

Factors of Policy Termination: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis Within Japan's Local Governments^{**}

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Introduction

Policy termination has received attention from scholars in recent years. In the past, researchers neglected this phenomenon (Bardach, 1976); one reason is that there were insufficient cases on which to generalize (deLeon, 1978; Daniels, 1997a). However, because of financial constraints, governments are increasingly terminating policies. Policy discontinuities are on the rise, while research on policy termination is also expanding (Daniels, 2001).

However, few previous investigations on policy termination have centered on its agenda-setting process. In this study, policy termination is defined as “the deliberate conclusion or cessation of specific government functions, programs, policies, or organizations” (deLeon, 1978: 370). As Bardach (1976) pointed out, politicians have no incentive to decide to terminate policies. Furthermore, some people or groups possess the power to keep the agenda out of the limelight in the political process (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963). For example, politicians who do not want to discuss termination as an agenda item may exercise the power not to place termination on the agenda. Although the importance of the agenda-setting process has been widely acknowledged in political science (Baekgaard et al., 2018), the process by which policy termination is set on a government's agenda has not

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received scholarly attention. As an exception to the general neglect of the agenda-setting process, Ye (2007) and Graddy and Ye (2008) constructed a two-stage decision-making model by separating the agenda-setting process from the decision-making process; however, the actual analysis was directed at the decision-making process. Since termination cannot be decided upon unless it appears on the agenda, it is of considerable importance to focus on the agenda-setting process.

By separating the agenda-setting process from the decision-making process, it is possible to identify which factors influence which process. Thus, the separation of these processes makes it possible to clarify the whole procedure leading to the decision to terminate a policy. For example, if the political situation has already affected the agenda-setting process, and the termination that politicians oppose is not on the agenda in the first place, in many cases, the political conflict over policy termination will not be visible. On the other hand, when we say that the political situation affected the termination of a policy, as reflected in previous studies, it can be said that the termination occurred as a result of visible political conflict. The processes described by the former and latter explanations are quite different. In the former political process, the proposal of termination was not on the agenda because of political factors, and the power to prevent it from being put on the agenda was exercised. To highlight these issues, it is necessary to develop an analytical framework that separates the agenda-setting process from the decision-making process rather than simply clarifying the factors in the decision-making process. No previous study has analyzed the process of policy termination by dividing it into these two processes.

Furthermore, previous studies have paid little attention to opposition based on policy type. Even in quantitative studies that analyze multiple policies, prior researchers have not considered differences in policy. Some studies suggest that ease of termination changes because of differences in policies (Haselswerdt, 2014; Thrower, 2017), but they do not specify differences in the scope of opposition. However, the probability of termination differs depending on differences in the opposition. Lowi (1964, 1970, 1972) pointed out that policy type regulates the actors involved in policy decisions and defines policy processes. Therefore, depending on the policy type, the probability of termination differs. If an extensive range of interested parties opposes termination, then it will be difficult to include termination on the agenda.

This study analyzes the process leading to the decision to terminate a policy. By examining the cases in which the termination of two policies appears on the agenda, it aims to clarify the process of policy termination through an investigation of such terminations by Japan's local governments.

Previous Studies of Policy Termination

Previous studies of policy termination have pointed out that factors such as the policy's

necessity, the political situation, and termination costs influence the decision to terminate. Governments also terminate policies by concluding that the policy's mission is no longer relevant (Turnhout, 2009). However, few previous studies have focused specifically on such factors. Most policy termination research involves studies showing that policy termination cannot be simply explained by a lack of clear necessity. In certain studies concerning the importance of the political situation, it was claimed that policy termination occurs because of the interaction of political actors and that the resulting political situation influences termination (e.g., Bardach, 1976; Daniels, 1997b; deLeon, 1987; Frantz, 1992, 2002; James et al., 2015; Sato, 2002). In addition, research on termination costs influencing the behavior of political actors shows that the extent of termination costs changes the likelihood of termination by constraining the decision-making behavior of those responsible (deLeon, 1978; Kirkpatrick et al., 1999; Shulsky, 1976).

Necessity of Policies

Considering that environmental changes have rendered some past policies unnecessary, termination is likely to appear on the agenda. Geva-May (2004) argued for the applicability of Kingdon's framework concerning policy termination, which indicates that highlighting budgetary costs or resource waste occurring through continuing policies is likely to prompt opportunities for termination. This study is theoretical, but empirical studies also exist on this matter. For example, Shulsky (1976) analyzed the case in which the motorcycle squad of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. was terminated. He pointed out that motorcycles were a good way to detect and respond to traffic violations, but as heinous crimes increased, cars became better suited to respond to criminal activities than motorcycles, which led to their termination (Shulsky, 1976).

Some point out that it is important to make a claim based on policy knowledge. Policy knowledge is a coherent system of logic and information for making policy decisions (Kato, 1995). Turnhout (2009) analyzed the process of terminating the ecological corridor policy in the Netherlands and concluded that the scientific efficiency and effectiveness of policies were more important considerations than political and emotional factors. What was important here was that arguments based on scientific policy knowledge were made. Krause et al. (2016) investigated the abandonment of climate protection initiatives by local U.S. governments and concluded that considerations concerning the effectiveness of the initiatives, as well as the political situation, had influenced the decision to terminate these projects.

The Political Situation

Studies focusing on the political situation assume that policy termination cannot be explained by a straightforward factor such as the policy's necessity (e.g., Bardach, 1976; Daniels, 1997b; deLeon, 1987; Frantz, 1992, 2002; James et al., 2015; Sato, 2002).

Research on presidential-style governments, focusing especially on the U.S. president and Congress, has revealed that political factors such as a change in presidency and the composition of Congress influence policy termination (Berry et al., 2010; Lewis, 2002, 2003). Lewis (2002, 2003) proposed that the risk of termination within U.S. federal government agencies increased in the event of political turnover and when the government was unified. Berry et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative analysis of a U.S. federal government program and showed that political factors related to the composition of Congress affected the outcomes. Thus, government actors tend not to put terminations on the agenda in political situations where the termination of policies are likely to be contested. The importance of the political situation is also pointed out in studies of termination in Japan (Matsunami, 2005; Mita, 2009; Sunahara, 2011; Okamoto, 2012).

Termination Costs

Accompanying costs in relation to terminations may hinder policy terminations. DeLeon (1978) stated that a high start-up cost for initiating a termination is likely to be an obstacle to deciding to terminate a policy. Policy termination always involves costs. For example, because legal safeguards remain in place, it can be difficult to simply lay off workers or change workplace practices when terminating an agency (deLeon, 1978; Kirkpatrick et al., 1999; Shulsky, 1976). Following the termination of a program, it may still be necessary to compensate the interested parties, which can be costly. Therefore, if the termination cost is likely to be high, termination becomes a difficult matter to place on the agenda.

Theory and Methods

How Policy Termination Appears on the Agenda

This study divides the process of policy termination into an agenda-setting process and a decision-making process. It is suggested by policy process phase models that the process begins with the perception of policy issues, while policy termination is the final phase of the process (Brewer, 1974). In this sense, the concept of setting an agenda for policy termination does not exist. However, when considering the actual political process in the phase of policy termination, the termination of policies is discussed as a solution to the problem, then decided upon, and lastly implemented. In this study, the act of raising policy termination as an agenda item is regarded as the phase in which policy termination is considered systematically, as a specific plan within the government. As can be seen from this definition, the agenda-setting process in this study is the process from the planning and formation of a termination plan to the agenda setting. Cobb and Elder (1972) divided the agenda-setting process of policies into a systemic and a formal agenda. A systemic agenda is defined as “all issues that are commonly perceived by members of the political

community as meriting public attention and as involving matters within the legitimate jurisdiction of existing governmental authority” (Cobb and Elder, 1972: 85). A formal agenda is defined as “that set of items explicitly brought up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision makers” (Cobb and Elder, 1972: 86). This study focuses on the formal agenda stage of the process. In relation to the decision-making process of termination, this study analyzes whether the decision was made. To decide the termination of policies in Japanese local governments, a vote in the assembly is necessary. The debate in the assembly is open and visible. The termination of a policy is defined as “the deliberate conclusion or cessation of specific government functions, programs, policies, or organizations” (deLeon, 1978: 370). Given that many previous studies have analyzed programs or organizations, this study also examines programs to provide a comparison with previous research.

Three identified factors affect the agenda-setting process of policy termination. First are the changes in circumstances that diminish the policy’s necessity, which constitute an influential factor. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) and Baumgartner and Jones (1993) modeled the process of policymaking, including the process of setting the agenda. These studies show that changes in the socioeconomic environment can trigger policy changes. As the circumstances surrounding policies change, some actors will put termination on the agenda based on the judgment that the policies are no longer necessary. Actors that raise termination on the agenda appear to do the same because of changes in circumstances. For this reason, changes in circumstances are necessary conditions, or conditions included in the case in which the result has occurred, for the agenda-setting process of policy termination. Further, the political situation and costs of termination are the second and third factors for putting policy termination on the agenda. For the agenda setter, if the termination is not realized—even if brought up on the agenda—that outcome would represent a political failure. For this reason, termination is likely to be on the agenda in situations where the political situation or termination costs make it easier to achieve a positive result. Thus, the political situation and termination costs are sufficient conditions, or those that always bring about the intended result when fulfilled, to raise termination on the agenda. Sufficient conditions refer to those that, when fulfilled, always bring about the intended result.

Furthermore, the wider the range of agents or interests against policy termination (which is likely to vary depending on the type of policy in question), the more difficult it will be to place termination on the agenda. This factor has not been clearly identified by previous studies.

It is more difficult to put termination on the agenda than review. A review not only refers to termination as a possibility but also considers policy changes, including project modification and relocation. Reviewing does not necessarily lead to termination, so it is more easily included on the agenda than termination. Therefore, even if there are no changes in circumstances leading to termination, review will be on the agenda.

In the agenda-setting process, actors outside the government might use the mass media to raise policy termination on the agenda. The influence of the mass media was analyzed, but it was not important as a condition and hence was not taken up as a condition in this study. Details of this analysis are described in the online appendix.

Factors Affecting the Decision-making Process of Policy Termination

In the decision-making process of policy termination, it is important to knowledge that indicates whether the policy is necessary. For the termination of a policy to be realized in Japanese local governments, it is necessary for both the head of the local government and the assembly to agree upon the termination. Given that politicians are seeking re-election and voter support (Fenno, 1973), Japanese politicians are now required to act on the knowledge of policy experts to increase the confidence of voters that the actions of politicians are in line with the public interest (Machidori, 2015). To win the support of voters, politicians agree to the termination or continuation of policies based upon the policy knowledge that they have acquired from experts (Yanagi, 2014b). In fact, case studies of the termination of hospital and dam projects in Japan's local governments have shown that demonstrating the necessity of policies based on policy knowledge has a significant impact on the decision-making process (Yanagi, 2012, 2014a). In this study, policy knowledge is defined as a coherent system of logic and information that supports the necessity of policies. Policy knowledge is a factor in the decision-making process and not in the agenda-setting process because it restricts actors only in the former process, where voters can confirm and judge the actions of politicians. Thus, policy knowledge is not a factor in the agenda-setting process when voters cannot determine the rationality or justifiability of the politician's behavior. Furthermore, empirically, policy knowledge is not necessarily required in the agenda-setting process for policy termination. For example, the termination of the Ono Dam project in Saitama Prefecture was raised on the agenda by the sudden decision of Governor Yoshihiko Tsuchiya in 2000. At this time, Governor Tsuchiya cited the change in the economic situation as a reason, but no policy knowledge was provided to confirm that the Ono Dam project needed to be terminated. As a result, the decision was made by the prefectural government to suspend the project rather than terminate it. In this way, termination may be included on the agenda even when policy knowledge is lacking.

Relationship between the Factors in the Agenda-setting and Decision-making Processes

The factors affecting the agenda-setting process are changes in circumstances that diminish the policy's necessity, political situations, and termination costs. Changes in circumstances are necessary conditions, and political situations and termination costs are sufficient conditions. In addition, since a review is more likely to be on the agenda than a termination, it has no necessary condition and fewer sufficient conditions than termination.

Policy knowledge that indicates whether the policy is necessary is an important factor in the decision-making process as a sufficient condition. Hence, the factors affecting the agenda-setting and decision-making processes are presented as distinguished, separate sets. Conditions that were necessary conditions or sufficient conditions in the agenda-setting process become necessary conditions in the decision-making process.

Analytic Approach

Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is used in this study to validate the developed model. QCA, using Boolean algebra, is an approach proposed by Ragin (1987). There are two states in Boolean algebra: a case where a phenomenon exists and a case where it does not. These states are represented by binary data expressed as “1” if the phenomenon exists and as “0” if it does not. In comparative analysis using Boolean algebra, the factors determining specific outcomes are clarified (QCA calls the factors that produce a given outcome of interest “conditions”). Next, the conditions (or combinations thereof) that are necessary or sufficient for producing the outcome are clarified (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009). QCA begins by assuming maximum causal complexity, and each combination of causal conditions is assigned its own outcome. Next, each combination is simplified by using a few Boolean principles. In this study, software fs/QCA 2.5 was used to perform the QCA.

There are several advantages of using QCA in this study. As we have discussed, the factors in the agenda-setting and decision-making processes are shown by the set relationship. This is consistent with QCA, which is based on Boolean algebra and set theory; moreover, QCA can be used to systematically describe the conditions of the policy termination process model in this study. QCA also has the advantage of addressing complex causal conjunctures. Previous studies have pointed out that the political situation and costs are important. However, this study emphasizes that not only these conditions but also policy knowledge indicating the necessity of the policy are important. In other words, the outcome of termination can be understood by the combination of the conditions that have been pointed out in previous studies and the conditions of policy knowledge. To verify such a theory, QCA, which understands the result as a combination of multiple conditions, is more suitable than a quantitative analysis that basically reveals the effect of only one factor. Even in the few cases handled as deviant examples in quantitative analysis, QCA treats them as having emerged from causal conditions. This makes it possible to clarify multiple causal pathways that produce the same outcome (De Meur et al., 2009).

Data

This study investigates specific local government programs in Japan. The local government system in Japan consists of two tiers: 47 prefectures as regional government units and 1,724 municipalities as local government units. The analyzed programs comprise prefectural hospital and dam projects to examine the influence of varying policy types.

These programs differ in terms of the opposition they arouse in relation to termination, as many residents oppose the termination of a hospital, whereas dam projects are often considered to be wasteful public works and many residents agree with their termination (Yanagi, 2014b). Since prefectures are the principal entities responsible for dam projects, both hospital and dam project terminations are explored in regard to prefectural involvement to ensure a valid comparison.

The selected prefectural hospitals operate under the Local Public Enterprise Act (Act No. 2921952) and have existed since 2009. They provide medical treatment that private hospitals find difficult to make available because of low profit margins. The financial situation of prefectural hospitals has been deteriorating, although the management reform of these hospitals is advancing (Koyamada, 2006). One option of management reform is the termination of hospitals, which involves not only the closure of a hospital but also the transition of hospital care to the private sector.

The prefectural dam projects involve multipurpose dams whose construction has been progressing since 2009 and which are intended for water use purposes as well as for flood control. In Japan, campaigns opposing dam constructions began to expand from the latter half of the 1980s because of concerns over the negative effects of dam construction on the natural environment (Shimazu, 2003; Imamoto, 2009). By the 2000s, there were areas where water demand had fallen because of a declining population and a slow economic growth rate. Prefectures have thus become willing to consider terminating dam projects because of a decrease in water demand.

Whether the termination of these projects has been raised on the agenda and decided upon was determined using a questionnaire survey, which was conducted for all prefectures with hospital and dam projects. The author's own institution at the time of the survey did not require ethical board review for this survey. This survey was carried out from August 2014 to May 2015 and asked questions about the situation of hospitals and dams from April 2010 to August 2014. The questionnaire was mailed to the division responsible for prefectural business operations. The survey form was a self-reporting form, and a person in charge who had the relevant knowledge was requested to complete it. The number of hospital projects surveyed was 184, and 123 valid responses were obtained. The dam projects surveyed comprised 51 projects, and 43 valid responses were obtained. There are three types of "outcomes" to be clarified using QCA in this study. The first outcome is that review appeared on the agenda, the second is that termination appeared on the agenda, and the third is that termination had been decided upon.

Hypotheses and Operationalization

In this study, whether the three outcomes occurred was determined via the questionnaire survey conducted by the author and a yearbook of each policy as follows. Whether the review or termination of a policy was on the agenda was verified from the

questionnaire survey, which asked the division responsible for the policy “whether policy review and termination have been systematically examined in the government.” When respondents answered that they were considered, “1” was coded, and when they answered that they were not considered, “0” was coded. Dam project termination was determined using the Dam Yearbook published by the Japan Dam Foundation and the questionnaire survey conducted by the author. Hospital termination was ascertained using the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications’ Local Public Enterprise Yearbook and the inquiries made to each prefecture during the author’s survey. A “1” was coded if the hospital was closed or transitioned to the private sector and “0” if not.

In this study, it was hypothesized that three conditions—(1) changes in circumstances, (2) the political situation, and (3) termination costs—would influence whether termination would be placed on the agenda and that the fourth condition—policy knowledge—would influence the decision-making process. Furthermore, the probability of a termination being included on the agenda would depend on the policy type. These conditions, in relation to hospital and dam terminations, constitute the study data. In the following sections, these four conditions regarding terminating dam and hospital projects in Japanese local governments are described. The definitions and sources of each condition and outcome are shown in the online appendix.

The first condition involves regional environmental changes that reduce the programs’ necessity. Demand is an important environmental change for both hospital and dam projects. Furthermore, for hospitals that are public enterprises, their management situation is also an important factor.

As regional changes occur in relation to increases in labor costs for public hospitals and the growth of private hospitals, the financial situation of public hospitals deteriorates and service demand for them falls, leading to the consideration of public hospital terminations (Yanagi, 2012). Local governments compensate for public hospital deficits if the hospital’s financial situation is bad. As an indicator of the financial situation, the ratio of medical income to medical expenses has been used, which shows whether the revenue obtained from the provision of medical services covers the expenses related to medical care. The prefecture provides a subsidy if the revenue from medical care falls below its cost. The central government has set a guideline target value for this ratio; this study coded values that are below this target “1.” The prefecture is forced to promote reforms, including a review of management style, when the value falls below this target. Furthermore, local governments may judge that there is no need for public hospitals if there are many private hospitals in areas where public hospitals are located and therefore an excess number of sickbeds (Yanagi, 2012). Area demand is assessed based on whether a prefectural hospital containing excess sickbeds is located in that area; this occurs when the number of beds in all hospitals in the area exceeds the reference bed number. The reference bed number refers to a numerical value determined for each area of prefectures that provide medical care based

on a unified nationwide formula. If a hospital is located in an area containing excess sickbeds, it was coded “1” in this study.

In terms of dam projects, an important environmental change is the decrease in water demand. Local governments may judge a dam unnecessary if water demand has decreased. After confirmation through the questionnaire survey, if a dam’s reservoir’s water levels were lowered or reduced water demand was forecast, “1” was coded, and 0 was coded if not.

The second condition involves the political situation. Japanese local governments operate under a system in which the governor and assembly members are elected separately. Factors related to the political situation are political turnover, the state of the assembly, and the existence of a nonpartisan governor.

The first political factor is political turnover. Research has indicated that political turnover affects terminations in the U.S. context (Lewis, 2002), and similar results have been found concerning policy termination in Japan’s local governments (Sunahara, 2011): the new government is not responsible for starting the project and political turnover facilitates the appearance of termination on the agenda. Regarding dam projects in the current study, if the political party supporting the governor when a project was started was different from the political party supporting the governor during the 2010–2014 period, this was coded “1” to indicate political turnover.¹⁾ Concerning the prefectural hospital system, some hospitals were established before World War II; the different party system operating at the time makes it difficult to use the same approach as that for dams. Therefore, regarding hospitals, in cases where the governor was serving his or her first term between 2010 and 2014, “1” was coded to indicate political turnover. The change in governor makes putting termination on the agenda easier because the new governor is not responsible for the deterioration of the hospital’s management situation to that point.

The second political factor is the state of the assembly. When the assembly-controlling and governor’s parties are the same, the policy is likely to be terminated (Lewis, 2003; Berry et al., 2010; Sunahara, 2011) because a majority of assembly members need to agree on terminating a policy. Thus, the assembly was coded “1” in instances where the governor’s party and the ruling assembly party were the same—that is, for unified governments.

The third political factor is the existence of a nonpartisan governor. Nonpartisan

1) In Japan’s local governments, several political parties may support a prefectural governor; however, the dominant influence of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is crucial. Therefore, the presence or absence of political turnover was judged by the presence or absence of LDP support. This is because the construction industry, which undertakes dam projects, is a major supporter of the LDP. In elections of governors who initiated dam projects, the LDP offered support regardless of the governor’s party affiliation before 2010; hence, for the election of governors for the 2010–2014 period, it was judged that there was no political turnover if there was no change in governor. Other patterns not involving the LDP in this way were examples of political turnover. This standard is the same as in Sunahara (2011).

governors since the 1990s have tended to decrease the expenditure of Japan's local governments (Soga and Machidori, 2007). In particular, having a nonpartisan governor in office raises the issue of the termination of programs such as dam projects that many residents agree should be terminated (Yanagi, 2014a). This is because nonpartisan governors are rarely supported by specific organizations such as those in the construction industry and rather act according to their constituents' preferences. On the other hand, for hospital projects, it cannot be assumed that termination is likely to occur with a nonpartisan governor because, unlike a dam, many residents oppose the termination of hospitals. Thus, adding hospital termination onto the agenda is disadvantageous for the re-election of nonpartisan governors who do not have the advantage of block votes. The nonpartisan governor was coded "1" in cases where a nonpartisan governor was in office.

The third condition involves termination costs. In this study, the hospital project cost was operationalized as the number of staff and the dam project cost was operationalized as the start of construction for the main part of the dam.

When terminating a prefectural hospital in Japan, the prefecture must find employment for the displaced staff. In the case of Fukuoka Prefecture, which terminated hospitals before 2009, those deciding on termination were concerned about what to do with the staff and reluctantly chose to terminate as the number of staff increased (Yanagi, 2012). Regarding the number of hospital staff, a fuzzy-set membership score was coded for input. QCA can have either "crisp sets" or "fuzzy sets": a crisp set is when an element has a binary value of either belonging or not belonging to a set, whereas a fuzzy set allows elements to partially belong to a set, assigning of value from 0 to 1. Fuzzy-set membership was considered for this variable since there was no clear basis for judging it as a crisp set. The conversion of the original data value into a membership score is called calibration. The closer to 1, the smaller the number of staff and the more likely they would be terminated. The crossover point was set to 233 because the largest number of hospital staff terminated before 2009 was 232 people. Moreover, full membership was set at 0, which was the lowest number of hospital staff, while full non-membership was 1022, based on the highest number of hospital staff.

The presence of costs incurred in dam termination was assessed in relation to the start of construction for the main part of the dam. Even in Nagano Prefecture, where the termination of many dams had been placed on the agenda before 2009, dams already under construction were not considered for termination (Yanagi, 2014a). This is because prefectures are required to pay a substantial default penalty to the contractor if the construction of the main part of the dam has already begun. In addition, the central government has recommended that local governments not initiate construction on projects under review or where termination may be considered. If the main part of the dam had not been built by 2010, it was coded "1." Although the sunk cost can be theoretically considered as the cost of termination, it does not fit empirically in the termination of a dam

project. In the case of Nagano Prefecture and the aforementioned recommendation from the central government, the existence of a sunk cost did not have any effect. In addition, it was difficult to accurately measure the projects' sunk cost from the dam yearbook or inquiries to each prefecture.

The fourth condition involves policy knowledge. Two types of policy knowledge are used in this study: policy knowledge (termination), which indicates the policy is no longer needed, and policy knowledge (existence), which indicates there is still a need for the policy. The first type of policy knowledge empowers actors to promote policy termination, while the second empowers actors who want to prevent policy termination. If, during the decision-making process, policy knowledge indicated the need to terminate or continue a policy, then policy knowledge (termination) or policy knowledge (existence) was coded "1," respectively. The existence of such policy knowledge was determined by administering the questionnaire survey to the staff of the local governmental department in charge of the project, as they have an abundance of policy knowledge.

Results

How Policy Termination Appears on the Agenda

The frequency with which hospitals and dam projects appeared on the agenda for termination varied widely. Table 1 shows the percentage of programs considered for review and for termination. The review rate was 54% for hospitals and 49% for dams, indicating little difference. However, the percentage of terminations within the programs under review was 9% for hospitals and 76% for dams. It is difficult to choose termination as an option for hospital projects being reviewed, while termination is an easier option for dams. Thus, the number of terminations placed on the agenda was significantly different depending on the type of policy involved.

Table 1 Percentage of Programs Involving Reviews and Terminations

| | Number of valid responses (a) | Number of examined program reviews (b) | Number of examined program terminations (c) | b/a | c/b |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| Hospitals | 123 | 66 | 6 | 0.54 | 0.09 |
| Dams | 43 | 21 | 16 | 0.49 | 0.76 |

With QCA, it is recommended first to analyze the factors that emerged as necessary conditions and then analyze the sufficient conditions needed for a change to occur (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). The analysis method of the necessary conditions is explained in detail in the online appendix. The consistency and coverage of all the conditions are also shown in the online appendix. Consistency is the degree to which cases under consideration are consistent with the set conditions; the higher the value, the higher

the consistency. Coverage is a numerical value representing the relevance and trivialness of the necessary condition. If there are too many cases where the necessary conditions are met and they are considered to be obvious, then the coverage value will be low. For example, the requirement to be a member of the Diet is a necessary condition to become Japan's prime minister, but it is also a constitutional requirement and an obvious one. Therefore, it has a low coverage value.

For both dam projects and hospital projects, there was no necessary condition for review in the agenda-setting process and no condition for consistency to be "1." On the other hand, as described later, there was a necessary condition for termination in the agenda-setting process. This is because a review is more likely to be on the agenda than a termination, as expected.

The examination of the necessary conditions for termination revealed that in the agenda-setting process, political turnover and a unified government were necessary conditions for hospital termination. The conditions of the deterioration of the management situation and low demand, which are indicators of changes in circumstances, were not necessary conditions on their own. However, in cases where termination was on the agenda, either the management situation had deteriorated or demand was low. In the absence of both these conditions, termination was not on the agenda. Political turnover and a unified government were not expected to be necessary conditions, but they turned out to be. Turnover coverage was as low at 0.081 and assembly coverage as low at 0.070. This means that there were many cases where termination was on the agenda and these conditions were met. The termination of hospital projects is difficult to raise on the agenda. It was clarified that the termination would not be included on the agenda unless it was a political situation where termination could easily be accomplished.

The examination of the conditions for the termination of dam projects revealed that cost was a necessary condition in the agenda-setting process. Although it was predicted that changes in circumstances when demand was decreasing were a necessary condition, a decline in demand was not a necessary condition, and consistency was low at 0.250. On the other hand, that the main part of the dam was not constructed was a necessary condition, which corresponds to an index representing the cost of termination. This is because, in 2010, the central government requested prefectures to consider the termination of dam projects where the main part was not constructed, as the cost of termination was low. Therefore, even if demand had not declined, termination was on the agenda.

The necessary conditions in the decision-making process for hospital project termination were found to be political turnover, a unified government, management situation, policy knowledge (termination), and policy knowledge (existence). As expected, indicators of changes in circumstances and political situations became necessary conditions in the decision-making process. However, the condition of a small staff, which is an index representing cost, was not a necessary condition. This may be because hospital staff are

often qualified personnel and can easily change jobs. Policy knowledge was also a necessary condition. Thus, the importance of this condition in the decision-making process was confirmed.

In relation to the decision-making process for dam project termination, termination costs and policy knowledge (termination) were necessary conditions. Unlike the assumption made in advance, changes in circumstances and the political situation were not necessary conditions, but this is because of the large influence of cost, as mentioned earlier. In addition, it was found that policy knowledge is required in the process of deciding to terminate a dam project. However, policy knowledge (existence) was not a necessary condition. Unlike for hospital projects, voters are positive about the termination of dam projects. If the actor promoting termination has policy knowledge that justifies the termination, the termination will be realized, even if the opponent has provided policy knowledge that supports the need for that policy. On the other hand, because it is politically difficult to terminate hospital projects, termination will not be realized if policy knowledge that the policy is still needed is shown.

Next, QCA on agenda setting was conducted to identify the sufficient conditions for termination. The truth tables used to derive the sufficient conditions are included in the online appendix. In the analysis of the sufficient conditions, the necessary conditions were not added. In the analysis of hospitals, the conditions of political turnover and a unified government were excluded to omit necessary conditions. However, the analysis of termination could not be performed because no combination resulted in a value of “1.” Even for combinations with the highest degree of consistency, the result was still 0.08, which is too far from the reference point of 0.80. In the condition combination where the degree of consistency was 0.08, demand declined, business conditions deteriorated, and the number of staff was small. This combination of conditions assumes that termination is likely to be included on the agenda. However, even with such conditions, there are few cases where termination is on the agenda. It appears that there are considerable difficulties to overcome in adding the termination of hospitals onto the agenda. For the combination with the highest degree of consistency, termination is on the agenda for Ichiishi hospital in Mie Prefecture. In this hospital, privatization was chosen because of declining demand and the worsening management situation. The criteria of the reference point are discussed in the online appendix.

On the other hand, using QCA to identify the sufficient conditions for the review of hospitals was possible because there were specific cases where the result was “1.” Using standard analysis, an intermediate solution is shown in Table 2. The online appendix explains the technical methodology of QCA, including the intermediate solution. In an intermediate solution, the symbol “*” represents “and.” In Table 2, the symbol “~,” which is placed immediately before the condition, indicates that the condition is denied. Necessary conditions for hospital termination were political turnover and assembly status. However,

there is no need for the assembly to be a unified government when review is on the agenda. Moreover, the intermediate solution of the third line involves a combination with no political turnover and assembly status, where management is difficult and there are excess hospital beds. Thus, hospitals are being reviewed in situations that combine changes in circumstances without necessarily involving political situations. All lines contain \sim Assembly. This can be interpreted that the review of hospitals, unlike the termination of hospitals, is not politically difficult. Hence, even if the governor's ruling party is small, the review can be considered. In this analysis, intermediate, complex, and parsimonious solutions all gave the same results, which also occurred in the subsequent analyses.

Table 2 Intermediate Solutions for Hospital Reviews in the Agenda-setting Process

| Intermediate Solutions | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Consistency |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Turnover* \sim Assembly*SmallStaff* \sim Demand | 0.089 | 0.089 | 0.848 |
| Turnover* \sim Assembly* \sim Management*Demand | 0.136 | 0.136 | 0.900 |
| \sim Turnover* \sim Assembly*Management*Demand | 0.045 | 0.045 | 1.000 |

Standard analysis was used to identify the sufficient conditions for dam termination. With the use of an intermediate solution, Table 3 shows that termination tends to be on the agenda if there is (i) political turnover, a nonpartisan governor, and a decrease in water demand or (ii) political turnover, a nonpartisan governor, and a minority assembly. From these two logical expressions, there are two routes to include termination on the agenda. One is for a nonpartisan governor with a new government to take up the issue of termination in the wake of declining water demand. The other is that a nonpartisan governor with a new government raises the issue of terminating the dam to gain support from voters if the governor's ruling party is a minority in the assembly. In both logical expressions, turnover by the nonpartisan governor prompted the consideration of termination. Since cost was a necessary condition, it was not included in this analysis; but it is, of course, a condition that applies to all cases.

Table 3 Intermediate Solutions for Dam Terminations in the Agenda-setting Process

| Intermediate Solutions | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Consistency |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Turnover*NonpartisanGovernor*Demand | 0.125 | 0.063 | 1.000 |
| Turnover*NonpartisanGovernor* \sim Assembly | 0.125 | 0.063 | 1.000 |

By using standard analysis, Table 4 illustrates what conditions are needed for the review of a dam to take place. Provided that there is an intermediate solution, Table 4 indicates that there are three routes for a dam review to be on the agenda. The first is the situation in which the ruling party in the assembly is small and the cost is low. The second is when there is a nonpartisan governor and the cost is low. The third is when water demand

is declining and the cost is low. What is important here is that if the cost is low, there tends to be a review regardless of the turnover, which differs from the case of dam termination.

Table 4 Intermediate Solutions for Dam Reviews in the Agenda-setting Process

| Intermediate Solutions | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Consistency |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| ~Assembly*Cost | 0.095 | 0.048 | 1.000 |
| NonpartisanGovernor*Cost | 0.095 | 0.048 | 1.000 |
| Demand*Cost | 0.238 | 0.143 | 1.000 |

Factors Affecting the Decision-making Process for Policy Termination

Standard analysis was used to identify the sufficient conditions for hospital termination. Table 5 shows, with the use of an intermediate solution, that termination tends to be decided upon if a hospital has a small staff and no excess hospital beds. Since political turnover, a unified government, management situation, and policy knowledge (termination and existence) were necessary conditions, these were not included in this analysis, but they are conditions that apply to all cases. The reason ~ Demand was incorporated into the conditional formula at that time was because the Aichi Cardiovascular and Respiratory Center in Aichi Prefecture, which had no excess beds, was terminated. This hospital was not a community hospital but one that provided highly specialized medical care. Therefore, this hospital is a special case, and it is difficult to judge demand for this hospital by the indicator of excess beds. Therefore, the lack of a decrease in demand is not a sufficient condition and the number of staff is considered to be important.

Table 5 Intermediate Solutions for Hospital Terminations in the Decision-making Process

| Intermediate Solutions | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Consistency |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| ~Demand*SmallStaff | 0.270 | 0.270 | 1.000 |

Standard analysis was used to identify the sufficient conditions for dam termination. The sufficient conditions are shown in Table 6 through two formulas. One formula includes the combination of a political situation (turnover) and no policy knowledge (existence). In Yanagawa (Iwate Prefecture), Otaki (Chiba Prefecture), Nunozawa (Shizuoka Prefecture), and Otanigawa (Okayama Prefecture), where dams were terminated, turnover occurred. Furthermore, opponents did not present policy knowledge showing the need for those policies still existed. On the other hand, in Shobara (Hiroshima Prefecture), Wajiki (Kochi Prefecture), and Harudo (Kochi Prefecture), although turnover had already occurred, termination was not realized because the actors opposed to the termination presented policy knowledge that the need for the policy still existed. The second formula involves a combination of environmental change (demand), political situations (assembly and not nonpartisan governor), and no policy knowledge (existence). Okoppe (Aomori Prefecture) is

the only dam that satisfies this combination of conditions. Okoppe dam was terminated mainly because of the decrease in water demand. In Aomori Prefecture at that time, Governor Shingo Mimura, who received support from the LDP, was not a nonpartisan governor, but the governor's ruling party was the majority in the assembly and the termination was realized. Even if turnover does not exist, a policy can still be terminated if the majority in the assembly support it. Moreover, termination costs and policy knowledge (termination) are necessary conditions and thus are excluded from this analysis.

Table 6 Intermediate Solutions for Dam Terminations in the Decision-making Process

| Intermediate Solutions | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Consistency |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Turnover*~Policy Knowledge (existence) | 0.571 | 0.571 | 1.000 |
| Demand*Assembly*~NonpartisanGovernor*~Policy Knowledge (existence) | 0.143 | 0.143 | 1.000 |

Summary of the Results

For hospital projects, as expected, either a deteriorating management situation or reduced demand was a necessary condition in the agenda-setting process. Contrary to our expectations, however, the political situation was a necessary condition. Generally, the termination of hospitals is opposed by voters; therefore, for it to be on the agenda, a political situation in which it is likely to be terminated is needed. Contrary to our expectations, cost was a sufficient condition in the decision-making process. Furthermore, policy knowledge indicating a policy was no longer needed and no policy knowledge indicating a continued need for a policy were necessary conditions in the decision-making process of hospital projects. However, four conditions—changes in circumstances, political situation, cost, and policy knowledge—all affect the termination, as expected.

In the agenda-setting process of dam projects, cost was a necessary condition, and changes in circumstances and the political situation were sufficient conditions. This is because the central government asked prefectural governments to consider terminating dams that had not started the construction of their main part. Therefore, changes in circumstances and the political situation were not necessary. However, as expected, no policy knowledge that indicated a policy was still needed was a sufficient condition in the decision-making process. At the same time, policy knowledge indicating a policy was no longer needed was a necessary condition.

Conclusion

The factors affecting termination decisions highlighted in previous studies have been shown here to influence the agenda-setting process. The combination of factors that generated both sufficient and necessary conditions to ensure the termination of dam projects would be on the agenda comprised changes in circumstances, the political situation, and

termination costs.

Furthermore, because of the difference in type between dam and hospital projects, the proportion of dams and hospitals placed on the agenda for termination differed. For dam projects, many citizens are more positively inclined toward termination, and there was a high ratio of terminations on the agenda. On the other hand, many citizens oppose hospital terminations, so there was a low ratio of terminations on the agenda; QCA could not be performed for hospital terminations. Therefore, politicians also dislike including hospital termination as an agenda item. It resulted that the influence of politicians who do not want to put termination on the agenda is exercised in the agenda-setting process. Any proposal that citizens oppose tends not to be placed on the agenda in democratic countries such as Japan. Differences in the scope of opposition because of the difference in policy type have a major impact on the adding of policy termination onto the agenda.

The sufficient conditions for including termination on the agenda differed from those for review. For dam projects, the sufficient conditions for termination included turnover and a nonpartisan governor. On the other hand, under the sufficient conditions for a review, even if the condition of turnover or a nonpartisan governor is not included, a decrease in water demand would put a review on the agenda. Concerning hospitals, these would be considered for review even if the political situation was unfavorable for termination, meaning that while a favorable political situation is a necessary condition for terminations, this is not the case with reviews. Previous studies have only analyzed terminations without comparisons to reviews. Stakeholders' opposition to policy termination is greater than that to policy review. Therefore, it is harder to place termination on the agenda than a review.

Policy knowledge was an important factor in the decision-making process. In the decision-making process regarding hospital termination, providing adequate policy knowledge was a necessary condition. Policy knowledge that there was no longer a need for the policy and no policy knowledge indicating there was still a need for the policy were necessary conditions. In the decision-making process for dams, providing policy knowledge indicating the policy was no longer needed was also a necessary condition; however, no policy knowledge indicating a policy was still needed was only a sufficient condition. Moreover, it was determined that dam termination is not decided without policy knowledge or political situation being conditions.

This study divided the process of termination into an agenda-setting and a decision-making process and clarified the conditions that affect each process. Previous studies have centered on the decision-making process of termination. However, it is still difficult to make termination come up on the agenda. This was clarified by comparing termination and review for the first time in this study. Unlike reviews, it is necessary to have more conditions for termination to be included on the agenda. The importance of the agenda-setting process has not been highlighted in previous research on policy termination. However, termination cannot be decided unless it comes up on the agenda, which confirms that the agenda-setting

process is a critically influential component for decisions on policy termination.

In this study, QCA, rather than quantitative analysis or case study analysis, revealed that several combinations of conditions determine whether termination is included on the agenda and decided upon. It not only reconfirmed that previously identified factors affect the agenda-setting process but also showed that multiple causal routes led to termination being included on the agenda. It also showed the importance of examining policy knowledge in the decision-making process, which has not been emphasized in previous studies. Thus, as shown by the current study, policy termination is determined by a combination of factors that include policy knowledge as well as the factors pointed out in previous studies. Considering that the combination of conditions that affect each process is different, a separate analysis of both processes can provide a comprehensive picture of the process of policy termination.

Although this research brings new insights to the study of policy termination, there is a limitation to highlight. The object of analysis consisted of two program types from Japanese local governments. The model presented in this study was developed based on termination studies from various countries and thus should be applicable to policy termination in other countries. However, this model's applicability on a global scale has not been verified. Nevertheless, this study contributed new knowledge in an Asian context, as previous studies have mainly analyzed policy termination in governments in Europe and the United States.

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