

The Policy Making Process over Cancellation of a New Shinkansen Station Construction Project in Shiga Prefecture

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Abstract

Theories on policy networks and network management pay attention to interdependent relationships among the actors involved in the policy making process to analyze the contribution of networks in the given policy domain to the formation and implementation of policies. Actors are interdependent on each other because they need each other's resources to achieve their goals, and such interdependent relationships foster the exchanges of goals and resources among the actors. The process of policy making emerges out of the repetitions of such interactions. The conditions for successful policy making (i.e. conditions for better governance) are discussed from this viewpoint. However, discussions in the past have not sufficiently addressed the questions of how such interdependent relationships are formed and how goals and resources are exchanged among the actors.

This paper examines the policy making process over a new Shinkansen station construction project in Shiga Prefecture, which was characterized by a sharp conflict between the supporting and opposing parties, and culminated in cancellation of the project. Even though the

construction of a new Shinkansen station was a long-outstanding desire of the Shiga Prefecture since the period of high economic growth, the policy was challenged when Yukiko Kada became Governor of Shiga Prefecture and announced “freezing that is infinitely synonymous to cancellation” of the construction project as she promised in the election campaign. This provoked great reactions from the prefectural assembly and from the municipal government of Ritto City. However, after knowing that about 80% of residents in Shiga Prefecture were opposed to the construction of a new Shinkansen station, both the Democratic Party and the Liberal Democratic Party turned from supporting to opposing the project. Following expert group activities, the winning of opposing party in the election of prefectural assembly members and a judgment from court, the project was finally cancelled because a consensus about the construction of a new Shinkansen station failed to be formed among the actors involved. By examining this case carefully with references to theories on policy networks and network management, this paper characterizes the case and then clarifies how interdependent relationships are formed and how goals and resources are exchanged among the actors.

Keywords: policy networks and network management, governance, goal, resource, interdependent

Arguments over the cancellation of a new Shinkansen station construction project in Shiga Prefecture escalated into a sharp conflict between the supporting and opposing parties. When the construction project for a new Shinkansen station, long desired by local residents since the period of high economic growth, had already begun, Yukiko Kada was chosen as the governor of Shiga Prefecture after having proposed “freezing” of the project during the election campaign on the ground of a financial difficulty in the prefectural government and poor utility of the new Shinkansen station, thus causing the prefectural government to turn from supporting to freezing the

The Policy Making Process over Cancellation of a New Shinkansen Station. . . project. This triggered great reactions from the prefectural assembly as well as from Ritto City and other municipalities in the neighborhood. However, after knowing that about 80% of residents in Shiga Prefecture were opposed to the new station construction project, both the Democratic Party and the Liberal Democratic Party turned from supporting to freezing the project. Following expert group activities, the winning of anti-project candidates in the election of prefectural assembly members and a judgment from the court, the project was finally cancelled because a consensus about the construction of a new Shinkansen station failed to be formed among the actors involved. While many prefectural governors experience sharp oppositions from the prefectural assembly and municipal governments over the reconfiguration of public works projects and cuts in budgets, this case in Shiga Prefecture is taken as a model of the successful reconfiguration of public works projects.⁽¹⁾ What made it possible for Shiga Prefecture to resolve complexities of conflicting interests? This paper clarifies policy making processes and discusses the conditions for better governance at local governments.⁽²⁾

1. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The birth of the concept of governance is believed to have something to do with the shift of leadership from the government to market and a de-

(1) For example, Yasuo Tanaka, the governor of Nagano Prefecture, experienced strong oppositions from the prefectural assembly and municipalities over cancellation of dam construction projects, which required him to resign and be reelected as Governor. Similarly, Toru Hashimoto, the governor of Osaka Prefecture, showed tears as he experienced sharp conflicts with the prefectural assembly and the mayors of municipalities over budget cuts.

(2) As exemplified by an article that appeared in the Yomiuri Shimbun on October 30, 2007

creasing trust in the government. The traditional style of governance based on the top-down control of the society by the government, has become incapable of solving social problems through policies.⁽³⁾ At the level of local governance, people began to discuss enthusiastically about the vision of various actors, in the three major sectors of the government, market and citizen group, pursue partnerships among equals, play their roles in the context of each policy issue and contribute to governance toward a better society. These discussions center around the question of what kind of mechanism should be introduced and how that mechanism should be used for better governance.⁽⁴⁾

Walter J. M. Kickert, Erik-Hans Klijin and Joop F. M. Koppenjan presented three perspectives from which to study public policy making and governance: (1) rational central rule model, (2) multi-actor model and (3) network model. (Table 1 describes the characteristics of the three perspectives.) The multi-actor model resulted from criticisms on the rational central rule model, while the network model resulted from criticisms on the multi-actor model. The network approach is characterized by the study of how policy making and governance take shape within a network comprising a variety of actors none of whom has a power over the strategies chosen by other actors.

The policy network theory is attracting attention as “a comprehensive theory that evolved from traditional researches on inter-organizational and inter-governmental relationships and on policy making processes, or as a

(3) Kosuke Oyama, *Public Administration of Energy Governance*, Keio University Press, 2002, pp. 5-6

(4) Masato Furusaka, *Chapter 6 - Policy Network Theory in Study on Kolleg Policy Research*, Koichiro Agata and Koji Fujii, Seibundoh (eds.), 2007, p. 117

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new analytical framework that integrate theories on institutional mechanisms, theories on management and theories on policies⁽⁵⁾". Walter J. M. Kickert, Erik-Hans Klijin, Joop F. M. Koppenjan et al. described the relationships among groups formed through their inter-sectoral activities using the concept of "policy networks and network management." The policy network is "the network of public, semi-public and private actors participating in certain policy fields related to public policies and their strategies and institutionalized contexts"⁽⁶⁾ and can be seen as "patterns of relations between interdependent actors involved in processes of public policy making."⁽⁷⁾

Interdependency is an important keyword for the network approach. Various actors in the network are in interdependent relationships because none of them can achieve one's goal by oneself without relying on resources held by other actors. Exchanges of goals and resources take place in interdependent relationships, and a process toward institutionalization emerges from repetitions of such interactions. Viewed from another side, a policy network develops around the resources required or produced for dealing with policy issues. The awareness (of issues), patterns of participation and rules of interactions shared among the actors gradually develop into something official. The process of policy making is seen not as the achievement of a pre-established goal, but as a process that evolves out of interdependent

(5) Yuji Nakamura, *Study on the Policy Network around Cultural Administration in the Great Britain - Policies, Mechanisms and Management for the Administration of Museums, Libraries and Sport*, an article in *Public Administration and Responsibility (Public Administration Study Annual Report Vol. 33)*, Gyosei, 1998

(6) Walter J. M. Kickert, Erik-Hans Klijin and J. F. M. Koppenjan (eds.), *Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector*, Sage Publications, 1997, p. 1

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 6

Table 1 Three perspectives on public policy making and governance

Perspectives:	The rational central rule perspective	The multi-actor perspective	The network perspective
Dimensions:			
Object of analyses	Relation between central ruler and target groups	Relation between central ruler and local actors	Network of actors
Perspective	central ruler	local actors	Interaction between actors
Characterization of relations	Authoritative	Centralized versus autonomous	Interdependent
Characterization of policy processes	Neutral implementation of ex ante formulated policy	Political processes of Interest representation and informal use of guidelines and resources	Interaction process in which information, goals and resources are exchanged
Criterion of success	Attainment of the goals of the formal policy	Local discretionary power and obtaining resources in favour of local actors	Realization of collective action
Causes of failure	Ambiguous goals; too many actors; lack of information and control	Rigid policies; lack of resources, non-participation of local actors	Lack of incentives for collective action or existing blockages
Recommendations for governance	Coordination and centralization	Retreat of central rule in favour of local actors	Management of policy networks: improving conditions under which actors interact

Source: Walter J. M. Kickert, Erik-Hans Klijn and J. F. M. Koppenjan (eds.), *Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector*, Sage Publications, 1997, p. 10

relationships among the actors who exchange information on various issues, preferences and measures, and on tradeoffs between goals and resources. Success of policy is measured by the formation of consensus for common goals or against common threats. It is assumed that a failure in policy making is attributable to two factors: a lack of willingness toward a harmonious solution and the presence of some obstacles to collective actions.

Now, in the process of policy making over the cancellation of a new

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Shinkansen station construction project in Shiga Prefecture, how policy networks was formed, how goals and resources are exchanged in interdependent relationships, and how consensus for common goals was formed? We shall examine this case using the policy networks and network management theory.

2. EVENTS UP TO THE CANCELLATION OF A NEW SHINKANSEN STATION CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

2.1 Outline of a New Shinkansen Station Construction Project

In May 2006, a construction project for a new Tokaido Shinkansen station between Maibara and Kyoto began. The new station was closer to Kyoto at the distance of about 24.3 km while the distance to Maibara was about 43.8 km. In 1988, when local communities started the petition campaign, there was a competition between two candidate locations for the new station: near Ritto (Ritto station) or near Omihachiman (Koto station). By the arbitration of Minoru Inaba, who was then governor of Shiga Prefecture, the basic policy of giving priority to the Ritto station was established.⁽⁸⁾ The local communities requested West Japan Railway to build a new station in the Kusatsu Line as well at the distance of about 400 m from the new Shinkansen station, and facilitate transfer by building a moving walkway between the two stations. However, nothing was promised about the construction of this new station in the Kusatsu Line.

The new Shinkansen station was to have five elevated tracks in the configuration of “two tracks on one side of a platform for up-trains and two-plus-

(8) Nobuyuki Sato, *Local Share in the Expense of Building a New Station Based on Petitions from the Local Community - The Case of Minami Biwako Station of the Tokaido Shinkansen Line*, an article in *Tetsudo Journal*, November 2006, p. 46

one tracks across a platform for down-trains”. Thus, the five tracks included a pair of main tracks for passing trains (up and down) and three sub main trucks for stopping trains (Track 1 for up-trains and Tracks 1 and 2 for down-trains). Even though the double trucks around the proposed site of the new station were built on embankment, the existing embankment was to be removed to build a brand new elevated bridge structure to allow commercial and other miscellaneous utilization of the space underneath. With the additional cost required for building temporary trucks for rerouting trains during the construction period, the total construction cost for the new station was estimated to be about 24 billion yen. Since the new station was going to be a *petition-built station*,⁽⁹⁾ this enormous cost had to be fully born by local communities. Central Japan Railway agreed to bear only the 0.85 billion yen required for building a sub main truck for down-trains that was going to be built partially by making use of a temporary truck for down-trains, and this cost was not a part of the 24 billion yen. The construction cost was to be shared in the following manner: 11 billion 697 million yen by Shiga Prefecture, 10 billion 94 million yen by Ritto City and the total of 2 billion 209 million yen by other municipalities.⁽¹⁰⁾

Adding to the new Shinkansen station construction cost, the new station construction required the additional cost of 41.6 billion yen, including 5.4 billion yen for building a new station in the Kusatsu Line for transfer to and

(9) This refers to a station built based on a petition from local communities under the condition that local communities should bear the station building construction cost. After the privatization of Japan National Railways, all stations built anew are petition-built stations except for the Shinagawa station.

(10) The other municipalities were going to share the cost in the following manner: 250 million yen by Koka City, 538 million yen by Kusatsu City, 377 million yen by Moriyama City, 269 million yen by Yasu City, 300 million yen by Konan City. (Source: *Ritto City News*, No. 800, September 2005)

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from non-Shinkansen trains, 29.6 billion yen for the replanning of districts
around the station and 2.4 billion yen for the development of hub areas.
Ultimately, Ritto City had to be ready to bear about 30.4 billion yen.⁽¹¹⁾

2.2 From Solicitation to Cancellation of the New Shinkansen Station Construction Project

The solicitation campaign to have a new Shinkansen station nearby had a relatively long history that dated back to 1964 when the Tokaido Shinkansen Line was completed, provoking fantasies among the local residents.⁽¹²⁾ The project became more concrete when a request for the construction of a new Shinkansen station was submitted to the prefectural assembly in 1981, followed by a petition to Japan National Railways, exchanges of opinions at meetings convened by the prefectural government. In 1988, “early construction of a new Shinkansen station in the Ritto area” was acknowledged as a policy of the prefectural government. In April 2002, the four stakeholders including Shiga Prefecture, Ritto City, the Promotion Council and Central Japan Railway signed a Memorandum on Basic Agreement, as an official sanction of the Ritto (or Minami Biwako) station construction project. The construction project started in May 2006, aiming at opening the new station in FY 2012.⁽¹³⁾

(11) Nobuyuki Sato, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47

(12) An interview with members of the Promotion Council for the Early Construction of Minami Biwako Station (Tentative Name) of the Tokaido Shinkansen Line

(13) Kazuo Fukuhara, *Issues around the Construction of a New Shinkansen Station in Ritto City - the Public Opinion is Questioned by the Election of Yukiko Kada as New Governor, a Candidate from the Third Group Calling for Freezing the Project Independently from the Group Supporting the Project and the Group Calling for Cancellation*, an article in the *examiner* magazine, October 2006, pp. 20-21

However, in the election of the prefectural governor that immediately followed a ceremony for celebrating the beginning of the new station construction project, Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu, incumbent governor who supported the construction project, was defeated by Yukiko Kada, who promised “freezing that is infinitely synonymous to cancellation” of the construction project during the election campaign. On the next day after the election, Yukiko Kada expressed her intention to suspend the budget for the construction project in an exclusive interview with the Asahi Shimbun. In the early days of governorship, Yukiko Kada experienced sharp conflicts with the prefectural assembly, which comprised mostly of the supporters of the construction project.⁽¹⁴⁾ Governor Kada also experienced sharp conflicts with Ritto City, which had already invested 17.7 billion yen for the acquisition of the land for public use, etc.

The conflicts between the governor and the prefectural assembly persisted until the next election of the prefectural assembly members. After this election of the prefectural assembly members in 2007, a majority in the prefectural assembly was taken by those who called for freezing or canceling the construction project. The Federation of Shiga Prefectural Liberal Democratic Party members turned from supporting to freezing the construction project. On October 31, the new station construction project was cancelled due to a failure in forming an agreement about the project among

(14) The prefectural assembly comprised 28 members from the Liberal Democratic Party, 13 members from the Democratic Party, 2 members from the Communist Party, 1 member from the New Komeito and 3 independents (including one who was connected with the Social Democratic Party and one who was expelled from the Liberal Democratic Party because of disobedience during the election of the governor. (Toshihide Aikawa, *The First Job of the Governor with Mottainai Spirit*, an article in *Diamond Weekly*, September 23, 2006, pp. 122–123)

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 Shiga Prefecture, Ritto City and other local municipalities.

Table 2 Events from solicitation to cancellation of the new station construction project

Sep. 1969	Establishment of the Special Committee for the Solicitation of a New Shinkansen Station (Ritto town assembly)
Feb. 1988	Establishment of the Promotion Council for the Construction of Ritto Station (Tentative Name) of the Tokaido Shinkansen Line (by the participation of 3 cities and 11 towns)
Apr. 1989	Beginning of an investigation toward the construction of a new Shinkansen station
Jul. 1990	Shiga Prefecture joined the Promotion Council.
Aug. 1999	The governor of Shiga Prefecture was chosen as the director of the Promotion Council.
Apr. 2002	The four stakeholders including Shiga Prefecture, Ritto City, Promotion Council and Central Japan Railway concluded a Memorandum on Basic Agreement as an official sanction of the new station construction project.
Aug. 2005	A general agreement was made about the share of the station construction cost to be born by Shiga Prefecture and by each of the local municipalities.
Dec. 2005	The four stakeholders concluded an agreement on the new station construction project (Construction Agreement).
May 2006	The beginning of the new station construction project was celebrated by a ceremony.
Jul. 2006	Yukiko Kada won the election of the prefectural governor after promising “freezing that is infinitely synonymous to cancellation” of the construction project during the election campaign.
Jul. 2006	Yukiko Kada became the new governor of Shiga Prefecture.
Sep. 2006	The Council for Discussions over the New Shinkansen Station Construction Project was established.
Sep. 2006	A judgment by the Otsu District Court prohibited the issuing of a municipal bond for the construction project.
Oct. 2006	In the election of the mayor of Ritto City, Syouchi Kunimatsu, the incumbent mayor who supported the new station construction project, was reelected.
Oct. 2006	Shiga Prefecture published the result of reexamining the estimated demand for the new Shinkansen station and the estimated contribution to economy.
Mar. 2007	The Osaka High Court rejected an appeal from Ritto City.
Apr. 2007	In the election of the Shiga prefectural assembly members, the candidates who advocated freezing or cancellation of the construction project won over the candidates who supported the construction project.
Apr. 2007	The four stakeholders including Shiga Prefecture, Ritto City, Promotion Council and Central Japan Railway concluded a memorandum that called for the termination of all agreements in case an agreement among local communities failed to be

	formed by October 31.
Oct. 2007	The Supreme Court rejected an appeal from Ritto City, confirming the earlier judgment that prohibited the issuing of a municipal bond for the construction project.
Oct. 2007	A general meeting of the Promotion Council held in Otsu City failed to form an agreement.
Oct. 31 2007	The all agreements were terminated and the new station construction project was canceled due to a failure in forming an agreement about the construction project.
Jul. 2008	Ritto City cancelled the new downtown area development project.

Source: compiled by the author from hearings and materials

3. CONFLICTS IN THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

3.1 Opinions in Favor of the Construction Project vs. Opinions in Favor of Freezing or Canceling the Construction Project

Until it was decided that the construction cost of 24 billion yen was to be fully born by local communities, many people expressed their support to the new station construction project. However, following this decision, the pros and cons of the construction project intensified, and people began to listen to opinions against the construction project. As a background, a decision about the share of the expense was sanctioned at the Ritto city assembly by a narrow majority of 10 supporters among the total of 19 assembly members excluding the chairman.⁽¹⁵⁾ Citizen movement against the construction project intensified from 2003. In reflection of such, the pros and cons of the new station construction project became the greatest issue during the elections of the governor of Shiga Prefecture and the mayor of Ritto city in 2006 and of the members of the Shiga prefectural assembly in 2007.

Those who supported the construction project argued that a higher utility provided by the new station was essential for the development of the locality in the future. They insisted on the necessity of the new station mostly from

(15) An interview with the chairman of the Ritto city assembly in those days

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the following three viewpoints: (1) The southern area of Shiga Prefecture has a significant concentration of urban functions with large population and industrial clusters, and a wide area in this part of the prefecture can potentially develop further to play an important role in the national scale; (2) Presently, the only Shinkansen station in the prefecture exists too far in the north, disabling the southern area of the prefecture to enjoy the utility of Shinkansen; (3) In the face of the challenge of creating the attraction of the locality and the need to pursue community development around the keyword of *communication*, a new Shinkansen station is indispensable as an important instrument. As the merits from having a new Shinkansen station, they identified the vitalization of local economy, the creation of employments, an increase in tax revenues and so on.⁽¹⁶⁾

On the other hand, those who opposed the construction project (asking for freezing or cancellation) emphasized poor utility of the new Shinkansen station, huge construction cost and the impossibility of expecting economical benefits large enough to recover the investment. A difference between the advocators of freezing and of cancellation was as follows: the latter argued that a new Shinkansen station was unnecessary in itself while the former accepted the option of reviving discussions about a new station at some time in the future when the growth of population and the expansion of industries have made it more easy for the local communities to bear the expense. Thus, the advocators of freezing did not flatly refuse the idea of building a new Shinkansen station, but rather, deemed it too early to begin the project now because the benefits were unlikely to match the spending of tax revenues.

(16) From the Ritto City document *On the Construction of Minami Biwako Station (Tentative Name) of the Shinkansen Line*

3.2 Promotion Activities by Administrative Bodies and Economic Organizations vs. Protest Activities by Citizens

Promotion activities in support of the construction of a new Shinkansen station started as early as in the 1980s. For example, the Promotion Council for the Construction of Ritto Station (Tentative Name) of the Tokaido Shinkansen Line⁽¹⁷⁾ was established in 1988 to pursue the aim of having a new Shinkansen station built in Shiga Prefecture. From the 1990s, economic organizations joined the promotion campaign, and pursued activities such as collecting donations, organizing promotion events and facilitating negotiations with local residents.⁽¹⁸⁾

Protests from citizens intensified following an official sanction of the new station construction period. In September 2003, the Ritto city assembly received but rejected a request (Bill No. 127) submitted by a group of 7,948 citizens as a direct action based on the Local Government Law, which pro-

(17) Renamed as the Promotion Council for the Construction of Biwako-Ritto Station (Tentative Name) of the Tokaido Shinkansen Line in 1996 after the joining of some economic organizations in Shiga Prefecture

(18) For example, the Association of the Supporters of the Construction of the New Ritto Station of the Tokaido Shinkansen Line [renamed as the Shinkansen Biwako-Ritto Station (Tentative Name) Early Construction Promotion Association in June 2004] was established in 1994, and pursued activities such as collecting donations and organizing promotion events. The Promotion Council for the Development of Districts around the Biwako-Ritto Station (Tentative Name) of the Tokaido Shinkansen Line was established in 1996 (renamed later as the Ritto City New Downtown Planning Council) mainly by residents' associations of the locality, and pursued activities such as facilitating negotiations between the Ritto City's New Station Construction Council and local residents. The Prefectural Resident Association for Community Vitalization in Shiga was established in 2005 mainly by economic organizations in the prefecture, and pursued activities such as collecting donations.

The Policy Making Process over Cancellation of a New Shinkansen Station. . . posed the establishment of a local law for referendum over controversies around the construction of the New Ritto Station of the Shinkansen Line. In September 2004, the Shiga prefectural assembly received but rejected the Petition No. 5 on the Reexamination of the Construction of the Ritto Station of the Shinkansen Line, which argued that Shiga Prefecture should ask Central Japan Railway the bearing of the construction cost of 24 billion yen. In January 2006, the Association for Referendum over the Biwako-Ritto Station collected the signatures of 75,497 citizens, a number that exceeded 1/50 of qualified voters, and submitted a request to the then Governor Kunimatsu as a direct action requesting the establishment of a local law for referendum. Governor Kunimatsu convened an extraordinary session to discuss the issue but rejected the request to establish a local law for referendum.

3.3 Legal Actions for Prohibiting the Issuing of a Municipal Bond

On September 25, 2006, the Otsu District Court passed a judgment that prohibited Ritto City from issuing a municipal bond for funding the new station construction project, as requested by a group of eight citizens led by Minoru Tamada that called for the freezing or cancellation of the construction project. Article 5 (Expenditures by local government entities) of the Local Public Finance Law imposes restrictions on the types of projects that can be funded by a municipal bond. The point was whether or not the issuing of a municipal bond planned by Ritto City was acceptable as the case of “. . . covering the expenditure for public facilities such as those in the category of other facilities that require civil engineering works or the cost of construction projects for public facilities.” The subject was the issuing of a municipal bond by Ritto City nominally for covering the cost of a road expansion project. While Ritto City planned to raise 4 billion 349 million yen by

issuing a municipal bond, only about 0.6 billion yen out of this total amount was going to be used for road building. The road expansion project was required for building the temporary tracks for use during the construction of a new Shinkansen station, and therefore, could be interpreted as a preliminary project for the construction of a new Shinkansen station rather than a road expansion project. Thus, the above-mentioned group of citizens that called for the freezing or cancellation of the construction project requested for a court order to prohibit the issuing of a municipal bond because the project seemed to be “outside the scope of municipal bonds.” In placing the judgment, Shigeko Inaba, Presiding Judge, concluded as follows: (1) It is unprecedented that the construction of temporary tracks is appended to a road construction project of 0.6 billion yen; (2) The amount is unreasonably enormous; (3) The city did not study at all about other construction methods; and (4) The proposed issuing of a municipal bond for covering the cost of 4.3 billion yen is not allowed.⁽¹⁹⁾

After being prohibited from issuing a municipal bond by this first trial, Ritto City appealed to a higher court. On March 1, 2007, the Osaka High Court supported the judgment from the first trial by rejecting an appeal from Ritto City. This was based on a conclusion that the project did not qualify for the issuing of a municipal bond because the construction of temporary tracks would cost about 8.7 billion yen while the road construction, as a nominal purpose for issuing a municipal bond, would cost only about 0.6 billion yen. Then Ritto City appealed to the Supreme Court, but on October 19 of the same year, the Second Petty Bench of the Supreme Court supported the judgment of the Osaka High Court by rejecting the appeal. As a result,

(19) *Ritto Minpo* issued October 1, 2006, available on the homepage of the Japanese Communist Party Members in the Ritto City Assembly (accessed October 20, 2006)

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Ritto City was left without any means to fund the construction project.

3.4 Election of Chiefs and Assembly Members

3.4.1 Election of the governor of Shiga Prefecture

In the election of the governor of Shiga Prefecture on July 2, 2006, Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu, incumbent governor who supported the new station construction project, was defeated by Yukiko Kada, who promised “freezing” of the construction project during the election campaign. Kunimatsu and his team maintained a low profile during the election campaign partially because they anticipated easy victory with supports from the major three political parties of Japan (the Liberal Democratic Party, the Democratic Party and the New Komeito). In contrast, Kada and her team aggressively conducted the election campaign combining criticisms against the new station construction project with criticisms against indiscriminate supports to the project expressed in unison by the Liberal Democratic Party, the Democratic Party and the New Komeito. The number of votes obtained by Yukiko Kada, combined with the number of votes obtained by Yoshinori Tsuji (nominated by the Communist Party) who advocated the cancellation of the construction project, amounted to about 290,000, exceeding the number of votes obtained by Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu by more than 100,000, and accounting to about 60% of valid votes (see Table 3).

3.4.2 Election of the mayor of Ritto City

On October 22, three months after the election of the governor of Shiga Prefecture, the election of the mayor of Ritto City was held. Since the question was the choice of the mayor of Ritto City that was going to provide almost a half of the construction cost, the new station construction project was the greatest issue. Those who supported the construction project

Table 3 Election of the governor of Shiga Prefecture in July 2006

Candidate	Ritto City		Shiga Prefecture	
	Number of votes	Percentage	Number of votes	Percentage
Yukiko Kada (calling for the freezing of the construction project)	7,241	34.2%	217,842	46.03%
Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu (supporting the construction project)	10,405	49.1%	185,344	39.16%
Yoshinori Tsuji (calling for the cancellation of the construction project)	3,529	16.7%	70,110	14.81%

Source: *Ritto Minpo* issued July 9, 2006, available on the homepage of the Japanese Communist Party Members in the Ritto City Assembly (accessed October 20, 2006)

aggressively conducted the election campaign while the protesting group suffered from the split of votes between two candidates who opposed the construction project. As a result, Syouichi Kunimatsu, the incumbent mayor and the only candidate who supported the construction project among the three candidates, obtained a relatively large number of votes and was re-elected (see Table 4). However, the total number of votes obtained by the two protesting candidates exceeded the number of votes obtained by Syouichi Kunimatsu. Governor Kada of Shiga Prefecture mentioned this during a press interview after the election of the mayor of Ritto City, and clearly reconfirmed her orientation toward the cancellation of the construction project even though she emphasized the need for mutual discussions.

3.4.3 Election of the Shiga prefectural assembly members

On April 8, 2007, the election of the Shiga prefectural assembly members (the quorum of 47 members) was held. The Democratic Party that called

Table 4 Election of the mayor of Ritto City in October 2006

Candidate	Number of votes	Percentage
Syouichi Kunimatsu (supporting the construction project)	12,082	41.48%
Takamitsu Tamura (calling for the freezing of the construction project)	11,053	37.95%
Satoshi Sugita (calling for cancellation of the construction project)	5,992	20.57%

Source: *Ritto Minpo* issued October 25, 2006, available on the homepage of the Japanese Communist Party Members in the Ritto City Assembly (accessed October 20, 2006)

for freezing the construction project, increased the number of seats from 11 to 13; the Communist Party that called for canceling the construction project increased the number of seats from 2 to 3; and the Society for Building Shiga through Creative Discussions (a group in support of Governor Kada) increased the number of seats from 2 to 4. On the other hand, the Liberal Democratic Party that supported the construction project suffered a crushing defeat of decreasing the number of seats from 27 to 16. Even when combined with the 2 seats taken by the New Komeito and the seats taken by independent assembly members nominated by the Liberal Democratic Party, the total number of seats failed to be in the majority. Since the assembly members who called for freezing or canceling the construction project (including the independent assembly members who supported the governor) were now in the majority, the continuation of the new station construction project became even more difficult. Accepting the defeat, the Federation of Shiga Prefectural Liberal Democratic Party turned from supporting to freezing the construction project.⁽²⁰⁾

3.4.4 Election of the Ritto city assembly members

On April 22, about two weeks after the election of the Shiga prefectural assembly members, the election of the Ritto city assembly members was held. As a result, the assembly members who supported the construction project increased by three and took the majority. However, the continuation of the new station construction project was virtually almost impossible because the Federation of Shiga Prefectural Liberal Democratic Party had turned from supporting to freezing the construction project before the election day of April 22.

3.5 Conflicts among Local Governments

Since Governor Kada called for freezing the construction project while the mayor of Ritto City supported the construction project, a sharp conflict between Shiga Prefecture and Ritto City persisted until the very end. However, in the election of the mayor of Ritto City in 2006 and the election of the Ritto city assembly members in 2007, the number of votes obtained by the candidates who called for freezing or canceling the construction project exceeded the number of votes obtained by the candidates who supported the construction project, reflecting a split in the opinions of citizens. Finally, during the general meeting of the Promotion Council held on October 28, 2007, just before the deadline for the formation of an agreement among local communities, the governor of Shiga Prefecture who called for freezing or canceling the construction project and the mayor of Ritto City who supported the construction project turned out to be irreconcilable. Thus, the Construction Agreement with the Central Japan Railway was terminated at the end of October because of a failure in forming an agreement

(20) An article that appeared in the Yomiuri Shimbun on April 23, 2007

The Policy Making Process over Cancellation of a New Shinkansen Station. . . among local communities and the construction project was canceled. Besides this conflict between Shiga Prefecture and Ritto City, there were other conflicts among Shiga Prefecture, Ritto City and other cities in the neighborhood. While some cities in the neighborhood criticized Governor Kada for calling for the freezing of the construction project, many cities in the neighborhood waited for a decision by the conference of local chairman and vice chairman before responding to the request from Ritto City to make the payment due October 2006 as a part of the sharing of the new station construction cost.⁽²¹⁾

3.6 Conflicts among Regions and among Residents

The groups that protested against the new station construction projects included not only the groups that believed that the new station was unnecessary in itself but also the groups that supported the idea discussed in the past of building a new Shinkansen station (tentatively called “Koto Station”) in Omihachiman City. Even though the proposed location of the Koto Station was closer to the middle point between Maibara and Kyoto when compared with the proposed location of the Minami Biwako Station, and choosing this location instead of Ritto City was said to promise a higher utility, this idea was defeated by the idea of building the Minami Biwako Station in Ritto City, the hometown of ex-Governor Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu. During campaigns prior to the election of the governor of Shiga Prefecture in 2006, those who called for the construction of the Koto Station supported Yukiko Kada, gradually weakening the power of the groups that supported Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu. When the Federation of Shiga Prefectural Liberal

(21) By October 27, 2006, Shiga Prefecture refused the payment; Konan City made the payment; other cities expressed their intent to wait for a decision to be made by the conference of local chairmen and vice chairmen.

Democratic Party accepted the cancellation of the Minami Biwako Station construction project, one of the background factors was this conflict between two candidate sites. In addition, there were sharp conflicts among the citizens of Ritto City. While those who had recently moved into the city and lived near the Ritto Station tended to be against the construction project, older citizens and landowners generally supported the construction project. According to a survey on opinions from different age groups, many young citizens (in the age group of 20 to 49) wanted the construction project to be frozen or canceled, opinions from the age group of 50 to 59 were split into halves between opposing and supporting, and many older citizens (at the age of 60 and above) supported the construction project.

4. FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY NETWORKS

4.1 Election of Prefectural Governor

In the gubernatorial election campaign in July 2006, Yukiko Kada proposed the freezing of the new Shinkansen station construction project with repeated expression of “Mottainai (what a waste!)” Adhering to a nonpartisan standpoint, based on her insistence on prefectural governance truly for the good of prefectural residents, she requested nomination to all parties at the beginning of the election campaign. Both the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party prepared an opportunity to hear from both Kunimatsu (incumbent governor) and Kada, but eventually, both parties decided to support Kunimatsu in unison. The Communist Party was poised to support Kada in the beginning. However, partially because of a reaction provoked when Kada changed her mind in the middle and began to ask for support rather than nomination, the Communist Party refrained from supporting her and elected a rival candidate. While the Communist Party

The Policy Making Process over Cancellation of a New Shinkansen Station. . . had requested Kada to avoid involvement with other parties, Kada refused this request saying that differences between parties were petty differences and she was looking for a broad support to her attitude of dedication to the people of Shiga Prefecture. Also with the Social Democratic Party, Kada changed her mind in the middle and began to ask for support rather than nomination. The Social Democratic Party expressed a discomfort toward this change of attitude, but eventually accepted her request. Finally, Kada was able to gain support from the Social Democratic Party, and support from non-mainstream factions of the Liberal Democratic Party such as party members at the Omihachiman Branch, and defeated the incumbent governor supported by the Liberal Democratic Party, the New Komeito and the Democratic Party.

Accepting defeat in the election, the Democratic Party turned from supporting to freezing the construction project, and acknowledged that the party was basically ready to support Kada. Similarly, the Communist Party acknowledged support to a certain degree saying, “The election of Kada is the manifestation of public opinions against the new station construction project.” On the other hand, the Federation of Shiga Prefectural Liberal Democratic Party expelled Eisho Fujitani, a prefectural assembly member elected from the Omihachiman region, for having supported Kada, and thus continued their anti-Kada attitude.⁽²²⁾

4.2 Formation of Policy Networks

Yukiko Kada expressed her intention to freeze the new Shinkansen station construction project in the manifest (campaign pledge). After winning the election, Governor Kada reconfirmed this policy by expressing an inten-

(22) Articles in the Shiga-hochi Shimbun such as those on May 18, June 1, June 15, July 3, July 16, 2006

tion to withhold budgeting for the construction project in FY2007.⁽²³⁾ Governor Kada mentioned the following three reasons for freezing the construction project: (1) stringency in the financial condition of the prefecture; (2) poor utility and low necessity of the proposed new station; and (3) construction cost significantly higher when compared with other petition-built stations.⁽²⁴⁾ By proposing this change of policy, Governor Kada provoked strong reactions from the prefectural assembly in which the majority was taken by supporters of the construction project, and the voices that asked for the continuation of the construction project dominated. In a meeting of the Promotion Council, Governor Kada's proposal on stopping the construction project was objected by mayors of cities in the locality, who claimed that they would not make such a decision as a mayor without consent from the city assembly because the city assembly had approved the budgeting for the construction project.⁽²⁵⁾

In September, the Council for Discussions over the New Shinkansen Station Construction Project was established to verify earlier estimations on the demand for the new Shinkansen station and on the contribution of the new Shinkansen station to the economy. As a result of this reevaluation, estimations were corrected with significant downward adjustment: the indirect economic contribution and an increase in the tax revenue arising from the economic contribution were now estimated to be less than half when compared with estimations from the previous survey conducted in FY 2003.⁽²⁶⁾ Governor Kada traveled widely in the prefecture and asked for supports; in September alone, she conducted seven Prefectural Governance

(23) An article that appeared in the *Kyoto Shimbun* on September 27, 2006

(24) *Shiga Prefectural Assembly Newsletter*, Vol. 38, September 10, 2006

(25) An article that appeared in the *Kyoto Shimbun* on October 1, 2006

(26) Shiga Prefecture homepage, accessed November 20, 2006

The Policy Making Process over Cancellation of a New Shinkansen Station. . .
⁽²⁷⁾
Report Meetings. Then, amid a sharp conflict, there arose an expert group that supported Governor Kada and her insistence on freezing the new station construction project. In September 2006, Tadahiko Tanizawa (lawyer) and Tsutomu Hayama (assistant professor, Kyoto Seika University) submitted a written opinion to Governor Kada, which called for the discontinuation of the new station construction project on the ground that it was “very carelessly managed and likely to produce irreparable financial burdens for the future.” Tanizawa mentioned that the amount that Ritto City paid for the purchase of land around the proposed location of the new station was “unreasonably high” and that the purchasing procedure was “opaque”; while Hayama, by an original questionnaire survey, demonstrated that many citizens in the prefecture did not desire for the new station and were not very interested in using the new station.

In November, the Society for Building Shiga through Creative Discussions was established as a political organization in support of Governor Kada. Major activities of this organization are presented as: (1) providing Governor Kada with suggestions on important policies through a policy board; (2) helping to make the Kada Manifest more complete by additional editing; (3) periodical holding of Discussion Meetings for direct exchange of opinions with Governor Kada; (4) the Society’s local branch activities for dealing with regional issues; and (5) support to and nomination of political candidates who support realization of the Kada Manifest. The organization pursued activities under the policy of supporting Governor Kada and moving toward the realization of the Kada Manifest (pledge to prefectural residents⁽²⁸⁾).

(27) An article that appeared in the Kyoto Shimbun on October 1, 2006

(28) Homepage of the Society for Building Shiga through Creative Discussions, accessed June 25, 2008

4.3 Development of Policy Networks

In the election of prefectural assembly members as a part of the nationwide local elections in 2007, the Society for Building Shiga through Creative Discussions successfully increased the number of seats from 2 to 4. Since the assembly members opposed to the new station construction project (including the Democratic Party and the Communist Party members and the independents who supported the governor) outnumbered the assembly members supporting the construction project, the Federation of Shiga Prefectural Liberal Democratic Party, which used to support the construction project, expressed their intention to “follow the governor’s policy” in accepting the freezing of the construction project. On the other hand, Central Japan Railway, which had been suspending the construction works, called back personnel from the site, acknowledging uncertainties about the future of the new station construction project. In this situation, Hidenao Nakagawa, the then Chief Secretary of the Liberal Democratic party, visited the locality, discussed with Governor Kada, and announced the policy of freezing the new Shinkansen station construction project in July. On October 24, a meeting was held in Otsu City for discussion over the issue of the new station. While most of the mayors who participated in this meeting accepted that various agreements that were at the base of the construction project would expire at the end of October, the mayor of Ritto City argued for the continuation of the project. Since local opinions remained split in this manner, the Construction Agreement with Central Japan Railway expired at the end of October, which was the deadline for the formation of an agreement among local communities. Thus, the construction project was canceled. In this way, the “freezing” of the new Shinkansen station construction project, as the most important pledge that Governor Kada had made during the gubernatorial election campaign, was fulfilled after one year

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and four months.

5. CONCLUSION

The process of policy making over cancellation of the new Shinkansen station construction project involved many public, semi-public and private actors. In spite of supports from a majority of people in Shiga Prefecture, Governor Kada, in the early period of her governorship, was obstructed from achieving the policy goal of “freezing” the new station construction project due to oppositions from the prefectural assembly, Ritto City, other cities in the neighborhood, landowners and Central Japan Railway. For achieving this policy goal, it required resources from other actors, and therefore, had to form policy networks through such events as the establishment of the Council for Discussions over the New Shinkansen Station Construction Project within the Shiga Prefectural Government, the submission of a written opinion from an expert group and the establishment of a political organization in support of the governor. Being a political organization that was formed to support Governor Kada, the Society for Building Shiga through Creative Discussions was able to promote the sharing of this policy goal through various types of “discussions” (e. g. suggestions to the governor through a policy board and direct exchange of opinions with the governor). The process of policy making over cancellation of the new station construction project did not consist of the achievement of a pre-established goal. The construction project contained many problems such as stringency in the financial condition of the prefecture, construction cost significantly higher when compared with other petition-built stations and the manner Ritto City tried to cover the cost by issuing a municipal bond. In the presence of options other than freezing or canceling, achievement of the shared goal required resources from other actors, and for this reason, interdepend-

ent relationships were formed among the actors involved.

By ignoring differences among political parties and welcoming supports from all parties and individuals that were in favor of “freezing” the new station construction project, policy networks expanded greatly. While Governor Kada was only able to gain supports from the Social Democratic Party and some non-mainstream factions of the Liberal Democratic Party during the gubernatorial election campaign, the Democratic Party and the Communist Party expressed their readiness to support her immediately after the election. After the election of prefectural assembly members, the assembly members who were opposed to the construction project outnumbered the assembly members who were supporting the construction project. Then, even the Liberal Democratic Party expressed their readiness to support freezing of the new station construction project. Furthermore, Ritto City was prohibited by the court from issuing a municipal bond, and other cities in the neighborhood began to accept freezing of the new station construction project. Thus, Governor Kada was finally able to achieve her policy goal.

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