

Amalgamation Perspectives: Citizen Responses to Municipal Consolidation*

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The 1999 Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Citizen Survey is used here to study citizen responses to a municipal amalgamation that created the Halifax Regional Municipality. The analysis of this survey brings forward citizen-based assessments of the amalgamation decision and subsequent municipal governance. Questionnaire items are used to create measures of citizens' views concerning amalgamation, the relationship between the urban and rural spaces of the new municipality, the performance of the HRM political leadership and the impact of amalgamation on municipal services.

There are two key research questions. How did HRM citizens assess amalgamation after three years of experience? What factors best explain citizens' views towards amalgamation? The political and policy context of the amalgamation decision taken unilaterally by the Nova Scotia provincial government is briefly described. In turning to the survey data, key variables are developed and then used in a model of citizens' amalgamation perspectives.

The Context of Municipal Amalgamation in Nova Scotia

In 1991, the Nova Scotia Minister of Municipal Affairs initiated a Task Force on Local Government to balance the design and implementation of local government with provincial settlement patterns. The municipal reform objectives for the province were:

* The findings reported in this paper are drawn from an analysis of the 1999 Halifax Regional Municipality Citizen Survey. The survey was a cooperative effort of HRM and the HRM Amalgamation Project of the School of Public Administration at Dalhousie University.

- ▶ To preserve and develop vital urban centres with a wide range of services, including social, educational, commercial, cultural, governmental and recreational amenities
- ▶ To deliver services to the communities of Nova Scotia based upon their needs, taking into account the differences in population, environmental circumstances and type of community
- ▶ To achieve an equitable, effective and fiscally sound system of municipal government to deliver community services (Nova Scotia 1992)

This Task Force continued a discussion of municipal reform that had been on-going since the 1970s which began with a royal commission on education, services and provincial-municipal relationships (Nova Scotia 1974). This most recent stage, however, moved from word to deed. The Nova Scotia government passed legislation which amalgamated the communities of industrial Cape Breton (Nova Scotia 1995a). Reflecting on their accomplishment and the lack of immediate, negative political consequences, the government did the same for the Halifax region (field interviews, Nova Scotia 1995b). At the time, proponents of amalgamation argued that this effort would decrease the over-all cost of government, improve the quality and level of services, improve regional planning and strengthen economic development by reducing competition between the four municipalities which were consolidated by the legislation

The Municipal Reform Commissioner's Interim Report (on amalgamation) boldly projected efficiencies in both the delivery of services and their administration (Hayward 1993). The single-tiered Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) was created 1 April 1996 with the amalgamation of four municipalities -- the Cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, the Town of Bedford and the Municipality of the County of Halifax -- and the elimination of the Halifax Regional Authority.

The new municipality consists of almost 2,500 square miles and brings together an urban core, suburban neighbourhoods and "big box" shopping centres with small communities, villages, farm land and wilderness. It is diverse in its economy and geography. The regional economy includes the financial centre of the Atlantic region, six universities, the provincial capital, a container port, the Canadian Navy, lobster fishing and dairy farming. Its population density, if expressed as an average, would be completely misleading. Still, most areas within the region are part of a shared social and political life and economy.

The amalgamation began in a context of conflict between the provincial and municipal governments and was implemented without municipal consent through legislation by the Nova Scotia government (Nova Scotia 1995b). The conflict developed, at least in part, because the municipal political leaders did not believe the projected benefits would occur. A survey of municipal councillors conducted prior to amalgamation identified the following concerns. Councillors felt the need for additional financial analysis and information regarding taxation, service and governance options. They sought a clarification of the relationship between the simultaneous provincial initiatives of amalgamation and municipal service

exchange, including an assessment of the financial impact of downloading services (policing and roads) to the municipal level. Finally, they expressed the need for more public participation in the process (Poel 1994). As a result, they funded their own study to assess the costs and benefits of amalgamation (UMA 1995). The “UMA report” clearly challenged the benefits projected in the provincial commissioner’s report (Hayward 1993).

The four benefits predicted for amalgamation contain their own potential internal contradictions considering the potential for improving the quality and level of services and regional planning, while at the same time decreasing the over-all cost of government. Now, several years removed from the actual decision, few professional observers talk seriously about decreasing the cost of government as a reason for amalgamation. The administration and Council have produced their first balanced budget in year four after three years with deficit budgets. In 1995-1996 the projected savings were less than 3 % of the over-all cost of municipal government. A 3 % savings in municipal expenditures, by itself, hardly seems worth the enormous political and organisation change required for the amalgamation process, but, in any case, was not realised. Savings and the absence of savings are still part of the everyday popular and media discussion of the HRM amalgamation.

The preliminary conclusions¹ coming from the larger HRM amalgamation study are that decreasing the over-all cost of government was not an important factor in the amalgamation decision taken by the Nova Scotia government. Removing the dysfunctional business park competition between the original four municipalities, however, was a key factor for the decision and the outcome has been favourable. In addition, the amalgamation decision also was a response to the politically unacceptable consequences of provincial-municipal service exchange in which the former suburban and rural County of Halifax would have experienced a net negative impact of \$4.4 million, while the Cities of Halifax and Dartmouth would have experienced a combined net positive impact of over \$12 million (Vojnovic 1999; Nova Scotia 1993)

The HRM Citizen Survey: Data and Methodology

The HRM Citizen Survey was fielded in April and May, 1999 by the Halifax Regional Municipality and the HRM Amalgamation project in a cooperative effort. An initial sample of 1,500 residents was drawn from a purchased, computerized resident data base. The 752 respondents represent 58 % of the valid sample list (i.e., excluding businesses and residents for whom the address was not longer valid and who could not be located within HRM).

1. These are conclusions of the author only and have not been put to the test of the project National Advisory Team.

The 1999 questionnaire replicated most questions from a previous survey conducted by HRM staff in 1997. Both included questions on the citizen's original and current position on amalgamation, the perceived impact of amalgamation on municipal services, assessments of specific municipal services, and general access to municipal services and service response. The 1999 survey added a broader range of issues that are important to the following analysis. These included questions of governance such as citizen participation, the consequences of amalgamation and an assessment of the performance of Council and the HRM mayor in their first term of office.

Factor analysis² was used to reduce the number of individual items used in the analysis and to create interval level measures of key variables in a proposed model. A group of questions, identified empirically with factor analysis, will be used to measure citizens' views toward amalgamation as of 1999. This measure, "amalgamation perspectives," is the dependent variable used in this article. Three groups of predictor variables characterising the individual citizen, citizens' perception of the service impacts of amalgamation and citizens' assessment of performance in governance are used to explain citizens' views towards amalgamation.

Citizen Responses to Municipal Amalgamation

How did HRM citizens assess amalgamation after three years of experience with the new municipality and the performance of its political leaders? And, what factors best explain citizens' views towards amalgamation? The dependent variable and an explanatory framework are developed in the following analysis.

The 1999 HRM Citizen Survey shows that opposition to the amalgamation legislation and its outcome not only continued, but actually increased since before amalgamation took place. A total of 66 % of citizens opposed amalgamation in the 1999 survey, three years after the event took place and an increase from 42 % in 1995. Of equal interest, 39 % strongly opposed the amalgamation decision. Table 1 shows the response to an amalgamation question over a period of five years and the persistence of citizen opposition to this decision of the provincial government.

The 1999 HRM Citizen Survey included several questions which made reference to the region, regional planning, urban and rural sectors and governance, as well as directly addressing amalgamation issues. A preliminary factor analysis of these questions produced four components which are characterised as amalgamation perspectives, governance, rural space and urban/rural policy (see

2. See Appendix A for a note on the use of factor analysis in this research. It has been used both as a data reduction strategy and to create interval level measures for use in subsequent regression analysis.

Appendix A).

The first component, identified as amalgamation perspectives, is the result of the relationships between the five questions shown in Table 2. Individually,

TABLE 1 Support and Opposition to Amalgamation before and after the Decision

	1995 Pre-amalgamation Survey	1997 HRM Citizen Survey	1999 HRM Citizen Survey
Strongly oppose	--	33%	39%
Oppose	42%	26%	27%
Neither favour nor oppose	19%	20%	20%
Favour	39%	16%	11%
Strongly favour	--	5%	3%
Total Respondents	100% (1,267)	100% (1981)	100% (743)

Note: The 1995 pre-amalgamation survey only asked respondents whether they were in favour, not in favour or neither. It was conducted for a committee of the CAOs of the former municipalities in their counter-amalgamation effort (Corporate Research Group 1995).

TABLE 2 Amalgamation Perspectives: Citizen Responses to Amalgamation

Questionnaire items defining "Amalgamation Perspectives"	Favorable to amalgamation	Uncertain	Unfavorable to amalgamation
Q4b: Feelings about amalgamation now (May-June 1999)	14%	20%	66%
Q39c: The possibility of having a vote to undo the HRM amalgamation (favourable = oppose)	22%	25%	53%
Q7e: There have been no real benefits resulting from amalgamation (favourable = disagree)	14%	20%	56%
Q7a: Amalgamation has helped us plan better for the region as a whole (favourable = agree)	19%	29%	52%
Q71: The HRM amalgamation is here to stay; we should put our effort into making it work (favourable = agree)	51%	21%	28%

the responses to these questions suggest that in 1999 a majority of HRM citizens remained opposed in some way to the amalgamation decision, favoured having a vote to undo amalgamation, did not think that the amalgamation had contributed to better planning for the region as a whole and did not see benefits flowing from the amalgamation decision that incorporated all these diverse social and physical regions into one municipality. But, a small majority believed it was "here to stay," and thought citizens and political leaders should "make it

work”.³



FIGURE 1 The Distribution of the Amalgamation Perspective Factor Score⁴

A number of citizens on each question were uncertain or had not developed an understanding of the issue and responded by saying they neither agreed nor disagreed with the question. These responses range from 20 to 29 % and represent an important component of the pattern.

A variable was derived from a factor solution using these five items. The linear, weighted combination of these items in the form of a factor score index defines the dependent variable in this analysis -- Amalgamation Perspectives (AP). The distribution of the AP factor score is shown below in Figure 1. It is a standardised score with a mean of zero, but is skewed negatively towards a

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3. The National Advisory Team has suggested that this was a “leading” question in that it suggests amalgamation “is here to stay” and set up the response to “making it work.” The author considers the question a plausible scenario that taps into a theme that could be reinforced by those not wanting to undo the HRM amalgamation.
 4. The single factor from which this factor score is derived is defined by the five Amalgamation Perspective items and explains 58% of their total variance. Negative scores represent increasingly negative or critical views of amalgamation; positive scores indicate a more favorable position overall.

critical perspective of amalgamation.

Elements of a Preliminary Model and Key Variables

There is considerable literature on citizen participation in various levels of government, political parties and interest groups. Graham and Phillips (1998) provide a recent review and analysis of citizen participation in Canadian local government. Much of the focus is on the structures and processes for public consultation, ways of encouraging public participation and participation in its organised and even “professionalised” forms. Where municipal consolidation has occurred in Canada, researchers have focused on the legal, institutional and organizational arrangements of these changes and less systematically on how citizens as individuals have participated in or viewed these changes. (e.g., Higgins 1986; Lightbody 1978; O’Brien 1993; Plunkett 1973; Sancton 1993, 1996; Skaburskis 1992; Tindal 1996; Vojnovic 1997). In this research we are considering the impact of individual qualities on a policy variable -- citizens’ amalgamation perspective.

Three groups of variables constitute a framework for explaining the Amalgamation Perspectives variable (see Appendix B). This framework includes:

- ▶ The individual citizen: political participation, values of and attachment to community, education, income, gender, home ownership, length of residence, age, participation in the workforce, place of residence
- ▶ Service impacts: the impact of amalgamation on services viewed from the vantage point of citizen as customer, and
- ▶ Performance in Governance: governance and public policy viewed from the vantage point of the citizen as citizen.

The Individual Citizen

Individual citizen characteristics can be viewed as a basis for opinions concerning amalgamation and its consequences for representation, policy or community -- without necessarily indicating the direction of those opinions. These attributes include age as a surrogate of life experience, education and income, as well as variables that measure some form of attachment to community such as length of residence and views concerning HRM as a place to live, work and raise children.

In addition to these measures of citizen characteristics, citizens differ considerably in the extent to which they pay attention to public affairs, generally, and to decision-making and developments around the governance of

HRM itself. The five questions shown in Table 3 are taken from a series of participation questions and define a single component, Active Participation, which is a factor score index used in the analysis.

TABLE 3 Patterns in Attention to and Participation in the HRM Political Community

Active participation items	% Active (yes)
Called or talked in person with your HRM councilor	15%
Attention paid to work and decisions of HRM Council (% "a lot")	13%
Called HRM offices with a question, comment or complaint about municipal services	25%
Watched a . . . Regional Council meeting on the community cable TV channel	41%
Attended a Community Council meeting in your area	7%

TABLE 4 The Impact of Amalgamation on Municipal Service Delivery (percentages)

Service area	Worse	Stayed same	Better	Don't have
Parks and playgrounds	23	67	4	6
Library services	12	73	10	6
Recreation programs	23	68	4	5
Metro transit services	18	62	7	13
Street & road paving and repair	49	45	6	< 1
Snow plowing of roads	46	48	5	< 1
Fire services	6	90	4	< 1
Police services	15	78	6	1
Refuse, recycling, organic collection	21	32	47	< 1

The Impact of Amalgamation Services

A principal focus of the 1999 HRM Citizen Survey was on the use of and satisfaction with municipal services. The survey included detailed questions for most municipal service areas. One question series linked the consequences of amalgamation to service delivery. Citizens were asked for each service area whether the service was worse, stayed the same or was better since amalgamation. Their responses are given in Table 4.

The assumption in our model is that citizens, as customers of municipal services, will be more supportive of the amalgamated region if they consider the services they receive as having improved or, at least, stayed the same.

A factor analysis of these questions identified three components which, in turn, have suggested their order in Table 4. IMPACT1 is based on the first four

social program areas. Here two-thirds or more of the citizens consider the service has stayed the same. Few citizens identified improvements resulting from amalgamation, but less than one-quarter in each case thought the services were worse. IMPACT2 is defined by the two transportation items and represent service areas in which almost one-half the respondents identified a worsening of services. IMPACT 3 is defined by responses to the two protective services. Most citizen saw these services as unaffected by amalgamation, except for a small

TABLE 5 Questions Defining Performance in Governance (%age)

Governance items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
Q7j: Council as a whole has worked successfully to deal with issues important to my area of HRM	10	31	43	16	1
Q7l: The HRM Councillors have tried their best to control the level of municipal expenditures	12	28	37	21	2
Q7k: Considering the services I receive and the property taxes I pay, I am getting good value from HRM	20	36	30	12	2
Q7d: The Mayor is providing strong leadership for the whole HRM region	17	27	32	20	5
Q7b: Most Councillors think more about their original municipality than about HRM as a whole	2	5	29	51	14

group of critics around police services.

One service area, solid waste management (SWM: refuse, recycling, organics collection), was unique within the original factor analysis and can be seen as such within Table 4. It is the only service area in which almost one half of the citizen customers considered their municipal service had improved since amalgamation. That question, by itself, is used in the analysis below.

Performance in Governance

Performance in governance in the context of amalgamation and the need to identify with a new spatial and political community involves the articulation of a political rationale and sense of community that encourages the integration of the communities of interest within the new geographic boundaries. The Governance measure (see Appendix A) focuses on the performance of the HRM Council and Mayor in dealing with issues important to the citizen's region, controlling expenditures, producing "good value" for tax dollar and providing leadership for the whole region.

Table 5 shows the responses to these four questions. The citizens'

assessment of performance in governance shown in these questions is not very favourable. In addition, a high percentage of citizens neither agreed nor disagreed, that is, were uncertain about the performance of the HRM Council as a whole, their specific councillor and the HRM mayor. From 29 to 43 % responded with the “neither” option.⁵ The most common alternative to uncertainty was criticism of the work and focus of both Council and the Mayor. In the factor score derived from these items, a positive score represents a favourable assessment of HRM governance; a negative score represents a critical assessment.

A Model for Amalgamation Perspectives

A step-wise regression analysis is used here to explore the relative potential of the variables identified in the three elements of the proposed framework: characteristics of the individual citizen, perceived impact on services and perceptions of governance. Table 6 displays all the independent variables, sorted by the variables that successfully entered this regression and those that did not. The variables that are statistically significant can be categorised in four groups: governance and policy, diversity and community, municipal service delivery and the citizen’s personal profile.

Performance in Governance and Policy (variables 1 and 4)

The most important predictor of a citizen’s perspective on amalgamation is the citizen’s assessment of HRM governance. The more critical a citizen is of the Council’s work and the leadership role of the HRM mayor, the less favourable is that citizen’s view in 1999 of the HRM amalgamation. More favourable assessments of governance are associated with more favourable assessments of the amalgamation experience. In addition, citizens’ views on urban/rural policy issues are also influential. Those who were against having the same tax rate for all the HRM regions and who called for recognizing urban/rural differences in by-laws were more critical in their view of amalgamation.

Diversity and Community (variables 2 and 5)

5. Both the researcher from the HRM staff and the author agreed that the use of a mid-point between agree and disagree was an important substantive option for the survey. It taps both the level of attention paid to municipal government generally and, more importantly here, the uncertainty citizens had regarding the performance of this particular Council.

Two questions measured respondents' views concerning the place of the most rural regions with the amalgamated municipality. One question suggested the most rural areas would be better off without the HRM municipality. The other suggested HRM would be better off without the most rural areas. Responses to these two questions were not influenced in a major way by whether respondents lived in urban or rural spaces. Most citizens agreed with these two suggestions

TABLE 6 The Entry of Variables in a Regression Predicting Amalgamation Perspectives

Order of variables entered	Variables not entered
1. Governance	1. Gender of respondent
2. Rural space within HRM	2. Home ownership: own/rent
3. Impact on SWM: refuse, re-cycling and organic	3. Halifax resident: dummy variable
4. Urban/rural policy in by-laws and taxes	4. Dartmouth resident: dummy variable
5. HRM as place to live, work, raise children	5. Halifax County resident: dummy variable
6. Length of residence, age, workforce	6. Active Participation
7. Amalgamation's impact on protective services	
8. Amalgamation's impact on streets and plowing	
9. Amalgamation's impact on social programs	
10. Respondent's socio-econo. status (educ., income)	

Note: The probability of F to enter was $\leq .05$; the probability of F to remove was $\geq .10$. This is a relatively easy threshold for entry when working with a sample of 752 cases.

and those who did also were more critical of amalgamation. Put in the positive, the minority of citizens who affirmed the social and geographic diversity of HRM was also more positive in their views of amalgamation.

Three questions asked citizens their views about HRM as a place to live, work and raise children. They were combined into one factor. Favourable responses, over-all, were associated with favourable assessments of the HRM amalgamation.

The Delivery of Municipal Service (variables 3, 7, 8 and 9)

The lead question in this area is the one question on which most citizens clearly saw improvements in the service since amalgamation. Just over 50% considered that solid waste management (SWM: refuse, re-cycling and organic collection) had improved since the creation of HRM. Citizens who identified this area as

improved were more favourable in their assessment of the HRM amalgamation.⁶ The factor analysis of the other service impact items produced the three areas of protective services (fire and police), street maintenance and plowing, and social programs (parks, playgrounds, library, recreation and transit). Again, favourable assessments of the impact of amalgamation on these service areas are associated with a favourable assessment of amalgamation.

The Citizen's Personal Profile (variables 6 and 10)

A factor defined by a citizen's length of residence, age and workforce status characterises an important personal dimension that contributed to an explanation of amalgamation perspectives. Citizen who lived in the community for a longer period of time, were older and who were not in the work force were more critical of the HRM amalgamation. Younger citizens who were in the work force and had lived in HRM regions for a shorter period of time were more supportive of amalgamation.

Variables that do not Predict Citizen Assessments of Amalgamation

The substantive content of the above four groups stands in contrast to other variables that did not contribute to this explanation of Amalgamation Perspectives. Municipalities frequently have "homeowners associations" that can be quite vocal on issues of services and especially taxation levels. Home ownership by itself, however, does not bring one into the activist category represented by membership in an organised group. Within these data home owners were not distinguished from renters in their views on amalgamation. There were also no important differences between men and women.

Discussions of amalgamation over the years have pitted, to some extent, the political leaders of the original municipalities against each other. The pre-amalgamation political debate included the need to preserve community and community often was defined in terms of the original municipalities. It is interesting that geographic place of residence does not compete with the other variables and does not contribute here to an explanation of citizens' views on amalgamation. We would draw two comments about this -- one methodological, the other substantive. First, geographic place names, while tempting explanatory variables in every day discourse, are frequently only surrogates for an array of

6. The HRM Amalgamation Project has prepared a case study that documents the decision-making in this service area. The decision-making process and its outcomes, to some extent, occurred parallel to the amalgamation process and were not entirely the result of the amalgamation.

more complicated socio-economic and cultural variables. Second, the unilateral provincial decision to amalgamate the original municipalities into HRM flew in the face of very broadly based opposition. As a result, it mattered less where you lived. Most residents in each community believed more consultation was required and opposed the decision taken by the Nova Scotia government. By 1999, support for amalgamation is only marginally stronger amongst residents of the original City of Halifax and weakest in the rural county regions. The relationship is not sufficiently strong, however, to enter our explanation here in comparison to the other variables.

Position-taking on the HRM amalgamation issue is not an elite, activist experience. The last variable shown as excluded from the regression analysis, Active Participation, demonstrates this claim. Passive observation of this policy decision was sufficient for citizens' to form an assessment of the amalgamation experience. The minority of citizens who pay a substantial amount of attention to the work of their municipal council is, on average, somewhat more critical of

TABLE 7 Regression Coefficients and Model Summary: Amalgamation Perspectives

Variables entered	Standardised Coefficients	t	Significance	Correlation coefficients		R Sq.	R Sq. Change
				Zero-order	Partial		
Governance	.384	13.199	< .001	.497	.435	.247	---
Rural space	-.373	-12.963	< .001	-.473	-.428	.384	.137
Service: SWM	.173	6.10	< .001	.267	.218	.413	.029

amalgamation, but this citizen characteristic is not important in our model.

Opting for Parsimony

The simplest model for predicting a citizen's views on amalgamation uses the first three variables entered into the step-wise regression. These three bring the model's R Square to .413. The change in R Square after the third variable is very small and all the variables shown above in Table 6 only bring the variance explained up to .480. The analysis for the three-variable model is shown in Table 7. This model places a priority on citizens' substantive assessment of the political performance of their municipal government, its socio-geographic diversity and positive service performance.

Discussion and Conclusions

The explanation of citizens' position on amalgamation lies in their assessment of external factors, not on their personal attributes. Citizens are thinking about the performance of their political leaders, the diversity of communities within HRM

and the impact of amalgamation on municipal services. There are two levels at which the outcomes of this analysis can be discussed: the theoretical and the applied.

At the theoretical level, we can reach conclusions based on the model presented above. From that analysis we can say that an assessment of amalgamation is derived from: an assessment of performance in governance, an assessment of the geographic, social and economic diversity of the HRM region, and an assessment of the impact of amalgamation on municipal services. Where that assessment is favourable, citizens have developed a favourable assessment of the HRM amalgamation experience and the reverse.

At the applied level, the point is that most citizens in 1999 did not have a favourable assessment of the HRM amalgamation decision or the performance of their Council, individual councillors or mayor, did not see the geographical, social and economic diversity of the HRM region as a strength and, with the exception of the SWM variable, did not link amalgamation in a positive way to municipal service improvements -- most considered most services to have stayed the same.

The relationships identified in the model suggest that improved performance in these three areas may, over time, neutralise citizen criticism of a municipal amalgamation that very likely will not be reversed. A common theme was identified in an early round of interviews with HRM councillors (Poel 1998). There was a consensus that several municipal elections and turnover in Council membership would be required before HRM would be led by councillors who were not previously councillors in the former municipalities or led by a mayor who was seen to provide leadership to the entire region. The early years of HRM have been noted for a degree of dysfunctional parochialism that has given citizens few substantive reasons for thinking the HRM amalgamation has been successful in ways that are meaningful to them. Just in the past year, the Council approved its first balanced budget and has been seen to deal with issues that have region wide implications. The Nova Scotia municipal elections of October 2000 will be critical to the face of HRM governance and to citizen assessments of the HRM amalgamation experience.

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*Appendix A***Factor Analysis Results****TABLE A1 Preliminary Factor Analysis for Scale Construction**

Questionnaire Items:	Component			
	Amalgamation Perspectives	Governance	Rural Spaces	Urban/rural policy
Q4b: Support/opposition to amalgamation now (1999)	-.781	-.138	.206	.150
Q39c: The possibility of having a vote to undo amalgamation	-.770	--	.244	--
Q7a: Amalgamation has helped us plan better for the region as a whole . . . . .	.765	.195	-.103	-.128
Q7l: Amalgamation is here to stay; we should make it work . . . . .	.704	.259	-.120	--
Q7e: There have been no real benefit from amalgamation	-.511	-.128	.354	--
Q7j: Council has worked hard to deal with issues important to my area . . . . .	.166	.819	-.122	-.106
Q7i: Councillors have tried to control municipal expenditures	--	.816	-.123	--
Q7k: Considering services and taxes, I am getting good value from HRM . . . . .	.405	.619	--	--
Q7d: Mayor is providing strong leadership for the whole HRM region . . . . .	.442	.480	.153	-.119
Q7m: HRM would be better off without the rural regions	-.167	--	.850	--
Q7h: The most rural districts would be better off to leave HRM	-.285	--	.818	--
Q39d: Recognizing urban/rural differences in municipality's by-laws	--	--	.121	.846
Q39a: Having the same property tax rate for all regions of HRM . . . . .	.161	--	--	-.833

Note: Factor analysis attempts to identify underlying variables or factors that explain the

pattern of correlations within a set of items -- in this case, a set of survey questions. This factor analysis using SPSS was a Principal Component Analysis with a Varimax rotation. The mean value for an item was substituted for the few cases on each item where missing values were recorded. The over-all solution conforms to the usual criteria for an acceptable outcome, except that items q7e, q7k and q7d have a higher secondary loading on another factor. Loadings $\leq .10$ are not shown. The cumulative percent of variance explained with these four factors is 65 %. The factor score indices used in the analysis were derived from a factor solution containing only the elements shown in each respective component.

TABLE A2 Amalgamation's impact (better, same, worse) on municipal services

HRM Service Areas	Component		
	Social Programs	Transportation	Protective Services
Parks and playgrounds	.758	.115	--
Library services	.721	--	--
Recreation programs	.709	--	.100
Metro transit services	.552	--	--
Street paving and repair	.107	.824	--
Snow plowing	0	.823	--
Fire services	--	--	.839
Police services	.117	.133	.790

Appendix B

Variables Used in Regression Model for Amalgamation Perspectives

- 1) The individual citizen: participation, values and attachment to community
 - ▶ ACTIVE PARTICIPATION: Attention to/participation in HRM political life -- a factor score with positive score representing higher participation and attention levels
 - ▶ SES: Education: highest level of education completed and Income: total family income before taxes
 - ▶ OLDER: Length of residence, age and workforce participation -- a factor score with high values associated with longer length of residence, higher age and not participating in the workforce)
 - ▶ PLACE: Opinion of HRM as a place to live, work and raise children -- a factor score with positive values representing the "good" end of the continuum
 - ▶ Place of residence (Halifax, Dartmouth, former Halifax County region as dummy variables)
 - ▶ RURAL SPACE: a factor score representing the individual's assessment of the value of the very rural areas within the new municipality -- higher scores associated with view that the rural areas and HRM both would be better off without each other (component 3 in Appendix A)

2) Amalgamation's impact on services -- the citizen as customer

- ▶ IMPACT1: social programs -- parks and playgrounds, library services, recreation and transit with response that services have gotten worse, stayed about the same or gotten better since amalgamation, a factor score with positive values representing the have "gotten better" end of the continuum)
- ▶ IMPACT 2: transportation -- street paving and repair and snowplowing
- ▶ IMPACT 3: protective services -- fire and police services
- ▶ SWM: Amalgamation's impact on refuse, recycling, organic collections -- single variable

3) Governance and public policy

- ▶ GOVERNANCE -- Performance in governance. A factor score derived from questions loading as component 2 shown in Appendix A with positive values representing a favourable assessment of the HRM Council and Mayor's performance.
- ▶ URBAN/RURAL POLICY -- a factor combining views on the issues of recognizing urban/rural differences in HRM by-laws and of having the same property tax rate of all areas (urban, suburban, rural) of HRM. (component 4 in Appendix A)