 11 merged municipalities criticized the public service levels. However, all of the local leaders in the new Hamamatsu City complained about the weak authority of the ward offices. Even the directors of

the ward offices themselves complained that they don't have any authority to make final decisions and that they have to negotiate with the responsible staff members from headquarters⁵⁾.

Next we asked about the local identity (sense of belonging to locality) of the leaders. Neither the leaders in the former Hamamatsu City nor the 11 merged municipalities identified with the new Hamamatsu City; they retained strong ties of identity with their former municipalities. This suggests the difficulty for the new citizens of Hamamatsu City to establish a sense of belonging to the new Hamamatsu City and to have sympathy for and good communication with the citizens of the other former municipalities.

Finally, we asked the local leaders the most important question about the amalgamation, *which concept of One City with One Municipal Administration or One City with Multiple Municipal Administrations should be based for new Hamamatsu City's governance*. Some local leaders in the former Hamamatsu City said that new Mayor Suzuki should immediately start to govern all the territories of the new Hamamatsu City based on One City with One Municipal Administration, instead of former Mayor Kitawaki's One City with Multiple Municipal Administrations. They also complained that the administrative authority of the ward offices was weakened by the mayoral change in April 2008 of Stage 2b and advocated stronger authority for the ward offices concerning administrative autonomy within the wards.

On the other hand, the leaders in the former merged municipalities complained that new Mayor Suzuki had violated the amalgamation agreement, citing the demolishing of the fund's delivery systems for conducting their own projects in the former municipal territories to the local autonomous districts in favor of the merged municipalities. Almost all the leaders of the former merged municipalities agreed that, based on the agreement between the former Hamamatsu City and the 11 merged municipalities, the administration should be conducted based on the One City with Multiple Municipal Administrations concept.

Through our interviews with local leaders, we also realized that the local leaders of the Hamamatsu City Federation of Neighborhood Associations might have to resolve many kinds of disputes, such as the reformation of the neighborhood associations, the unification of different standards for the consignments and the subsidiaries to them, and public service tariffs; none of these issues had been resolved in the pre-amalgamation agreement by the mayors and the officials of the 12 municipalities. In other words, detailed agreements for governance of the new Hamamatsu City must have been put with the discussion of local leaders after the amalgamation. The leaders needed an incredible amount of work and time to reach an agreement.

Now we turn our attention to the results of our questionnaires on the attitudes of the local people toward the amalgamation. We selected some basic neighborhood associations in Higashi and Tenryu Wards. Higashi Ward is a part of the former Hamamatsu City and is located in its urbanized area. Tenryu Ward consists of the former Tenryu City and four former municipalities. Its central part is 90 minutes by car from central Hamamatsu, and its other parts are mainly located in underpopulated areas. The territory of the former Tenryu City is directly served by the Tenryu Ward office as well as the Tenryu local branch office, and the territories of the four former municipalities are served by the local branch offices under the Tenryu Ward office.

In January 2009 (Stage 2b), we asked the local leaders of the neighborhood associations to distribute our questionnaires to the residents of Higashi and Tenryu Wards. We got 129 responses from Higashi Ward, and the response rate was 86%. The number of responses from Tenryu Ward was 382, and the response rate was 70%.

First, we show the basic characteristics of the respondents (Fig. 7). People 65 and over 65 accounted for the largest proportion (45%). In terms of their occupations, 40% of the respondents had already retired. The other 60% of them operated farms or worked in agriculture-related businesses, in self-employed businesses or at ordinary jobs for companies.

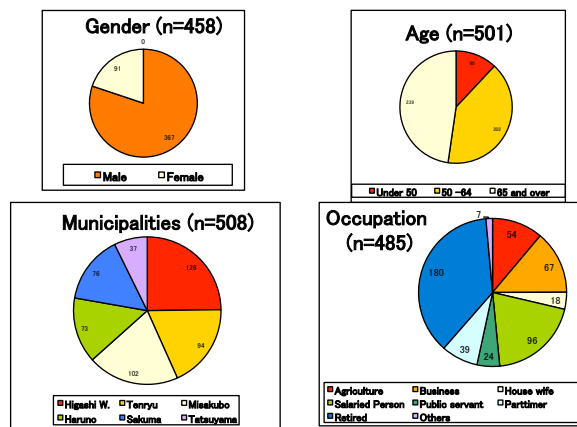


Figure 7 Characteristics of questionnaire respondents

Second, we discuss the people's attitude about the amalgamation plan before its actual implementation (Fig. 8). These results closely resemble those of the local leaders. The attitudes of the citizens in Higashi Ward of the former Hamamatsu City are slightly

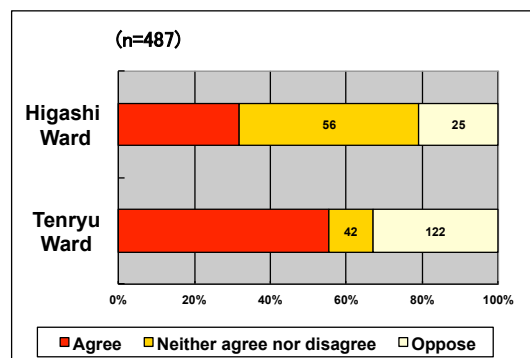


Figure 8 Pre-merger attitudes: Higashi and Tenryu Wards

affirmative; 30% agreed positively or passively, but a large proportion (45%) were neutral. On the contrary, 60% of the Tenryu Ward respondents agreed with the amalgamation plan. However,

30% opposed it. Their attitudes were clearly separated into two groups of affirmative and negative. Next, we conducted a more detailed analysis of the differences in the attitudes between the people of the Tenryu Ward office district and those of the four branch office districts (Fig. 9). The differences were very similar to those between the people in the Higashi and Tenryu Wards.

55% of the local people in the four local branch office districts strongly agreed with the amalgamation plan; at the same time 35% disagreed.

Third, we discuss the people's total perception of the amalgamation's outcomes three and half years after it. Generally speaking, a few of the people in both the Higashi and Tenryu Wards gave ratings of good or very good (Fig. 10). 70% of the respondents of Higashi Ward gave a rating of no change for the new administration. Over 50% of the Tenryu Ward respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the new administration after the amalgamation. After scrutinizing the Tenryu Ward responses, the percentage of responses in the served areas of the local branch offices who felt unsatisfied increased to about 60% (Fig. 11).

Fourth, we examined the people's evaluations of the municipal service levels and the work of the city government officials. We got almost the same results as from the local leaders. The Higashi Ward respondents positively evaluated the city government,

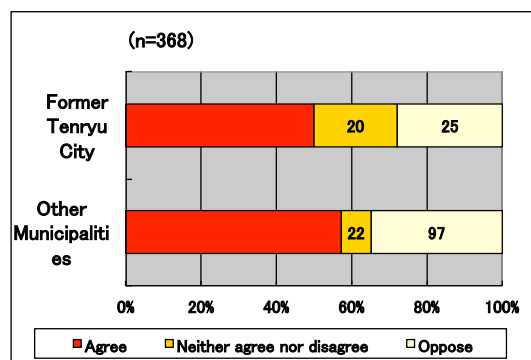


Figure 9 Pre-merger attitudes: former Tenryu City and others in Tenryu Ward

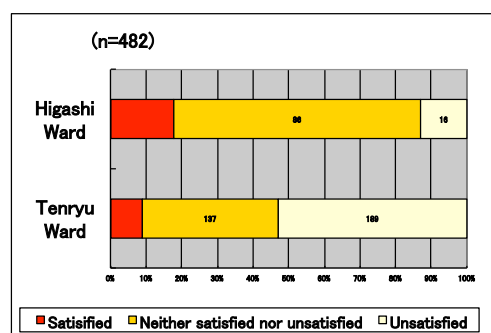


Figure 10 Complete evaluation of merger outcomes: Higashi and Tenryu Wards

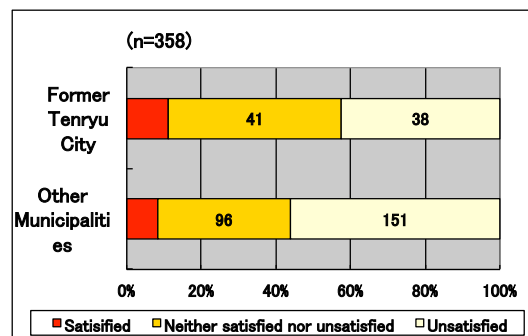


Figure 11 Complete evaluation of merger outcomes: former Tenryu City and others in Tenryu Ward

especially the Higashi Ward office, because of quick responses and better communication between the people and the ward office officials in charge of social welfare and national health insurance program.

On the contrary, even about 50% of the Tenryu Ward respondents felt that the public service levels had deteriorated. Among them, we found a great difference in the provided public services. Only 20% of the respondents in the district served by the Tenryu Ward office believed that the level of services had fallen, but even about 50% of the respondents of the served districts of the four local branch offices felt that the level of services had decreased. Before the amalgamation, the people in the former merged municipalities, enjoyed incredibly good public services⁶⁾, supported by such generous subsidiaries from the national government as Local Allocation Tax Grants and National Treasury Disbursements.

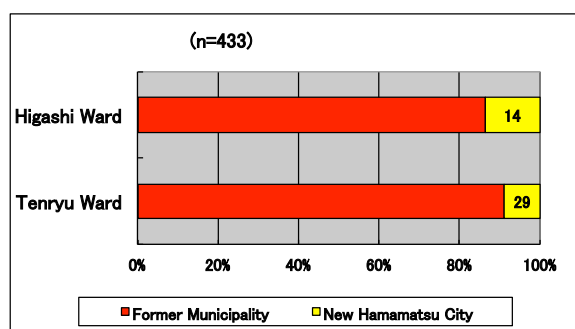


Figure 12 Identification of locals: Former municipality or New Hamamatsu City?

Finally, we discuss the people’s local identity (sense of belonging to locality) (Fig. 12). We asked them which area or locality they most strongly identified with. The respondents of both the Higashi and Tenryu Wards didn’t have strong feelings of identification with the new Hamamatsu City or the wards. They retained a strong sense of identification with their former municipal areas. Even though a few respondents of Higashi Ward felt like members of it, none of the Tenryu Ward respondents expressed feelings of belonging to the new Hamamatsu City or to Tenryu Ward.

We gathered the results of the people’s attitudes toward Hamamatsu City’s administration after the amalgamation. Many felt unsatisfied. We identified a large difference in the attitudes of the people between the former Hamamatsu City and the merged municipalities. There was also a difference in the attitude of the people between the served districts of the Tenryu Ward office and the four branch offices. The people in the areas directly served by the ward offices can be provided with much better public services than those by the local branch offices. They maintained a strong local identification with the former Hamamatsu City and the former municipalities.

5. Governance of NPOs in peripheral areas of new Hamamatsu City

In this chapter, we discuss the governance in the new Hamamatsu City after the amalgamation from the viewpoint of the local people's organizations that are seeking intra-municipality autonomy or alternative avenues for public services and the revitalization of their local communities. On behalf of the demolished municipalities, NPOs were established to address the above two purposes by their own activity territories in the peripheral areas of the new enlarged municipalities.

In the new Hamamatsu City, many and various kinds of NPOs have been established. We interviewed the leaders of the only two NPOs who seek provisions for public services or to revitalize their local communities. *Let's Do it for Sakuma* is an NPO in the former Sakuma Town, and another called *Dreaming of Kunma's Future* is a NPO in the Kunma district of the former Tenryu City (Fig. 4).

The former Sakuma Town is located in the deepest mountainous area of the new Hamamatsu City two hours by car from central Hamamatsu. Its population, which was 5,400 in 2005 with an area of 169 km², has decreased from a peak of 20,000 in 1960. Before the amalgamation, Sakuma Town had been designated as an underpopulated area by the national government. To support its local people after the amalgamation on behalf of the government of Sakuma Town, the Sakuma NPO (*Let's Do it for Sakuma*) was established on July 1, 2005 at the amalgamation by the strong leadership of the former Sakuma Town's mayor.

The Sakuma NPO received a grant of 100 million yen from the former Sakuma Town as a starting fund. Its organization consists of a council, ten committees for ten activity areas, and volunteer activists from local households. The Sakuma NPO has only two regular workers, a general secretary and a clerk, and general members from 1,450 households. This figure accounts for 70% of all the households in the former town of Sakuma. Its primary tasks include: 1) managing a cultural hall called *the Home of History and Folk Tales of Sakuma*, established by the former Sakuma Town; 2) a local taxi service business for its general members; 3) managing annual festivals and ceremonies at the behest of the Hamamatsu City government; and 4) establishing and managing various own projects, including revitalization of their communities, entertainments, etc.

From the viewpoint of its financial base (Fig. 13), the Sakuma NPO gets annual membership dues of 1,200 yen per household from 1,450 households, the commissions from projects of the Hamamatsu City government, and income from various businesses and projects. Both the total revenue and expenditures reached about 30 million yen. About 70% of the total revenue is roughly estimated to come from various commissions and subsidiaries of Hamamatsu City,

Shizuoka Prefecture, and the national government.

Compared with the local people in the other former municipalities in the peripheral areas in the new Hamamatsu City, the people in Sakuma seem happy because they have access to taxis for shopping and trips to the doctor/hospital as well as being able to attend inexpensive local ceremonies and entertainments provided by the Sakuma NPO. However, it faces the following two serious problems: 1) retaining the necessary number of activists, and 2) improving its weak financial base which depends on commissions and public sector subsidiaries.

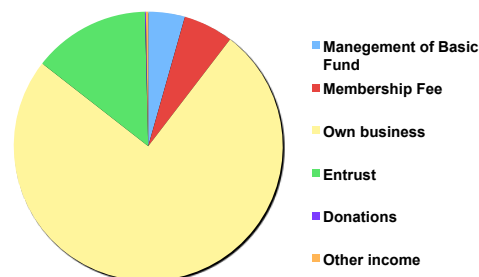


Figure 13 Revenue of Sakuma NPO in 2010
Total: 290 thousand euros

Next, we discuss the Kunma NPO, or *Dreaming of Kunma's Future*, which doesn't provide public services on behalf of the former municipal government, but mainly runs community businesses to revitalize its own community.

Kunma district, which is located in a deep mountainous area two hours by car from central Hamamatsu, was merged into the former Tenryu City in 1960 as part of Showa's pro-merger action. The Kunma NPO was established in June 2000, based on a former organization called *the Kunma District Revitalization Committee*. It operates a road station with a restaurant and a shop, and a factory for its agricultural products. It also organizes various community events and festivals and is starting to provide public services on a small scale.

Kunma NPO's organization is composed of a council, a committee of activists, and four departments that manage the four major projects mentioned below. Its most critical aspect is that all 525 households in the Kunma District are members. Their major projects include: 1) running a road station of Kunma with a restaurant and a shop that sells agricultural products; 2) organizing such community events as festivals and special food sale campaigns; 3) operating a delivery lunch service and a public bath service for its elderly citizens; 4) conducting various revitalization projects entrusted to it by the national, prefectural, and city governments. Its annual revenues are 70 million yen: 95% from its own businesses.

However, NPO Kunma faces almost the same problems as NPO Sakuma, including depopulation and deindustrialization. The most serious problem is the serious dearth of young people to participate in its activities. The restaurant and the shop get many tourists from new

Hamamatsu City and the neighboring regions. The majority of both the visitors and the restaurant and shop workers are senior citizens, fueling speculation about NPO Kunma's future.

We mentioned the neighborhood associations and their local leaders in Hamamatsu in Chapter 4. According to our interviews with local leaders, there was a large difference in the activity levels between the neighborhood associations of the former Hamamatsu City and the 11 merged municipalities. In Tenryu Ward, there were only a few neighborhood associations with high levels of activity, because of the population decline and the overall aging of the population. Except in the former Tenryu City and the former Sakuma Town, many previous municipal events have not been held since the amalgamation because their organizers changed from the former municipal governments to the regional federations of neighborhood associations. Almost all of the regional federations of neighborhood associations in Tenryu Ward (except those of the former Tenryu City and the former Sakuma Town) lack strong organization ability. When we discuss the NPOs in Tenryu Ward, the local people in the former Sakuma Town and the Kunma District of the former Tenryu City have organizations that play a key role in maintaining the quality of the lives of their citizens on behalf of the former municipal governments. However, the Sakuma and Kunma NPOs must struggle to organize their projects.

7. Conclusion and implications of new Hamamatsu City's experience

We identified a large difference in the government after the amalgamation between the former Mayor Kitawaki and the new Mayor Suzuki. When new Hamamatsu City started, the then Mayor Kitawaki adopted a unique government policy called One City with One Municipal Administration in favor of the people in the merged municipalities and established Local Autonomous Districts (General), local branch offices, and local councils in each former municipality in addition to a city assembly and neighborhood associations. However, in April 2007, a new mayor was elected, Suzuki, who drastically reformed the city government. In the 11 merged municipalities, especially in the peripheral and deep mountainous areas, the daily lives of the people are filled with hardships because of the deterioration of public services and the population decline strongly effected by the amalgamation.

We examined the actual conditions of the new Hamamatsu City from the viewpoints of government as administration by municipal governmental organizations and governance as various activities for the local people by voluntary- and community-based organizations.

The following are our primary conclusions: 1) The new mayor is going to change the governance of the new Hamamatsu by drastically reforming the administrative organization and

reducing the branches of city government in the merged and former municipalities in the peripheral areas. 2) Some community leaders in central Hamamatsu prefer the new concept of One City with One Municipal Administration by the new mayor, while community leaders in Hamamatsu's peripheral areas prefer a return to the One City with Multiple Municipal Administrations of the government's former mayoral system. 3) The people in the peripheral areas are strongly opposed to the government after the amalgamation and the new mayor's methods of government. 4) Some people in the peripheral areas have established NPOs to restore public services and have begun the process of revitalizing themselves.

In April 2012, the present Mayor Suzuki demolished the Local Autonomous Districts (General) and the local councils, which had been deployed in the 11 former municipalities. At the same time, he also demolished the eight local branch offices with about 25 officials and established eight local posts with 15 officials instead of them. These actions made it more difficult for the local people to conduct intra-municipality autonomy and to govern themselves.

Notes:

- 1) According to *the Local Autonomy Act*, there are three additional and special statuses of cities: (1) *Special Cities* whose population exceeds 200,000, (2) *Designated Mid-level Cities* whose population exceeds 300,000, (3) *Ordinance-designated Cities* whose population exceeds 70,000. Some cities, which meet each city status's requirements, can request from the national government one status among three these.
- 2) *The Ordinance-designated City System* is an administrative institution for large cities that have administration difficulties by only one headquarters of city governments and almost the same authorities in the areas related to their citizens' daily lives as prefectural governments. In 1960, there were only six ordinance-designated cities (Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Kyoto, Yokohama and Kobe) in Japan. Since 1970, the number has increased, especially in accordance with the Heisei Pro-merger Action of Municipalities. In 2012, there were 20 ordinance-designated cities.
- 3) The national government arranged *the Local Autonomy Act*, *the Former Municipal Merger Act* and *the New Municipal Merger Act* to encourage the new municipalities to develop intra-municipality autonomy and established three kinds of institutional systems: *Local Autonomous Districts (General)* for both the merged municipalities and the non-merged municipalities, *Local Autonomous Districts (Special)* for the merged municipalities, and *Special Districts of Merged Municipalities*.

- 4) *The Underpopulated Areas* were designated by the national government for the revitalization of the municipalities that suffered from the collapse of local communities and local economies, owing to severe depopulation and de-industrialization. In 1970, the national government established a periodical law that provided generous financial supports called *the Act on Urgent Measures for Underpopulated Areas*, which was expanded four times past its original ten-year term. The national government has repealed it and continues to support the underpopulated areas through *the Act on Special Measures for Promotion of Independence for Underpopulated Areas (2004-2014)*.
- 5) Based on our interviews with the directors of wards.
- 6) For example, according to our interviews with the officials of the former municipalities in Tenryu Ward, they were frequently asked for various kinds of help to the elderly people's daily lives.

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