Although “diversity” is identified as the principal characteristic of the contemporary family, regional diversity has thus far attracted little attention among sociologists studying the Japanese families. They tend to regard industrialization as a unilinear process. Yet, industrialization has been developed multi-linearly in Japan, making the pattern of industrialization vary considerably from one region to another. This research focuses especially on the fact that traditional industrialization relying on domestic labor force has developed in parallel to modern industrialization based on the factory production system in Japan. In the interior area of central Japan where this pattern of industrialization has occurred, women stop working during the period of child-bearing despite the high rate of cohabitation of three generations. However, there have been few studies on the relationship between traditional industrialization and family change. Moreover, the conventional theory of family change focuses primarily on the period in which industrialization has progressed, failing to examine family change during the period of industrial stagnation and decline.

This study, therefore, examines the relationship between the rise and fall of traditional industries and family change by using the concepts of family strategy through the analysis of the case of Gifu City, which developed as the ready-made clothes production center but have been facing its dissolution since the 1990s. The following research questions were addressed:

1. The extraction of distinguishing family strategies in Gifu City.
2. The clarification of the association between family strategy and industrial change.
3. The analysis of the relationship between individual strategy and family strategy.

Two survey data of Gifu City were used for the analysis:

1) A mail questionnaire survey of child-rearing women whose first children were 2 years old. 490 out of 1,350 questionnaire sheets were returned.
2) An interview survey of 17 child-rearing women who reside with their mothers-in-law.

The following results were obtained.

1. The quantitative analysis of the relationship between the labor-force-participation of child-rearing women and intergenerational living arrangements revealed that child-rearing women are likely to live with parents-in-law and those living with parents-in-law are less likely to participate in the labor force market in the cases wherein their husbands were blue-collar workers.
2. The qualitative analysis of life histories of child-rearing women revealed that their mothers and mothers-in-law played the key role of ready-made clothes manufacturers. Many of them had been engaged in sewing at home. On the other hand, only a few child-rearing women had engaged in sewing. Analysis of role relationships between the generations revealed that in some cases daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law tend to work complementarily: Although both of them participate in the labor market soon after marriage, daughters-in-law exit upon childbirth, while mothers-in-law remain in the labor market to support their household economy. A few years following childbirth, daughters-in-law return to the labor market, at which point mothers-in-law leave it.

3. These complementary role relations typically occur between mothers-in-law who had engaged in sewing at home and daughters-in-law who do not have sufficient human capital. In these cases daughters-in-law's individual strategy to concentrate on child-rearing by living with their husband's parents is likely to be pursued as a strategy of the stem family.

4. Based on these findings, a new typology of regions on family change. During the period of rapid economic growth after World War II, stable family structures were formed in various areas: a dual-income family (corporate employment for a husband and sewing homework for a wife) in Gifu City where its economy was developed by traditional industrialization. Although the young generation has been facing difficulty in forming a family due to a lengthy recession since the 1990s, a new family strategy based on the traditional family system has been evolved in Gifu City. Three generations are living together under a stem family system, and daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law work complementarily according to the developmental stage of children in order to support the household budget.

The findings of this research demonstrate two academic contributions:

1. The proposal of a new family change theory
I constructed a theoretical framework of family change which takes into account the characteristic of industrialization in Japan. It also paved the way for viewing family change in the eras of industrialization and globalization in a continuous way by introducing the perspectives of industrial time and generations.

2. Theoretical Contributions to the Concepts of Family Strategy
It showed the effectiveness of analyzing the household division of labor during child-rearing period by examining role relations between generations. It also depicted the changing process of role relations by treating it as a dynamic process. Lastly, this research clarified structural conditions in which the individual strategy of child-rearing women can be used as the strategy of stem family.