

ABSTRACT

Making a 'home' in Australian suburbia: Case studies of Japanese female marriage migrants living in Western Sydney

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The aim of this paper is to investigate the extent to which contemporary Japanese migrants to Australia situate self in relation to the family and local society. Specifically, by looking at the increase in the number of Japanese female marriage migrants in Australia, the paper will draw attention to the ways in which these Japanese women take part in their new society in an effort to make a new 'home' in Australia. The number of Japanese migrants to Australia has displayed a steady increase recently, but it is important to realise that this increase owes a great deal to the large number of Japanese women involved in cross-national marriages with local partners. In the Greater Sydney area, the Japanese population has traditionally been predominantly concentrated in the central and northern regions around the city, but today a Japanese population can increasingly be found in remote suburbs on the fringe of metropolitan Sydney. Importantly, in these remote suburbs Japanese female marriage migrants represent the greater part of the local Japanese population. Taking this into consideration, this paper will explore the ways in which Japanese female marriage migrants remould their selves and attempt to take part in a new society in Australian suburbia. Based on long-term fieldwork with local Japanese women living in Western Sydney, conducted between 2006 and 2009, it will describe how the women construct selves in this situation through the process of making a 'home' with their cross-national families. Emphasising the fact that suburban life is sharply divided between the public and private spheres, and that migrant women are most likely to be situated in the latter space for the sake of the family, this paper will consider both the advantages and the drawbacks of the process of moulding of gendered selves engaged in by these women.