Local Politics and National Policy in Japan

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[Note to readers: This conference paper is adapted from my recently published book *Local Politics and National Policy: Multilevel Conflicts in Japan*, 2017 Routledge. I am hoping to both generate interest for it as well as get advice on further avenues of research on some points raised in the conclusion section. Thanks for your comments in advance.]

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The question of local power in Japan [taken from introduction in book]

In post-war Japan, questions of local power have been posed in two ways. First, scholars have asked to what extent Japanese local governments possess local autonomy, and hence are able to pursue policies at local level independent of central government interference. Second, observers have investigated ways in which local politics shape national-level politics and policy.

In terms of local autonomy, different historical periods have highlighted either the elements of centralized control or of local discretion of Japanese local governments. In the early post-war period, the dominant interpretation among observers was that the Japanese state was highly centralized and that local governments were mainly agents of the center. Though responsible for an increasingly large share of the expanding welfare state in the post-war period, local governments were unable to exercise policy initiative or diverge substantially from centralized standards set in the center. In this view, local governments were limited in their autonomy by a web of national laws, central ministerial oversight and regulations, as well as critical dependence on the center for financial resources (Steiner 1965, Tsuji 1976).

This characterization of Japanese local government was undermined by an unexpected period of local activity during the late 1960s and 70s. During this period, local governments under control of opposition parties pursued innovative policymaking in environmental regulation and welfare provision. These measures at times exceeded their legal authority, diverged from national standards, and challenged central ministry guidelines (Muramatsu 1975, Reed 1982). Furthermore, local government policy and budget spending was found to be affected by the partisan composition and interactions of local legislatures and executives throughout the post-war period (Soga & Machidori 2007, Sunahara 2012).

In terms of the second question, scholars have tried to capture how local politics (its elections, local politicians, and territorial interests) shaped national policy. Their analytical focus naturally fell on the LDP, which was dominant locally and nationally throughout the post-war period. Revisionist analyses emerged from the mid-1970s

countering the view of local politics as being irrelevant under a highly centralized legal framework. Muramatsu (1975, 1988) indicated how local conservatives (prefectural and municipal legislators as well as directly elected mayors and governors) were able to draw out benefits from the center by participating in a bottom-up and inclusive policy making process. This bottom-up dynamic involved a "rugby scrum" linking local politicians, local governments, local Diet members and national-level bureaucrats (Muramatsu 2010). Policy demands were channeled upward to the ruling party and coordinated among ministries and various sectional interest groups. Local governments (and local politicians representing these areas) competed among each other in "horizontal political competition" to capture a greater share of expanding governmental spending to various regions. (Muramatsu 1975, 1988).

Local politics influenced national policy not only through such vertical linkages within the LDP but also in providing an arena for opposition parties to challenge the center. During the mid-60s and 70s, local governments controlled by leftist governors and mayors challenged local and national conservatives on a platform questioning unregulated high-growth (Flanagan, Krauss & Steiner 1980). These Socialist and/or Communist-backed governors implemented local bylaws expanding welfare services and enforcing pollution regulations which superseded or even contravened national laws and regulations. Many of these initiatives were copied by other local governments or were co-opted into national standards. Local opposition thus served to alter national policy by representing policy preferences which could not emerge nationally and by counter-balancing one-party dominance at national level, making Japanese democracy more responsive to voter demands (Soga & Machidori 2007, p. 202).

Local government power in the post-war period thus depended on contextual factors: the nature of intra-party integration, local opposition strength, and the availability of redistributive resources. As such, Japanese local power has been highly contingent; such contingency is probably also the reason why interest in local government has ebbed and flowed over time.

A new disequilibrium between center and regions

These past evaluations and descriptive models of Japanese local power, however, have become inadequate since the 1990s. Three broad processes have transpired which have transformed the dynamics between national and local levels of politics in the past quarter century. These trends have been observed and analyzed separately, but not comprehensively understood in terms of its impact on the local influence over national politics.

First, the links between national and local politics have weakened as the interests and preferences of national and local politicians have become less aligned. Electoral reforms in 1994 have contributed to greater programmatic competition between two major parties targeting floating voters under strong executive leadership. But local elections remain under the old electoral rules, which have hindered the emergence of two-party programmatic competition locally. Reapportionment has also meant the national party's center of gravity has shifted towards urban districts, while its local branches (especially its numerous rural ones) remain beholden to a narrower set of local interest groups and organized voters. Municipal mergers have also drastically reduced the number of local politicians, reducing channels of communication between center and localities.

Second, the Japanese state has undergone a steady, albeit gradual, process of administrative and fiscal decentralization with the central government less and less committed to maintaining inter-regional equality. The ruling LDP undertook a number of whole-scale administrative and fiscal decentralization reforms, begun in 1995 and accelerated under the Koizumi administration (2001-2006). As described earlier, these administrative decentralization measures reduced central government intervention and expanded local government discretion. A set of local government fiscal reforms (2002-2006) resulted in a sharp decline in grants and earmarked subsidies (including public works spending) to the regions. Periodic interventions of "compensation" to shore up support in economically disadvantaged rural areas continue to occur (usually during election years, particularly prior to major local elections and the Upper House) (Kitamura 2014). But the central government has continued to encourage deregulation and self-sufficiency among regions, emphasizing regional diversity and competition between localities rather than pursue balanced growth.

Third, the stability of inter-governmental relations has been disrupted by LDP electoral volatility in the national arena which has occurred together with the emergence of non-partisan governors and mayors and regional parties at the local level. The formation of a Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government in 2009 created a historically uncommon situation in Japan whereby the party in government at national level faced a majority of prefectural legislatures controlled by another party (the LDP). Such partisan incongruence across levels of government has generated a new dynamic and strains in inter-governmental relations. Since the late 1990s non-partisan governors – maintaining equal distance to all parties – have emerged with increasing frequency. These governors, many of them high-profile figures attracting considerable media attention, focused on cost-cutting and administrative reform at local level. Some, such as those in Osaka, Shiga, and Aichi, invented their own regional parties to consolidate power locally, resulting in complex strains with incumbent parties nationally and locally.

The three trends reflect an overall unravelling of the symbiotic ties linking local and national governments through the ruling party's party vertically integrated organization. As these center-local ties weakened, successive LDP and DPJ administrations pursued structural reforms including decentralization, privatization of public services such as the postal network and highways, as well as overall reduction in spending on public works and redistribution to local governments. Though opposed by local governments and partisans as measures which "abandoned the regions" (*chihō kirisute*), these measures have, by and large, been implemented. Since the 1990s, then, Japan has become a far less "peripherally oriented" political economy (Calder 1988) as regional inequalities increase. Demographic and economic crises in the regions during this period have not resulted in the kind of redistributive political compensation seen in the past.

The argument about Japan and in a broader context

Since the 1990s then, the equilibrium generated by the traditional symbiotic relations between the center and regions under a dominant party have been replaced by

disequilibrium and strains between the two levels in Japan.

What remains unanswered is how Japanese local politics can still matter under these new circumstances. What powers do Japanese local politicians both in legislature and executive have to influence national policy if traditional partisan channels of bottom-up policy making have been severed? If we look at key conflicts between central and local governments, how have the various national and local political actors engaged in them? If there is a shift to more conflictual relations, what are the consequences of such a shift? What sort of new equilibrium are both center and localities seeking to create out of this state of flux? These dynamics must be examined in order to be able to understand whether and how local governments matter in the new environment of the post-1990s Japan. This is the goal of this book.

To foretell our findings, the book argues that changes in the national political arena, fiscal and administrative decentralization, together with broader socio-economic trends, have led to a decoupling of once closely-integrated national and local party systems in Japan. This process of "decoupling" refers to the process of national and local party organizations becoming de-aligned in terms of electoral incentives and interests. These trends have had, and will continue to have, significant consequences for elections and policy-making in Japanese politics. These consequences include: greater externalized intra-party conflict; more conflictual inter-governmental relations between central and local governments controlled by different parties; and the rise of chief executives with agendas and resources increasingly autonomous of the national ruling party.

Although being a book primarily about Japan, the study seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of how local partisans shape national policymaking. Existing literature, mostly on federal systems, have theorized and investigated how the degree of state centralization, vertical integration for party organizations and partisan congruence in different levels of government affect inter-governmental relations. Although these claims will be explored in greater depth in the succeeding chapters, we set out the key arguments that relate to the book's concerns.

First, an important literature on federal systems and party organizations has argued

that nation-wide parties with integrated organizations create a balance between national and local interests, prevent one level from acting against the interest of the other, and stabilize inter-governmental relations to sustain the federal system (Riker 1964, Filippov et al 2004). Hence, vertical integration of parties ensures damaging conflicts over policy between levels of government are contained and defused.

Second, following this logic of party integration, when different parties control different levels of government, these channels of vertical integration are lost and inter-governmental relations are expected to be more conflictual and strained (McEwen et al 2012).

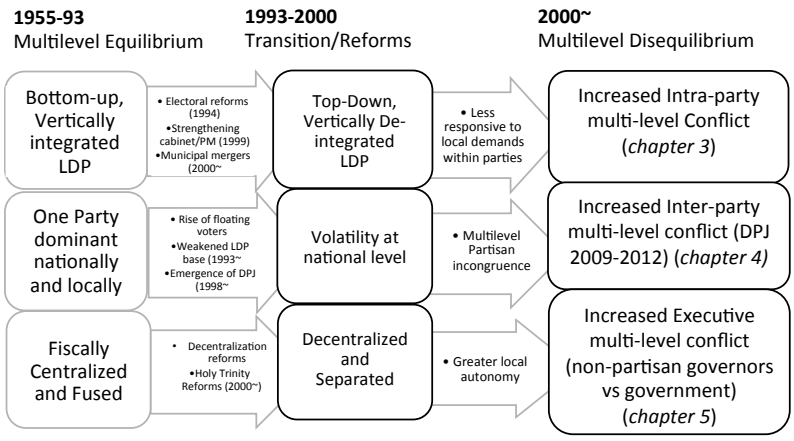
Third, local executives play an important role in inter-governmental negotiations and conflicts, particularly in states where partisan channels are weakened and local governments have considerable policy autonomy from the central government. (Chandler & Chandler 1987, Watts 1989) Moreover, directly-elected executives generally tend to be weakly loyal agents to parties (Samuels & Shugart 2010). Thus governors or mayors - who are local presidents - which gain greater autonomy and resources through state decentralization are likely to challenge national policy programs.

These theoretical expectations will be tested in our investigation of Japan's experience of multi-level conflict. First, we ascertain if inter-governmental relations have become more conflictual as the vertical integration of the LDP weakened over time since the mid-1990s. Second, we ascertain if periods of widespread partisan incongruence (during the DPJ administrations between 2009 and 2012) led to similarly or even more conflictual interactions between the central and local government than compared to periods of partisan congruence. Finally, as Japan combines both a parliamentary system at national level and a presidential system at local level (a relatively rare combination found in few of the older democracies), Japan provides a useful case of examining how partisan affiliation of local directly elected executives (governors and mayors) affect interactions with the national government over policy. Japanese local executives in theory gained greater powers as a result of decentralization reforms since 2000. We can thus ascertain if the expanded autonomy of prefectural governors

generated more frequently conflictual relations with the central government. Close investigation of cases in which local executives challenged the center should reveal if the expansion of local powers actually played a role in strengthening their position against the central government.

We thus test these existing expectations about the role of vertical integration, partisan congruence across levels, and partisan affiliation/autonomy of local chief-executives on multi-level policy conflict through the case of Japan. The chart below provides an overview of the structure of the main arguments and their corresponding empirical chapters through the book.

Figure 0.1: Structure and overview of book



Source: compiled by author

The following section [chapter five] analyses how directly-elected chief executives (governors) impact national policy processes. It investigates how the partisan affiliation of local executives affects their willingness to cooperate or confront the national government over policy. The chapter also analyses to what extent decentralization reforms since 2000 had strengthened the local executives' ability and willingness to challenge national policy.

Governors in Japan [taken from Chapter 5 in book]

The governors of Japan's 47 prefectures are vital nodes of representation and power in the local politics of the country. As directly elected executives, they downplay partisan affiliations and portray themselves as impartial representatives of the whole prefecture. Such governors control government budgets and oversee regional economies as large as major countries'[i], and are granted considerable formal powers over initiating and blocking policy.[ii]

The wide formal powers ascribed to governors are further amplified by the duration of their terms and the directly-elected nature of their office. Japanese governors tend to complete their legally mandated four-year terms, and commonly go on for second and third terms.[iii] Unlike national presidents with term constraints[iv], popular governors can be entrenched for three, four terms or longer, developing extensive networks and able to pursue long-term plans. Compared to the volatility of cabinets and short durations of national administrations in recent years, governors clearly enjoy greater stability in their office. Combined with such longevity in office, governors also point to their democratic legitimacy of being directly elected, unlike indirectly selected ministers of state, most governors receive more votes in their own elections than Diet members; those from the most populous prefectures, like Tokyo or Osaka need millions of votes to win office.

From this unique platform of formal power, stability and popular legitimacy, governors of varying backgrounds have impacted the national political process and discourse. They have been described in popular discourse as being "more powerful than prime ministers or presidents"[v], "modern-day *daimyō* lords" (Yawata 2007), and, for the Tokyo governor, the "second prime minister of Japan" (Sasaki 2011). They are, in other words, a significant force in both the national and local arena of politics. More than local legislatures or local party organizations, these powerful executives arguably play a visible role in defending territorial interests in the national arena. How the governors' relationship to central government has evolved since the 1990s and how their powers impact national policy are the main topics of this chapter.

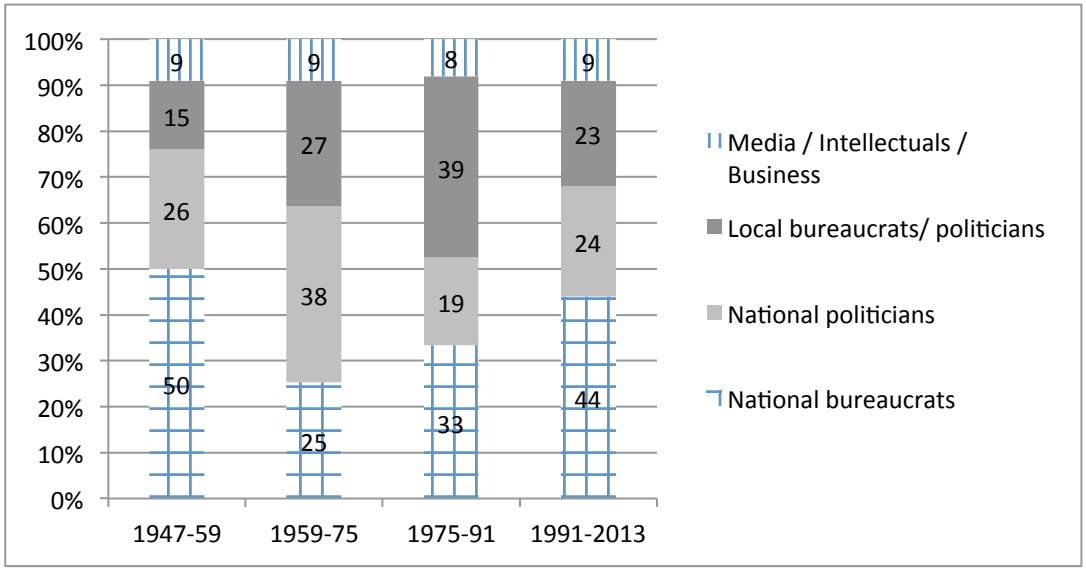
Types of governors and expected behaviors

A diverse group of high-profile governors has loomed large in post-war history. During the 60s and 70s, economists and constitutional scholars became leading progressive governors: Ninagawa Torazo (Kyoto), Minobe Ryokichi (Tokyo), and Kuroda Ryoichi (Osaka). Governors from smaller prefectures later became prime ministers such as Hosokawa Morihiro (Kumamoto) or party leaders such as Takemura Masayoshi (Shiga) who played a central role in party realignment at national level in the early 1990s. Following this period, a surge of non-partisan voters dissatisfied with party politicians and ministry bureaucrats swept celebrities and writers to victory in gubernatorial elections. These include Yokoyama Nokku (Osaka), Aoshima Yukio (Tokyo), Ishihara Shintaro (Tokyo), Tanaka Yasuo (Nagano), and Higashikokubaru Hideo (Miyazaki). In recent years, local chief executives have started their own regional parties, some that have crossed over successfully onto the national stage. These include Hashimoto Toru (Osaka), Kada Yukiko (Shiga), and Kawamura Takashi (Nagoya mayor). Other governors have suffered high-profile scandals, such as the three governors of Fukushima, Wakayama, and Miyazaki prefectures who were arrested for construction-related bid-rigging crimes in 2006, as well as two successive Tokyo governors who stepped down on misuse of political funds in 2013 and 2016. Although the proportion of former bureaucrats among governors remain high (figure 5.1) throughout the post-war period, there has been a fair share of former national and local politicians as well as non-politicians who have become governors.

Regardless of their background, governors individually and collectively have over the years played a key role in major confrontations with the national government. The progressive government era (1965-75) centered on governors and mayors in major urban areas backed by non-LDP parties and opposition forces. Local executives, not legislatures, led the charge against the national conservatives' agenda of runaway economic growth and called for greater welfare and environmental regulations for residents.

Since the 90s, governors worked together through national umbrella organizations in defending local government interests; in particular, against central government attempts to reduce subsidies and grants through fiscal decentralization.

Figure 5.1: Career backgrounds of governors in percentages

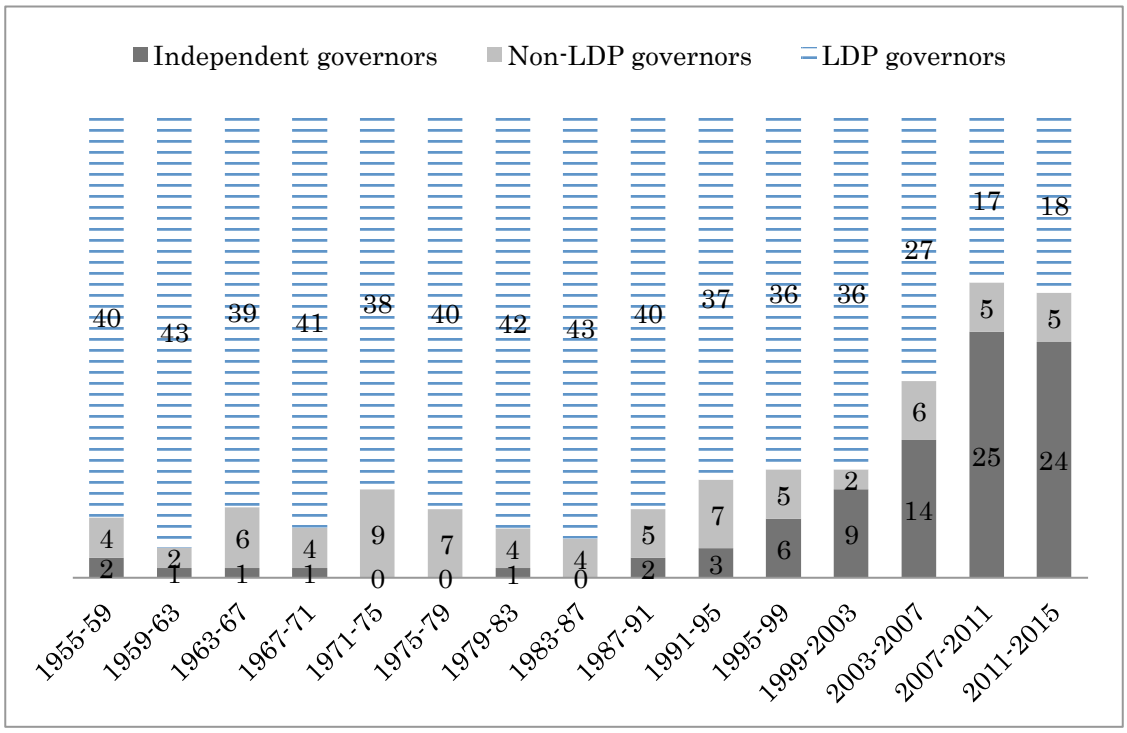


Source: Compiled from Tsuji 2015 (p. 53-54).

Individual governors have also collided with the central government over national policies which directly affect their prefectures, with what appears to be increasing frequency and intensity from the mid-90s. Among notable examples, this period has seen severe clashes between Okinawa governors and the capital over US base policy; recurring and public conflicts over the funding of national projects; and successful resistance against major public works, including the construction of national damns and blocking the restarting of nuclear power plants.

The relationship between governors and the national parties has also been changing. An increasing number of gubernatorial candidates are refusing nominations and the support of national parties and their headquarters, choosing to stand as independents or with the backing only of local branches of the national parties (**see figure 2.5**). Related to these developments, high-profile governors/mayors have established their own local parties in legislature and sought to expand these forces upwards into the national arena and influence national policy.

Figure 2.5: Partisan affiliation of governors (LDP, non-LDP, or Independent)



Source: Tsuji (2015) and for data after 2013, compiled by author from various newspapers.
Note: Independent governors are those that did not receive nominations from the headquarters of any national party (*hombu kōnin, suisen*), although they may have received support of local party organizations including that of the LDP (*kenren suisen*). LDP governors are those that received nomination from the national LDP (*honbu kōnin, suisen*). Non-LDP governors are those that received nomination from the headquarters of a national party beside the LDP.

Our theoretical and historical discussion in earlier chapters claimed that national and local governments are decoupling because of decentralization since the 1990s, which combined the expansion of local autonomy with reduced fiscal support/clientelism from the center. Such decoupling is expected to lead to less cooperation and more critical/conflictual attitudes among national and local governments in general. Local executives, leading these local governments, are thus expected to be more willing to challenge the national government over national policy direction. This is expected to be particularly the case for the increasing number of governors who are less dependent on the ruling party at national level for re-election or policy implementation at local level.

We try to provide evidence for these hypotheses by focusing on three areas. First we

look at the changing overall dynamic between individual governors and the central government, specifically using data of governor meetings with the PM over time. Second we look at the evolving role and behavior of the National Governors' Association, a key actor representing the collective interests of the regions, as well as the use of more institutionalized frameworks for intergovernmental interaction. [This section has been cut for the conference article] Third, we investigate cases of major conflicts led by individual governors against the national government to better assess the origins, processes and outcomes of these multilevel conflicts. By weaving together these different sets of evidence, both capturing changes over time for all governors and between governors with different characteristics, the chapter will show how interactions between governors and central government have become less stable and less cooperative.

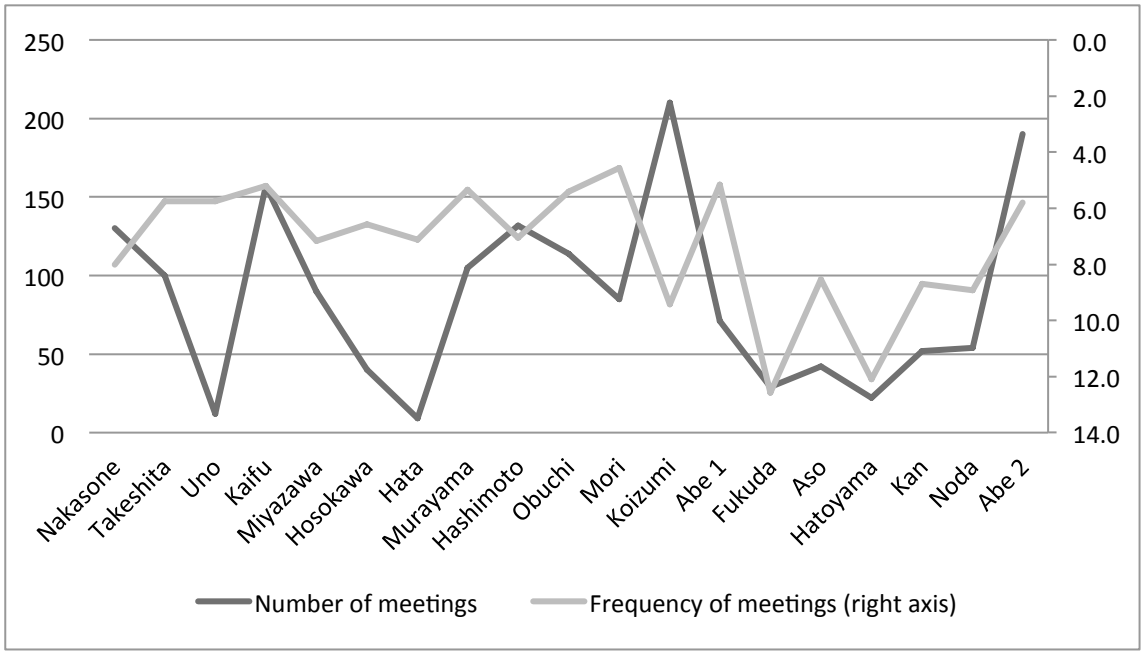
PM meetings with governors

How have the relations between national and local executives changed over time? Governors interact with the central government through different channels and in different capacities. They may meet with higher-level national bureaucrats, ministers, and local Diet members to petition for local projects or influence national policy. In some cases, the governor will take their case directly to the prime minister. Among these interactions, nation-wide data of how often a governor meets with national ministers, Diet members, or bureaucrats are not readily available. Each of the 47 prefectures keeps past records of governors' official visits, but not their informal meetings, and past records are available only through information disclosure requests. In comparison, the daily movement and meetings of the Japanese prime minister are comprehensively recorded, archived, and made public by the major newspapers. As a data source, the so-called "daily movement of prime ministers" have been effectively mined by other researchers to capture the changing leadership style of PMs (Machidori 2012 e.g.). The author similarly collected and analyzed this data to capture the changing overall relationship between PMs and governors.

Using the Asahi newspaper database and searching all articles recording the PM's daily schedule between 1985 and 2015, the author found 1,645 unique meetings involving a

PM and a governor (1,307), a vice-governor (64), a gubernatorial candidate (216), or multiple governors (58).[vi] From these 1,645 meetings, the author counted the frequency of meetings (by dividing the duration of the administration by the number of PM-governor meetings during that administration)(See Figure 5.2 below). It is evident that the frequency of meetings have generally fallen throughout this period, but with particularly low frequency of meetings with governors under the Koizumi, Fukuda, and Aso administrations as well as under the three DPJ PMs (2009-2012).

Figure 5.2: Changing frequency of meetings between PM and governors, 1985-2015

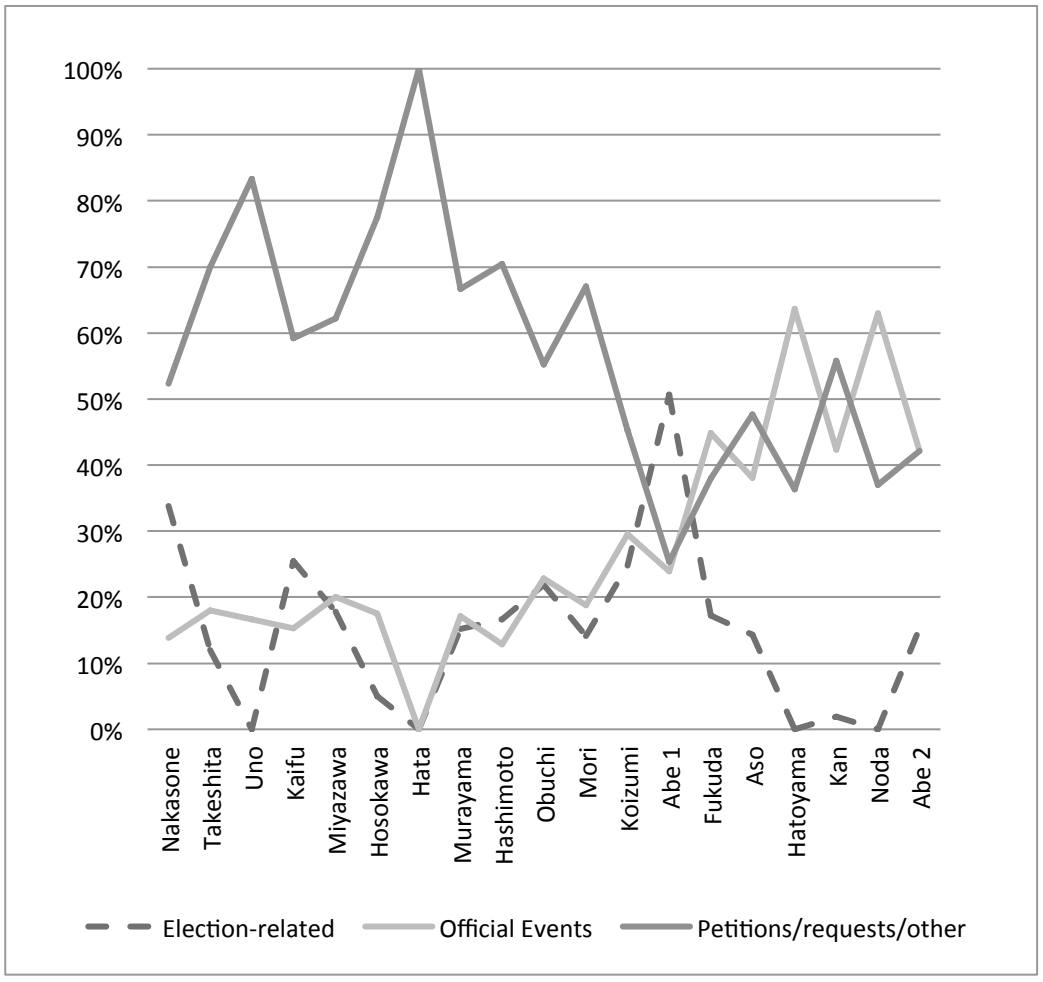


SOURCE: Compiled by author from *Shushō dōsei* data from *Asahi Shimbun,* 1985□2015. (N=1,645 meetings).

This general decline in frequency of PM meetings with governors can be interpreted as an expression of the growing distance between national and local governments, with direct interactions between the executives of the two levels diminishing. Moreover, the very infrequent meetings between the DPJ PMs and governors come as little surprise. The previous chapter explained how the DPJ sought to end traditional petitioning (including those from the governor) and force local demands to be channeled through formal procedures with their local branches. The sharp drop of governor meetings since 2009 is likely a result of this DPJ policy.

The newspaper records of the PM's daily schedule sometimes detail the purpose or nature of the meeting between the PM and the governor (or governors). The author categorized the governor meetings into three types and recorded the proportion of these meetings for each of the PMs, tracing changes over time. (See Figure 5.4 below)

Figure 5.4: Proportion of meetings between PM and governors by category



SOURCE: Compiled by author from *Shushō dōsei* data from *Asahi Shimbun,* 1985-2015. (N=1,645 meetings).

The first type are meetings between the PM and governor that relate to elections, these include meetings in which the PM in his capacity as the leader of the LDP (or DPJ): to formally hand over party nominations to candidates (*suisenjō no tewatashi*); to

campaign on their account in their prefectures (*senkyo ōen*); to meet a governor who had come to thank the PM for support after an election (*senkyo aisatsu*); as well as to meet governors on the road when making campaign tour for national-level elections. The second are those in which the PM meets a governor during official business or ceremonies. These include: attending National Governors' Association meetings; attending various ceremonies and conferences; visiting prefectures for inspection tours or after natural disasters; or receiving guests of honour that are escorted by the governor to the PM's residence. Finally, the third type of meetings include any meetings in which: there is an explicit reference to some policy petition or demand (22 meetings); the only explanation for the meeting is that it was a lunch/dinner meeting (42 meetings); or there is no explanation given for the meeting (838 meetings). The majority of these meetings, in which the newspapers do not record the explicit nature or purpose of the governor visiting the PM, are intriguing. The author assumes that many of these are meetings in which the governors petition for local projects or negotiate about national policies which affect their prefectures, bringing their case directly to the PM.

Figure 5.4 above demonstrates some clear trends for the three types of PM/governor meetings since the mid-1980s. First, successive PMs are meeting governors for official occasions more, as a proportion of all their governor meetings. At the same time, PM meetings with governors concerning petitions or other matters not on official business are declining over time. From Nakasone to about Mori (1985-2000) meetings with governors on unofficial business (and those held at the *kantei* or LDP headquarters) were at high levels. Since Koizumi, these types of meetings have declined (while more and more meetings are held increasingly outside of the PM's official locations). This trend could be interpreted as a growing distance and formalization of ties between PM and governors, with fewer instances of the governor coming to the *kantei* to negotiate or petition national policy at the top level. Finally, the proportion of electoral-related meetings vary across administrations, but clearly the three DPJ administrations met hardly at all with governors to campaign for them or provide nominations, etc. This is not surprising considering the difficulty the DPJ had in nominating DPJ gubernatorial candidates, even during their term in power (Hijino 2014).

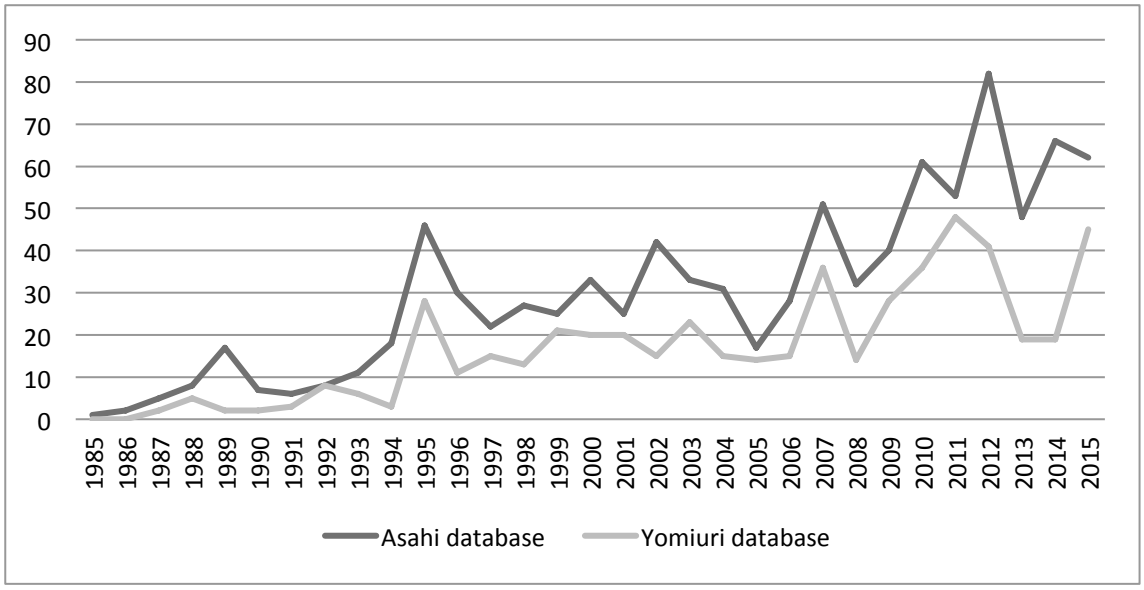
The changing frequency and types of PM and governor meetings since 1985 to 2015 illustrate a number of trends in the evolving relationship between central and local governments as expressed in the interaction of executives from both levels. Primarily, meetings have become fewer in frequency and more formal in nature (ceremonies, tours of inspection, emergency meetings over natural disasters). At the same time, fewer of these meetings relate to either local petitioning/influencing national policy.

Aside from the clear increase in meetings with Okinawa governors since tensions heightened over US military bases in the mid-90s and relations unraveled over relocating the Futenma air base from 2009, the PM meeting data cannot - by itself - capture increased tensions or conflicts between governors and PMs. What it does reveal, however, is the growing distance between governors either less willing (or no longer invited, as in the DPJ) to bring their case to Tokyo. Concerned about media relations and publicity, increasingly "presidentialized" PMs (Krauss & Nyblade 2005, Machidori 2012) appear to be taking to the road to make more frequent stops in prefectures resulting in incidental meetings with governors outside of Tokyo. PMs are also less attached to their home prefectures, meeting with governors from their prefectures farless. There also appears to be an overall weakening of providing electoral support for governors in later administrations, as more governors distance themselves from the national parties. Executives of the two levels are delinking and direct channels of communication between the PM and individual governors thinning out.

Although a very crude indicator of the changing relations between governors and PMs, the author searched for articles in the major dailies (*Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*) that included the terms "criticize", "governor", and "prime minister's official residence (*kantei*)" (See Figure 5.6 below). The results included articles that were not related to relations between governors and the PM, but the majority of them were articles in which governors criticized or questioned national policy. In both newspapers, the frequency of articles with those search terms increased at a similar rate: sharp increases in 1995, 2001-2004, 2007, and after 2009~. Each of these peaks reflects different issues of contention between the two levels of government, but the overall trend is clear: governors are generally more critical of the central government executive, with much of these increases occurring after 2000. Together with the PM meeting data,

the frequency of such articles further corroborate the interpretation that relations between executives at both levels have become more tense and confrontational.

Figure 5.6: Media reporting on governors criticizing cabinet/PM and vice versa



Source: compiled by author from *Yomiuri Shimbun* database (*yomidasu*) and *Asahi Shimbun* database (*kikuzo II*).

Cases of multilevel conflict: origins, process and outcomes

Types of conflicts and overview of cases

The historical data so far capture how the relationship between governors and central governments have shifted to a weakening of informal links, growing tensions over national policy, and more institutionalized interactions. These developments occurred contemporaneously with trends of decentralization, weakening clientelism, top-down policy making from above and the emergence of non-partisan governors from below. The changing relations between levels of government, like all broad historical change, is driven by intertwined, multiple variables having multiple, inter-related outcomes. Yet such a description of messy covariation lacks analytical rigour in terms of causality. Moreover, not all governors became uncooperative towards the central government overnight. Some governors opposed national policy while others didn't, even if all local governments were more or less affected similarly by administrative decentralization in

2000 or reduced fiscal support since that time.

What, then, makes some governors, under this new institutional context more likely to resist national policy publicly? In this section we try to sharpen the causal argument to this question. First, after describing what sort of actions by governors can be construed as challenges to the central government, we provide a table of major challenges by governors since 2000 over a range of national policies. The governors who challenged national policy in this list are then analyzed in terms of two variables - their party affiliation and fiscal wealth - and compared to the national average for all governors. This comparison is done to see if governors engaged in multilevel conflict tend to be of a particular partisan affiliation or wealthier/poorer than the national average. The rest of the chapter explores cases of multilevel conflict involving governors to show what resources and channels were used to resist national policy and to what degree they succeeded in this local resistance.

What types of actions constitute conflict or resistance from local chief executives against the central government over national policy? The following list captures, from a survey of past cases, the potential routes used by governors to challenge the center.

1. Petition and influence the central government (ministers and bureaucrats) through local Diet members, local bureaucrats, or through direct meetings with central government representatives as individual governors.
2. Petition and influence the central government through the NGA (or other regional governors' associations) collectively.
3. Make personal and public statements (in press conferences, in media interviews, on personal blogs/social media) challenging or opposing national policy.
4. Use executive powers as governor (propose budgets, seek bylaw changes, retract permits, use the National and Local Government Dispute Resolution Council, sue the central government) which seek to block or influence national policy.

The list is, intuitively speaking, on an escalating scale of seriousness in terms of raising the stakes of conflict. We have already captured how informal meetings between governors and PMs (channel 1) has weakened as well as how collective bargaining

routes (channel 2) have become more intense and institutionalized since the mid-90s. We turn to how individual governors have opposed national policy by going beyond channels of petitioning to publically challenge and oppose the central government (channels 3 and 4).

We select multilevel conflicts over national policy which triggered resistance from some governors but not from others to ensure variation in outcome (unlike the collective responses from all governors such as on fiscal decentralization e.g.). The cases selected are particularly high-profile and well-publicized, reflecting the intensity and high stakes of the conflict for both national and local politicians. The time period is between 2000 and 2016 under the new institutional context following the start of decentralization reforms. The policy conflicts can be divided into conflicts over public works (dams or nuclear power plants), disputes over funding of shared facilities, and security issues. The 15 cases in Table 5.1 are categorized by the policy area, what major actions were taken against national policy, the governor who took these actions, his/her prefecture, years of conflict, the governors' partisan background, and the fiscal strength of his/her prefecture.

The data points to two observations. First, the fiscal strength of a prefecture seemed unimportant in determining whether its governor was likely to challenge national policy. Prefectures highly dependent on central government transfers such as Tokushima, Okinawa, and Niigata appeared prepared to challenge the center as frequently as wealthier prefectures such as Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, or Shiga. Second, governors that were not backed by LDP headquarters tended to engage in conflicts against the central government. During 1999 to 2015, 48 per cent of all governors (98 out of 188) were not backed by the national LDP (they were either backed only by the local-LDP, backed by other parties locally or nationally, or had no partisan affiliation). In the conflicts sampled here, 80 per cent (12 out of 15 cases) involved were non-national-LDP governors.

Case number	Policy Area	Main Actions taken by Governor against National Policy	Governor	Prefecture	Period	Partisan Affiliation of Governor	Financial Strength of Prefecture
1	Dam projects (prefectural)	Cancel dam projects / Dismiss public works section manager	Tanaka	Nagano	2002-2006	independent	lower
2	Yoshino river movable weir	Seek project termination	Ota	Tokushima	2002-2003	non-LDP	lower
3	Ootogawa dam	Seek project termination	Kada	Shiga	2006～	other	higher
4	Kawabegawa dam	Seek project termination	Kabashima	Kumamoto	2008～	local LDP	lower
5	Pluthermal nuclear project	Withdraw agreement to plan	Sato	Fukushima	2002-2006	LDP	lower
6	Restarting nuclear power plants	Oppose restart of plants	Izumida	Niigata	2011～	LDP	lower
7	Restarting nuclear power plants	Oppose restart of plants in other prefectures / Demand safety agreements with utility company	Izumida	Shiga	2011-2012	other	higher
8	Restarting nuclear power plants	Oppose restart of plants in other prefectures / Demand safety agreements with utility company	Mikazuki	Shiga	2015～	non-LDP	higher
9	Restarting nuclear power plants	Oppose restart of plants in other prefectures / Demand safety agreements with utility company	Yamada	Kyoto	2011-2012	local LDP	higher
10	Stopping nuclear power plant in operation	Sumbit request to utility company to stop nuclear power plant	Mitazono	Kagoshima	2016～	non-LDP	lower
11	Special Local Corporate Tax	Announce opposition and official protest	Ishihara	Tokyo	2008～2012	local LDP	higher
12	Hokuriku Shinkansen construction costs	Refuse to pay obligatory local contributions / Use National and Local Government Dispute Resolution Council	Izumida	Niigata	2009-2012	LDP	lower
13	Olympic facility costs	Refuse to pay obligatory local contributions	Masuzoe	Tokyo	2015-2016	local LDP	higher
14	Obligatory local contributions	Refuse to pay obligatory local contributions / Protest through National Governors' Association	Hashimoto	Osaka	2009-2012	other (originaly local LDP)	higher
15	Futenma base transfer to Henoko	Withdraw permit for construction / Use National and Local Government Dispute Resolution Council	Onaga	Okinawa	2012-2016	non-LDP	lower
		total by cases				**LDP(3), local LDP (5), independent or non-LDP (8)**	**Higher than national average (7) vs lower (8)**

Table 5.1: Cases of multilevel conflict between governors and governments, 2000-2015

The finding that such governors less dependent on the national ruling party more frequently challenge national policy is not in itself surprising. The surge of these types of governors since 2000 thus explains how multilevel conflict has generally increased during this period. What is curious is that such combative governors have emerged both in richer and poorer regions. Our expectation that lack of fiscal strength, because it decreased local autonomy, would make governors less prone to challenging the center was not supported in these cases. There are two potential explanations for this unexpected outcome. First, governors in poorer regions no longer expect to receive fiscal support from the center (having seen it cut sharply since 2000) by remaining loyal to Tokyo. Thus they see little to lose by challenging the central government. And second, many of these non-LDP governors who later on challenged Tokyo had specifically campaigned in opposition to these national projects. Opposition to these projects have become sufficiently strong and widespread in the prefectures to over-ride concern of reduced fiscal support from the center. Having once turned off the fiscal tap to its most traditionally loyal regions, the center can no longer ensure obeisance when trying to implement unpopular national policy programs in these regions.

Central-local relations over controversial national policies have changed abruptly and dramatically in some prefectures through gubernatorial elections as well. As we will see below, e.g. in Nagano, Tokushima, Shiga, Kagoshima, and Okinawa, the birth of a non-LDP governor resulted in a sudden reversal of past prefectural positions accepting national programs or projects. In these cases, non-partisan governors - with little dependence on the national ruling party for re-election - have chosen to take on a combative relationship to the national government. In some rare cases, such as in Fukushima or Niigata, governors initially backed by the HQ of the national ruling party have later hardened against national programs. We look more carefully at some of these cases of conflict, focusing on how governors fight back and whether they succeed.

Public works: dams and nuclear policy

Local opposition movements against national public works projects such as dams, airports, and nuclear plants have always been a recurring fixture in postwar politics.

Notable protests include the Shimouke dam protests (1959-64), local struggles against construction of the Narita airport (Sanrizuka struggles, 1960~), as well as numerous local opposition fights to nuclear plant sites across Japan since the 70s (Aldrich 2016). In these earlier conflicts, the struggles occurred mainly between the ministries (central government) and opposition movements at local level. Conservative governors, who were involved in petitioning the center to bring these major national projects to their prefecture, tended to back these national infrastructure project in these conflicts.

Entering into the late 90s and early 2000, however, governors emerged across Japan who campaigned and won elections in opposition to national public projects, criticizing them as both economically unsound (waste of tax money) and environmentally damaging. Such governors emerged in a number of regions, but most dramatically in Nagano, Tokushima, Shiga, and Kumamoto where governors sought to halt long-standing national plans to construct dams.

In Nagano, author Tanaka Yasuo who had formerly organized opposition to the construction plans of Kobe airport in the mid-90s, became governor in 2000. He had campaigned against public works projects as wasteful and economically inefficient, pointing to prefectural debts resulting from the construction boom for the Nagano winter Olympic games. After making a "declaration of quitting dams", Tanaka halted the construction of all major dam projects in Nagano. Although most of the cancelled dams were prefectural projects, subsidized by the central government, Tanaka came in direct conflict with the local LDP and construction ministry officials in support of the dams. The governor cut the budget for dam construction and fired a ministry of construction bureaucrat seconded to the prefectural government.[vii] Tanaka faced strong opposition in the local legislature, dominated by conservatives, who passed multiple votes of no-confidence, but he was able to stop prefectural dams and delay national dams in Nagano during his term.

In the traditionally conservative stronghold of Tokushima, an LDP-backed governor was arrested and later charged for bid-rigging of public works in 2002. In the ensuing gubernatorial elections, Ota Tadashi, a former SDPJ prefectural assembly member received backing from parties on the left, campaigned against wasteful public works

and defeated the LDP-backed candidate. Ota declared an end to a long-standing national movable weir project on the Yoshino river which had been opposed in local referendums by a wide majority. Despite majority opposition, the weir plans had not been officially terminated by the ministry of construction who held final discretion over the continuation of the project[viii]. Like Tanaka in Nagano, Ota faced severe resistance from the local conservative-dominated assembly which sought to revive the project and passed votes of no-confidence against the governor, resulting in his early ousting in 2003. During his term, Tanaka sought meetings with the minister of construction, but was refused.[ix] The project remained delayed, however, and was finally cancelled under the DPJ government in 2010.

In Shiga, Kada Yukiko, a former academic and environmental activist backed by neither LDP nor DPJ in her 2006 gubernatorial race, came to power criticizing public works on the slogan of "*mottainai*", don't be wasteful. Once in office, she sought to halt construction of nationally-funded dams and a *shinkansen* station in the prefecture, but faced the foot-dragging of the local legislature controlled by conservatives. After leading a regional party (*Taiwa de tsunagu shiga no kai*) to victory and pushing the conservatives into a minority in the legislature in 2007, Kada was able to terminate the shinkansen station construction plans (Hijino 2014). The national dam projects (Daidogawa and Niu dams), however, being far larger in scale and budget size, proved more difficult to stop. In 2008, Kada joined with governors of Kyoto, Osaka, and Mie (prefectures down-river of the dam project) to submit a joint statement to the ministry of construction opposing the Daidogawa dam project. The DPJ government announced the project "frozen" in status in 2009, but since the LDP government returned to power, there is evidence of the central government trying to "thaw" the dam project back to life.

In Kumamoto, Kabashima Ikuo, a political scientist, became governor in 2008 with the support of the local LDP. Once in power, he announced opposition to a long-standing national dam project (Kawabegawa dam). The project which had been delayed for decades as a result of strong local opposition was re-assessed, with the governor concluding that such a dam was unnecessary. The DPJ government which had campaigned in 2009 promising to terminate the dam halted the project officially in 2010. Opposition by the governor (as well as local mayors) to Kawabegawa dam was in

contrast to another similar-sized and controversial dam project in Gunma, the Yamba dam. Here, the pro-dam local governor, together with local conservatives, was able to revive the national project despite DPJ promises to terminate it along with Kawabegawa (see chapter 4).

In sum, governors in rural areas have emerged on the back of a mood of hostility to wasteful public works projects, defeating LDP-backed candidates. Once in power, these governors have declared opposition to major national projects which have been delayed for years by municipal-level opposition movements. Though lacking legal authority to terminate these national projects, the emergence of governors opposing these long-standing national projects have led to delays and eventual termination.[x]

Following the explosion and meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in March of 2011, governors across Japan voiced doubts about restarting existing and building new nuclear power plants. [xi] The DPJ Noda administration (2011-2012) and succeeding LDP Abe administration (2012~), however, sought to restart some of the 52 plants across Japan which had been stopped since the earthquake in March 11, 2011. In the process, a handful of governors from prefectures hosting the plants (as well governors from prefectures such as Kyoto, Shiga, and Osaka close to prefectures with numerous plants) openly challenged national energy policy of restarting nuclear plants. Notable among these cases were the host prefectures of Niigata and Kagoshima. Though governors have no legal powers to stop the operations of an existing nuclear power plant, it can refuse to sign a so-called "safety agreement" with the utility companies operating the plants made before operating the nuclear reactor.[xii]

In Niigata, Governor Izumida who had been backed by the LDP in his re-election in 2008, repeatedly criticized the utility and regulators over its handling of the nuclear accident. Izumida opposed restarting of the nuclear power plants in the prefecture by refusing to sign the safety agreement as well as to accept safety inspections and construction of additional safety features on the Niigata plants[xiii].

In Kagoshima, Satoshi Mitazono campaigned in 2016 to stop a nuclear plant currently in operation in the prefecture, becoming the first governor to win by campaigning

against nuclear power in a host prefecture. Mitazono's predecessor had given the green light to restarting the nuclear power plant and stated intentions to allow the plant to run for the next 30 years. Once in power, Mitazono stated that he would ask the utility company to halt the local nuclear power plant, although the governor has no legal powers to enforce this request.[xiv]

As with the construction of national dams, governors do not have full authority to stop the operations of nuclear power plants that are regulated by the energy agency. Yet vocal opposition against nuclear power from high-profile governors - both in host and neighbouring prefectures – boosted the legitimacy of popular opposition and made it difficult for utility companies to restart plants. These cases show how governors have influence beyond their formal powers, stemming from their democratic legitimacy and media impact. Even when lacking ultimate legal authority, governors, as concentrated nodes of political representation, can shape national policy.

Conflicts over shared funding

Money, being the source of most social conflicts, has unsurprisingly been a recurring flash point for intergovernmental relations in Japan. Local governments have collectively and individually clashed with the central government over funding levels for locally-administered public services mandated by national law, discretion to issue local debts, and obligatory local contributions for national public works projects. Some of these long-standing struggles re-emerged and were resolved during the post-decentralization period.

A long-standing struggle over money between national and local governments has been controversy over local contributions to the construction and maintenance of national infrastructure projects such as dams, roads, bridges, and harbours. Based on local finance law[xv], local governments are obligated to contribute between one-third to 45 per cent of the construction and maintenance of projects directly managed by the central government (*chokkatsujigyō chihō futankin*). This obligatory local contribution has been a source of intergovernmental tension since early in the post-war period, with the NGA making a collective petition in 1959 and 1962 to reduce and abolish these

practices.[xvi] Despite continued protests by the NGA, the co-payment rates have remained largely unchanged until the 1980s, where rates were moderately reduced.

The local contribution issue re-emerged onto the national scene in 2009, when the high-profile Osaka governor Hashimoto Toru made headlines by refusing to pay part of the local contribution bill for the year for Osaka, citing lack of transparency in the calculations. In typical populist fashion, Hashimoto appealed to the press by comparing the way central ministries send these obligatory payments bills to local governments for national projects as being similar to the unfoundedly expensive bills given customers at a "rip-off bar" (*bottakuri* bar) . His acerbic metaphor made the rounds, with criticism erupting from numerous other local governments about the practice.[xvii]

Renewed hostility to this local contribution system stemmed from the reduced flow of money overall to regions since around 2000. Central government subsidies for locally-managed construction projects had been slashed, while the budget for national projects (and hence local contributions) remained largely unchanged (Yamazaki 2009, p. 83). Local governments were now receiving less subsidies, but footing the same costs for national projects and feeling unfairly squeezed. They thus took collective action, following the lead of Osaka governor Hashimoto.

Through the year, the NGA, together with a government committee on decentralization, pushed for change. The NGA demanded formal discussions over the local contribution system with the relevant ministries, made an emergency appeal to abolish the system, and demanded the national parties to include reform of this system in their general election manifestos (Yamazaki 2009, p. 89-90). The DPJ administration came to power in 2009 and abolished the local contribution system of maintenance fees for national projects, but the practice of local contribution for construction of national projects remains.[xviii]

There have also been other similar struggles over shared funding of national/local projects. In Niigata, governor Izumida initially refused to pay for a part of the obligated 1/3 copayment for the construction costs of a new *shinkansen* bullet train through his prefecture in 2009. Local bureaucrats told media that the governor may have been

pushed to these actions in the face of reduced overall subsidies and grants from the central government, while facing unchanged copayment costs for national projects.[xix] An additional factor enabling this combative behaviour was the existence of a bullet train line already connecting Niigata to Tokyo.

Izumida had also earlier challenged the government to arbitration by the National and Local Government Dispute Resolution Council (*kunichihō keisōshori iinkai*) over the central government's approval of the bullet train construction plans. The council rejected the arbitration request, stating that the central government had not directly intervened in Niigata prefecture, but merely approved a railway company's plans. This was the second time that a local government took a dispute to this arbitration council, which had been set up as part of the decentralization reforms to ensure intergovernmental disputes be resolved on equal footing. The first occurred when the Yokohama city government challenged the MIC minister for refusing to allow the city to tax horse-race facilities. Yokohama city lost. The third occurred under the tensions between Okinawa governor and the central government after 2015 (see below).

In Tokyo, governor Masuzoe balked at contributing payments to the construction of the new national stadium for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Masuzoe questioned the ballooning costs of the project, arguing that no formal agreement had been made by his predecessor over shared costs. Through the spring and summer of 2015, the governor criticized the Ministry of Education, the Japan Olympic committee, and even the prime minister over the ever-growing construction costs for the project, refusing to meet the ministry officials who were prepared to "explain" the costs.[xx] The ministry of education responded by threatening to pass special legislation to ensure that local governments, including Tokyo, would be compelled to contribute to the construction of national stadiums.[xxi] In turn, Masuzoe appealed to the public through media, attacking the central government over an issue which most voters were sympathetic about. The popular uproar eventually resulted in the Education minister resigning and the PM calling for a new, less expensive stadium plan in December, 2015. Masuzoe, however, was forced to resign half a year later when a scandal of improper use of political funds emerged. In the same month, a cabinet decision was taken compelling Tokyo to pay a quarter of the total costs of the construction of the stadium.[xxii]

Though tensions over who pays for what in intergovernmental relations is not unique to Japan (see chapter 6), the highly fiscally centralized structure and dependency of a majority of local governments on central transfers and subsidies has kept such challenges under check in the post-war period. Not surprisingly, it had been wealthier local governments - Tokyo, Osaka, and other urban centers - that sought greater fiscal autonomy. In the post-2000 period, such wealthier local governments have again taken the lead in demanding more freedom to raise and spend monies. But notably, poorer prefectures have also fought back to pay less payment for national projects. Similar to opposition against long-standing national dam projects and nuclear plants, the new combative and assertive local posture towards shared funding of projects reflects an overall weakening of clientelistic links between the two levels.

Conclusion

The chapter demonstrated, through a wide range of evidence and case studies, how relations between governors and the central government have changed since the mid-90s. Individually, governors have less personal contact with the prime minister, as fewer and fewer of them are backed by the national ruling party. Collectively, governors have become more active in protecting local interests by politicizing and institutionalizing the governor associations in the face of top-down decisions by LDP administrations. The case studies involving key flash points of public works (dams and nuclear plants), shared funding, and US base issues demonstrated how partisan affiliation of the governors was more predictive of multilevel conflicts than the fiscal autonomy (wealth) of the prefectural government.

Finally, governors are successfully challenging the center, but not through new powers or institutions granted to them through administrative decentralization. Among the new tools used by governors was the Dispute Resolution Council, established as part of the decentralization reforms in 2000. The council has only been used by local governments three times and on two of these occasions the council has refused or failed to arbitrate multilevel conflict. Instead, fiscal decentralization (and reduced clientelistic practices) has made governors from both richer and poorer regions more willing to

challenge the center because they face less risk of being disloyal to Tokyo. In this context, governors are using executive powers and their informal power of popular legitimacy, resources available in the past, to challenge the center. Whether driven by genuine opposition or strategic positioning, these governors are choosing to represent territory, rather than the partisan links to either ruling or opposition parties. Increasingly, campaigning against Tokyo has become a successful vote-winning strategy in post-decentralization Japan, feeding multi-level conflict and disequilibrium.

Further research avenues: territorial politics and party "de-nationaization"?

In general, the book illustrated how local politics played an important role in slowing, delaying, and shaping significant national policy initiatives at various stages of its life cycle. Albeit not as powerful a veto player as the Upper House, the behavior of local party branches, local legislatures, and most importantly local executives have certainly made national executives' less decisive than they wished. Delays in TPP, restarting nuclear power, and relocating Futenma base are but the most visible and important effects of local veto power.

Local politics thus matters. It matters, after all, because preferences over national policy differ considerably across different territories. If voter preferences were distributed homogeneously - i.e. all provinces or districts across a nation have the same proportion of supporters for different parties and/or policies - local politics would be irrelevant. But this is not the case. Geography is diverse across Japan as it is in most countries, and most policies (from public works, trade, energy, tourism, immigration) have a heterogeneous impact on these different regions. When specific policies benefit more people in some territory/region/district than others, it is only natural to expect policy preferences (of the majority or median voter in a particular territory) to diverge across territories.

These divergent territorial interests are than represented and institutionalized, at local level, through local elections, governments, and party organizations. That these local interests are not just represented at national level by legislators from electoral districts representing specific territories, but also locally is a very important distinction.

Throughout the book, the existence (regardless of their actual formal powers) of directly-elected legislatures and executives as well as local branch organizations of national state-wide parties gave greater voice and channels for local preferences. In Japan's case, the existence of powerful and high-profile chief executives (governors and mayors of large cities and prefectures) played a particularly vital role. They have often acted as nodes which concentrate and direct local interests towards central governments.

These observations about the continuing importance of local political actors and territorial interests lead us to question the claims of a "nationalization" of Japanese parties and electoral politics. In a highly "nationalized" system of party competition, territorial interests are dissolved under national issues and the distribution of preferences among voters for policies/parties become homogeneous across all territorial units. Local politics thus becomes unimportant or largely non-existent. (see Detterbeck 2012, p. 8-12 for an overview).

In the context of Japan, recent observers (Rosenbluth & Thies 2010, McElwain 2013, Scheiner 2012, e.g.) have also suggested that Japanese elections and party systems are becoming more "nationalized". Primarily through electoral reform in 1994 that created a more majoritarian electoral system, Japanese politics was being transformed into a system of roughly two parties equally competitive throughout the country. Voters were paying less attention to local/district level issues or the quality of individual candidates, and more on party programs. Weakened incumbency advantage, increased floating voters, the reduction of malapportionment between rural and urban votes, had flattened the electoral playing field. These claims about the nationalizing trends of politics in Japan need to be modified in light of this book's findings.

The first point is that although the nationalization thesis claims increasing homogeneity of support and turnout across territorial units in Japan[xxiii], this is hardly the case for local-level elections. The opposition has a "hollowed out" and very erratic local party organization in contrast to the stable, institutionalized, and often dominant LDP organizations across 47 prefectures. When one looks deeper – that is at local election results and local party organizations – it is clear the "nationalization" of

Japanese politics is only skin-deep.

Although our empirical focus was on local political elite – not voter – behavior or preferences, we provided countless evidence of local representatives from select regions diverging from the national executive's preferences. Either these local politicians are not representative of the majority of voters in their regions (which is possible for local legislatures, less so for directly-elected local executives). Or more likely, the preferences for national policy in one region as reflected by its local representatives differ from the national executive position (which may or may not proximate the national median voter position). Our book demonstrated how these territorial differences, unable to be resolved internally within party channels or through redistributive compensation as in the past, triggered significant multilevel conflict.

Although Japan's party system has not re-organized across territorial cleavages, as some more regions in traditionally "nationalized" party systems like the UK[xxiv] appear to be doing, it sits uncomfortably astride numerous territorial divisions, including a persisting rural-urban (overlapping wealthy-poor and populating-depopulating) cleavage. The emergence of new parties such as Osaka Restoration Association (*Osaka ishin no kai*) later Japan Restoration Party (*Nippon ishin no kai*), Tax Reduction Japan *(Genzei nippon*), and Your Party (*Minna no tō*) representing primarily urban voters and preferences, as well as those focused on rural interests such as PNP (*Kokumin shintō*), People's Life Party (*Seikatsu no tō*), and New Party Daichi (*Shintō daichi*) testifies to the possibility of territorially-based parties even in a primarily majoritarian system.

Moreover, statewide parties continue to possess geographic biases of support - so-called regional strongholds against uncompetitive regions. What remains unclear is a general pattern of how these regional strongholds persist and/or collapse for statewide parties over time in Japan (as elsewhere). What and where are these strongholds and how have they evolved over time? Can new bases of geographic support be built by new national or regional parties under conditions of high electoral volatility? How do influential governors and their attempts to build regional bases affect state-wide party strongholds? These are potential avenues of further research for understanding multilevel dynamics in party systems.

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[i] As of 2012, Tokyo's economy (by gross regional product) was larger than the GDP of Indonesia, Holland, Turkey, Switzerland and Sweden. Aichi's economy is larger than Austria. Even the smallest prefectures like Tottori are comparable to the economies of Estonia or Iceland in pure size. See data from *Shakai jitsuzō data zuroku* website. Available from http://www2.ttcn.ne.jp/honkawa/4550.html [Accessed on October 20th, 2016].

[ii] Unlike US presidents, for example, the Japanese governor has the right to submit legislation (bylaws) and has exclusive right over the drafting and submission of the local government budget. The Japanese governor, unlike most presidential systems, also has the power to dissolve the elected legislature, if the legislature passes a motion of no-confidence against him/her.

[iii] Yawata (2007) calculates that the re-election rate for incumbent governors is over 90 per cent and the average number of their terms is just above 3 between 1947 and 2007.

[iv] Presidents in US, France, Germany, Austria, Brazil, and Finland have two-consecutive terms as limits.

[v] '*Tokyo tochijino kengen wa 'Daitoryō nami' yosan 13 chōen, Sweden ni hitteki.*'. *Asahi Shimbun*, February 5, 2014.

[vi] Using Asahi Kikuzo II database, the author searched for *shushō dōsei* articles which capture the daily schedule of the PM. If the PM met with the same governor on two consecutive days (e.g. during a visit to some conference/symposium stretching over two or more days) this was counted as a single meeting of the same governor.

[vii] '*Chiji tokubetsuhisho ga rihan, ken dobokubuchō ha kōtetsu. Tanaka Yasuo, kubikiri urabanashi.*' Asahi Shimbun, March 23, 2001.

[viii] Governors must be 'consulted' over dam and other construction projects conducted by central government agencies which oversea rivers designated as national ones. The national law for rivers states that the central government agency must ask for the agreement of the governor on any public work plans (such as dams), but it is unclear if

the results of such consultation are legally binding. (River law *kasenhō* articles 10.4 and 16.5)

[ix] "*Jimin sōryoku, Iizumi Kamon shi hatsutōsen denaoshi Tokushima chijisen.*' Asahi Shimbun, May 19, 2003.

[x] It is important to note that there was growing opposition to wasteful public works since 2000 in the national party leadership and public mood. Administrations after Koizumi were disposed to ending these projects as part of their drive to slim down the state and, under DPJ, to shift investments from 'concrete to people'. In this sense, the governors' resistance to national projects did not face direct opposition from the party executive, merely from local MPs and assembly members as well as ministries benefitting from these public works.

[xi] Until the Fukushima accident, governors in prefectures hosting the plants tended to promote nuclear power even against local and national protest movements against nuclear energy use. An early and rare example of conflict between a governor and the nuclear regulators (METI) and utility companies occurred earlier in Fukushima under governor Sato Eisaku (1988-2006). Sato had earlier accepted the government's pluthermal nuclear fuel program in 1998, but withdrew this agreement in 2000 after utility companies were found to be hiding accidents and fabricating data. Sato continued to refuse national plan for pluthermal power, until his arrest on charges of political corruption in 2006 (Sato 2009, pp. 49-116).

[xii] This 'safety agreement' (*anzen kyōtei*) is one that takes place between the utility company, host prefecture, and the host municipality. Described as a 'gentlemen's agreement', it does not have any legal foundation or binding powers, and theoretically a nuclear power operator can over-ride local government opposition to restarting a plant..

[xiii] Ikeda Nobuo, '*Izumida Niigata kenchiji wa naze gempatsuno anzen shinsa ni hantai surunoka.*' Newsweek Japan, August 6, 2013.

[xiv] Okada Hiroyuki, '*Kagoshima ken ni datsugempatsuchijiga tanjō shitanowa shōgekida.*' Toyokeizai, July 14, 2016.

[xv] Article 17 sections 2, see (Yamazaki 2009) Reference.

[xvi] Zenkokuchijikai PT, 2009,'*Chokkatsu jigyōni kansuru sankōshiryō',* (p.4). Available at http://www.nga.gr.jp/ikkrwebBrowse/material/files/group/3/5shiryou3090316.pdf. [Accessed on October 20th, 2016].

[xvii] '*Bunkenito chijira taggu kunino chkkatsu jigyō, hihōfutan minaoshihe.*' Asahi Shimbun, March 27, 2009.

[xviii] Prefectures most dependent on national public works projects are reluctant to abolish this system. They fear that abolishing the local government contribution system may result in the central government quitting national projects altogether. Around the time of this policy debate, the construction ministry published (in timely and threatening fashion) the predictions that if local governments stop contributing, overall size of the budgets for nationally-managed projects may fall by more than one-third (Yamazaki 2009, p. 92).

[xix] '*Chihōbunken kunino tsuke, zaisei chokugeki / Niigata ken.*' Asahi Shimbun, August 11, 2009,

[xx] '*Tochiji, Monkashō no setsumei kyohi Shinkokuritsu kyōgijō no hiyōfuran mondai.*', Asahi Shimbun, May 30, 2015, and '*Shinkokuritsu, shiminno koega ugokasu 'Sekininno shozai hakkirito' 'shijiritsu agetai noka.*' Aashi Shimbun, July 18, 2015.

[xxi] '*Shinkokuritsu kyōgijō no tofutan, Monkashō Konkyo to naru hōseibi.*' Asahi Shimbun, June 9th, 2015.

[xxii] '*Shinkokuritsu hiyōfutanwo kakugiketteі.*' Mainichi Shimbun, June 28, 2016.

[xxiii] Weakening incumbency advantage of LDP candidates in rural areas has been provided as one set of evidence for the "nationalizing" of Japanese elections between

2000 and 2009 (McElwain 2013). In the 2012 and 2014 elections, however, it appears the LDP has regained its advantage in the most rural SMDs and "won big" over the DPJ in them.

[xxiv] Labour and Conservative support has always shown geographic concentrations, with Labour strong in the Northern England, Scotland, Wales and industrial areas and Conservatives dominant in the South and Southeast (Radice 1992, Radice & Diamond 2010). Recently the weakening and collapse of Labour in Wales and Scotland respectively to regionalist parties highlights the new territorialization of politics in the model two-party Westminster system.