

Transition of the municipal merger after Meiji era in Yamaguchi Prefecture

Junichi Naka^{*1}, Mahito Nakazono^{*2} and Akira Ushijima^{*3}

¹Master's Course, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Yamaguchi University, Japan

²Professor, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Yamaguchi University, Japan

³Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Yamaguchi University, Japan

Abstract

Recent years the administration area shows a strong tendency to expand by a municipal merger. But it is considered incongruent area by the community planning of "Daily Activities Area". This paper aims to clarify the transition of the cities, towns and villages area after the Meiji era of the Yamaguchi prefecture based on literature survey. The large merger of Meiji and Showa, the standard scale was set in advance for management of an elementary school and a junior high school respectively, therefore the number of cities, towns and villages decreased from 722 to 229 and 169 to 58. On the other hand, the large merger of Heisei, it became clear that the number of cities, towns and villages decreased sharply from 56 to 19 in ten years, even though the standard scale wasn't set in advance.

Keywords: Municipal Merger, Community Planning, Daily Activities Area, Yamaguchi Prefecture, After Meiji Era

1. INTRODUCTION

In Japan, local autonomy means the self-government that a municipal corporation performs. From Article 92 with the Constitution of Japan "Regulations concerning organization and operations of local public entities shall be fixed by law in accordance with the principle of local autonomy", local autonomy is secured by the constitution. In Japan, the minimum unit of local autonomy is cities, towns and villages, thus they can be considered to be the closely related governments by local residents' daily activities. The number and area of cities, towns and villages were changed a lot by three large mergers of Meiji, Showa, and Heisei since the modern age. The number of cities, towns and villages in 1888 (Meiji 21) was 71,314. It decreased to about 1/40 (1,727) between 1888 and 2010 (Heisei 22).

In 2010, the large merger of Heisei changed constitution of Yamaguchi Prefecture into 13 cities and 6 towns. According to "About the large merger of Heisei¹⁾" that Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications wrote, the purposes of the large merger of Heisei are "Strengthening of the service providing system to residents", "correspondence of the declining birthrate and aging society", "large area city planning" and "the increase in efficiency of administration". And it is supposed that a certain amount of effect worked. On the other hand, there is also negative evaluation and we are anxious about "the vitality loss of the old cities, towns and villages of a neighboring part", the "residents opinion which becomes difficult to take in", "degradation in service to residents", "loss of the tradition and culture of the old cities, towns and villages", "loss of the historical name of a place".

* Contact Author: Junichi Naka, Master's Course,
Faculty of Engineering, Yamaguchi University,
address 2-16-1 Tokiwadai Ube Yamaguchi Japan
Tel: +81-080-1935-3082
e-mail: t023vm@yamaguchi-u.ac.jp

Table.1 Abstract of law to be related to the large merger

The large merger of Meiji	Before the enforcement of the "City Code" and the "Town and Village Code" which aimed to establish a modern system of local administration, mergers of towns and villages were carried out nationwide by setting a standard of about 300-500 households in one town or village on the basis of the Announcement of the Standard for the Mergers of Town and Villages (Home Minister Directive No. 352 issued on June 13, 1888), in order to enlarge the size of towns and villages at that time from a size that reflected that of natural communities in the Edo period to a size that was suitable for the effective administration of education, tax collection, public works, relief work, and the family register. As a result, the number of towns and villages decreased to about one-fifth.
	AD. Law to be related to the merger
The large merger of Showa	1888 the City Code and the Town and Village Code Announcement of the Standard for the Mergers of Towns and Village
	After World war II. Administrative tasks such as the construction and management of junior high schools under the new education system. Fire defense and police administration, and functions related to social welfare, health and sanitation were newly assigned to municipalities, requiring rationalization of the size of municipalities so as to enable effective and efficient management of their tasks. The national government aimed to achieve the Basic Plan for the Promotion of the Mergers of Towns and Villages (decided by the Cabinet on October 30, 1953) which aimed at a decrease in the number of towns and villages to about one-third, through the implementation of the Law for the Promotion of the Mergers of Towns and villages enacted in 1953, of which Article 3 provides that towns and villages shall have a population of about 8000 or more as a standard, and the Law for the Promotion of Construction of New Municipalities enacted in 1956 replacing the Merger Law. The population of about 8000 was taken as a target because it was considered necessary for a municipality to have such a population size as the minimum for the effective management of one junior high school. The number of municipalities actually decreased to about one-third between 1953 and 1961.
The large merger of Heisei	1953 the Law for the Promotion of the Mergers of Towns and Villages 1956 the Law for the Promotion of Construction of New Municipalities
	The old Special Mergers Law was amended in 1999. Because there were "promotion of the decentralization" and "progress of declining birthrate and aging society", "demand of the large administrative area", "severe finance of local administration" in this background. The national government promoted a merger by providing financial assistance. The old Special Mergers Law lapsed in 2005, and the new Special Mergers Law was enforced. The national government and prefectures have begun to participate in the municipal merger positively. The number of municipalities actually decreased to about one-third between 2000 and 2010.
	1999 Amendments of the old Special Mergers Law 2005 the new Special Mergers Law

note1: This table was made based on documents which Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications made.

note2: The official name of the old Special Mergers Law is the Law on Special Measures for Municipal Mergers

note3: The official name of the new Special Mergers Law is the Law on Special Measures for Municipal Mergers, etc.

However, the effect of a municipal merger will likely become apparent after ten years, and the propriety will be evaluated from now on. In order to the effect of evaluate a municipal merger, historical positioning of cities, towns and villages area and an understanding about the process of formation are required. Research of the past includes study on the method of sphere establishment on the coordination between living sphere and city-town-village consolidation that Tokuda and others²⁾³⁾ wrote and municipal merger studied from a viewpoint of the structure in daily life based housing market area that Majima⁴⁾ wrote. However, in the field of the architecture, there are still few studies arranged about the contents of the merger after Meiji era. This paper aims to clarify the background and the characteristic of a merger about the transition of the cities, towns and villages area after the Meiji era in Yamaguchi prefecture.

2. HISTORY OF LAW TO BE RELATED MUNICIPAL MERGER

Table 1 indicates the abstract of law to be related municipal merger. In this chapter, we consider about promotion policy of municipal merger that have been performed by the Japanese government from the Meiji era and rearranged it.

The Family Registration Act of the early period of Meiji is the origin of the transition of the administrative division. This law enforced in 1871 schemed the establishment of centralization government in Japan by introducing a unified national family register system that did not exist in those days. Japan was mediated in the ward that was a unit to deal with family register, and a town official, a vice-town official were employed in each ward. This division was a role only to deal with family register office work at first. It changed in a general administrative unit later and became the first basic division in the local administration of Japan.

However, the division of *the Family Registration Act* was not quit equal with the area of the conventional village. It became the friction with the administrative organization that a lot of unreasonableness ruled the conventional village on this part. Therefore this division was abolished by “*the Law for Reorganization of Counties, Wards, Towns and Villages*” in 1878. This law brought back conventional county and municipalities. And it assumed them an administrative unit again. The town official employed in every municipality had two roles which are the head of the local government and the head of the national local administration organ.

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan was promulgated in 1889, and Japanese modern political system was spread. On the other hand, the thought that the local government system should be provisioned first than maintenance of the national governing system was shown from the Department of the Interior. Thus, *the City Code and the Town and Village Code* was established in 1888. Education Order in 1879 set municipalities unit in setting plan of the elementary school. And it was required that the municipalities after *the City Code and the Town and Village Code* could take management and the administration of the elementary school. Because nearly 70% of Japanese municipalities of this time were less than 100 households and were small, most Japanese municipalities were the scales that were inadequate for this condition. Therefore an

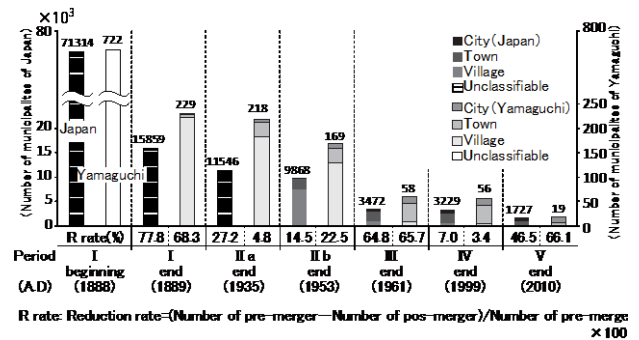


Fig.1 Comparison of the number of the municipalities according to the period of Japan and Yamaguchi prefecture

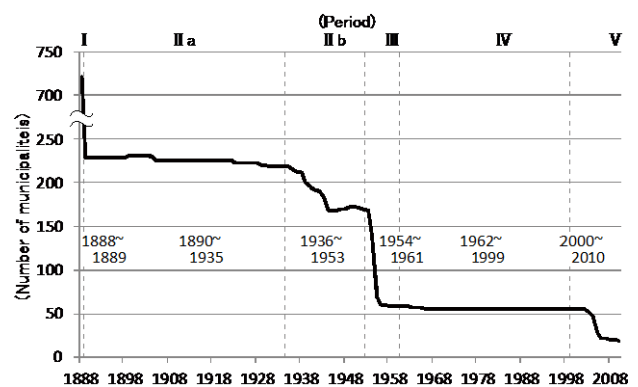


Fig.2 Change of the number of the municipalities of Yamaguchi prefecture

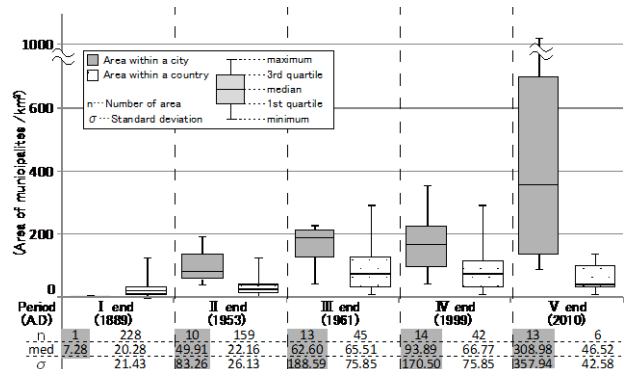


Fig.3 Change of the municipalities area of Yamaguchi prefecture

instruction of *the Announcement of the Standard for the Mergers of Towns and Villages* was given with *the City Code and the Town and Village Code* by the Minister of Home Affairs. The contents pushed forward the merger of municipalities by setting 300-500 households as the standard scale that management and the administration of the elementary school were possible. A large-scale merger (the large merger of Meiji) was carried out by this instruction throughout Japan.

After World War II, the role of the local government became important. The minimum role of municipalities was management and administration of the junior high school. In addition, administration about daily activities of residents such as firefighting and the social welfare was aimed for. However, the administration and financial base of old municipalities was inadequate for the enforcement. Therefore promotion of the

Table.2 Background of merger in II-period

City (Town,village) name	Name of municipalities incorporated (Meger year): Background of the merger
Shimonoseki-city	Ikuno-village (1921) : The expansion of the area of Shimonoseki-city due to the increasing population. Hikoshima-town (1933) : 1) The improvement of International Port (<i>Shimonoseki -Port</i>) . 2) The improvement of land transportation between Shimonoseki and Hikoshima. Chohu, Yasuoka-town; Kawanaka-village(1937),Oduki-town, Yoshimi, Oji, Katsuyama, Kiyosue-village (1939) : The expansion of the area of Shimonoseki-city absorbed the surrounding municipalities.
Ube-city (Ube-village)	Fujiyama-village(1931) :The control of the population of the municipality. Konan-village(1941) : 1) The formation of common economic and traffic zone. 2) Necessity of the right of water supply. 3) The rights of coal mine across two municipalities. 4) The shortage of food supply by a severe drought. Nishikiwa-village (1943) : The reorganization of City Planning Area.
Onoda-city (Onoda-town)	Takachiho-village(1940) : 1) The formation of school union by two municipalities. 2) <i>The movement for promoting the merger by major companies.</i>
Hagi-city (Hagi-town)	Chintou, Tsubaki, Yamada-village(1923) : 1) The neighboring municipalities which has the same size. 2)Progress of development of railway network.
Yamaguchi-city (Yamaguchi-town)	Kamiunorei-village(1905) : The revised of School Order. Yoshiki-village(1929) : The plan of the increasing population for Enforcement of the City code. Miyano-village(1941), Ogori, Ajisu-City; Sue, Natajima, Aiofutajima, Kagawa, Sayama, Otoshi, Hirakawa-village(1944) : Strengthening administrative function under the war regime.
Hofu-city (Hofu-town)	Nakaseki-town; Kajou, Mure-village(1936) :Reduce burdens of building a new factory. Nishiura-town(1939) : The neighboring municipalities which has the same size. Migita-village(1951) : The geographical, economic and cultural relations.
Tokuyama-city	Kami, Kume-village(1942) : Strengthening administrative function under the war regime. Tomita, Fukukawa, Kushigawama-town; Yaji, Otsushima, Yuno-village (1944) : The strong request by the military authorities.
Kudamatsu-city (Kudamatsu-town)	Suetakeminami, Hanaoka, Kubo-village(1939) : Increase in the number of workers by the industrialization.
Hikari-city	Mitsui, Shimada, Mitsui, Asae-village(1939); Murozumi-town(1943) : 1)The confrontation of the right of water supply with Tokuyama-city. 2)Strengthening administrative function under the war regime..
Iwakuni-city (Iwakuni-town)	Yokoyama-village(1905) : The formation of school union by two municipalities. Marifu-town; Kawashita, Atago, Nada-village(1940) : The municipal merger toward Enforcement of the City code.

municipal merger was demanded. *The Law for the Promotion of the Mergers of Towns and Villages* was established as law in the period of three years in 1953, and a merger was pushed forward among municipalities less than the population of 8,000 people. Furthermore, *the Law for the Promotion of Construction of New Municipalities* was established as law limited period of five years in 1956 before *the Law for the Promotion of the Mergers of Towns and Villages* lapse. The government and the prefectures urged the merger for non-merger municipalities less than the appropriate scale. A large-scale merger (the large merger of Showa) was carried out throughout Japan for seven years when these two laws were enforced.

The life of the people greatly transformed after rapid economic growth in Japan for next 40 years, but most of the municipalities did not merge. In this period, in the other side of the economic growth, the roles of the municipalities which gave a public service increased by a change of the life of the people. Furthermore, the financial status became serious throughout Japan that progress of “population decline” and the “declining birthrate and aging society” without being able to anticipate economic growth after the Heisei. It was establishment of administration and the financial base that the local government was demanded as the person bearing responsibility of the decentralization of power for the offer of a

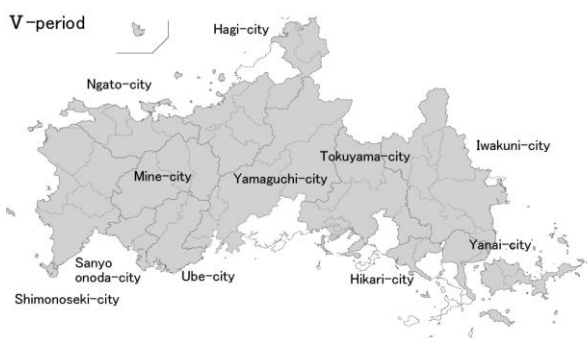
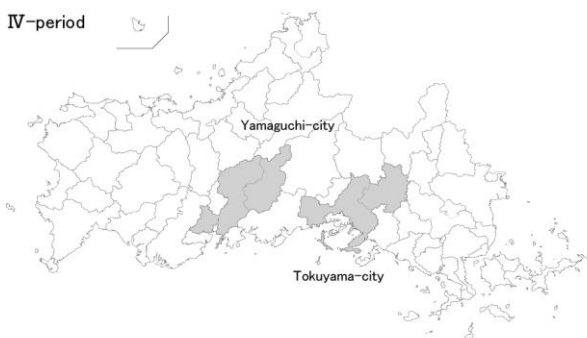
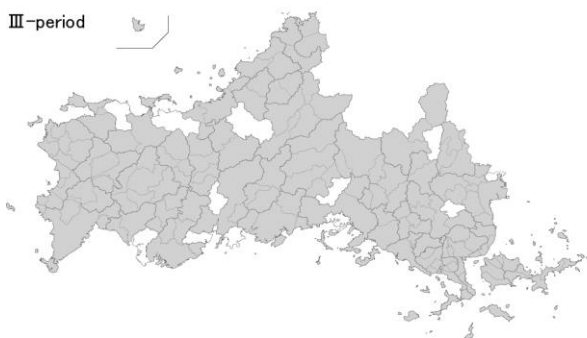
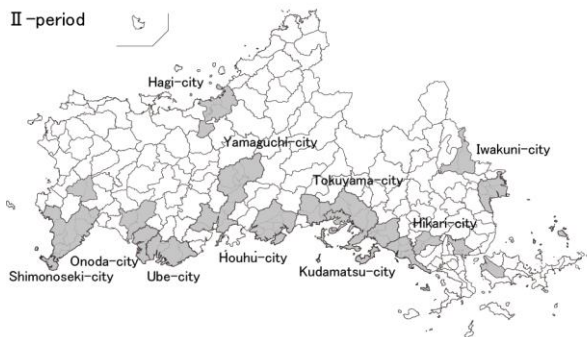
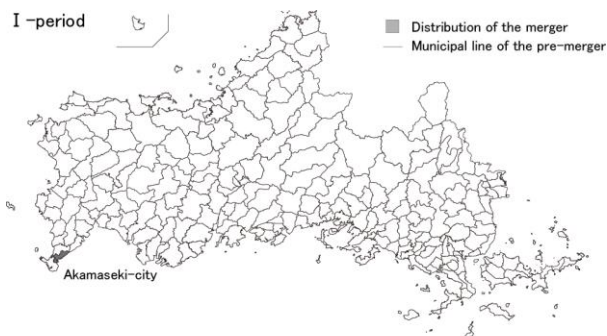
variety of residents’ services. Therefore *old Special Mergers Law* was amended in 1999 to support financially such as merger exception bonds. Furthermore, in 2005 when *the old Special Mergers Law* lapsed, *the new Special Mergers Law* that specified the active participation of the government and the prefectures for the merger was established. the large-scale merger (the large merger of Heisei) was carried out throughout Japan again by these two laws.

3. CONSIDERATION ACCORDING TO THE PERIOD OF THE MUNICIPAL MERGER IN YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE

In this chapter, we divided the period when the number of the municipalities was clear from 1888 to 2010 into five. Therefore, based on the number of the municipalities (figure 1, 2), municipalities area (figure 3) and the change of the municipalities division (figure 4), the consideration about the characteristic of the merger of Yamaguchi prefecture in each time is shown. In addition, we compared the change of the number of the municipalities of Yamaguchi with Japan.

3.1 I-period: Large merger of Meiji (1888-1889)

The period from 1888 to 1889 (Time of the large merger of the Meiji) is classified as I-period. In this period, the number of the municipalities of Japan decreased from 71,314 to 15,859 (Reduction rate approximately 80%), and the number of



note: This fig was made based on Historic map of municipalities in Yamaguchi prefecture⁹⁾
 Fig.4 Change of the municipalities division of Yamaguchi prefecture

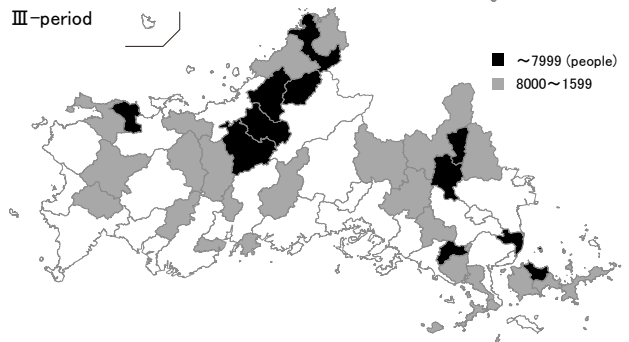
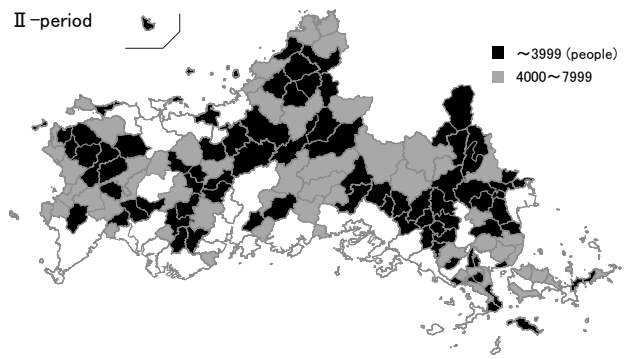


Fig.5 Population distribution in II-period and III-period

the municipalities of Yamaguchi prefecture decreased from 722 to 229 (Reduction rate approximately 70%). In figure 4, Municipalities division of I-period indicates that municipality's area formed by the large merger of Meiji is still small. Furthermore, figure 3 indicate that areas included a unity in this period. Among 229 municipalities of Yamaguchi in the I-period end, it is only Akamaseki-city (present-day Shimonoseki-city) that City code is enforced.

3.2 II-period:(1890-1953)

The period from 1890 to 1953 (Between the large merger of the Meiji and the large merger of the Showa) is classified as II-period. National merger-related law was not maintained, but the number of the municipalities of Japan decreased from 15,859 to 9,868 (Reduction rate approximately 40%), and the number of the municipalities of Yamaguchi prefecture decreased from 229 to 169 (Reduction rate approximately 30%). In addition, the analysis that a change of the number of the municipalities was divided into in the pre-latter half after 1935 indicates that a merger of Yamaguchi prefecture was late. A reduction rate of Japan is higher in Iia-period, and a reduction rate of Yamaguchi prefecture is higher in the IIb-period. By the common view, the background of the municipal merger in II-period was expansion of the urban areas while Japan shifted to a wartime posture. Increase in city area in figure 3, 4 indicates the urban area spread in Yamaguchi prefecture. Therefore, table 2 indicates the abstract of the sentence in conjunction with the merger from literature search into history¹¹⁾⁻¹⁹⁾ of each city to arrange the merger process of the city area in II-period of Yamaguchi prefecture. In Yamaguchi prefecture, war is related to the background of the merger of some cities, and a merger just before the outbreak of war (mergers in IIb-period) corresponds to it. In particular, it is written in the history of Tokuyama-city and Hikari-city that the maintenance of military facilities is an opportunity of the

merger promotion. It is an example to know a relationship of the merger in II-period and war well. On the other hand, table 2 indicates the background of the merger in II-period is not only war. It is the geography climate which adjacent municipalities share from old days, and consideration of the convenience for the traffic with the development of municipalities. Ube-city, Hagi-city, Hofu-city corresponds to it.

3.3 III-period: Large merger of Showa (1954-1961)

The period from 1954 to 1961 (Time of the large merger of the Showa) is classified as III-period. In this period, the number of the municipalities of Japan decreased from 9,868 to 3,472, and the number of the municipalities of Yamaguchi prefecture decreased from 169 to 58. Approximately 65% of municipalities are reduced by a large merger of the Showa. In addition, in ratios of number of the municipalities, the ratio of village decreases sharply whereas the ratio of city and town increase, but the areas of country greatly increase against the areas of city. This factor is that the small county area of the population scale became a target of the merger by the great merger of the Showa for municipalities less than a population of 8,000 people. Figure 5 indicates that many small municipalities which existed in II-period end almost became extinct in III-period end. On the other hand, only some municipalities less than a population of 8,000 people exist in the III-period end. As for this, two factors are thought about. First, the municipalities which did not merge existed. Second, because the population between the municipalities which merged was small, it did not touch a standard scale.

3.4 IV-period: (1962-1999)

The period from 1962 to 1999 (Between the large merger of the Showa and the large merger of the Heisei) is classified as IV-period. In this period, the number of the municipalities of Japan decreased from 3,472 to 3,229, and the number of the municipalities of Yamaguchi prefecture simply decreased from 58 to 56. The contents of merger is the expansion of the area of the city by Yamaguchi-city and Tokuyama-city having incorporated adjacent municipalities.

3.5 V-period: Large merger of Heisei (2000-2010)

The period from 2000 to 2010 (Time of the large merger of the Heisei) is classified as V-period. The merger in the large merger of the Heisei was different from the trends of merger from I-period to IV-period. A reduction rate of municipalities of Yamaguchi greatly exceeds it of Japan. The number of the municipalities of Japan decreased from 3,229 to 1,727, and the number of the municipalities of Yamaguchi prefecture simply decreased from 56 to 19. And, a reduction rate of Yamaguchi prefecture is 66%, and it of Japan is 47%. In other words it means that Yamaguchi greatly pushed forward a large merger of the Heisei. Because a standard scale was not set in the large merger of the Heisei, each region judges the scale of the merger. However, it is said that most mergers were aimed for the financial assistance of the national government by the reason of a local financial difficulty. Therefore, it is thought that many municipalities in Yamaguchi prefecture which are a financial difficulty aimed at the solution to the problem by being admitted into the adjacent city. As a result, the areas of the city greatly increased, but the scale of municipalities varies.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Newly gained knowledge

1) After the Meiji era, the administrative division greatly changed by maintenance of the law to begin with the Family Registration Act. In particular, in three large mergers of Meiji, Showa and Heisei, because the national government strongly led a merger by law, large-scale merger advanced throughout Japan. The background of the large merger of Meiji was the formation of municipalities that could manage the elementary school. The standard scale was set to 300-500 households by *the Announcement of the Standard for the Mergers of Towns and Villages* in 1888. The background of the large merger of Showa was increase of role (management of the junior high school) of the municipalities after the war. The standard scale was set to a population of 8,000 people by *The Law for the Promotion of the Mergers of Towns and Villages* in 1953. The background of the great merger of the Heisei was aggravation of the local finance after the rapid economic growth. The standard scale was not set, and a country did utmost financial support for the municipalities which merged by amendments of *the old Special Mergers Law* in 1999.

2) In I-period (1888-1889) which was the large merger of Meiji, approximately 80% of municipalities were reduced Japan, and approximately 70% of municipalities were reduced in Yamaguchi prefecture. The area of the municipalities formed in I-period was small, and the area included a unity.

3) In II-period (1890-1953), approximately 40% of municipalities were reduced Japan, and approximately 30% of municipalities were reduced in Yamaguchi prefecture. It was said that the background of the merger in II-period was what an urban area expanded while Japan shifted to a wartime posture, and the background of some mergers in Yamaguchi prefecture was similar to it. On the other hand, the background of some mergers was convenience of the traffic and geography climate.

4) In III-period (1954-1961) which was the large merger of Showa, approximately 65% of municipalities were reduced Japan and in Yamaguchi prefecture. Because municipalities less than a population of 8,000 people were the target of the merger, county area that was small population scale decreased, and city areas increased.

5) IV-period (1962-1999) is the period when a merger was not pushed forward Japan. In V-period (2000-2010), approximately 50% of municipalities were reduced Japan, and approximately 70% of municipalities were reduced in Yamaguchi prefecture. In this period, reduction rate of municipalities of Yamaguchi greatly exceeds it of all Japan. In addition, the area of the municipalities varies because a standard scale was not set.

4.2 Future issues

In this report, we analyzed a background and a characteristic about municipal merger after the Meiji era according to period. We are in the resource acquisition stage in that about I-period (large merger of the Meiji) and V-period (large merger of Heisei), and further analysis is necessary. This study examines the appropriate nature of the municipal merger based on population and an educational facility at the present, but the background of the merger is more complicated. Thus, the examination about other approach methods is necessary. Because there is the complicated factor that finance affects in the large merger of Heisei in particular, we think about doing the minutes of the Local Assembly with an analysis object.

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