Globalisation, Higher Education, and the Re-creation of

Japanese Femininity

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ABSTRACT

Overseas education is currently a global phenomenon. An increasing number of Japanese students cross national borders to study at higher education institutions. In this paper I argue that new images of Japanese women are one of the most visible manifestations of the growth of overseas education in contemporary Japan. I report on preliminary findings of a cross-cultural and sociological study of identity formation and femininity of Japanese female students in Australia.

First, I outline the current research project and then link the concept of globalisation to three other important themes - 'self/subjectivity', 'higher education', and 'cultural hybridity' - in order to unravel the complexity of identity formation of Japanese women studying in Australia. Next, I sketch the research methodology and process that frames this doctoral study of Japanese female students recreating their identities and femininity. I conclude with a discussion of some of the implications of globalisation related to higher education, women, and the politics of identity.

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Overseas education is one of the conspicuous features of globalisation. Professionally ambitious Japanese women are entering the space of 'globalisation' to cross national boundaries through means such as study overseas. A significant number of Japanese women come to Australia to pursue their studies at higher education institutions every year. I see the new images of Japanese women as one of the most visible manifestations of the growth of overseas education in contemporary Japan. In general, the incentive to engage in globalisation in higher education is 'commercialism' and enthusiastic recruitment activities by education institutions in host countries (Habu, 2000, p.44). Another major impetus for increased Japanese movement overseas is the appreciation of the value of the yen. However, there are more important underlying reasons for those women studying abroad. These are related to the nature of Japanese society and its economic, cultural, and social system that set out very different social roles for men and women.

Studies of Japanese female overseas students conducted by Goldsmith and Shawcross (1985), Matsui (1991), Andressen and Kumagai (1996), and Habu (2000) find that women who go overseas to study as a consequence of globalisation tend not to be strongly motivated by work-related objectives and their associated financial rewards. They conclude that Japanese women cross national borders in pursuit of greater freedom and self-development, to relax, to escape from social pressures and to look for an alternative way of living that can free women from the constraints of life in Japan. Lacking such fulfilment in Japan these women may turn to higher education abroad. Habu (2000) calls them 'post-materialist'. There is, however, a lack of comparable data and reports to support analysis of the issue of post-materialistic Japanese female overseas students. The assumption that these women have a relative lack of interest in career related benefits is a central issue that I examine in my doctoral research. I investigate the relationship between social expectations and women's perceptions about work, family, career and education.

The experiences of Japanese women studying in Australia can be analysed in the context of the multidimensionality of globalisation and the "plurality of globalisations" (Therborn, 2000). There are many ways in which we come to understand globalisation just as there are many ways in which we understand modernities (Stivens, 1994). At the macro level, the movement of students signals not only Japan's increasing international role and its dependency on global trade, but also a shift in the values of Japanese society itself. At the micro level, the globalisation of higher education means that increasing numbers of students are studying abroad and must negotiate new social and cultural environments. A great number of studies have been conducted both empirically and theoretically to reveal the characteristics of globalisation and its impacts on economy, politics, culture and education, however, astonishingly little attention has been paid to gender relations and identity issues in contemporary Japan. I seek to provide briefly one snapshot of what has become a somewhat totalised concept of globalisation: "the mother of all metanarratives" (Luke and Luke, 2000, p.278). My snapshot is through the lens of a woman's point of view.

**Overseas Education as a Global Phenomenon**

Overseas education is currently a global phenomenon. According to UNESCO (1996), approximately 1.5 million international students were enrolled in higher education outside their countries of origin in 1996. The trend in overseas students classified by country of origin highlights the rapid growth of Asia as a source of international students who have a strong preference for an overseas education. According to various statistical sources provided by UNESCO, between 1977 and 1993, China moved from fourth to first place as a source of international students, Japan from thirteenth to second. In 1977, 12,874 Japanese
students crossed the national borders to study and the number of those students in 1997 increased to 64,284, and was forecast at 109,308 for 2000.

The United States, OECD Europe, Australia and Canada are the net exporters of higher education (Jolley, 1997). For example, the statistical data released by IDP Education Australia (2000) showed that 46,406 Japanese full-time students enrolled in 1998-1999 in university degree levels were studying in the U.S.A.; 5,558 in the United Kingdom; 1,414 in Canada; and 760 in New Zealand. The relatively high number of Japanese students in American higher education must be viewed in the context of its historical relationship with Japan. The U.S.A. has extensive educational links with Japan that date back to the occupation era when it established scholarship programs.

In Australia in the 1980s, the recruitment of international students underwent a fundamental review. Australia's policy towards international students, like that of Britain, was influenced by once strong ties within the Commonwealth. In Australia and the U.K., a higher education policy that was strongly related to post-colonialism has given way to one of global competition. The most important shift in this regard is the move from providing education - especially higher education - as part of an 'overseas aid program', to a view of education as an 'export commodity' (Andressen and Kumagai, 1996, p.34). This shift has coincided with the changing domestic concept of higher education from an elite oriented to a mass based system resulting in the construction of a mass market and valuing of overseas students (Rhoades and Smart, 1996, p.126). This means that educational services are marketed abroad, and consequently, Australia turned towards the Asia-Pacific which was regarded as a region of economic dynamism (Habu, 2000) in 1980's.

Australian educational institutions are increasingly looking for new sources of students. Australia's share in Japan's overseas student market has been small, however, Japan is currently seen as one of these new markets in part because of the increased global competition for students from the traditional source countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore. Subsequently, the number of Japanese students coming to Australia has increased significantly over recent years, from 675 Japanese enrolled in higher degree levels in Australian universities in 1993 to 1,627 in 1999. More interestingly, the number of Japanese female students (968) in Australia far exceeded that of males (659). The number of Japanese students studying in Australia therefore has a clear cut gender bias. This is an unparalleled phenomenon in the Asian region (DEETYA, 2000), except for Taiwan, Macau and Mongolia where women outnumber men in overseas education enrolment.

How should this phenomenon be interpreted? One possibility is that increased and diverse exposure to and experience of other cultures may influence cultural change such as the transformation of constructs of women at home. This is the line of argument I pursue in this study. I want to draw attention to the new image of Japanese women as one of the visible manifestations of the growth of overseas education in contemporary Japan. Thus I would argue that the recent trend of globalisation has strong impacts on social and cultural issues related to overseas education which, in turn, has consequences for women.

Research Questions

Therefore, my study started with two research questions:

i) To what extent are the Japanese women's experiences of education at Australian universities as a student emancipatory or empowering?
This research question attempts to clarify and draw on the radical traditions within sociology, feminism and higher education as an approach to understanding the experiences of Japanese female students in the Australian universities. Empowering and changing women's lives have been at the heart of feminist discourse and research. Returning to education and having access to knowledge gives them greater power to take control over their lives, compete for a more professional occupation within the labour market and also bring them a positive self-image and the feeling of independence (Parr, 2000, p.41).

One of the fundamental aspects of overseas education that often prevents female students from being empowered is the difficulty of their adjustment to the new environments which are quite different from the ones in which they were immersed in their home countries. There is general consensus that overseas students face more adjustment problems in relation to universities in host countries than do their native counterparts. More specifically, a number of researchers have found that female students experience more difficulty in adjusting to life at universities abroad than do their male counterparts. Makino (1992), Miyakoshi (1997), and Ohnishi (1998) examined the cases with Japanese female students in the U.S. in this context. The bulk of literature related to the problems of students' cultural adjustments and their perceptions of psychological well-being in the new environments has been reviewed, therefore, I do not attempt to provide another summary of these issues in this paper. However, a fuller understanding of those women in between cultures cannot be accomplished without paying attention to the fact that returning to learning for both young and mature students can result in feelings of ambivalence, lack of cultural capital, lack of confidence and guilt (Parr, 2000, p.x).

This study, therefore, examines how, within these constraints, women were able to construct and change their lives in a positive way through learning at a degree level. To what extent does learning as a female student result in fulfilment, self-realisation and a changed identity? The dialectic between structure and agency (Merrill, 1999) which is discussed later in this paper becomes a crucial dimension in analysing how women's lives are both shaped by structural forces and their own actions.

In considering this first question the issue of emancipation for those Japanese female students in Australia cannot be wholly explained without looking at the influence of their identity recomposition. Therefore, my second research question is:

ii) How do the Japanese female students accommodate their changing 'selves' and craft 'selves' and represent themselves through the experiences of being between cultures as students in Australia?

Current interest in identity and diversity has particular relevance for educational researchers concerned with feminism. The framework of 'socialisation' and 'social learning theory' (Bem, 1981) lacks theoretical space for resistance and change. However, the multiple conceptual frameworks of 'hybridity theories' that are rooted in postcolonial critiques, allow me to understand the formation of identity as a continuous process. Luke and Luke (2000) make two points about identity. First, they argue that identity is not fixed. "Identity might just as easily have a will towards pastiche or multiplicity as towards stable ego-identity" (Luke and Luke, 2000, p.47). Second, they state that identity is not singular. Identity is "a work in progress, ... a dynamic process by and through which increasingly diverse and commodified texts, cultural and discourse resources are brought to bear" (Luke and Luke, 2000, p.47). Traditional theories of identity have failed to account for this complexity and continuous reformation of identity. The development of identity is a 'lifelong project' in which self-image and how a person sees her/his own life are repeatedly constructed and reconstructed according to the meanings and values existing in society. The socially constructed
categories of femininity and masculinity interact in complex ways with other categories, such as ethnicity, class and age (Brah, 1996).

**Conceptual Framework**

There is no scarcity of scholarly works on Japanese women. I hope this work helps to dismantle the intellectual edifice known as "Japanese Women". For all its unfruitfulness, the term "Japanese Women" is a powerful abstraction. It generalises a remarkable variety of people that are distinguished by variables such as class, age, marital status, occupation, educational background, geography, lifestyle, and philosophy.

This study is about a group of Japanese women whose lives are socially, economically, and culturally in transition as a consequence of studying at higher degree levels in Australian universities. In examining the two research questions discussed above, I developed a conceptual framework which consists of four different themes affecting, both directly and indirectly, re-creation of those women's 'selves'. The framework underpinning my research highlights the conflicts between tradition and change in women's roles and lives and illuminates the complex issues of identity. These four factors are: 1) globalisation, 2) 'self'/subjectivity, 3) higher education, and 4) cultural hybridity.

This is the assumption underlying this framework: The force of globalisation has pulled Japanese students to go overseas to study, work, and travel. Concurrently, a range of social factors that restrict Japanese women from being set free and recent trends for Japanese women in patterns of educational acquirement, employment, marriage, and life courses result in pushing them to pursue 'self-fulfilment' in their lives by such a means of studying abroad. Those Japanese women being pulled and pushed by two factors have their own reasons to return to education, and I assume that they gain far more from their return to education than just paper qualifications, such as feelings of autonomy and positive self-image. They also encounter new people, cultures, and customs in host countries and those experiences might bring about new images of Japanese women since people's identities are constantly recreated as they go. This is the 'push-pull' dynamics of globalisation that Robertson (1992; 1995) alludes to.

i) A Wave of Globalisation

Globalisation is typically described as increased economic and new transnational, financial and political formations arising out of the mobility of capital, labour, and information. Apparently, the concept of globalisation did not become widely used in Japan until the late 1980s (Robertson and Khondler, 1998, p.29), and its meaning since then has been centred on the idea of economic globalisation. As Waters (1995), Luke and Luke (2000), Rizvi (2000) and Robertson and Khondler (1998) argue, however, culture in the broadest sense must be conceived as a crucial aspect of globalisation. Much of the literature on globalisation has focused on the importance of the social, cultural and political implications of global processes which are said to quicken the movement of people across boundaries. One of the most interesting academic impacts of globalisation and the movement of peoples around the world, McDowell (1999) claims, has been the development of a new focus of analysis in the social sciences on travelling, on journeys and on extended periods or multiple chains of movement including studying overseas. Interconnections as consequences of globalisation mean that we have to "rethink some of our traditional foci and emphases turning to new ways of studying people who are in transit, whose identities are unfixed, destabilised and in the process of changing" (McDowell, 1999, p.206). For feminists, used to challenging fixity
and essentialist thinking, unchanging notions of what it means to be a woman, this move is long anticipated and welcome.

However, women are still invisible in most globalisation analyses and narratives which do not admit their experiences as evidence (Pettman, 1999). I would agree that a striking feature of consequences of the globalisation for women is that time-space compression reshapes women's options, holds a possibility for the dispersion of power and achieves their visibility in society (Phillip, 1998, p.38). My aim is to explore, through the lens of a woman's point of view, how globalisation is a systematically gendered process embedded in an historical context and intertwined with recent demographic trends in Japanese society. This process has a great impact on Japanese gendered society in terms of education and women's mobility.

Women's mobility has been facilitated by the view that the world is seen as a marketplace in which academic institutions compete for students as a source of revenue. Some institutions in the U.S.A., Britain, and Australia have established offshore campuses or collaborative links with institutions in other countries to encourage the flow of international students to their host countries. This is, what Appadurai (1996) calls, a "world of disjunctive global flows". One notable feature of educational globalisation is that education markets require the 'normalising' mechanisms of standardised national and international tests, programs, disciplines, degrees, structures, and requirements to facilitate individual choice and prove competitiveness. "Time-space compression" (Harvey, 1989; Keller, 2000, p.306) made possible by new media and communications technologies are triumphing over previous boundaries of space and time, creating a global culture village (Wark, 1994). In education, this has led in part to greater flexibility in curriculum, certification, and assessment with the development of more fluid pathways between national/international education sectors, the workplace, and the home in order to promote 'lifelong learning' in a range of sites focusing on 'learning how to learn,' and new modes of flexible learning.

The globalisation of higher education in Japan reflects the "massification of higher education" (Kelly, 1999, p.38; Kurimoto, 1997, p.95). Higher education, Arimoto (1997, p.205) states, aims to provide substantial learning opportunities to the whole population, regardless of their age, sex, social class, race, or nationality. Accordingly, the restructuring of higher education in Japan has selectively altered access to higher education for married women, women from lower socioeconomic groups and mature-aged students. This neoliberal version of globalisation and massification of higher education - implemented by multilateral and international organisations - widened the equal access to overseas education for both men and women in Japan - at least in theory. The market, however, as Blackmore (2000) points out, does not operate either freely or efficiently and is not value neutral. The number of Japanese students studying in Australia has a gender implication, as discussed earlier. Why do more women than men intend to study overseas?

One possible answer to this question in relation to globalisation is that in reaction to the global economy and capitalism, human capital theory has been introduced to facilitate free trade and economic growth. Consequently, the human capital-oriented education, or Schoppa's term - "catch up" education (1993, p.25) system, was rigidly established to foster the nation's subsequent economic advance. Human resource planning has resulted in testing and educational curriculum tracks designed to meet the needs of the local labour market (Beachamn and Vardaman, 1995, p.252; Joel, 1998, p.54; Marshall, 1995, p.222-223). Human capital concept accounts for the marginalisation of female labour with women's workplace participation being regarded as less important. Konno (1996) refers it as "a mechanism of women's marginalization" in Japanese workplace and explains its assumption that individual women's career orientations are fixed and larger factors outside the workplace play central roles in determining women's career.
Paradoxically this social perception makes it relatively easier for working women than men to slot out of work and slot into higher education abroad. This may be one of the features of contemporary Japanese gendered society and is accelerated by a surging wave of globalisation. However, I suspect that there are more reasons for Japanese women to choose to study abroad. This question led me to consider what pulls/pushes Japanese women to go abroad. To answer this we have to go beyond a market oriented framework of assumptions to examine a complex range of factors that encourage women to study abroad.

<Socially Constructed 'Self'>

In order to examine in what circumstances Japanese women decide to study abroad, I use the concept of construction of subjectivity (Luke and Carrington, 2000). They deal with issues of 'critical change events' in individuals' life histories to identify people's everyday public life and family relations and negotiations of their selves. The idea of 'critical change events' in each Japanese woman's life is very useful for me to identify what makes her decide to go overseas and why she might break with normative tradition and expectations. Although postmodern conditions and aspects of globalisation are changing social relationships and shifting power relationships in the contemporary Japanese society, going overseas to study is still a big step outside normative expectations for both young and mature women.

Japanese women's narratives about critical change events enable us to tackle the dichotomies of 'subjectivity/society' and 'individuals/institutions' theoretically by demonstrating how subjectivity is intimately linked to social forms. McVeigh (1996, p.216-7) considers socialisation as 'a process that manufactures what may be called "mental tools," "psychological techniques," or "cognitive equipment." These "mental tools" have a micro and macro dimension, that is, they may be viewed as either the thinking tools of individuals, or as strategies assembled by and for sociopolitical forces. I seek to describe how one set of Japanese population is fitted with a particular type of 'tool' called gender. Gender identity, whether male or female, is more than just a sociopolitical construct or a form of subjectivity; it is a tool, built through bodily management and experiences and used for sociopolitical and economic ends. In order to understand how the socio-psychological tools of gender are manufactured in Japanese society, we must consider normative principles in respect of schooling, state, economic structures, and labour market. In this study, I examine how Japanese women's narratives articulate socialising forces that produce gendered identities and how these forces can be interrelated to the motivations for them to study abroad.

<Education and Identity>

The main higher education track for female students in Japan is still two-year junior college rather than four-year university degrees and female enrolment at four-year universities is lower than that in any Western industrialised nation (Fujin Kyoiku Kenkyu Kai, 1991; Matsui, 1996; Okano and Tsuchiya, 1999). This trend is particularly important when we consider the close relationship between education and social mobility. According to Kempner and Makino (1996), Japanese education still follows functional and modernist strategies where students are educated to be competent citizens and trained to enhance economic productivity. Such a modernist premise of education reinforces the social norm that a university degree is necessary for most upper level jobs while junior colleges function as a kind of finishing school for women before they enter the workforce. The educational system for women in Japan must be seen in a rather different light than the one in the West. Generally, while some women go to university to earn qualifications to compete with men in the workforce, many use their degrees to enhance their marriage opportunities (Saso, 1990, p.35).
On the other hand, increasing numbers of female students have been enrolled in recent years at postgraduate degree levels as well as four-year degree levels in Japan. In 1985, for example, just 13.2 percent of the female students were enrolled in graduate school programs in Japan. By 1995, the proportion had risen to 21.5 percent (Jassey, 1998, p.93). Dissemination of 'lifelong learning' encouraged by a wave of globalisation and recent educational policy change towards 'internationalisation of higher education' in Japan, are part of the reasons. What does higher education mean to Japanese women in Australia? I am drawing on two sociological theories - macro / structural theory, and micro/action theory. Macro/structural theory - in particular the work of Marxist feminist - provides a framework for analysing to what extent higher education offers a means of emancipation from gender and class oppression. Micro/action theory, such as the work of Goffman (1983) and Becker (1964, 1967), is valuable in looking at how women's identities changed as a result of being socialised into a student career and academic culture. In action theory the individual plays a central role in shaping her/his behaviour and consciousness. People socially construct their own reality, which implies that they have agency and control over the way in which their identities have been and continue to be defined (Parr, 2000, p.41). Subjectivity is central to understanding social reality if actors define their own situation (Merrill, 1999). Sociologists tend to be locked into either a structuralist or social action paradigm. But I argue that people do not live their daily lives in either a macro or micro world; the two are intertwined. I attempt to unify the two theoretical paradigms that are often contradictory. I will examine how women in this study consciously try to change their lives by becoming more educated abroad despite being constrained by family lives and traditional notions of gender.

<Cultural Hybridity and Changing 'Self'>

This brings us to recent arguments about 'translocal' identities from postcolonial literatures in particular. The key concepts used to refer to translocal culture and identities are hybridity, diasporic identity and cultural translation (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In the postmodern imaginary, as Werbner (1997) suggests, hybridity invades whole areas of sociological discourse, changing long-established classes and categories. Papastegiadis (1997) also agrees by suggesting that one of the achievements of poststructuralist theory has been to liberate the subject from notions of fixity and purity of origin. Hybridity or diaspora experience, as used by cultural theorists, means that identities and cultural forms are a product of intermingling and fusion, a product of movement. The term 'border crossing', 'between-ness' or 'third space' are also frequently used to imply the same concept. The concept of living in the margins or betweenness does not mean marginality but rather the 'transcendence of identities' (McDowell, 1999, p.212).

Before tackling these issues of changing identity, it is imperative to consider at least two major aspects of 'self' featuring 'Japaneseness'. They are: (i) the Japanese concept of self and (ii) the interconnectedness of national identity and femininity. The first aspect has to deal with facets of Japanese culture that highlight the affinities between acting and being oneself, that is, "performed self" and "expressed self" (McVeigh, 1996). My contention is that socio-politically constructed situations socialise people to have these two facets of self. Moreover, these versions of self are not merely generated by the momentary situations: individuals, as active agents and intentional beings, also manage the situation, thereby establishing a complex, emergent, mutually defining system of self and situation, individual and society. It must be stressed that the difference between expressed and performed self is a matter of degree. There is no essential "true, inner self" versus a "faked, public persona" (McVeigh, 1996, p.42). The point is that Japanese socio-political relations embedded in status and social organisations shape these two versions of self. The question is to what extent new environments and living experiences alter a socially rooted 'set of self" ("performed self" and "expressed self"), in other words, originally formed styles of self-representations.
In investigating changing self-representations of Japanese female students in this study, it is crucial to conduct a close examination of two major ideological themes - 'femininity/gender role perception' and 'ethnicity/being Japanese'. At first glance, femininity and Japanese-ness may seem unrelated. However, I would argue that there is a complex and subtle relation between these themes through the promotion of 'internationalism'. Internationalism is part of a complex Japanese nationalising discourse that compares and contrasts 'self' with 'Other' (Ehara, 1992; Hashimoto, 2000; Sugimono, 1989; Yoshino, 1992). Ironically this reinforces what it means to be Japanese; in other words, distinguishing self from other, insider from outsider, "we" from "they", and Japanese and non-Japanese (Masden, 1997, p.57; McVeigh, 1996, p.66). The logic that connects national identity and gender means that "if one is born a female Japanese, then one should not only act Japanese but should also be feminine because one is born Japanese" (McVeigh, 1996. P.83). Indeed, Japanese-ness and feminine behaviour mutually construct and reinforce one another. In the line of this argument, I attempt to search for the new ways of being Japanese, that is, the possibilities of creating new femininity for/by Japanese women.

These four factors discussed in this section intertwine in a complex way. Unravelling this complexity and linking them effectively through the lens of theories I have proposed can reveal the complexity of culture, society and 'self' in the making of socialisation of Japanese women.

Methodology and Analysis of Data

Research on overseas students is often shaped by researchers' commitments to one research paradigm which tends to insist on a singular theoretical framework and methodology. However, I argue that such an approach falls into reductionism and constrains the research process in ways that inhabit the richness and flexibility of living research (Smith, 1993). This type of research has blinded us from seeing the effects on identities of overseas Japanese female students and socio-economically embedded factors that allow them to choose to go overseas to study. This present work draws on the philosophical traditions of sociology, feminist standpoint theory, postmodernism, and postcolonialism in an attempt to make an epistemological break from the influence of earlier positivist thinking, and to reveal the contested notions of multiple subjectivities of Japanese women studying for higher degrees in Australian universities.

Approximately 20-25 Japanese female students currently enrolled in various postgraduate courses at three universities in Australia are to be recruited. Some will be recruited via my own social network, as I am also a student at The University of Queensland. Others will be collected from this initial cohort in a networking format ("snowball" sampling). Participants will receive a "Questionnaire" that seeks basic demographic information on their personal background such as education, family and employment and they are also asked to volunteer to participate in interviews. Sociological 'multiple-case approach' enables participants to address their social, economic and cultural background, gender socialisation, and the ongoing identity revision which I hypothesise occurs when living overseas, is used for this study. This work can be accomplished through the process of 'reflective conversation' advocated as a model of educational inquiry and research. This conversational semi-structured individual interview method is combined with focus groups and my personal reflective journalling. The project involves maintaining 3-4 focus groups for approximately one year, supplemented by individual interviews to reduce the possibility of suppression of individual expression through group culture. The use of a semi-structured, open-ended aide-memoir has been designed for the group and individual interviews to explore the meaning and context of the narratives used. The group format is chosen to encourage respondents'
participation. Group membership may be self-selected and, once established, groups may be closed to additional members to maintain feelings of trust. Participants share four obvious identifiers: 'international university student', 'female', 'Japanese' and 'age' between 18 and 39 (this is classified into several categories, such as college-age groups and more mature groups). Additional socio-demographic differences including number of siblings, social class, work experience, place of birth etc. are also included. The narratives produced are coded for those differences.

This project consists of two consecutive phases. The first phase is a 'pilot study' which involved several interviews with four participants. This pilot study enabled me to trial my questions, the interview process and elicit insights related to my research questions from participants. Data from the pilot study were used to distil, extend, and refine the research process. In Phase 2, another 15-20 participants will be interviewed individually approximately three times each. The interviews will be interspersed with group interviews approximately three times per group. This process will take one year. Interview transcripts will be returned to participants for validity and member checking.

All demographic information derived from the Questionnaire will be transferred into a small data matrix. Interviews will be transcribed and coded manually to produce the qualitative data. Data will be coded according to my operant conceptual categories and emergent themes. Both Questionnaire data and interview narratives will be analysed and interpreted to obtain new understandings of contemporary Japanese women. Qualitative data also include visual images and my reflective journal. Visual images (e.g. representations of Japanese women, "international students", etc.) will be analysed semiotically. Issues that arise from my journal are analysed thematically using discourse analysis. Finally, reflections on the effects of such experiences of participating in higher education overseas, constructions of forms of 'new gender', and how they might impact on Japanese society, will be attempted.

My goal as a researcher is to access women's different experiences and develop interpretations of them. It is significant to trace and analyse the complex and dynamic meaning making processes articulated by participants; however, it is equally important to theorise the political context of their experiences and identities. I want to explore to what extent higher education facilitates participants' emancipation, and how they accommodate their changing 'selves', craft 'selves' and represent themselves as students in Australian universities. In attempting to enlarge the boundaries of what counts as theoretical, I attempt to build on feminist scholarship that expands our definitions of what counts as political. To develop theory in this regard, I want to refer to "evocative ethnography" used by Kondo (1990). Experience, and the specificity of my experience as a researcher and a researched - 'a particular human being who encounters particular others at a particular historical moment and has particular stakes in that interaction - is not opposed to theory; it enacts and embodies theory' (Kondo, 1990, p.24). Locating myself in the research both as a researcher and a researched (since I too am a Japanese female postgraduate student at an Australian university), allows me to participate in participants' everyday lives, and in turn, their experiences construct my life in Australia.

**Japanese Women - Where to Go from Here**

Globalisation means many things and has many unintended consequences. I have argued here that one aspect of globalisation has subtly transformed traditional cultural expectations of Japanese women. However, domestic societal constraints mean that many women are still unable to realise their aspirations in Japan. Japanese women's motivations to go overseas to study are encouraged by several forces of globalisation, including economic,
cultural, domestic and intellectual factors; more precisely, a complex interaction of all of these. In part, this accounts for why a great number of Japanese women choose to study abroad.

The manifestations of globalisation discussed in this study are regarded as a historical process. At a deeper level, there is demonstrable change on a global level 3/4 economically, politically, and culturally 3/4 that will fundamentally alter the terrain of public and private life (Morris-Suzuki, 1998, p.176), and which is of a paramount political concern to all feminists. If the historical development of capitalist economies has always had profound implications for cultures, identities and ways of life, as Moley and Robins (1995, p.111) claim, then the economic globalisation is now related to a wave of cultural transformation and a process of cultural globalisation. Today, in other words, we must face the responsibilities of rapid "cultural translation" (Bhabha, 1989). This is the "dynamics of global cultural systems" (Appadurai, 1996) driven by the relationships among flows of people, technologies, capital, information, and ideology.

This investigation of globalisation is really only a first step in answering the important question of how overseas education will become a force that helps reshape the identities of Japanese women, their cultural tastes, and professional aspirations, but in ways that are neither uniform nor predictable (Rizvi, 2000, p.221). These complex processes of globalisation are not simple reproductions of Western cultures. As Luke and Luke (2000, p.283) argue, these processes go through "a hybridization and reappropriation of Western cultures", and "long-standing incorporations and appropriations of other Asian and regional cultures".

Furthermore, a fuller understanding of how cultural globalisation allows women to express a multiplicity of female roles, goals and lifestyles, can be found from the development of a new focus of analysis in the social sciences on travelling, on journeys and on extended periods or multiple chains of movement (McDowell, 1999). It is the analysis of flux and fluidity, the ways of becoming rather than being a woman and the making and remaking of identities. McDowell (1999, p.206) notes that it is an exciting opportunity to make visible the exceptional and to reveal the importance of women who 'broke the rules' and stepped out of place. Whatever grounds 3/4 'cultural reasons' or 'academic reasons', 3/4 Japanese women are manipulating the age of marriage and fertility. By managing the personal income and rearranging their life courses, they expand their possibilities to choose what they want their lives to be. In my estimation, those women who go abroad to study are potential catalysts for changes to the existing gendered society in Japan.

However, there is one important aspect of globalisation on which we may speculate 3/4 the downside of effects of globalisation. If Japanese female students in Australia are, as Habu (2000) states, "post-materialists" - they study abroad in the pursuit of cosmopolitan status, freedom, self-development, career benefits, and relaxation - then they may be disappointed with business-oriented treatments of international students provided by educational institutions. Consequently, a potential cause of friction might arise in the relationship between these 'idealistic' students and Australian academics and administrative staff. How do these negative experiences affect Japanese women's psychological well-being and the construction of their self-images? Studying overseas unquestionably does expand the horizons of many students, but it may also teach them to appreciate their own culture which can strengthen their national identity, and reinforce traditional constructs of feminine identity.

As I discussed in this paper, the experiences of Japanese women studying in Australia must be analysed in the context of the uneven development of globalisation. Overseas education and students' identity re-formation are multifaceted and complex issues. In order to map this complexity, my research investigates a group of Japanese female students in Australian
universities in an attempt to examine their new ways of becoming Japanese women, by identifying their strategies of identity formation, and their ways of crafting themselves and 'doing new femininity'.

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