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Australian Dream

In recent years a number of newspaper articles have described Australia's 'new suburbia', focusing in particular on many new housing developments characterised by 'McMansion'-style houses and a related 'affluenza'. These commentaries tend to reconfirm stubborn geopolitical binaries such as city versus suburb, high-density versus sprawl, creative production versus docile consumption, community and culture versus materialism and conservatism, and so on. The debates about the 'affluenza' of the new suburbia also intersect with wider debates about the environmental and social costs associated with escalating consumerism, with the unsustainability of traditional patterns of suburban home-ownership, and the pecuniary nature of the great Australian suburban dream in general. But by simply representing consumption as pathology most of these debates not only demonstrate a surprising lack of critical imagination they also simultaneously fail to adequately register what is actually *new* about the 'new suburbia'. By tracing the historical development of Australian suburbia as a 'way of life', this paper examines changing experiences of home, suburb and nation, focusing in particular on the diversity of new suburban cultures.