The transition of the "family course" and the reorganization of urban spaces in non- metropolitan cities ; The case of Hirosaki city and Tsugaru region.

Ch. YAMASHITA Yusuke (Faculty of Humanities, Hirosaki University)

Mem. YAMAGUCHI Keiko (Faculty of Humanities, Hirosaki University)

[SYNOPSIS]

The purpose of this paper is to examine how the spatial structure of the contemporary city has been formed. The process of change on urban spatial structure is the process of modernization. We approach the topic through the analysis of transitions in the process of the "family course" and residential choices in the case of Hirosaki city in Aomori prefecture. We focus on the process of family procreation which extends, separates and decreases; we call this process the "family course".

The data were taken from 2 projects classified roughly as follows; Firstly, families from 5 areas in the West and Central Tsugaru regions in the periphery of Hirosaki city were investigated in 2002. The interviews were conducted on 3 levels: 1. the profile of each town or village was obtained from their officials, 2. the general picture of 5 communities selected from each of the 5 areas was given by local residents, 3. the life-history of each local resident and their extended family was investigated with a focus on education and employment history, social mobility and living place. Secondly, 17 communities in Hirosaki city were investigated in 2003. 2 methods were used: 1. gathering close to 60 books and magazines written on the local history for each community in Hirosaki city, 2. interviews with community members about the profile of their community and their life-history in each of the 17 areas.

These investigations reveal that reproduction and migration are important factors for explaining how regional society has changed so drastically over half a century in the Tsugaru region. The family has produced a new family different from the original. Some of new generations stay in the original community, though the better part of them relocate to other areas with changes in education, transportation, employment and institution. The original communities decline in population, lose their traditional occupations resulting in a change in the meaning of local community.