



# DIJ Forum

Thursday, 28 September 2017, 18.30h – 20.00h

## Changing Dynamics of Multilevel Democracy in Japan

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**Kyohei Yamada**, Rikkyo University

Since the 1990s, local democracy and representation in Japan have been changing. Political reforms at the national level, decentralization, reduced clientelism, and broader socio-economic challenges such as depopulation have transformed the roles of local legislatures and executives. These changes have not least affected important national policies.

The talk will analyze overall trends in the "quality" of local democracy in terms of some indicators of responsiveness, accountability and participation in local representation at municipal and prefectural level. It will further discuss how changes in local representation and local party organizations have affected national processes regarding public works, energy, and security. The talk concludes with reflections on how aggravated regional inequality will affect decentralization and the quality of local and national democracy in the near future.

Professor Yamada Kyohei will comment on Dr. Hijino's latest research and amend the discussion by analyzing how changes in institutions and patterns of political competition at the local level affect political competition at the national level. A particular focus lies on how the increased volatility in national elections affects calculations and decisions of majority-seeking political parties. He will further discuss how political competition at national level affects the central government's willingness and capacity to change or not to change the population size of local governments.

**Ken Victor Leonard Hijino** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, Kyoto University. He has written about local elections, decentralization, and central-local relations in Japan primarily. His latest book, "Local Politics and National Policy: Multilevel Conflicts in Japan and Beyond", analyzes the impact of local politics on national policy (Routledge 2017). He has also published articles, among others, about party organizations and chief executives and about the political discourse surrounding regional inequality and decentralization in Japan. He is Swedish-Japanese, raised in Japan with a B.A. from Wesleyan University and a PhD from Cambridge University, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

**Kyohei Yamada** is Specially Appointed Associate Professor in the College of Business at Rikkyo University. His research interests include local government, intergovernmental relations, and Japanese Politics. His recent works focus on the consequences of municipal consolidations in Japan at national and local levels, and have appeared in *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, and *Urban Affairs Review*.

Following talk and comments, the floor will be opened for a Q&A session. The event will be held in English. It will be followed by a small reception. Admission is free, registration is required at [forum@diytokyo.org](mailto:forum@diytokyo.org) or