

# **Putting Japanese Youth into Practice: Japanese Student Campus Practices and Sustainability**

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## **Abstract**

Practice theory has been increasingly employed to deepen understanding of how everyday life is conducted, including the question of how our daily activities might evolve in more sustainable directions (Shove and Spurling 2013; Strengers and Maller 2015). This thesis uses practice theory – specifically a modified version of the Three-Element (3E) Model of social practice as developed by Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) – to bring a new understanding of student activities on the campus of a Japanese university, and suggest how insights might contribute to the wider debate on sustainability. This is the first piece of research to use the practice theory approach to look at the daily lives of Japanese university students. Longitudinal data were gathered using various qualitative methods including intensive interviews with Japanese students, a field diary at several locations on the campus, and through the shadowing of students around the campus. The data were then analysed from a practice theory perspective using an expanded form of the 3E Model that incorporates consideration of Japanese socialisation processes (Nakane, 1970; Kumagai, 1996; Sugimoto, 2014), and various radical notions of spatiality and temporality (Massey, 2005; Southerton, 2013). This shows how collective social practices on a campus in Japan are produced, and how the establishment of a greater level of sustainability among the cohort of Japanese students might be informed. The thesis finds that practice theory offers an effective route for a greater understanding of the actions of Japanese university students especially if it incorporates expanded concepts of spatiality and collective cultural experiences.

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## **Chapter 1: Practice theory as a response to Japan's climate change issues**

Among the many things that people do in the conduct of their daily lives, turning on a tap or switching on a light are two of the more prosaic and straightforward. Until a few decades ago they were also held to be relatively benign. However, the growing understanding of the effects of everyday human actions on the earth's ecological systems, especially the quotidian activities that we engage in everyday, has turned the conduct of these activities into an arena in which the pursuit of a viable and sustainable future is taking place. Taken one by one, our daily undertakings can appear simple. However, the connections that they form as they collide, compete and mix, along with the effects that they generate as a result, are of great complexity and mirror the contemporary societies in which they occur.

The nation of Japan is one such society, yet if it is to avoid a future of instability and unpredictability as a result of growing resource scarcity and an increasing number of extreme weather events (Lever-Tracy 2011), comprehending the origins and consequences of the daily actions of its citizens has become a crucial undertaking. Using practice theory as a conceptual basis, this study is an attempt to reveal some of those origins and causes within the context of a Japanese university campus – an environment in which a significant number of Japanese youth spend several years of their lives – and to offer conclusions that can help this particular group work toward more sustainable lifestyles.

Accepting that one of the biggest threats to the pursuit of a sustainable future is climate change (Hamilton 2010: 31) then the daily practices that make up the lifestyles that we create are deeply implicated in accelerating its adverse effects (see for example, Hui 2013). This thesis is based on the proposition that a greater understanding of how to encourage those practices in sustainable directions is increasingly urgent. It provides a deeper understanding of how

some Japanese come to conduct the practices that they do. Research in the area of sustainable consumption, for example, has over recent years moved from a focus on the occasional moments of conspicuous consumption, as in the purchase of a new computer, to the routine, *inconspicuous* consumption practices that make up everyday actions, such as turning on air conditioners and buying convenience store food (Shove and Warde 2002, Warde and Southerton 2012) – what are termed ‘social practices’.

Through an analysis of the practices of students on the campus of a Japanese university, this research seeks a detailed assessment of why daily activities are performed in the way that they are and how the insights may be utilised in framing responses that can lead to more sustainable outcomes. The potential destruction that climate change poses for Japan is no less alarming than scenarios for other regions of the world in which traditional ways of life are under threat. Forms of consumption in Japan, for example, have deep connections with many aspects of culture. As the country recovered from World War II, Japanese came to define themselves through their occupations (Kondo, 1990) and the disposable income that became available meant that consumerism took a central place, not only in the construction of identity (as productive workers), but also in the many practices that constitute social relations, including the ‘gift culture’ (Clammer 1997). The argument that “for many, if not most contemporary Japanese, consumption behaviour is *the major* available form of self-expression” continues to hold true (*ibid*: 153, emphasis added). Like other developed countries, lifestyles in Japan are threatened by climate change and its consequences, yet these very lifestyles make significant contributions towards it.

Not unusually, personal circumstances provided the motivation for the thesis. I have lived and worked in Japan for almost 30 years, nearly 20 of which I have taught in institutions of higher education. The mostly Japanese students with whom I have engaged during the majority of my working life are set to bear the brunt of these changes, and a failure to radically alter lifestyle patterns will

almost certainly hasten many of the worrying trends that have been predicted. It is now largely understood that we need a far greater understanding of how we conduct our daily activities if we are to develop more informed efforts to construct societies with, at least, a level of sustainability that can halt the destabilisation of the world's ecological balance (Lorenzoni *et al.* 2006).

In this chapter, I begin by presenting a brief, three-part background to the issue of climate change as it affects Japan in order to show the necessity for understanding the environmentally damaging practices of Japanese. In the first part (1.1) I describe the country's not insignificant contribution to climate change, whilst in the second part (1.2) I look at the serious consequences of climate change for the Japanese archipelago. In the third part (1.3) I discuss some of the efforts that have been made to respond to the problem, most of which reflect the belief that sustainability can be advanced by the method of awareness-raising. Following this, I outline the reasons for choosing Japanese university students as a case study, explore the implications of what a changing climate means for them, and explain why they represent a meaningful population for study (1.4). I then move onto a brief explanation of the relevance of practice theory (1.5) and why the Three-Element (3E) Model of Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) is valuable for understanding practices. I also present reasons why, in radically re-conceptualising issues of human activity, both the theory and model have the potential to more specifically identify the measures needed to furnish practices with greater sustainability. From this, I outline the questions that directed the research (1.6) then finish up with a description of the subsequent chapters (1.7).

## **1.1 Japan and the issue of climate change**

It is almost universally accepted that evidence linking climate change to human activity is very strong. The report of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group 1, states that

[h]uman influence has been detected in warming of the atmosphere and the ocean, in changes in the global water cycle, in reductions in snow and ice, in global mean sea level rise, and in changes in some climate extremes. It is *extremely likely* that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century (IPCC 2013).

The emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs), 68% of which originate from just five countries/regions that includes Japan, is of course one aspect of this human influence (Oliver *et al.* 2013). Moreover, the nuclear accident at the Number One Reactor in Fukushima in 2011 has led the Japanese Government to drastically revise its emission-reducing goals from a planned 25% cut by 2020 from 1990 levels to a 3.1% *increase* as a result of the country being forced to import fossil fuels to make up its energy shortfall (Pielke 2013). Latest figures from the National Institute of Environment Studies show that emissions increased 6.3% in 2012 to its highest level in 20 years (NIES 2013).

It would be a mistake however to attribute Japan's failing efforts to reduce emissions solely to the disaster. While the industrial sector, as might be expected, continues to be responsible for the largest share of emissions, there has since the 1990s been a long-term, upward trend in the emissions from the commercial and residential sectors (Kiko Network 2008). Evidence suggests that, while Japan continues to create ever more energy-efficient products, through its Top Runner Program for example which requires companies to meet strict environmental criteria for new products (see Kimura 2010), it is making little progress in reducing the overall upward trend in emissions, towards which, the domestic and service sectors are contributing (Oliver *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, Japan fares poorly in other measures of sustainability. At 4.17 global hectares (gha) per capita, Japan's Ecological Footprint is 1.55 times the world average of 2.7 gha, with household consumption taking up 66 percent of the country's overall Ecological Footprint (Poblete *et al.* 2012). Whilst we should not

over-emphasise the significance of these indicators given how ecological footprinting has been questioned (see Fiala 2008; McManus and Houghton 2006), they nevertheless suggest that progress toward sustainability in Japan lags behind other countries of the world.

Prior to the Fukushima nuclear accident, nuclear power provided around 13% of the country's energy mix, and represented the only domestic power source (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2012). With almost all of Japan's nuclear reactors still offline pending safety checks and maintenance, the shortfall is made up from imported, fossil fuel sources, such as oil, coal and liquid natural gas which, before the accident, constituted 42%, 22% and 18% of energy needs respectively (*ibid*). Japan's reliance on these sources of energy has become higher than at any time since the Second World War (Oliver *et al.* 2013).

## **1.2 Climate change awareness and the predicted threats to the archipelago**

In line with many industrialised nations, Japanese perceptions of the threat of climate change and willingness to take action has fluctuated with growing scepticism and 'climate fatigue' being factors since the late 2000's (Capstick *et al.* 2015: 36). However, scepticism is much less widespread in Japan than Western Europe or the United States. Capstick *et al.* show a negative change of five percentage points in 'developed Asia' in contrast to ten percentage points in the West, and much of this downward trend is accounted for by negative attitudes in China (*ibid*: 47). A large majority of Japanese is familiar with the issue and perceives it to be serious to some degree. Four national surveys of public opinion conducted between 1997 and 2007 by the National Institute for Environmental Studies found that those regarding climate change as a "serious environmental issue" rose from under 5% to over 40% during the period (Aoyagi-Usui 2009). In addition, a GlobeScan survey in 2006 quoted in the

2007/08 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (Leiserowitz 2007), found that 75% of Japanese identified climate change as a “very serious threat”. However, subsequent research found that that number had dropped to 65% (Brechtin and Bhandari 2011). Although opinions regarding nuclear power were deeply affected by Fukushima, attitudes toward climate change remained at similar levels before and after the accident (Capstick *et al.* 2015).

A similar pattern exists amongst Japanese concerning their willingness to accept some degree of responsibility for climate change and meet its costs. It is important to bear in mind that responsibility can be perceived *inter alia*, at individual, familial, and communal levels. By viewing responsibility through the core concepts of practice theory – as outlined by Elizabeth Shove (2010) and to which I return to later in this chapter – new understandings of how these forms of responsibility impact on climate issues can be obtained. Leiserowitz (2007) found that 87% of Japanese believed that the country had a responsibility to take action against climate change, and 81% accepted that energy costs needed to be higher in order to encourage conservation. This compared to only 50% in the US and 45% in France at that time (*ibid*). However, in later polling, the number of Japanese willing to pay to address climate change had sunk to 68% (Brechtin and Bhandari 2011), although other polls do not show quite such a precipitate drop. In the 2013 Survey of Japanese National Character, conducted every five years since 1953, 85% of respondents agreed with the opinion that individuals must take an active role in order to protect the world environment even if life becomes less convenient as a result. This was the second highest percentage since the question was first asked in 1993, although down three percentage points from its peak in 2008 (Institute of Statistical Mathematics 2013). Similarly, a Japanese Cabinet Office survey in 2009 found that just over 50% of Japanese would accept “a zero waste society” even if it resulted in a lower standard of living (Japan for Sustainability 2009).



However, the central finding of its 2015 survey was the steep drop in interest amongst young people about the issue, which concerned the government to such an extent that it began renewed efforts via social media to halt the decline (Cabinet Office 2015). Given that Japanese university students are the focus of this thesis, this is a particularly significant observation, for it is possible that the daily practices of students may reflect this disengagement. Moreover, looking further into the future, it may also impact on how the generation of current students in tertiary education responds to global challenges. How will the practices that these Japanese follow today impact upon the country's ability to respond and adapt to changing conditions? A greater awareness of the environmental implications of student daily practices could help feed into sustainable solutions that may in future originate in the political and economic spheres.

Mirroring other developed nations, it is probable that the Japanese are no more than partially aware of how their lives are likely to be affected by climate change and of the consequent need to adopt more sustainable living patterns. However, the effects of climate change in Japan are likely to be considerable. According to a report compiled by the Ministry of the Environment (MoE 2009), warming in the country is expected to exceed the global average, in the range of 2.1°C to 4.0°C. The impact on human health will include increased incidences of heat stroke and heat-stress related mortality especially among elderly people while the higher temperatures are expected to widen the vectors of infectious disease-carrying insects. The urban heat island effect may see an additional temperature rise of 2°C in Kyoto and Osaka, and 3°C in Tokyo (*ibid*). Based on data collated from 1981 to 2010, this would lead to average summer temperatures of over 30°C on average in Osaka and just under 30°C in Tokyo but with regular highs of close to 40°C (Japan Meteorological Agency, 2017). In 2010 the effects of this led to the deaths of over 1,700 people as a result of heat stroke (Edahiro 2015).

Other changes already recorded show a greater variability and instability in

precipitation patterns that are likely to lead to more frequent flooding and landslides as well as water shortages and droughts (*ibid*). In addition, storm surges and stronger typhoons are expected to become both more frequent and severe, damaging infrastructure and affecting millions who may experience flooding or be forced to evacuate, especially in large cities such as Tokyo and Osaka. Furthermore, with sea level rise projected to be higher than the global average at around +0.05 to +0.10 metres, there will be an increase in the salinity of ground water and a loss of as much as 47% of the country's beaches (*ibid*). Finally, the effects on food supply will be felt nationally as the quality and quantity of rice and other agricultural crops is undermined as a result of changes in water availability and reliability, disease and pests. Global climate changes affecting the production of foodstuffs around the world will also likely have an adverse impact on Japan as the country has traditionally relied heavily on imports for more than half of its food requirements (*ibid*).

Despite these potentially serious consequences, the report states that Japan has a "high adaptive capacity" (*ibid*: 62) while the OECD have described Japan's policies for monitoring and preparing for earthquakes and flooding as being likely to have some effect in responding to climate change consequences (OECD 2009). However, the cost of the impacts could place the economy under enormous stress, with a consequent decrease in GDP between six and thirteen percent (Asian Development Bank 2017). In addition, other vulnerabilities such as the high frequency of earthquakes, the country's dependence on imported goods, and the high proportion of elderly people may undermine Japan's capacity to adapt. The report warns that

If such vulnerabilities are amplified by the impacts of climate change, it may have enormous influences and threaten...social stability and safety in Japan (MoE 2009: 62).

As a response, the report lays stress on the importance of individuals playing a

“proactive” role (*ibid*: 64) as well as placing responsibility on researchers to communicate effectively with local governments, business and civil society. However, this approach is not only inadequate but also ineffective, for efforts to coerce citizens into more sustainable lifestyles, even in a country traditionally known for according respect to its leaders, has produced no significant change. To bring about more sustainable responses therefore will require more nuanced approaches, and the example (and unexpected success) of ‘Cool Biz’ discussed in the next section, may be a pointer in the right direction.

### **1.3 Mitigation efforts and the significance of ‘Cool Biz’**

Japan’s contribution to securing international agreement aimed at reducing the adverse effects of GHGs was recognised internationally through the country’s brokering of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. However, although the Protocol collected a total of 83 signatories (UNFCCC 2014), Schreurs (2003) has argued that Japan found itself in the vanguard of international efforts to respond to climate change as a result of political and opportunistic efforts aimed at establishing a positive international image, rather than over a desire to be a leader in global environmental protection specifically. Japan had for many years been pressured by the US to take on a greater share of global responsibilities commensurate with its economic power (*ibid*), and growing concerns about the effects of worldwide environmental pollution provided the country with the chance to gain international prestige by addressing these issues (Watanabe 2011). Furthermore, the government felt that it had the necessary international credibility for such a role, having recently enacted a series of strict national pollution laws (see Broadbent 1998). Japan therefore found itself in the position of being a champion of environmental protection almost by default: a situation that has had two major consequences.

The first major consequence was that, because support for climate change

action did not form part of a paradigmatic shift (Watanabe 2011) aimed at the pursuit of a more sustainable society Japan has been unable to find the political will to implement concrete policies that would achieve positive results. Even before the events at Fukushima, the OECD posited that it was unlikely Japan would meet its Kyoto targets, stating that there was a need for “significantly more cost-effective policy instruments” and much less emphasis on pushing technological solutions (OECD 2010:121). In fact, without the options available in the Protocol allowing emission-offset programmes to be initiated in other countries, Japan would be even further behind its targets (Japan Times 2012). There are two reasons for this. First, in close cooperation with the country’s conservative bureaucracy, the central government’s conduct of environmental governance has been characterised by the ‘administrative guidance’ of business and industry (Imura and Schreurs 2005; Fujikura 2007) based on voluntary action and compromise but which has resulted only in weak, ineffective policies and piecemeal action (OECD 2010). At the same time, efforts to reduce emissions through lower energy use in the commercial and residential sector have focused on information campaigns that, with one exception – the ‘Cool Biz’ campaign, discussed below – have failed to halt rising emissions (Kiko Network 2008). Secondly, the struggle between the various antagonistic government agencies, organized as *zoku* – literally ‘tribes’ – has stalled efforts to institute emission reduction policies, particularly due to the relative weakness of the environmental lobby (Kondoh 2009).

The second major consequence of Japan’s high profile international position in support of environmental protection was to mobilise and energise efforts among several Japanese local governments and civil society. The municipalities of Tokyo, Yokohama, Kawasaki and Kyoto are all currently pledged to achieving 25% reductions, well above the national guidelines and recommendations (Japan for Sustainability 2013). These programmes have arisen partly due to frustration with the national government whose efforts in this field have been half-hearted, but also as a result of the freedom that local authorities possess,

which has enabled them to pursue their own climate mitigation efforts sometimes in collaboration with local businesses and civil society organisations (Kondoh 2003). However, some have argued that enthusiasm has noticeably waned in recent years as a result of attention shifting to other social issues (Leheny 2014).

Despite these efforts, the upward trend in emissions has not been halted. Possible reasons for this may be to do with the strategies chosen to achieve the targets. A Global Environment Information Centre report from the United Nations University in Tokyo argues that Japanese lack the specific practical knowledge to take meaningful action. The reason for this has been ascribed to “ineffective communication” on how to take action for which “strategies for GHG reduction at the personal level need to be further strengthened so as to make GHG reduction a desirable and normal behaviour in daily life” (Chun *et al.* 2008: 26). The inference is clear: if Japanese were more “effectively” informed, then progress would result. In addition, few if any beneficial effects have resulted from the country’s efforts to provide environmental education. Stimulated by the programmes instituted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), environmental education in Japan has been relatively comprehensive, requiring students to receive instruction in this area from elementary school upwards to the tertiary level, which offers programmes in education for sustainable development (ESD) (Nomura and Abe 2010). However, the top-down approach has lacked effectiveness, and some research has found that despite young Japanese possessing an awareness of environmental issues, their knowledge of specific problems and causes is sketchy (Barrett *et al.* 2005). Moreover, actions advocated by civil society organisations and supported by government are generally focused on plugging the gaps in what are perceived to be areas of information deficit (Chun *et al.* 2008). Unfortunately, the focus on placing responsibility for living more sustainably on individuals through increasing their level of knowledge is unlikely to achieve its intended aim.

It has been argued that more sustainable societies have failed to develop due to a variety of psychological and social barriers that prevent individuals from acting more in keeping with environmental sensitivity (Lorenzoni *et al.* 2006), and that therefore, the task is to remove such barriers in order that sustainable societies can be realised. However, the identification of more and more barriers is leading to a growing surfeit of responses manifested in the sporadic implementation of complex policies and the dissemination of diluted messages.

This thesis, following Shove and Walker (2008), argues that the failure to reverse the trend in research on identifying barriers is due to the conceptual basis on which the problem is interpreted. A focus on investigating collective social practices rather than barriers to individual action diverts the emphasis away from personal attitudes and perceived obstacles to action onto the factors that create and/or impact upon people's collective practices. Identifying how practices work (for example, Hitchings 2010; Strengers *et al.* 2015) can provide new and potentially more amenable strategies for change than attempts to manipulate an individual's relevant knowledge and motivation. Progress toward sustainability requires "new expectations and understandings of everyday life and different forms of consumption and practice" (Shove and Walker 2008: 471). How practice theory might realise these new interpretations through a focus on social practices as opposed to factors centred on the individual is a central concern of this thesis, and is discussed later in the chapter.

A small example from my own research to illustrate how such "new expectations and understandings" might have practical implications relates to a practice on the university campus. The university administration occasionally sends out messages asking for staff to reduce the energy consumption on campus. Japan's energy problems resulting from the nuclear accident in Fukushima are often cited as a reason, along with a reminder of the government's guidelines for power saving. The appeal engages the sympathies of Japanese for the people of Fukushima who are still suffering the consequences of the disaster, as well as

the duty and responsibility to adhere to government 'administrative guidance'. One such message drew attention to the several rooms distributed around the university in which photocopying and printing can be done and which have switches for fan blowers as well as for electric light. The message asked staff to take care not to turn on these blowers as they were an unnecessary use of energy. On several occasions subsequent to this announcement, I passed by a number of these rooms when they were unoccupied and found that blowers were often running even when the lights were off. An appeal to the environmental understandings and attitudes of staff (knowledge of Fukushima and the waste of energy involved in the use of blowers) was ineffective. The switches for both blower and light were located close together, one above the other.

A closer look at how the practice was conducted revealed that when a person went into a dark copy room they were unable to locate the light switch accurately. Sometimes the blower would be switched on first before the person found the light, and at other times, people took a blanket approach and simply switched on both at the same time (to ensure they turned on the light straightaway, presumably in order to save time). On leaving the room, users would be able to switch off the light easily but would forget to switch off the blower. For various reasons, on entering the room, people lacked the 'competence' to only turn on the light rather than the blower. The problem then could be identified as the co-location of the two switches which were close enough together to cause the blower switch to be turned on inadvertently. From here, it was possible to identify a solution in which the blower switch was covered up with thick masking tape. Fingers that encountered the tape would simply move down to find the light switch and not turn on the blower. A focus on the practice of users rather than an engagement with their social and environmental attitudes provided what might be called a practice theory solution.

A more complex example of what such "new understandings" might involve can

be seen in the campaign referred to above known as 'Cool Biz' (meaning 'cool business'). The campaign has achieved remarkable success in persuading Japanese businessmen to dispense with their conventional tie and jacket during the summer months, and is based on the simple observation that a person who wears a jacket and tie in the hot summer months will likely, at every opportunity, engage in the practice of turning any available air conditioner to a lower temperature setting. It has unexpectedly brought an estimated reduction of approximately one million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year since it began in 2005 as a result of less powerful settings on air conditioners (Chun *et al.* 2008). Interestingly, it is a success story that some have argued was brought about more by accident than design (Shove *et al.* 2012) but provides evidence that progress toward sustainable societies requires a different understanding of the activities that have contributed to the climate's stressed condition. The 'accident' is that 'Cool Biz' inadvertently shaped the conduct of a common and public-faced *social* practice rather than through a focus on the private, diverse attitudes and values of *individuals*.

In a fundamental sense *all* practices are social in that everything any individual does has social origins. What is crucial about 'Cool Biz' is that, by engaging with a core and widely shared daily practice involving well-recognised customs, it exercises significant influence through the millions of shared relationships and patterns that it encompasses. As a result, through the simple adjustment of making the act of wearing fewer clothes socially acceptable (even fashionable), it has achieved a major reduction in the use of energy and resources. The influence of 'Cool Biz' is spreading to other areas and adjacent daily practices as a result of the myriad interconnections that naturally exist and occur. A key design feature of the 'Cool Biz' shirt is its declared smartness and appropriateness even in the absence of a tie. However, the practice has spread amongst the more traditional shirt-wearing businessmen who are increasingly going tieless. Further, although the focus of 'Cool Biz' was on making higher temperature settings for air conditioners acceptable in office spaces, it has



affected practices outside the office. For example, the use of a tie and jacket has become more selective. Many businessmen whose day includes meeting regular clients and customers, now spend much of it in a 'cool Biz' mode, but carry a tie folded up in their pocket ready to put on when meeting prospective or new clients for the first time. Meetings in clients' workplaces or neutral locations like restaurants and coffee shops take place with greater frequency in this more informal style. It has also encouraged more casual forms of dress generally, impacting on areas of work outside the traditional office space.

The example of 'Cool Biz' then points to how efforts to move daily conduct in more sustainable directions can succeed if an understanding of the way practices are grounded in communal culture is employed. The Japanese 'Cool Biz' campaign may have stumbled upon an alternative to current policymaking in how it has led to changed social conventions and increased sustainability. More importantly, we can ask if and how the elements that have made 'Cool Biz' an inadvertent success can be transposed to other areas and, within the purview of this study, to the generation of students and their campus lives. For example, as information technology continues to evolve and affect practices in daily life, a 'Cool Biz' approach may be an effective tool for stimulating changes in the practices of today's generation of students. It is of course, this generation who in the manner that they conduct their daily practices will have a significant future influence on how Japan moves toward a more sustainable society, and it is to a discussion of the importance of this group that I now turn.

#### **1.4 Japanese university students as a case study**

As indicated above, the cohort of Japanese youth currently in tertiary education may be the generation onto which will fall vitally important decisions regarding the pursuit of a more sustainable society in Japan over the next four or five decades. At the same time, as members of the Japanese 'global' generation

(Sugimoto 2014), it has its own set of social issues, and therefore understanding the way young Japanese people conduct their daily lives is vital, including the collective experiences of those who populate university campuses.

The challenge for young Japanese attending university (and by extension, the country at large) is a complex one. The Paris Agreement of 2016 demonstrates that, in dealing with climate change, international cooperation is of crucial importance yet Japan remains a country still somewhat disengaged from the process (Dujarric and Takenaka 2014). It is a country in which globalisation has failed to take a meaningful hold. Although it is superficially visible in multilingual street signs and train announcements, it is absent in key areas of society, for example, in the low numbers of non-Japanese working in large corporations (Sugimoto 2014). This lack of exposure to international influences is visible also within tertiary education. Moreover, there are signs that the internationalisation of Japanese youth is retreating. Japanese students today show increasing reluctance to study abroad and their exposure to students from other nationalities is far less than the student bodies of many other countries (Dujarric and Takenaka 2014). Indeed, evidence suggests that Japan is almost alone in this downward trend, as the number of international students has increased in almost all other countries for which data are available (Madge *et al.* 2009). Despite the prospects that study overseas might present, for example, gaining valuable social/travel experience and benefitting from more extensive educational opportunities (see Brooks and Waters 2009), Dujarric and Takenaka posit that, “the next generation of the Japanese establishment will be a more insular one while the rest of the world is moving in the opposite direction” (2014: 278). In the absence of a close connection with other countries, how much will Japanese who are entering the years in which they will be most influential in society be exposed to world efforts to limit the effects of climate change? If the results and lessons from international cooperation in this area are to be less prominent, it could mean that identifying sustainable solutions for Japan might require a deeper understanding of how Japanese culture and daily customs

relate to daily practices, including the practices of students at a Japanese university campus. Students at Japanese universities are a significant section of youth in Japan and, as a group, are set to experience the adverse affects of climate change more than any other generation so far.

In Chapter 3, I look in more detail at the place of youth in Japanese society. At this point, I note that there exist various opinions regarding the potential of today's Japanese youth, and that the different experiences of this generation of Japanese students from previous generations is worthy of consideration in how their practices might impact upon the country. Some commentators, for example, Sakurai (2004), have pointed to a lack of passion among youth, in contrast to the protest movements in which the youth of the 1960s engaged. Others, including Ackermann (2004) have stated that the disengagement of youth from society is itself a form of protest arguing that they represent "beleaguered survivors, struggling to maintain their own identities against an adult world that seeks to dominate them" (Matthews and White 2004: 190). The classification provided by Sugimoto (2014: 76-85) perhaps gives a better overview of what might be expected from the current generation of students in terms of how they might conduct their daily lives. Sugimoto identified four generational types in Japan since the Second World War. The first two, the 'wartime' and 'postwar' generations were characterised as having pre-modern and modern lifestyle aspirations, experience of the traumas of war and post war recovery, and a high work ethic. The 'prosperity' generation, born from the late 1950s to the 1970s, in contrast had no war experience. They pursued a postmodern lifestyle in the 'bubble economy' yet were characterised by a low work ethic. This group was followed for the fourth 'global' generation – today's youth – born in the mid 1970s and later, including today's university students, whose school life experience, Sugimoto states, has been bureaucratised and commercialised, while prospects for employment have been marked by recession and unstable job markets (*ibid*). This group too has a low work ethic, but unlike the 'prosperity' generation, their exposure to IT has been extensive. Shove *et al.* have argued that practices are

“historically situated” (2012: 123) and that one practice rarely supplants another completely, but rather newer practices lie on top of older ones in the way of a palimpsest in which faded echoes of previous practices can still be seen, and their effects still felt. Likewise, we can conjecture that the practices of today’s ‘global’ generation of Japanese may carry echoes of previous generations through cultural traditions, socialisation, changing lifestyle aspirations, economic circumstances, and global influences.

The university student population of Japan that is part of this ‘global’ generation represents a significant portion of Japanese youth. Around half of all high-school graduates enter one of the more than 720 universities in the country with latest figures for 2015 showing that 54.6% of high school graduates enrolled in a four-year degree course at a university (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2016). The government reports that the ratio of students entering tertiary level education is predicted to rise in the long term. In 2012, this amounted to around 600,000 of the 1.2 million graduates from high school adding to a total university population of 2.9 million (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2013). This represents 40% of all 18 to 22 year olds in Japan (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2016).

A final reason for taking Japanese students as a population worthy of study has personal origins. In teaching courses on the work of Japanese NGOs, students were regularly confronted with the prospect of a world of increasing instability and danger. Often in discussions of the issues I would suggest to them that the world was no longer mine but theirs, meaning that the problems and challenges we were examining would impact their lives far more than mine. As an intergenerational concept, sustainability has a high profile in much of the students’ study, and it was a consideration of this concept that drew me towards the question, “What can be done?”

Although the highly informal dress code for students means that ‘Cool Biz’ has

little daily relevance for them, its exposure is high with 95% of Japanese aware of the on-going campaign (Ministry of Environment 2013). However, students joining the world of employment are now entering a new social environment in which acceptable forms of business attire is significantly differently from that of their predecessors. Further, Fukushima continues to keep issues of energy and resource use at the forefront of daily life. Appeals for efforts to exercise self-restraint (*gaman* – see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion) regularly make reference to the continuing crisis in requests for campus users to save power through reduced heating, cooling and lighting, suspension of kitchen hot water sources in summer, and movement-sensitive lighting on stairwells. However, despite the disaster at the Number One Nuclear Power Plant and the vulnerable situation in which Japan finds itself with regard to power sources, the country's future energy policy is in a state of confusion. There has been no serious review and the government is beset with "significant policy conflicts and... policy paralysis" (Luta and Midford 2015: 605). In the midst of this, it is unlikely that young Japanese have a clear sense of how society could be guided into a more sustainable direction. In recognising the precarious position of the country, there is, to reiterate, a pressing need to gain a deeper understanding of how practices can be made to evolve in more sustainable (or at least as a first step, less environmentally damaging) directions. Employing practice theory and the 3E Model in particular might provide us with the ability to do this.

### **1.5 Employing Practice Theory and the Three-Element (3E) Model**

A fuller discussion of the relevance and importance of practice theory and the 3E Model to this thesis is found in the following chapter, however, I will briefly describe it and place it in context here. Although practice theory has many different forms, as a result of theoretical commonalities they are generally found under the same label (Nicolini 2012). The most important of these commonalities is the centrality of human practice to any hypothesising and analysis. A single

practice can be defined as “a set of doings and sayings organized by a pool of understandings, a set of rules, and a teleoaffective structure” (Schatzki 2001: 53). To this, Reckwitz adds that practices also contain “states of emotion and motivational knowledge” (2002: 249). In a link to the 3E Model, Reckwitz posits that practices are characterised by the interrelation of various elements that together contribute to the production of a practice. The 3E Model of social practice is so called on account of the dynamic interaction between three critical elements – ‘materials’, ‘competence’ and ‘meaning’ (defined fully in Chapter 2) – that are fundamental to the making of a practice. These elements can be understood as the model’s building blocks, and like building blocks they can be combined in any number of ways to create the ‘shape’ of a practice. From this base, Shove, with her colleagues Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson were able to explore the dynamic ways in which these elements interact and reveal the workings of practices.

Efforts to promote sustainability have often focused on appealing to individuals to alter their lifestyles, usually presenting lifestyle changes as a form of liberation from the restrictions of consumerist living (Dresner 2003). It focused much on individual responsibility and was underpinned by an understanding that the route to sustainability lay in influencing attitudes and values. In a seminal paper Elizabeth Shove (2010) questioned this approach when she criticised not only the ABC (Attitude, Behaviour, Choice) theory of understanding human activity, but also the political assumptions that it supported. Shove’s contention is based on a fundamental critique of the particular understanding of how the social world works and the fact that, despite its theoretical dominance, it has failed to furnish successful policies to promote more sustainable societies (Burgess 2003). Shove argues that securing a transition to a sustainable society must involve much more than the reshaping of beliefs. It must also include a challenge to, and modification of, social rules together with shifts in how we develop routines, follow conventions and use technology in our daily lives (*ibid*: 1279).

In the narrower understanding that the ABC approach embodies, the role of government is directed (some would claim conveniently, so) to exhorting others to take action, the argument being that change in the collective condition can only be realised by the effort of every individual to modify their attitudes – defining the government role as facilitator only. However, envisioning a new way first requires us to recognise a deeper underlying problem, namely that societies have failed to make meaningful progress towards sustainability because the dominant theoretical positions that underpin policies for promoting sustainable action fail to understand how social relations are organised, and are therefore unable to change it. In the area of behavioural economics and the so-called Nudge debate, some have argued that a more subtle approach would be to create conditions that encourage instinctive rather than altruistic individual behaviour but which, as a result of carefully designed policies, interventions and ‘Choice Architecture’, would ensure a movement towards sustainability without the need for coercion (Warde 2014). Nevertheless, if an effective transition requires engagement with other aspects of daily life, then the efforts of political institutions and processes must take a more prominent position in pushing for a sustainable transition. This greater involvement can be envisaged through perceiving how social life is realised through social practices. Understanding social change (and ultimately sustainable transition) means understanding how practices surround and define us (*ibid* 1282).

In her conclusion, Shove asks how theories and policies can be taken beyond the restrictive binds of the ABC model. She suggests research should look into the “making and erosion of ‘envirogenic environments’” and how they reproduce (or undermine) progress toward sustainable daily life (2012: 1282). In addition, Shove also states that researchers should avoid investigating supposed barriers but should instead focus on other areas, for example, technology. Grounded in practice theory, this thesis is the first in an Asian context to take up Shove’s challenge and, using the 3E Model which explains the complexity of practices through the dynamic interplay of three core elements namely ‘materials’,

‘competence’ and ‘meaning’, analyses the actions of students on a Japanese university campus.<sup>1</sup> I support the argument that the premises on which practice theories are based offer a potential for creating meaningful responses to the challenge of creating sustainable societies. In defining practice theory Schatzki similarly rejects the ABC approach by arguing that ‘bodies and activities are ‘constituted’ *within* practices” (2001: 2, emphasis added). According to Schatzki, practice theory is “the prioritization of practices over individuals” (*ibid*: 11) in which the mind is not the central component of social life. Rather “the status of human beings as ‘subjects (and ‘agents’) is bound to practices” (*ibid*). Practice theory therefore offers an escape from the constraints of the ABC approach.

I argue that the 3E model is a significant contribution to the development of practice theory, for several reasons. First, whilst acknowledging the depth and complexity of the theoretical developments coming from the ‘practice turn’, a key characteristic of the model is its empirical simplicity, which, as a consequence, invites application in specific contexts for understanding practices. Second, it shows how a rigorous and consistent interrogation of practices themselves can provide new ways of interpreting daily actions and their consequences while at the same time negotiate a way around the ‘value-action gap’ (See Chapter 2). Third, in reflecting the radical move away from dominant theories of human activity that focus on the individual, the model allows investigation into more dynamic interpretations of practices that are not compressed into narrow theoretical constructs. Fourth, the model is a natural companion to the more radical thinkers in human geography, particularly Doreen Massey, whose ideas of space offer a natural extension to practice theory as well as a route to building on the 3E Model. Indeed, it has been argued that the way “one formulates the

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the nomenclature relating to practice, Hargreaves (2008) and others have used the term social practice theory (SPT) to differentiate between older theories of practices as developed by Wittgenstein or Bourdieu, for example. Others have argued that as practices are inherently social, to label practices as social is tautological. In this thesis, I use the terms ‘theories of practice’ and ‘practice theories’ to refer to contemporary forms. In discussions of older theories, explicit reference is made to the name of the theorist.



concept of space or place radically shapes one's understanding of the social world and how to effect transformation in and of it" (Callard in Hubbard and Kitchin 2011:299). Just as practice theory attempts to conceive the social world as made up of practices, similarly, Massey is focused on showing how we think about space and place has similar major implications.

In applying the 3E Model to a Japanese university campus, I bring two aspects into greater prominence. First, as implied above, using Massey as a theoretical underpinning, I expand the role of spatiality and temporality of the model in an analysis of the campus and its routine. Second, as a parallel development, I highlight some of the historical factors pertinent to Japanese university education and, as the model enables, explore, for the first time in a Japanese context, the idea that practices evolve through integrating socialisation processes that are of daily significance for practitioners. Whilst there have been some studies in English focused on student perceptions of Japanese university life (see Lee-Cunin 2004; McVeigh 2002; 2004), no studies yet exist that have analysed the practices and lives of Japanese students on campus using a practice theory approach. In addition, this thesis adds to the literature on geographies of student life. The meanings that practitioners attach to practices are partially constructed as a result of the socialisation that they have experienced. This may be of particular relevance because Japanese society is widely held to have a high degree of homogeneity (Nakane 1970, Kumagai 1996). The extent to which this is true has been challenged in recent years, but in considering socio-educational effects there is much evidence to suggest that most Japanese youth go through remarkably similar experiences, particularly from the beginning of secondary education (Park 2014). This further suggests that potential exists to bring about change in collective practices.

## 1.6 Research questions

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the campus practices of students at a Japanese university in order to gain insight into how campus life is constructed and consequently, through this knowledge, might be altered in more sustainable directions. The thesis employs an ethnographic approach for gathering data including in-depth interviews, observation and guided campus walks (“go alongs”), which are then analysed using the 3E Model. In conducting this research on a university campus, the understanding of practices in context-specific situations will be deepened. At the same time, interpretations of the data that the model provides are critiqued: does the model help unlock possibilities for the sustainability of university campuses? Furthermore, in concurring with Nicolini’s argument that practice theory is receptive to a broad range of ideas and that any particular application can be enriched by “some common elements [that] allow them to be used in conjunction” (2012: 213), I integrate new aspects of spatiality and socialisation into the 3E Model in order to widen its applicability and use.

The research poses four main questions. The first represents a central empirical objective of the thesis, while the remaining questions seek to use the data for both a wider understanding of practice theory and its application as well as for revealing implications for sustainability in the specific context. The questions are as follows:

- i) What practices do Japanese students conduct on a campus in Japan, and why do they conduct them in the way they do?
- ii) From the empirical data obtained, how does the application of a practice theory approach to a Japanese context help develop the theory?
- iii) In arguing the importance and significance of spatiality, how does this affect the conduct of practices and the understanding of practice theory?
- iv) What are the implications for sustainability in the particular context of Japanese universities?

## **1.7 Outline of chapters**

The next two chapters present a literature review and critique of practice theories including the 3E Model and offers further justification for its use in this study, and a discussion of the socialisation of young Japanese, particularly with reference to education and educational culture. Chapter 4 provides the methodology for the study, including a detailed explanation of the decision to use ethnography as a data gathering method. Details of the strategies and techniques used are included. Chapter 5 lays the groundwork for the analysis that follows by explicating the important practices that take place there. Chapter 6 is the first of four analysis chapters. This chapter introduces the prominent campus practices and dissects them using the three elements of materials, competence and meaning. By dealing with each separately as a tool for analysis, it is intended to show more clearly aspects that might otherwise be hidden. This is followed in chapter 7, by an attempt to complement the previous chapter in showing how the separate elements are, in the real world, dynamically interrelated and reveals some patterns and their consequences. Chapter 8 focuses on the socialisation and cultural processes that represent the historical evolution of the practices found on a university campus while Chapter 9, the final analysis chapter, explores the spatial and temporal influences on both elements and dynamics of practices. The final chapter, Chapter 10, discusses the implications for campus practices and wider sustainability, and takes into account factors related to tertiary education in Japan and what political considerations might be drawn.

## **Chapter 2: Applying a practice theory approach for understanding and interpreting the campus life of Japanese students**

In this first of two literature review chapters, I present the arguments for why social practice theory offers an alternative approach to cognitive, behavioural and economic theories that aim at understanding human activity. I begin by covering the literature that brings into question the efficacy of some of these established theories (2.1). I follow this in section 2.2 with a look at the challenge posed to these theories by the 'practice turn' and why it should be seen as a more viable approach for conducting research into the social world, particularly research aimed at changing the way we carry on our daily lives. Theories of practice have developed along many branches, and the relevant literature is discussed in the next section (2.3) together with how practice theories relate to understandings of the social. This section also includes a discussion on definitions of practice and theories and everyday life and habits. The final part of this section looks at the connection of practice theory with theories of consumption. Following this, in section 2.4, I offer an analysis and critique of the Three-element (3E) Model of Elizabeth Shove, Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson as presented in *The Dynamics of Social Practices* (2012, Sage Publications), which is used for the empirical analysis of the data collected for this thesis. A key argument of this thesis is that there is greater potential to exploit ideas of spatiality and temporality within practice theory and the 3E Model in particular, and the next section (2.5) seeks to explore these issues through the work of Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey and Dale Southerton. I close with a brief summary and conclusion (2.6).

### **2.1 The problems of dominant approaches to understanding human activity**

In this section, I discuss why dominant theories of how people behave have been challenged. I look at how perceived flaws, such as the central focus on the individual, are seen as fundamental, and thus why efforts to modify such theories will fail to address their failure to account for human actions. I provide an example from Japan to illustrate, and mention some of the political dimensions where established theories are used to inform policymaking. I close with a discussion of the need to re-envision social theories of behaviour, even to the necessity of a paradigm shift.

The development of social practice theories over recent years (along with other cultural theories) has been both a cause and a result of growing doubt about the efficacy of cognitive, behavioural and economic theories of explaining the way humans conduct their lives, examples of which include the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) and the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern 2000). Ajzen's theory built on the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) which posited that people "behave", that is, engage in an action (1) for what they believe the action will achieve together with the value they place on that achievement, and (2) according to their "subjective norms", that is, how they believe others would perceive their actions. The Theory of Planned Behaviour extended this by including a further indicator called 'perceived behavioural control', which sought to show how a person's belief in the level of difficulty of a particular task and the ability to conduct it successfully would impact on their intention to act (Ajzen 1991).

Stern's Value-Belief-Norm theory (2000) sought to link these dominant theories to ecological issues, especially the New Environmental Paradigm published in 1978 and later revised as the New Ecological Paradigm (See Dunlap *et al.* 2000). Using the common Likert five-scale format, the measure aimed at eliciting an individual's environmental beliefs, which were used to predict how a person might act. For example, a high score on the NEP was taken to indicate strong biospheric and altruistic values, but weak egotistical ones, which would then

affect beliefs and norms and result in certain types of behaviour. Stern qualified this by stating that “individual action may depend on the belief or value set that receives attention in a given context” (2000: 57-8) so that an egotistical frame of mind may cause someone to disagree with higher prices for esteemed but environmentally damaging goods.

In ‘Beyond the ABC’, Elizabeth Shove (2010) challenged the usefulness of these established views and contended that the classical “dominant approaches” encapsulated in the ‘attitude, behaviour, choice’ – the ABC of the title – were both inadequate and flawed (2010: 1274) as, for example, the intention to act is not an effective predictor of actual activity. Shove argued that research underpinned by economic and psychological concepts has served to exclude alternative ways of interpreting the world and as a consequence has narrowed the research options available in the search for effective responses to social issues.

One major defect identified by critics of these established approaches is the central position afforded to the individual, which often combines with an implicit support for the idea that human action is the result of a process of linear decision-making based predominantly on rational deliberations and self-interest – the so-called *homo economicus* model (Reckwitz 2002). It is a view of human nature that has been questioned by others who claim that acceptance of the model’s theoretical principles contributes to the failure of efforts by government and society to influence human actions, such as attempts to reduce smoking or to take more exercise (for example, Jackson 2005; Hargreaves 2008; 2010; 2011; Shove and Walker 2007). Nowhere more so is the failure of the *homo economicus* view visible than in the realm of environmental matters and environmental education, where, despite acquiring greater knowledge about the anthropogenic effects of particular actions together with the dissemination of diverse ways of sustainable living, the movement towards more sustainable lifestyles and societies remain largely unfulfilled (see Burgess 2003; Sugiyama

and Takeuchi 2008; Hamilton 2010).

This disconnection led to the coining of the term “value-action gap” to describe the difference between the more informed environmentally sensitive values that people, in good faith, claim to hold as a result of greater awareness, and the daily environmentally damaging actions that, notwithstanding, they continue to conduct (Blake 1999; Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). In attempting to explain this gap, social scientists posited the existence of a variety of psychological, social and institutional barriers such as scepticism, the externalisation of responsibility, pressure of social norms and lack of enabling initiatives, that prevented people from translating their intentions into actions as a result of a more informed worldview (Whitmarsh *et al.* 2011; Lorenzoni *et al.* 2007), but which, over recent years, have become bewilderingly complex. With the addition of each new variable, theoretical parsimony has been sacrificed, and this has led to a state of steadily diminishing returns (Jackson 2005).

National pro-environmental campaigns in Japan illustrate some of these points. For example, the government has relied heavily on the mass media to dispense information about pro-environmental action. However, fluctuating perception of climate change as a serious problem among Japanese challenges the linear idea of growing awareness through knowledge provision (Sampei and Aoyagi-Usui, 2009). The government’s current *Team Minus 6%* campaign – so called to reflect the country’s Kyoto Protocol commitment for reduced emissions – is an example of a campaign largely based on the information-deficit model, and a rational, cause-and-effect theoretical premise (Tan *et al.* 2008). The campaign, begun in 2005, has sought to increase opportunities for recycling, promote public transport use and make efforts to change the household acts of dressing, eating and living at both national and local levels (*Ibid*). Yet, according to a report by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF 2012), Japan’s ecological footprint “remains high – a situation that is ultimately not sustainable” (*Ibid*: 17). Of course, many factors are responsible for the country’s high ecological

footprint, not least the consequences resulting from the nuclear disaster at Fukushima in March 2011 which continues to impact the country several years after especially, with nearly all nuclear reactors still offline, Japan still needs to import replacement energy sources. However, a key contributory factor to the continuing lack of progress towards sustainable lifestyles in the country is the reliance on flawed approaches to understanding human activity that underpin policy decisions aimed at reducing energy consumption and conserving resources.

In addition, a parallel criticism has been leveled at the political purposes for which dominant theories have been enlisted to serve; namely the unrealistic expectations placed on individuals (comparatively more so than on institutions of society such as businesses and governments) to take responsibility for actions in response to issues like environmental protection and climate change. While accepting the presence of some degree of personal accountability, Hargreaves (2008) has argued that policies based on the information-deficit model seriously underplay the role that national governments and institutions should take in pushing approaches and strategies beyond those of merely seeking to influence individual and collective attitudes. Further, Hargreaves also holds that it is necessary to go beyond the analysis of barriers and consider how social (and political) actions take place in daily life in order to find the catalysts that can more successfully bring about change (2011).

Critics such as Elizabeth Shove (2012) have conjectured that the theoretical need for an explanatory concept such as the “value-action gap” is not an illustration of human nature, but a result of an error in the way we conduct research. Indeed, Tom Hargreaves has described the gap as “the central paradox of the cognitive approach” (2008: 35) and a major reason why the attempt to understand people’s daily activities (and a first step in understanding how to change those activities) needs to be envisaged in a different way. It has been suggested that pursuing such a way first requires us to recognise a deeper



underlying problem: that societies are unable to make meaningful progress towards lifestyles that are more sustainable because the dominant theoretical paradigms that underpin policies aimed at securing appropriate action fail to understand how the social world (and the individual within it) really works, and are therefore unable to change it (Shove and Walker 2007; Shove 2010; Seyfang 2013). The clear call is for researchers to adopt new theoretical alternatives in order to secure greater insight into human activities.

Some research has sought for ways to both unpick and re-define the contradictions found in the “value-action gap” in order to advance beyond the seemingly unscalable barrier against sustainable behaviour that it represents. Thaler and Sunstein (2008) for example perceive the gap in neuroscientific terms as a struggle between what they identify as the ‘impulsive’ and the ‘reflective’ systems in our brains. Their key concept – the *nudge* – is defined as an intervention to promote sustainability but which goes almost un-noticed because while environmentally beneficial it still largely corresponds with the wishes of the practitioner. Simply put, rather than attempting to resist our impulsive nature (with all the effort that this entails), *Nudge* seeks to harness human impulsiveness for sustainable ends. Strategies to achieve this involve (1) more closely connecting incentives with sustainable actions, and (2) initiating more immediate forms of feedback to allow people to make immediate adjustments to their behaviour. It has been argued that, if the concept of *Nudge* could be employed in the circumstances of collective action, then it could make a significant contribution to sustainability (Warde 2014).

A further effort to negotiate a way through the “value-action gap” dilemma is found in the work of Dale Southerton (2012) who argues that part of the problem emanates from narrow and unclear interpretations of ‘habit’ and ‘routine’. Rather than seeing these as simply characteristics of human nature (and human failings), he demonstrates how, as elements of stable practices, they are eminently observable and thereby open to explanation and analysis. As a

consequence, Southerton proposes a more rigorous conceptual framework of action that interprets these concepts as part of the “temporalities of practice [that] both configure and are conditioned by dispositions towards, and procedures and sequences of, action” (249).

In the next section I discuss the development of social practice theory and how it represents an alternative means of research on human activities. I begin by placing practice theories within socio-cultural theories generally then outline some of the perceived advantages. These include the benefits of having practice as the central focus of analysis (in contrast to the individual), the advantages that accrue from a more concrete and practical methodology, and the argument that practice theory is more synchronous with the characteristics of life as it is today.

## **2.2 The potential of social practice theories**

Several features that make practice theories a promising alternative to dominant theories can be identified. First, Reckwitz (2002: 250) argues that in the ‘practice turn’ taking practice as the central element of analysis allows the researcher to follow how “bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood”. Proponents have sought to demonstrate that a potential contribution to the understanding of human activity comes from the study of practices conducted in social situations (Shove and Pantzar 2005; Hargreaves 2008; Sahakian and Wilhite 2012). Indeed, Giddens’ contention, oft quoted by practice theorists (for example, Hargreaves 2011:82; Røpke 2009: 2491; Shove and Pantzar 2005: 3; Warde 2005: 134), that “the basic domain of study of the social sciences is social practices ordered across space and time” (*ibid*: 2), shows a recognition of the fundamental importance of practices in analyses of social life. In addition to this, Schatzki (2001: 2) argues that other “components of the *field of practices* [including] power, language,

social institutions, and historical transformation” – all represent ‘subdomains’ of practice. Schatzki goes on to state that

[t]he ‘practice approach’ can thus be demarcated as all analyses that (1) develop an account of practices, either the field of practices or some subdomain thereof (e.g. science), or (2) treat the field of practices as the place to study the nature and transformation of their subject matter (*Ibid*).

A second positive feature of practice theories is that, as Nicolini (2012) posits, the changing nature of the social phenomena with which researchers wish to engage in the modern world has made practice theories more relevant and therefore more appropriate as a research tool. For example, in the study of organisations, theories based on inflexible structural or mechanistic premises offer less explanatory power in understanding how organizations respond to the multi-faceted challenges and rapidly changing environments in which they function today. Similarly in other areas of society, practice theory is able to focus on the atomised nature of modern, complex, domestic routines and daily practices, as well as on the diverse histories that lie behind the development of quotidian practices and the observable effects of the relationship between these aspects (for example, Hitchings 2010; Southerton 2012; Røpke 2014).

A third significant advantage is that, in common with the theory of structuration (Giddens 1984), practice theories are able to navigate through the various dichotomies that have stymied established theories, particularly that of agency/structure. The key elements of structuration theory together with the importance of practical and discursive consciousness and the concept of ‘duality of structure’ are discussed below. However the point here is that by interpreting the relationship between the various elements that Giddens identifies as being responsible for construction of social systems (such as human knowledgeability of “forms of life” (*ibid*: 3) that is revealed through practices) as mutually

productive of each other, elements are not forced into reductive relationships. The concept of 'duality of structure', which emphasises a more organic connection between agency and structure, ensures that it is "neither individualist not holist" (Warde 2005:132).

Fourth, with the observation of the performances of practices serving as the starting point of analysis, a further advantage, especially in the arena where competing social theories come with high degrees of subjectivity, is the strong empirical footing upon which practice theory and its methodology rests. This can be illustrated in several ways. Firstly, practice theories reduce, to some extent, the reliance on attempts to interpret abstract notions such as the beliefs, attitudes and values of individuals, which, as Barnes notes are "invisible entities", and by implication, unknowable (2001:17). This also has the effect of neutralising the dilemma posed by the issue of the "value-action gap". Secondly, following from this, practice theory also avoids the extremely difficult task of endeavouring to identify causal links between values and actions (Crompton 2010), but can instead, as Nicolini argues (2012: 3) "foreground the importance of activity, performance, and work". Indeed, Hargreaves (2010) has argued that social science research in the form of practice theory can comfortably adopt elements of Aristotle's *phronesis*, that is, an approach characterised by a pragmatic, context-dependent and action-oriented methodology, which suits the empirical processes appropriate for practice theories. Finally, shifting research attention in this way allows a greater emphasis to be placed on the analysis of other observable aspects of social interaction within the doing of practices, and thus provide a stronger foundation for hypothesising why people do what they do.

Fifth, the placing of practices at the core allows a greater emphasis on the role of everyday objects, and the bodily actions that associate with them. Reckwitz (2002) argues that the objects with which we surround ourselves are a central factor in discursive relationships, as well as being determinants of how we

perform practices. Although not falling within the “recognizable framework of practice theor[ies]” (Nicolini 2012: 187), actor-network theory reveals the extent to which objects can be seen to impact upon social life, arguing that widely diverse ‘objects’ including non-human, organic entities such as fish, can appear actor-like when part of a relational web (Law 2009). In addition, in the case of embodiment, practice theorists argue that we can conceptualise how daily practices, through the use of objects, train the body (Reckwitz 2002) via processes of habituation (born partly from aspects of socialisation) that are fundamental to practice (Nicolini 2012). As Nicolini goes on to argue (*Ibid*: 4) the characteristics that identify young people as, say, university students, are a result of having been “inscribed in the habituated bodies of children from their tender age.” Similarly, being part of the “social order that we call a class is inscribed in the bodies of all participants, and manifests through particular bodily (and discursive) practices” (*Ibid*).

A final advantage of using practice approaches is that by virtue of challenging the dominant theories of human activity through decentralising the position of the individual, there is also, according to Shove in her critique of the ABC model (2010), an inherently political dimension to any analysis of research. Although this thesis does not deal with issues of inequality or responsibility and capability (see Walker 2013; 2015), the final discussion chapter explores some of the political implications arising from considerations of spatiality and temporality (as intimated by Massey 2005) as well as the social challenge posed by the need to promote greater sustainability both on the university campus (Sterling *et al.* 2013) and society wide (Shove and Spurling 2013).

To summarise, the literature presents several arguments for why practice theories should be regarded as having potential to provide new interpretations of human activity. First, in its emphasis on the conduct of practices, it is well placed to provide data on the central contention of cultural theories, namely, that humans conduct their lives through collective understandings of how society

functions, which are manifested in practices (Reckwitz 2002). Second, owing to their organic theoretical framework, they are able to navigate a meaningful path through some of the dilemmas found in more classical theories, particularly, as noted, agency and structure (Shove 2010). Third, understandings of the concept of practice have both widened and deepened and thus permit more critical analysis, although this has brought with it new challenges related to how we define practices (Christensen and Røpke 2005). Fourth, in the ways that methodology in practice theory application has so far been operationalized, practice theories are an appropriate vehicle for meeting the growing demand for research into aspects of sustainability in everyday life (Shove and Spurling 2014). A growing understanding of the elements that constitute practice will facilitate new ways of looking at the problem of how to promote sustainable lifestyles and, equally important, how to broaden and strengthen such ways of living. Finally, empirical use of practice theories presents an opportunity for a more sensitizing analysis of the social world as it unfolds (Hargreaves 2010; Nicolini 2012). Shove (2012) has argued that it is no less than the paradigm boundaries of *homo economicus* and *homo sociologicus* (Reckwitz 2002) that are responsible for the impoverishment of 'established' models which can no longer contribute to the further understanding of how social life is conducted.

### **2.3 Development of practice theories and their applications**

In this section I describe the historical progression of practice theories beginning with a brief mention of some early theories in order to illustrate how they inform modern theories and how I deploy them. Following this, I cover in greater detail some relevant contemporary developments, at the same time identifying the particular traditions from which Shove *et al.* (2012) derive their model. Next I comment briefly on how the social is perceived within practice theories before defining the term 'practice' and why it is not always necessary to adopt universal definitions. After considering what is meant by everyday life and habits, I look at

areas of contention before closing with a discussion on the links with consumption theories.

Practice theories have a significant historical pedigree, and while this richness has been an obvious benefit, it has also brought with it considerable complexity and often disagreement and resulted in the development of some rather esoteric forms (Reckwitz 2000). Further, theories have been connected with a diverse group of social commentators and philosophers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century such as Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Marx, and Nietzsche, as well as later figures like Bourdieu, Foucault, Garfinkel, Giddens and Schatzki. As a result, practice theories have unsurprisingly encompassed a similarly wide range of philosophies, although they could also be said to have often offered a radical challenge to mainstream intellectual thinking. Given the depth of intellectual interest, concepts related to practice have received a variety of different interpretations by researchers in other fields. In geography, for instance, Giddens' theories have had significant influence, while nonrepresentational theories of performance also owe something to social practice (Horton and Kraftl 2014). Furthermore, other fields of research, such as science and technology studies (STS), innovation studies, and theories of consumption have all contributed to expanding the scope of practice theory, adding to its hybrid development (Shove *et al.* 2012).

### **2.3.1 Early practice theories**

As Nicolini (2012) demonstrates, the appreciation of *praxis* was central to the way Marx understood the nature of human activity and the consequent calls he made for action in the political domain. Similarly for Heidegger, the nature of practice was vital for understanding how we extract meaning from the world, or rather how, he argued, we take the world for granted in the way we successfully assimilate the things of practice into our social being. The idea that many of our actions are conducted without a full awareness of what we are doing is echoed in later theories (for example, Giddens (1984) – discussed below) and is

recognised by Shove *et al.* (2012) as contributing to their work. Accepting that activities can be done unconsciously suggests the importance of Heidegger's concept of 'intelligibility' and from this, 'practical intelligibility' (Schatzki 2001: 47). This can be understood as a person who, in wishing to achieve outcome  $x$ , will conduct practice  $a$  because it makes sense to her – it is intelligible within her experience of the world – rather than practice  $b$ , which makes less sense even though it may accomplish the same result. Heidegger was later to ascribe significant importance to discursive practices, as did Wittgenstein, who also posited that the social act of following rules was an instinctive aspect of practice (*Ibid*). In addition, according to Schatzki, Wittgenstein represents the link to modern theories of social practice, for despite the fact that he did not develop a specific theory of practice, Wittgenstein recognised that “understanding and intelligibility structure not only the social realm, but also the domain of the individual mind and action” (Schatzki 1996: 12), although Schatzki downplays the elevated position that Wittgenstein accorded the role of language.

### **2.3.2 Contemporary practice theories**

Modern theories of practice owe much to the work of Giddens (1984), for a number of reasons. First, as mentioned above, Giddens' structuration theory provided a way out of intellectual paralysis by, for instance, presenting human activities as both creators and products of social structures, arguing that

...the rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction (*Ibid*: 19).

Giddens argues that agents and structures do not exist as a dualism but as a 'duality', that is, they are not “two independently given sets of phenomena” but instead have an interconnected, recursive relationship (Giddens 1984: 25). In using the term 'recursive' rather than repetitive, Giddens emphasises the presence of transformative factors in the ongoing and evolving interrelationship



between agency and structure, and of which, the production and reproduction of vast numbers of practices every day are a part. This dynamic relationship represented by the concept of 'duality' suggests the presence of processes of evolution in practices rather than merely the repetition of patterns that are more and less influenced by diverse, contextual factors, as argued by more established social theorists. For Giddens, structure "has no existence independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activity" (*ibid*: 26). Through the duality of structure, Giddens illustrates the central role that practices occupy both in constructing society and being a constituent of it. Structuration theory also links to Heidegger's argument about the taken-for-grantedness of daily practices through Giddens' concept of practical consciousness, in which people conduct activities without conscious consideration. People only contemplate what they do when something is brought into the realm of discursive consciousness (*ibid*), for example, when an object or process of routine nature, in malfunctioning, forces itself into their active consideration.

A further impetus given to the development of contemporary practice theory came with *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (Schatzki *et al.* 2001), which drew attention to the role of objects in practices, the distinction between practice as entity and practice as performance, and the importance of historical factors in understanding the history of particular practices (Shove *et al.* 2012). Andreas Reckwitz (2002) clarified some of the more abstract elements, described and organised several key components, and placed practice theories firmly in the category of 'cultural theories'. In addition, Reckwitz also illustrated how practice theory represented a significant departure from other cultural theories. He showed how putting practices at the forefront of analysis allows a re-imagining of the constitutive elements of the social. Reckwitz argued that practices (1) give direction to the actions and movements of the body; (2) represent mental constructions that supply senses of motivation, interpretation, emotion and so on; (3) utilise objects for their performance; (4) contain different

kinds of knowledge that provides the how, when and where of performance; and (5) possess structure that is acquired through the development of routines. His work has allowed a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the roles of practices in practice theory.

While Giddens, Schatzki and Reckwitz establish a direct line to contemporary practice theory and the work of Shove *et al.* (2012), it is necessary to mention, first of all, two other social theorists, Pierre Bourdieu and Etienne Wenger, who have made important arguments on the relation of practices and the social, and secondly, two empirical applications by Nicolini and Hargreaves whose studies under the practice umbrella have some interesting implications. I deal with each in turn.

The relevance of Bourdieu's work to practice theory comes from his concern about how people pursue their daily lives (Nicolini 2012). The argument that practices are influenced by socialisation processes which enable people to have, as Bourdieu described, 'a feel for the game' (Bridge 2011) has a resonance for the Japanese who place considerable importance and attention on understanding and adhering to social conventions, as evidenced in the common expression, 'reading the air' (*kuuki wo yomu*). I argue in subsequent chapters that the particular circumstances that pertain to Japanese education have a significant influence on the activities of students on campus. A second element of interest relates to Bourdieu's idea of habitus, defined as "a set of mental dispositions, bodily schemas, and know how" (Nicolini 2012: 55). Much has been written on habitus that cannot be covered here, but in regard to the subject matter of this thesis, habitus, together with symbolic capital (for instance, respect, position, age, and so on), provides a relevant perspective on how power influences the production of practices. In a Japanese university, hierarchical positions are not only vigorously, almost obsessively, maintained, but social relations are conducted with clear understandings of roles, and the degrees of dependence that different groups have on each other (a Japanese concept

called '*amae*'), which are, moreover, often accentuated by fundamental cultural understandings. This, and other culturally relevant norms, is covered in more detail in chapter 3, while I also return later in this chapter to these elements of Bourdieu's work.

Collective practices, conducted within institutions and leading to communities of practice that follow shared objectives, have been a key research theme of Etienne Wenger. Although he does not specifically employ a practice approach in the sense in which I have laid out, Wenger (1998) considers practice from several angles, such as, 'practice as learning', 'practice as locality' and 'practice as boundary'. However it is his connection of practices with meaning and identity as it relates to organisations that provide some overlap with, as well as counterpoint to, practice theory generally and this thesis, in particular. In stating that "[p]ractice is about meaning as an experience of everyday life" (ibid: 52), Wenger appreciates the centrality of meaning in practice although emphasises it at the expense of other components of practice. For Wenger, meaning is a process of dynamic and historical negotiation, which becomes the catalyst in the creation of new understandings of practices, and consequently new performances.

Negotiation of meaning is composed of (1) participation; which contributes to the formation of identity, for instance, in the manner that students are identified in several ways according to faculty, department, advisor, and so on, and, as a result, engage in practices 'appropriate' to their position, and (2) reification; which, in the institution of a Japanese university are symbols that legitimise the hierarchical positions played by the various campus users, for example, the practices that are reified in the form of assignment submissions, documents requesting absence, and certificates of acceptance on study abroad programmes, but also the positions of seniority that students occupy and of which they are highly aware. Through these forms of negotiating meaning, practitioners can become competent members of communities of practice.

Further, Wenger recognises that collective practices can be prompted in order “to meet the existing demands of the institution [and of] squaring institutional demands with the shifting reality of actual situations” (*ibid*: 46). Within a practice theory approach, meaning is inextricably linked with practice. However, identity too is similarly connected, for, in any practice, even one that is carried out reluctantly, the action ‘identifies’ with its practitioner. More specifically, in the Japanese context, I later argue that the existence of a ubiquitous dissonance between the official institutional objectives of Japanese universities and the daily campus practices that are ostensibly supposed to meet them, has a significant impact on student identity, and therefore, on their daily practices, some of which might involve symbolic acts of resistance. Wenger would interpret this resistance as a legitimisation of community membership for it represents a “dimension of identity” (*ibid*: 152). Resistance to a community no less than acceptance of it, requires a competency that imparts membership. Even disengagement requires the knowledge of what a person is disengaging *from*.

A major purpose of Nicolini’s 2012 case study on the practices involved in telemedicine was to illustrate how practice theory can be empirically applied to institutions. As well as discussing how the practices of nurses are influenced by Bourdieu’s habitus where a ‘feel for the game’ is manifested in understanding how, for example, to relate to patients on the phone, and how, through various induction processes, nurses are installed into the community of telemedicine practice, Nicolini also includes an analysis of the thread of social practice most closely connected to the Heidegger and Wittgenstein tradition, and by implication, the work of Shove and her colleagues. In this analysis, Nicolini (2012: 182) breaks telemedicine down into ‘practice-order bundles’ of overall aims that are then facilitated by suitable projects, which are in turn further divided into tasks and activities. In addition, he also discusses the teleoaffective nature of practices – their purposefulness – and how they influence the sayings and doings that represent ‘proper’ telemedicine activity. These analyses were instructive in showing how practice theory is relevant in understanding the

contemporary practices of the groups that make up a modern institutional structure.

A more narrowly executed application of practice theory in the context of an institution (in this case, a British construction company) is found in Tom Hargreaves' ethnographic study which focused on how practice theory might inform ways of promoting 'pro-environmental behaviour'. He argues that "transforming practices to make them sustainable" (2011: 83) depends on (1) breaking the links that maintain unsustainable practices, (2) considering how the diversity of practices within an institution interrelate in ways that encourage or restrain efforts to promote sustainability, and (3) focusing more on how, within the collective nature of practices, social and power relationships impinge on efforts to achieve pro-environmental change. Later work, particularly Strengers and Maller (2015), posit that a spectrum of theories, from practice theories at one end to cognitive theories at the other, would be a way of allowing behaviour-change programmes to select the most appropriate tools for achieving the task: selecting strategies that adopt gradual, incremental change in the case of practices that are highly entrenched, and choosing more radical options for practices that are receptive to modification.

### ***2.3.3 Practices and their position in the social world***

Practice theory locates the social within practices. According to Giddens (1984), practices are "the structural properties of social systems [and] are both medium and outcome" (*ibid*: 25). Schatzki similarly provides justification for identifying practice as central to an understanding of the social when he writes that

practices are not only pivotal objects of analysis... of contemporary Western society, but also the central social phenomenon by reference to which other social entities such as actions, institutions and structures are to be understood (Schatzki 1996: 11).

Further, while practices are the central unit of analysis, also contained within practices is the broader, historical background of practices. The pre-established rules that dictate acceptable and appropriate actions are the part of the practice established by historical processes that conduct of practices, as a social action, have co-produced.

To clarify these points with an analogy: the hosts and guests at a dinner party engage in a variety of collective actions that are by and large clear to the participants. For example, the hosts move between the dining and cooking areas carrying dishes of food, they introduce guests to each other, and indicate where guests are to sit at the table. Others meanwhile engage in small talk, offer help to the hosts, and by acting in amiable ways, seek to contribute to the 'success' of the party – in short a whole range of coordinated actions that make the practice. The dining room, and – to an increasingly reduced extent as we move outwards from this focal point – the kitchen, the hallway, and the building itself, represent the specific physical context, in which the people perform. This Euclidian view of the space in which the dinner party is conducted is complemented by the more unpredictable senses of social space that the participants create, as when, for example, they move out to the garden to admire the hosts' new rosebushes. Potential acts that make up the practice of a dinner party are extensive, and may be pushed into new areas, whilst at the same time historical precedents exercise a measure of restraint.

Also enclosed within practices is the specific physical context, which a practitioner occupies. Practices encompass aspects of space and time in their performance. Actions influence the spatial dimensions of a practice, and these dimensions likewise impinge on actions in a recursive and evolving relationship, but which nevertheless, remains bounded by both the real-time performance of the practice and its existence as an entity. Similarly, the relevance of processes of social interconnection and integration do not sit outside practice, nor do they simply act as restraints on or barriers to the actions of individuals (Hargreaves

2007).

#### **2.3.4 Defining 'practice': the evolution of meanings**

With the growing use of social practice theories in research, the term 'practice' has come to take on wider and more nuanced meanings, resulting in potentially greater empirical applications. Previous interpretations of practice have described it as an area of professional expertise, as in a 'dental practice' or as in a direct contrast to the concept of theory (Barnes 2001), while other meanings have identified it as the strict repetition of bodily or mental actions in order to achieve a level of fluency or speed (Turner 2001). Reckwitz provided a more inclusive interpretation when he described practice as 'routinised' activity (that is, part of an oft-conducted pattern of conventional action) formed in patterns or structures in which the individual actions that constitute them combine in distinctive ways (Reckwitz 2002).

Under this definition, the widening of a practice to encompass activities such as room cleaning, using social media sites, going to a restaurant, etc., permits more scope for analysis of what occurs during the enactment of specific practices. Although the closer scrutiny of everyday activities raises deeper questions as to what exactly a particular practice might include (Christensen and Røpke 2005), at the same time it opens up large areas of daily life to data gathering that could be relevant and potentially significant. The practice of using a dining hall at a university, for instance, could include the physical movement around the hall itself, from food counter to table to kitchen hatch, while collecting utensils, cups and plates, (bodily activities and the use of objects). In addition, the practice may also include mental considerations, for example, the desire to eat a certain food, to meet someone or be alone, to eat quickly or leisurely, or a preference for a particular atmosphere or location. These mental states, argues Reckwitz, are engendered by the existence of the specific practice itself. Although all of this appears to make the area of legitimate concern almost limitless, by arguing that practices constitute a *series* of actions, as Reckwitz does, means that we need

not describe turning on a light at home, for example, as a practice. Rather, this simple, discrete action is one of a “multitude of single and often unique actions” (Reckwitz 2002: 250) that makes up the practice of ‘living room use’. However, a remaining challenge is that of arbitrary categorisation, and the ‘double-counting’ that may take place with practices that fit into several categories. Attempts to counter this have been made by Warde (2013) through his concept of ‘compound practices’ and Christensen and Røpke (2005), who found that dividing practices into their ‘dispersed’ and ‘integrative’ aspects helped to facilitate analysis. As will be discussed later, creating definitions of practice for the purpose of employing as an analytical tool is one way that some of these problems can be circumvented.

### **2.3.5 Everyday life and habits**

In attempting to grasp what is meant by ‘everyday life’, a practice approach is well positioned to negotiate some of the difficulties in pinning down what this represents. Non-representational theories have wrestled with the philosophical problems that questions of ‘the everyday’ pose. The observation that “Everyday life escapes; it exceeds” (Seigworth 2000: 231 quoted in Horton and Kraftl 2014: 194) by which Seigworth means it transcends our ability to describe or truly comprehend, shows the need for caution in conjecturing on the relationship between everyday life and the practices that constitute it. However, the use of practice theory, whilst not addressing these conundrums directly, appears to allow some form of anchoring through its approach and offers a way to add solidity to the inchoate nature of everyday life that non-representational theories have revealed.

Heidegger described the everyday as being invested with ontological meaning through social and material practices (Nicolini 2012), while Schatzki perceives daily life as a “series of overlapping events” rather than a continuous flow of activities (2013: 32) and argues that daily practices may just as much strengthen the status quo of daily life as undermine it. In *Comfort, Cleanliness and*



*Convenience* (2003), Elizabeth Shove describes everyday life as 'routinized' but notes that it is becoming increasingly so as a result of the growing standardisation of daily activities and the adoption of conventions that impact upon the collective rhythms in which we engage. At the same time, there is increasing dissipation of what were once commonly shared activities, such as meal times, work times, etc., (Southerton 2009). In addition, everyday activities inevitably involve different kinds of consumption. Stern (1997) discussed the multifaceted nature of consumption by describing it from the viewpoint of physicists, economists and ecologists. In a working definition, he stated that while the *effects* of consumption are biophysical, the *causes* are mostly economic and social (1997: 20). Later, Alan Warde posited a direct link between consumption and practice theory when he commented that, "consumption is not itself a practice but is, rather, a moment in almost every practice" (2005: 137).

All of this has impacted upon the form of everyday living and the regularity and predictability that it used to represent, bringing with it the potential for greater possible change and disruption of once core daily activities. Although adequate descriptions by themselves, the above wide-ranging positions indicate the conceptual problem that human geographers have in pinpointing what is meant by 'everyday life'. Lefebvre's understanding of 'everyday life' (*la vie quotidienne*) is similar to Schatzki's quoted above, but, in wishing to make it even more comprehensive, Lefebvre tied it to the related concept of 'everydayness' (*quotidienneté*) that includes what he felt to be the unrepresentable, yet possibly quintessential, things that elude our comprehension of 'everyday life', and which go beyond our capacity to discourse upon (Horton and Kraftl 2014). Indeed, Lefebvre saw 'everydayness' as a concept involving resistance against efforts to order it. For him, "The everyday protests; it revolts in the name of innumerable particular cases and unforeseen situations" (Sheringham 2006: 149).

An interest in everyday practices makes it necessary to consider those practices that are most characterised by being habitual. Traditionally, habitual practices

have been perceived as resistant to change. Practices, according to Warde (2005) have considerable inertia, and habituation results from convention, routine, and practical consciousness. However, alternative ways of conceiving of habit may provide opportunities to reassess its position in the conduct of everyday practices. For instance, some geographers have challenged the standard views of habit. Bissel has described habit as 'agitative', and supports Ravaissou's argument that habit is a dynamic and vital force that "makes change possible" (2012: unpaginated). According to Shove (2012: 103), habits are practices that are "recurrently and consistently reproduced by suitably committed practitioners" but rather than asking how habits can be broken, the author conjectures whether bringing about changes in the configuration of elements that make up an habitual behaviour – for example, altering the availability of technology – can stimulate the adoption of more sustainable practices. The implication is that looking at what we might call the *mechanics* of practices, that is, how the 'cogs', 'wheels' and 'levers' of how practices work together, both within and between practices, may be a more fruitful way of learning about all forms of action, not only habitual types, and strengthen the search for ways to steer practices in more sustainable ways, as in the simple example of the copy room fans described in Chapter 1 (Shove 2003). In addition, as discussed above, Warde and Southerton (2012) and Southerton (2013) have sought to show that the terms 'habit' and 'routine' can be useful in practice terms for looking at issues of sustainable consumption, especially if analysed empirically and using a theoretical framework that seeks to avoid the traditional ambiguities and vagueness of these concepts.

Given the predilection of current practice theories, it is understandable that the growing body of research focuses on everyday activities. One area of attention has been on domestic practices and within this area, as mentioned above, issues of consumption have occupied considerable attention (for example, Warde 2005; Watson and Shove 2008; Halkier *et al.* 2011; Røpke 2009; Sahakian and Wilhite 2013; Butler *et al.* 2014; Røpke and Christensen 2014).

However, there have also been efforts to use practice theory on other aspects of domestic life where links to consumption while not non-existent, are more indirect for example, Nordic walking (Shove and Pantzar 2005), concepts of kitchen use (Hand and Shove 2004), customs of showering (Hand, Shove and Southerton 2005), DIY / digital photography (Shove, Watson, Hand and Ingram 2007), and freezer usage (Hand and Shove 2007). Although a smaller amount of work has focused attention on institutions, it is equally diverse and includes research on company pro-environmental practices (Hargreaves 2008), seasonal office wear and office climate control (Hitchings 2010), the promotion of tap water consumption in London restaurants (Sahakian and White 2013), use of equipment in schools (McGregor 2004), telemedicine practices (Nicolini 2012), and the use of paper in offices (Yli-Kauhaluoma *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, new understandings of the nature of habit has informed work on daily 'performative practices' and how habit may influence the manner in which practices are conducted for example, gracefully or clumsily (Bissell 2013). Unsurprisingly, no one particular form of practice theory application emerges from this diversity, although there are some core similarities.

### **2.3.6 Areas of contention**

In this part I take a brief look at two areas where differences of opinion currently engage theorists, namely, the significance of mental processes in practices, and the extent to which practices are seen as being disembodied from the people who perform them, in order to illustrate how the various threads of practice theory continue to evolve. I close by considering Nicolini's argument against the development of a unified theory of practice, although he posits that combinations of similar or complementary ideas can enrich portrayals of daily life (2012: 9).

Schatzki (2001) places more emphasis than most practice theorists on the role of the mind in the production of social practices. He has interpreted Bourdieu's habitus (1990) and Giddens' practical consciousness (1984), as permitting social action to originate from an intuitive sensibility, particularly in the case of

routine actions but contends that this is an inadequate explanation, arguing that, fundamental to practices are functions of teleology and affectivity, both of which are “‘mental’ phenomena” (2001: 54). Indeed, for Schatzki, the “socially constituted” nature of the mind is what creates the practices we can observe and therefore legitimises the position of practice as the location of the social (*ibid*: 42). For others, however, the characteristics of individuals emerge *only* as a result of the fact that humans have become integrated into social practices. Schatzki described it succinctly: “Practices, in sum, displace mind as the central phenomenon in human life” (*ibid*: 11).

A further area of dispute centres on the extent to which practices are seen as being disembodied from the people who perform them. Reckwitz (2002) argues that meanings, in the form of teleoaffectivity and the acquisition of knowledge, are predominantly found in the conduct of practices themselves; that meanings are a constituent of practices, with an independent existence beyond individual practitioners. They are, he argues, “necessary elements and qualities of a practice in which the individual participates, not qualities of the individual” (2002: 250). In addition to the crucial role of the mind, Schatzki has also sought to connect the meaning of a practice conducted in the present with its past causes and future possible consequences (2010b in Shove *et al.* 2012).

Some have claimed that practice theory by itself is not comprehensive enough to provide an adequate explanation of human activity (Barnes 2001:18; Rouse 2007), while others suggest that this challenge can be answered by integrating studies of social practice with other theories in order to allow wider interpretations of empirical findings (Wilhite 2012). A study on the practices of marketing managers concluded that while practice theory is “useful for the academic observer”, it is too abstract and “insufficiently pragmatic” to provide deeper insight into the everyday activities of managers (Lowe *et al.* 2016: 763). However, despite being relatively recent, this study conducted analysis based on the work of older theorists only, namely Goffman, Bourdieu and Giddens. Indeed, little research appears to have been undertaken using the 3E Model

specifically or other contemporary empirical forms that take into account modern social contexts.

Nicolini (2012) has considered whether the diversity of practice theories could be combined or unified into a grand theory of practice. Although Reckwitz (2002) did much to bring together the diverse strands of practice theories, Nicolini concludes that creating a unified theory would be neither possible nor desirable. This, he states, would not only be contrary to the way most practice approaches work, but would also undermine the potential for the unique features of different strands to inform each other. Instead, he contends that the most effective application of practice theories should be to “exploit both their similarities and differences” through a toolkit approach (Nicolini 2012: 9). Whilst it is partially true that elements from different forms of practice theory may complement each other, there is a danger that using different approaches in combination may lead to some aspects working against each other or cancelling each other out. Notwithstanding, it may be that bringing different theories together may ultimately stand or fall on the results of their empirical application, or that particular forms of practice theory may be suited to specific contexts and conditions. For Nicolini, it is crucial that when attempting to blend different elements of practice together, researchers endeavour to exploit areas where there are “family resemblances” (*Ibid*: 10).

### **2.3.7 Links with consumption theories**

In this section I show how consumption theories have increasingly been tied with practice theories, particularly as interest in the issue of consumption has expanded, and closer links between consumption and practice have been established. A significant amount of research has allied theories of consumption with practice theories, beginning with Warde who, in linking the two argued that, “consumption occurs as items are appropriated in the course of engaging in particular practices” (Warde 2005: 131). Consumption theories had largely focused on issues of self-identity, social status (conspicuous consumption) and individual choice, however Warde’s assertion that, far from possessing symbolic

or identity forming functions consumption was an essential part of social organisation and routine, led to more research attention being given to *inconspicuous* consumption (for example, see Halkier, Katz-Gerro and Martens 2011). The environmental consequences and sustainable implications arising from consumption have similarly received growing attention from practice theories, with a key question being the relationship between the level of consumption required by a particular practice and its environment consequences, and the propensity of practices to maintain their more and less sustainable impacts (Warde and Southerton 2012). In combining consumption theories with practice theories, Christensen and Røpke (2005: 4) interpret people's use of goods not as consumption, but as 'activity', and argue that, "consumption is 'derived' from practice". Shove and Spurling (2013) have argued that theories of social practice are uniquely placed to explore these connections. The development of these theories to include consumption in daily life has integrated consumption theories with concepts of social practice theory to the extent that consumption, as stated above, is now an integral part of practices within which the appropriation of materials occurs (Warde 2005: 137).

Sahakian and Wilhite (2013: 3) posit that the focus of practice theories on everyday life can lead to a deeper understanding of consumption through its rejection of consumption as individual choice, instead, by proposing the idea of 'distributed agency' which perceives agency as including "things and socially grounded cultural structures". Similarly Lipschutz *et al.* (2015: 3) argue that as an analysis of the consumption of energy using practice theory could concentrate on 'socially-normative' practices and be used to "find ways to transform such normative practices at a collective scale". Goodman *et al.* (2009: 4-5) has combined consumption theories with spatiality. They emphasize that the commodities of consumption are "essentially geographical [in that] they inhabit, produce and embody space and spatial relationships," and argue that everyday life produces, or is produced by, consumption and the practices that arise from it.

A further coming together of practice and consumption theories has been noticeable in the concern of both with the material dimension of everyday life in the form of artifacts, materials and infrastructure (Warde 2014; Røpke 2009). Further the material environment and the practical knowledge that is embedded within them is “central to creating interaction, continuity and reality” (Halkier *et al.* 2011: 6). Information communication technology (ICT) studies has provided one particular approach in the investigation of how practices can be influenced through new applications of technology that make particular practices easier, more accessible and more popular. For example, research on ICT in computer use and shopping helped reveal a diversity of elements that make up these activities including the skill of assessing price and quality, meaning of different forms of shopping as well as the materials (from trolley, to loyalty card to car park) required, although the authors concluded that empirical challenges in the use of practice theory remain (Christensen and Røpke 2005).

Warde (2005) states that the direction practices take can be influenced by cultural considerations, and in considering aspects of consumption peculiar to Japan, Clammer (1997) explored the link between consumption patterns and cultural practices and argued that daily consumption for Japanese is not only rooted in social and psychological processes, but also historical and religious ones as well. He argues that the ubiquitous act of gift giving in the culture (possibly unique in the level of formality it requires) is a manifestation of the hierarchical relations that are seen as vital to the maintenance of social harmony. Further, the link between theories of consumption and student campus practices can be made by looking at how certain campus practices might produce particular consumption patterns that have sustainability implications. For example, in the consumption that takes place through use of the campus infrastructure, frequent energy waste can be identified, in the leaving on of lights, air conditioners and computers. If we accept consumption as being integral to practices, then the practices of students on campus will clearly have sustainable

implications.

I have up to this point discussed practice theory in general and some of the issues that concern it. As I have shown, these discussions are relevant to the particular cohort under consideration in this thesis, namely university students on a Japanese campus. In order to study this cohort through a practice theory approach, I utilised the 3E Model of Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), and it is to this model that I now turn.

## **2.4 The 3E Model of Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012)**

As I argued in the Introduction, the 3E Model (composed of the three elements ‘materials’, ‘competence’ and ‘meaning’) represents a development that opens up opportunities for greater empirical application of practice theory. I begin this section with a description of the model and the authors’ declared purposes in constructing it. I then look at its unique features, especially the clear intention to show practices as comprised of three elements and their dynamic interrelation. This is followed by a critique of the model.

### ***2.4.1 Objectives of the model***

A central feature of the model is its accessibility via a straightforward framework that provides the robustness to achieve its central objective, namely a more incisive analysis of the origin and form of practices. Creating a solid foundation from the bold and extensively argued position that practices are made up of three basic elements – ‘materials’, ‘competence’, and ‘meaning’ – acting together in dynamic ways, the authors articulate clear accounts as to why practices happen in the way they do. Making frequent reference to the framework that governs the model, the authors offer original insight on how elements interrelate and practices form with what can be called a degree of scientific precision, whilst still recognising that practices are contingent and



emergent. Further, the model aims for a less abstract / more concrete focus, not only on how practices materialise and develop but also on how practices change and can be changed, thus making practice theory more relevant in addressing problematic issues in society such as climate change (Shove *et al.* 2012: 2). In aiming for greater clarity, the model also represents a way of dismantling the apparent intractability found in the “value-action gap”.

#### **2.4.2 Features of the model**

The 3E model comprises the analysis of (1) the three elements of practice, and (2) the dynamics that exist within and between practices and their elements (Shove *et al.* 2012). It demonstrates how common social practices (driving is one given particular detailed attention), can be analysed in alternative ways from cognitive theories for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of how these practices develop and change. A unique feature of the model is the deliberate flexibility attached to what is understood as a practice (*Ibid*: 123) opening up to analysis activities previously opaque or not considered as practices. Conceptualising *materials* as an element of practice and thus elevating their role is a significant move. Materials including objects ranging from electronic devices to traditional tools, raw materials and the body itself, are shown as having an influence above and beyond merely facilitating the conduct of practices for their practitioners.<sup>2</sup> As a result the 3E Model has contributed much to enhancing awareness of the central position that materials occupy in the conduct of daily life.

The second element of the model, *competences*, defined as (1) types of

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<sup>2</sup> This idea is taken a stage further in actor-network theory, which as stated above, argues that ‘materials’ are of such importance that, through the connections they establish, they not only possess agency but also in fact represent the very bedrock of social relations (Law 2009). Whilst this might be seen as offering more support for the greater prominence of the material element in the construction of social relations, Shove *et al.* (2012) reject this view, arguing that allocating such a central position to the role of materials serves only to bestow the element with too much solidity and, as a consequence, deprive it of the dynamism that contributes much to the understanding of how practices are conducted.

knowledge and skills that practitioners acquire through the performance of practices, and (2) the know-how that practitioners gather in the conduct of particular practices, highlights the different levels on which competence mediates between practitioners and their practices – the doers and their ‘sayings and doings’ (Reckwitz 2002). The authors argue that linking these different forms of knowing (how to conduct a performance and how to evaluate it) makes the element of competence easier to assess. In considering the practices that make up everyday life, the term ‘competences’, like ‘practice’, has taken on a wider extent. While a person snowboarding down a mountain may be seen to have a special competence, the competence of entering a library, using an identity card and checking out books is less obviously a competency in the traditional sense, partly due to its relative prosaic quality. However, this more expansive notion is useful when considering the reasons why practices get performed on a daily basis – for even the simplest of actions represent a form of competence and can include competences gained from diverse life experiences. In considering everyday actions, competences are represented not simply through the physical or mental agility we develop, but also in the habits and routines we follow, many of which are pursued for reasons of convenience and comfort (Shove 2003). This leads on to the third element of the 3E model, namely, *meanings*.

Meanings are understood as the purposes that practitioners ascribe to practices, including both the symbolism and status that attach to them (Shove *et al.* 2012: 23). As the authors of the 3E Model recognise, understanding what ‘meaning’ includes represents a considerable challenge. However, rather than get caught up in complex definitions that undermine empirical application, they see a greater benefit in linking the interpretation of meaning to the moments in which practices are conducted (*Ibid*). Meaning is extracted from observing the doing of practices. Whilst recognising that ‘meaning’ along with the other elements, is ‘out there’ and existing independently, these elements are subsumed within ‘practice’ and, as such, are not a separate, discrete or independent constituent of social

relations. The theoretical foundations of the 3E Model seeks to bypass some of these conceptually nebulous issues by conceiving of meaning as an element that can be investigated in the same way as 'materials' and 'competence' (*Ibid*: 24).

A foundation block of the model and a key distinction that it makes (developing Schatzki, 2006) is between *practice as entity*, that is, the generic understanding of a practice that is held as a collective understanding through time and space, and *practice as performance*, in other words, the daily, contingent form of a practice, observed in its specific location and restricted to finite boundaries. As the authors state, "Practices-as-performances involve the active integration of elements (materials, meanings, competences). Practices-as-entities are constituted through such integrations" (*Ibid*: 119-120). It is practice as entity that carries much of the meaning of a practice, while practice as performance equates to the actions influenced by contingency and circumstance. A further distinctive characteristic of the model is the development of the concept of bundles and complexes of practices. The former describes how some practices though connected as a result of sharing a location or existence, are loose enough to maintain an independent character. The latter represents practices that are more closely connected, perhaps as part of a sequence that cannot be completed otherwise (*Ibid*: 81). Bundles and complexes allow us to analyse how practices fit together in the flow of daily life and help to conjecture why some activities are more enduring than others. An intended effect, recognised by the authors, was that, in constructing a simplified framework, clearer and more concise discussion on the inter-relations between bundles and complexes of practices was facilitated (Matt Watson, personal communication 2017).

A final feature of the model involves the clear statement of intent to turn traditional questions on their head. Although practice theory has sought to challenge mainstream views the 3E Model aims to explore daily practices at a deeper level, from which a question such as, "How do people adopt practices?"

is re-constituted as, “How do practices recruit people?” It is in this way that the model is able to confront the dominant approaches that have been unsuccessful in moving societies to, for example, more sustainable lifestyles.

### **2.4.3 Critique**

The simplification process that makes up the framework of the model carries with it several consequences. First, on account of the enormous variety of forms that materials can take, including infrastructural forms, the conceptualisation of materials as an element obscures the different ways that materials may impact upon practices. Indeed, it has been accepted that seeing materials as an element detracts from the understanding that materials are also the ‘stuff’ *within* which practices take place, as well as of what practices are *constituted* (Shove, Watson and Spurling 2015: 6). Second, whilst electing to place mental processes, emotions, values, and motivating stimuli under the label of ‘meaning’ may help liberate analysis and enable it to hone in on particular aspects of interest, the growing subtleties and distinctions found in affective geographies may require caution. If (following Horton and Kraftl 2014: 229) we can distinguish between *emotional* mental processes of feeling, which are open to discourse and cultural understanding, and *affective* processes that are, in contrast, unexplainable yet embodied, it might be that such distinctions, in playing separate parts, lead to different performances or outcomes that become lost as a result of being conflated.

Two further points can also be made. First, in accepting that the model focuses on instances where interpretations of practices are “relatively uncontested” (Shove *et al.* 2012: 53) the model is open to the criticism that, in picking what could be called the low-hanging fruit, it has yet to take on more significant challenges that would indicate its potential for wider applications. Finally, the above-mentioned flexibility regarding interpretation of the term ‘practice’ can lead to difficulties in interpreting and identifying analyses in dynamic relationships across practices. Can causal factors that produce different

performances of a practice be always identified in evolving elements of other practices? It should be noted that many of these points are recognised by Shove *et al.* (2012), and are justified by the argument that the construction of “this *analytic* strategy has allowed us to develop a method of thinking about the dynamics of practice, starting from first principles” (*Ibid*: 121). As stated earlier, the success of this approach may in the end be judged by the quality of insight into practices that the model achieves. Accepting that much of the content of *Dynamics of Social Practice* broke new ground, this thesis seeks to extend the model specifically in how matters of space and time might be accorded more influence within the model. The next section lays out the arguments.

## **2.5 Linking social practice with spatiality and temporality**

In this section, I begin with a detailed look at how the authors of *The Dynamics of Social Practice* (2012) perceive space and time within the 3E Model, both from a customary standpoint and from a more expansive position. I then cover some of the literature that can be viewed as providing a link between practice theories and geographical understandings of the concepts of space, place and time, dealing specifically with Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey and Dale Southerton.

An illustration of how a link between spatiality and practice theory could be explored through the social role that space plays is found in Cresswell (2004). Cresswell demonstrates the recursive nature of the evolution of practice in relation to spatiality in his example of an urban park that is rectangular in shape and divided by pathways along the vertical and horizontal axes. Notwithstanding the way its organisation is intended to dictate its usage, before too long, the park acquires diagonal pathways as a result of the collective practice of many individuals making short cuts in order to cross the park. In explaining this case of evolving usage, a practice theory analysis identifies the contingent nature of

practice and how ordinary, routine activity, through continual re-production, has within it potential for change.

Schatzki (2009) developed a closer connection between space/time and practice theory through his concept of 'timespace' in which he argues that, unlike many social theories, space and time are not contingent influences upon practices but are instead intimately bound with them and with people's teleological motivations. To illustrate the spatial aspect of timespace and the close link with human activity Schatzki talks of "arrays of places and paths anchored in material entities" where "[a] place is a place to perform a particular activity, [and] a path is an avenue for getting from one place to another" (*ibid*: 36). Using the example of a racecourse, he talks of places where races can be watched and bets made, linked by paths in the form of passageways that link places to each other. The complexity engendered by these combinations and the deep connection they establish with human activity, Schatzki calls 'settings'. To illustrate the temporal aspect of timespace, Schatzki employs Heideggerian notions of existence to argue that human practices have past, present and future dimensions, but crucially, not as a linear progression but rather as constant and synchronic influences. He does this by emphasising the teleological propensity of human activity. He states that

...teleology underlies spatiality because spatiality is the pertinence that objects around have for human activity, and the pertinence of the world around for activity ultimately rests on the matters for the sake of which people act (*ibid*: 38).

The concept of timespace then clearly underlines how intimately aspects of space and time infuse human practices. I now look at how some of these ideas and concepts transfer to the 3E Model.

### ***2.5.1 Spatiality and temporality in the 3E Model***

*The Dynamics of Social Practices* (Shove *et al.* 2012), presents a variety of views of how space and time connect with practices. I will deal with each in turn. The first perception of space is as a location and a resource for the conduct of practices. Following traditional lines, the discussion illustrates how some practices require more space than others, and that practices appropriate space from each other in order to be carried out. For example, in posing the questions, 'How much space do we have to conduct practice, and how much do we need?' answers are discussed in terms of the "viable practice space" available out of the earth's 149 million km<sup>2</sup> of land (Shove *et al.* 2012: 130). The authors tentatively suggest that "it might be possible to conclude that the area required for day-dreaming is smaller than that needed for playing a game of football" (*Ibid*: 131). Clearly, quantitative assessments of this nature, based on the concept of space as a surface in which the physical features of the earth are taken into account, are important and serve to show the physical restrictions that space imposes on the conduct of practices.

In discussing elements interacting within space, Shove, Watson and Pantzar show how practices influence the way space is created and contend that space is an outcome of practice, for example, in how the building of motorways, car parks, and so on have changed the nature of particular spaces as a consequence of the practice of driving (*Ibid*: 130-131). In addition, in the process of travelling, elements of practice help to "re-make space" which is "reconstituted through the enactment of practices" (2012: 133). Further, in situations where practitioners have optimal 'viable practice space' they are able, given the necessary materials and basic competence, to conduct a practice freely, and be constrained only by available time. The authors note that complicating factors include cases in which (1) space is not optimal so that practices become curtailed, modified, changed or abandoned, (2) several practices are conducted in the same space (3) certain practices dominate in spaces that permit multiple practices, and (4) the history of accumulated practices impact upon the nature of the space in which they are performed.

In advancing other complicating factors regarding the use of 'viable practice space', the authors move beyond the space-as-a-container viewpoint. In spaces that permit multiple practices, it is recognised that certain practices dominate, with the implication that social as well as physical space might be implicated. In addition, the history of accumulated practices is seen as having an impact upon the nature of the space in which they are performed. Shove *et al.* (2012) also touch upon issues of equality of access to space for practitioners in say crowded urban areas, or who lack the resources to secure adequate access to space. As can be seen, these investigations into practices and space include both traditional understandings of space (as a measurable entity) and understandings that emphasise more social dimensions of space. For Shove *et al.* (2012) space (and place) are socially constructed however, I argue that space is less passive and more active in the development of practices than they suggest. Spatiality can occupy a position of greater connectivity with the elements that produce practices. While Shove *et al.* (2012) assert that space is something that practitioners directly or indirectly change in the course of doing practices it is not, even in its social aspect, seen as something which of itself exerts an influence on what people do.

In the case of the relationship between practices and time, Shove *et al.* (2012: 127-130) develop four arguments, the first three of which are grounded in what Lefebvre and Regulier (1985: 73) called "the time of watches and clocks". First, time, like space, is viewed as a limited resource for which practices compete; second, practices that are temporally flexible can more easily 'invade' the time occupied by other practices; third, where practitioners have continuing access to the elements that make up particular practices, then, even during dormant periods when they are not actually being performed, they can still retain the potential for performance; and fourth, time is something produced rather than consumed by practices. This last idea particularly engages with subjective senses of time into which considerations of social constructions of spatiality can



be included. Similarly, perceptions of time (in the sense of having plenty of it or a shortage of it) impact upon many aspects of a practice, for example, in the competence of its performance (hurriedly, incompletely, disjointedly), the meaning it has at a particular moment, as well as the materials needed for its realisation.

In a concluding comment, the authors state that, space and time are not equivalent to the elements of the 3E Model because “they do not circulate... nor are they shared and stored in the same way” (*Ibid*: 134). However, they acknowledge that these concepts are not simply the stage on which the dynamics of practices play out, but are implicated in the production of practices in that “they constitute media of aggregation and storage, holding the traces of past practice in place in ways that are relevant for the future” (*Ibid*). In other words, they provide historical legitimacy for present and future practices (echoing Schatzki’s ideas of timespace, here) as well as how space and time influence the degree to which practices are accessible. Many of these ideas have echoes in the work of Lefebvre and the next part explores some of these connections and indicates how they can be expanded.

### ***2.5.2 Lefebvre and the production of space and rhythm analysis***

Two elements of the work of Lefebvre, namely his speculations on the production of space and his exploration of rhythm analysis, provide an important link to practice theory. Of the three dialectically connected aspects that comprise the production of space, namely ‘conceived space’, ‘perceived space’ and ‘lived space’ (following the language of Shields 2011), two are of special interest to practice theory. First, echoes of conceived space can be found in certain, more formalised campus practices in which rules, instruction manuals and established collective understandings serve to maintain the existence of a practice over time and space. Conceived space is defined as the form of space that exists in abstraction, for example, images drawn by designers of kitchen units or usages of space proposed by local government planning departments. Lefebvre posited

that those engaged in creating conceived space were able to exercise control over discourses on space and were thus able to reinforce existing social classes and inequalities (Lefebvre 1991). Similarly, on a university campus, teaching staff (through their course curricula) and dining hall managers (in their plans for rearranging the position of tables and chairs) as well as administrative and academic staff are able to manipulate conceived space and therefore have an impact upon the conduct of practices by students. Conceived space I suggest is a contributory element to the formation of practices-as-entities. It helps define the boundaries of campus practices as perceived by the dominant groups within the university, and although these boundaries can at any time be challenged, expanded or dissolved by a single performance of practice, conceived space in its abstract and reified manifestations, nevertheless help maintain a certain stability (and resistance to change) through the hegemonic position it occupies. As a result, innovation and transformation of campus practices are made harder to initiate and stimulate.

The second aspect of Lefebvre's production of space is his idea of 'lived space', which has connections with practice theory at a number of levels. As well as 'lived space' or 'third space' being comprised of daily life activities, it is seen as a space to challenge the other two forms by allowing the individual (through art and literature, for example) to resist the dominant ways of producing space (Shields 2011: 281). Practices-as-performances can similarly (and continually) challenge established forms of practices-as-entities and stimulate the unpredictable development of practices in unforeseen directions, like the movement of skateboarding from parks and drained swimming pools onto the streets. Lefebvre's work serves to highlight the potential conflict between different forms of practice and their perception in space.

The second area of Lefebvre's work that can be linked to practice theory is in the application of rhythmanalysis. In this, Lefebvre explores the rhythms that have a part in dictating the conduct of everyday life. As in his analysis of the production

of space, he identifies a struggle for ascendancy between the modern forms of living and working, and the body's physiological and psychological needs (Lefebvre 1992). Social space and time is disrupted by the space and time demanded by consumption (markets and capitalist activity). Lefebvre places social practices in the category of linear repetition competing against the cyclical and circadian rhythms that have always been an influence on human activities but which are threatened by the imposition of the social environment (*Ibid*: 6). As a rhythm analyst Lefebvre is of most interest to this thesis through the variety of ways he looks at time beyond traditional understandings. For example, in a discussion of what he calls, 'The Media Day' which "never ends", time becomes appropriated and demeaned. Although he could not have predicted the extent to which the 24-hour news cycle developed, in identifying it Lefebvre understood how the constant exposure to news alienates us from our own lives and practices and demeans and cheapens our here-and-now activities. He writes that within the media day "time is – or appears – occupied [b]y empty words, by mute images, by the present without presence" (*Ibid*: 46).

He concludes that, as a result, "The present simulates presence and introduces simulations into social practice" (*Ibid*). Portraying time in this way brings into view the background and history that might lie behind certain practices and that, as a result of this superficiality, might be seen as empty, unfulfilling and ersatz. If temporality is perceived in this way, we can conjecture on the effect of some practices connected to the media day acquiring similarly altered or even degraded meanings. Similarly, in examining the suppression of natural rhythms Lefebvre speculates that time is "both uniform and monotonous whilst also breaking apart and becoming fragmented" and hierarchical (Lefebvre and Regulier 1985: 74). Such varied senses of time impinge on what practices are chosen for each appropriate time 'parcel' (*Ibid*) and within its constraints, how that practice might be conducted. How time is perceived can impose on other aspects of practice from materials chosen and level of competence employed in order to conduct a practice. Recent work using Lefebvre's rhythm analysis has

been carried out on daily schooling in South Africa to assess issues of space, place and social justice (see Christie 2013), and on how the various forms of daily rhythms for example, eurhythmia (the successful integration of different rhythms) might inform the use of energy (see Walker 2016).

In empirical, practice theory based studies of daily life, space and time have usually been considered only from the point of view as a resource, for instance, in car use (Shove *et al.* 2015), nocturnal and seasonal influences on practices (Wilhite 1996; Hitchings 2010), and the temporal rhythms of technology use (Davis *et al.* 2010). Little other empirical research exists in which expanded notions of spatiality and temporality are considered in the study of practices. An important exception, though with a theoretical slant, is the work of Everts, Lahr-Kurten and Watson (2011) who combine practice theories with Theodore Schatzki's concepts of 'orders and arrangements' to examine the role of space and time in practices. Taken from Schatzki's 'site ontology', orders and arrangements provide the context for practices to take place. Building on ideas of timespace, orders and arrangements include the collections of people and the disposition of objects that we encounter daily and which intimately connect, both with each other and with the practices we conduct. Everts *et al.* conclude that

practices make places and practices are in turn inherently spatial. Changing, transforming, destroying, preserving, protecting or maintaining any kind of place is dependent on the dynamic nexus or practices and arrangements which comprise it (*Ibid*: 332).

This work illustrates the important connection that spatial and temporal factors have in the production of practices. In summary, Lefebvre and his interpretations of space and rhythmanalysis open up new ways in which practice theory can develop and deepen the relationship between aspects of space and time, and the conduct of practices. However, these ideas can be pushed further, especially through the work of Doreen Massey and Dale Southerton, whom I discuss in the

following section.

### **2.5.3 Massey, Southerton, and the production of practices**

This thesis argues that practice theory can be more closely bound with ideas of spatiality/temporality. In discussing more deeply aspects of spatiality, the work of Doreen Massey, particularly her concepts of power-geometry and ‘the chance of space’ are pertinent. In discussing issues of temporality, I especially refer to the work of Dale Southerton and his ideas of social time.

While practice theory can accommodate the idea that space not only provides the medium in which practices occur but also possesses characteristics that affect the doing of practices, it can also be responsible for the *production* of practices. Pile and Keith (1993) identified a link of equivalent power between the social and spatial when they argued that spatiality is used

to capture the ways in which the social and spatial are inextricably realised one in the other, to conjure up the circumstances in which society and space are simultaneously realised by thinking, feeling, doing individuals and also to conjure up the many different conditions in which such realisations are experienced by thinking, feeling, doing subjects (1993: 6).

To see space as primarily, but merely, the medium in which practices take place is to understate its role in the formation of social practices. The work of Doreen Massey has been seen not only as establishing firmer links between geography and social sciences, but also recognising that “the concept of space and place radically shapes one’s understanding of the social world and how to effect transformation in and of it” (Callard 2011). In *For Space* (2005), Massey’s emphasis on the relational nature of space and how it should be re-imagined, leads to the claim that space has mostly been grounded in dominant, ‘representational’ notions that are “deprived of dynamism” (2005: 21). Although

Massey has received some criticism for attending to the “social or political consequences” at the expense of describing what relational space actually is (Malpas 2012: 228), her work nevertheless permits a consideration of how the elements of practice can be seen to have a greater interconnectness with specific spatial contexts. In perceiving space in terms of social relations, Massey imagines a train journey on which we do not just pass through space but also, albeit in a small way, contribute to the continual forming and re-forming of the space through which we move. In an echo of one of the key dynamic features of practice formation, Massey argues that we are involved in “the constant process of the *making and breaking of links*” and that “[s]pace and place emerge through active material practices” (*Ibid*: 118, emphasis added), so we can conjecture that practices emerge through the creating and re-creating of space. Similarly Thrift (2000: 96) describes how, “through the agency of things encountering each other” space is always in the state of being produced. However, Massey’s concepts of ‘power geometry’ (1991; 2005) and ‘the chance of space’ (2005), show that space can also *produce* practices. We can once again identify a recursive, dynamic relationship between spatiality and practice. In such a relationship, during the doing of practices, space is being molded and created, out of which potential subsequent practices will arise.

The first concept from Massey relevant to the developing of spatiality within practice theory is the concept of ‘power-geometry’. Simply put, power geometry refers to the effects that space and geo-historical process have had in creating relationships of power. In its original manifestation, Massey employed the concept to illustrate how particular power/knowledge relations allowed colonial nations to dominate those countries they colonised. Similarly, it has been applied to processes of globalisation in the way developed countries have dictated the agendas – the trajectories – of newly emergent countries, restricting the potential diversity of different patterns of globalising. Power geometry can also be applied at a micro level, for example, to institutions. In her study on public sector cleansing services, Tooke (2000: 569) views employment as an

institutional space, arguing that such spaces are “the effect of social practices that have accumulated over time to produce enduring socio-spatial relations”. In a similar way, I perceive Japanese tertiary education today as an institutional form in which power-geometries have arisen as a result of the distinctive history of education in the country (see Chapter 3). Power-geometries have been important in helping to retain the formalised practices and rituals that can be found in Japanese tertiary education (for example, the singing of the university song on formal occasions), and represent both a perceived stable pillar of support against the existential challenges that threaten it, and a barrier that prevents institutions from being overwhelmed by the large evidence of its failings. Specific campus spaces often form a dissonance with the practices that take place within them, and the spatialised nature of power-geometries similarly legitimise the identities of campus users and the inequality of their multiple interrelations. The institutional space that is manifested in the campus is a contributor to the form of power-geometries that operate upon the practices of campus users.

The second concept, namely, ‘the chance of space’ (Massey 2005: 111-117), offers a complement to the concept of power-geometries. While power-geometries can be seen as entrenching certain socio-spatial practices, ‘the chance of space’ represents liberation from the restricting bounds of institutionalisation. This concept encompasses “the element of surprise, the unexpected” (Massey 2005: 112). Shared spaces and routines on campus facilitate ‘the chance of space’ through unforeseen encounters that can serve to deflect the course of practices in several ways. A degree of contingency in practices is discussed in Shove *et al.* (2012), however, in creating a ‘fractured space of accidents’ (Massey 2005: 113) ‘the chance of space’ adds a greater level of contingency to performances of a practice going beyond what the emergent elements might predict. According to Massey, this is due to “complex mixtures of pre-planned spatiality and happenstance positionings-in-relation-to-each-other”, however, the key definitional aspect of ‘the chance of space’ is

that Massey locates it “within the *constant formation of spatial configurations*” (*Ibid*: 116, emphasis added). The spatial configurations that operate on a university campus both encourage and inhibit ‘the chance of space’ and the practices that result.

Temporality too can be seen as having a deep involvement in the construction of practices. In tackling the issue of how to pin down the nature of habitual and routine practices, Southerton, following Schatzki (2001) argues that practices occur within “socio-technical systems, social institutions and modes of spatial and temporal organisation” (Southerton 2012: 339). Of particular interest here is his argument that temporality and practice exist in a recursive relationship. In analysing this relationship (and building on Zerubavel 1981), Southerton employs three concepts, which I argue can represent *temporal* aspects of the three elements – materials, competence and meaning – of the Shove *et al.* model (2012). First, Southerton uses Bourdieu’s concept of ‘dispositions’ – as mentioned above and defined as the predisposition toward particular actions that arise from cultural origins, as well as linked to new understandings of habits – is used to illustrate how the time, duration, frequency and degree of completion of certain practices is a consequence of how different social groups interpret them (Southerton 2012: 341), in other words, what meanings they ascribe to these practices. Second, Southerton refers to ‘procedures’, the tacit understandings and embodied skills of practices that can be impacted by temporal considerations such as the time of day and for how long it is seen as appropriate to conduct a practice (*ibid*: 347). We can clearly see echoes of the competency element of the 3E Model here. Finally, temporal aspects of the material element of the 3E Model are evident in Southerton’s discussion of ‘sequences’, which stress the “material, infrastructural and institutional sequencing of practices... held in place by multiple technologies, infrastructures and institutionally timed events” (*ibid*: 348). I argue that these close connections are able to inform each other in a deeper understanding of how practices are conducted.



Shove *et al.* (2012) argue that practices make time as well as consume time, and they can be said to do this in several ways. In a linear, quantitative sense, practices can only consume time in the minutes and hours that are required to perform them. However, in subjective ways, temporality has a more extensive influence on the production of practices. The sense of 'time squeeze' – the feeling of being pushed for time (Southerton 2003; 2009; Southerton and Tomlinson 2005) illustrates this well. Southerton refers to 'the paradox of time pressure' (Southerton 2009: 49) in which people complain of having less time despite data that indicates they have more free time than ever. This suggests that subjective senses of temporality have as significant an influence on the performance of practices as quantitative time. Practices are deeply affected by this subjective sense of temporality.

The literature on spatiality and temporality suggest that a greater consideration of these concepts can be incorporated into the 3E Model. Although as stated above Shove *et al.* (2012) contend that space and time are not elements of practice, they recognise that they are nevertheless inextricably linked: they can be considered part of practices without undermining the model's theoretical structure. For example, Southerton's (2003) research into the sense of hurriedness is, as I will show, a result of temporality acting upon practices, as much as practices acting upon temporality. Hurriedness acts within practices because it expresses aspects of materials (for example, choice of materials), competence and meaning. To this extent, the conclusion of Shove *et al.* (2012: 129) that "temporal infrastructures of society... are made and reproduced through the fine detail of what people do" omits other potential effects on practices that are suggested by expansive notions of temporality. Time and space are inherent to the elements of practice.

## 2.6 Conclusions

In this first literature review chapter I have placed practice theory into its historical context and outlined why it should be seen as a strong alternative to other social theories that have been deployed in understanding human activity and should, as a consequence, be regarded as a useful tool in the pursuit of sustainable lifestyles. Research about the daily workings of life on Japanese university campuses is largely descriptive only (for example, Park 2014; Lee-Cunin 2004) therefore the deployment of practice theory for the first time to a Japanese context can not only provide deeper understanding of daily university life in Japan, but also provide a unique test-bed for the application of the theory itself.

I followed a discussion of the development of practice theories with a detailed description and analysis of the 3E Model, an important empirical development that aims at realising the promise of contemporary practice theories. Similarly, the application of the model to a Japanese context can provide indications on the performance of the model and the effectiveness of its framework.

In breaking significant new ground, the 3E Model has revealed new avenues in which nascent areas of research can be further extended, for example, in the relationship that space and place has with human practice. In the final section, I explored some of these potential developments, notably the relationship between space and place, through a selection of relevant concepts taken from the work of Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey and Dale Southerton. The application of the model to a spatially discrete location such as a Japanese university campus provides an original opportunity to add new understandings to the 3E Model and its ability to contribute to practice theory and, by extension, progress toward sustainability.

The application of practice theory clearly requires a context in which to engage it.

As noted above, the context in this case is the campus of a Japanese university and the research population, the Japanese youth who use it. In Chapter 1, I showed the significance of this group as a target population and in the next chapter I look at the literature that deals with the socialisation processes that contribute to the cultural grounding of the campus practices of its students.

### **Chapter 3: The formation of Japanese youth and their lives as students on campus**

In this chapter I look at some of the literature concerned with the socialisation of Japanese youth and the context that surrounds its development, together with the geographies of students and campus geographies. The manner in which young people are socialised in Japan, how they perceive themselves as students and engage with the campus clearly has implications for the practices they conduct. I focus on two aspects of this. The first concerns the wider political, economic and social circumstances that pertain to the lives of young people today and the collective experiences that these conditions bequeath. Taking a narrower focus, the second aspect relates to particular aspects of student and campus geographies that include the philosophy and methodology behind educational practice, the government policies that reflect these, and the purpose and role to which education is perceived generally in the country, all of which bear upon the collective group of youth known as university students. In doing this I make a contribution to the argument begun by Hanson Thiem (2009) that 'social geographies of educational provision and consumption' need to develop a broader outlook through employing different forms of research, and re-imagining the role of 'educational spaces' (Holloway *et al.* 2010: 585). Together, these aspects have an important impact on the practices that are conducted on university campuses.

Prior to a discussion of the first aspect, I provide some important context by describing the three main contrasting schools of thought regarding the underlying drivers of Japanese socialisation (3.1), and how these different strands of thinking may affect the interpretation of practices. Section 3.2 then covers some of the wider features of society that are relevant to Japanese youth, while section 3.3 looks at three key cultural characteristics that impinge regularly on students in their daily campus life. Section 3.4 starts a discussion of the second aspect and narrows the focus to issues of education and the

socialisation of Japanese youth. In this section, I examine the experiences of Japanese students in secondary education and give details of the peculiarities of the socialisation processes that they encounter (3.4.1). I follow this with some background on the tertiary education system in Japan (3.4.2) then discuss reasons for its lethargic condition (3.4.3). I then look at how this affects students who choose to enter tertiary education and the nature of the education that they receive there (3.3.4-5). In part 3.4.6, I discuss how some of the issues discussed earlier in the chapter are covered in the literature on student geographies. The conclusion to this chapter (3.5) discusses the implications for this thesis and how the research contributes to the field of (Japanese) student geographies.

### **3.1 Three contrasting interpretations of socialisation**

Understanding the nature of Japanese socialisation processes is complicated by having three relatively distinct traditions from which socialisation is understood. The ‘mainstream’ tradition (following McCargo 2004), is characterised by literature coming out of the period following the end of World War II, and attributes the speed and success of the country’s post-war recovery to the ‘self-sacrifice’ and ‘single-mindedness’ of its people. Common examples cite the mothers of students taking entrance examinations who do everything for their offspring, including running baths and putting out clothes, in order that their children can focus entirely on their study (Nakane 1970: 99), while the socialising after work that company employees and their bosses regularly engage in is cited as evidence testifying to the commitment that employees display for the company that not only employs them, but takes an active interest in their personal lives (Cummings 1988).

Arising out of these writings and concurrent with the growing self-confidence of Japan as a world economic power at that time came the *nihonjinron* (‘theories of Japaneseness’) tradition. This tradition is characterised by an emphasis on the

‘unique’ aspects of Japanese society including supposedly low levels of conflict and racial homogeneity that are claimed to be responsible for its success. A key focus of this is the sense of harmony (*wa*) that is said to permeate Japanese social relations. Criticism of this model has focused mainly on the overly consensual view of social relations and the presentation of Japan as a homogenous society.

The third wave of literature known as the ‘revisionist’ tradition has developed partly as a critique of (and corrective to) this ‘cultural nationalism’. It has gained legitimacy as a result of the prolonged economic slump and attendant social problems that the country has experienced since the 1990s and which has rendered earlier arguments less persuasive. Revisionist literature tends to describe Japan as a country in which a conservative elite exploits an ambiguous, traditional social structure in order to maintain political and economic control, and was brought to prominence as a result of Karel van Wolferen’s book *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (1989). Social issues that were previously obscured or downplayed as a result of the economic boom came to receive greater attention and led to more critical assessments of social trends. For example, this tradition is more likely to argue that Japanese men die from over-work (*karoshi*) not because of their commitment to their employers but because of the intense pressure placed on them by the hierarchy of company culture, and that while on the surface Japanese society might appear collegiate and cooperative, the reality provides much evidence to contradict this. Rather than a society based on social harmony, Japan experiences conflict arising from inflexible hierarchical structures and from the presence of diverse social groups (Sugimoto 2014). As a result of these different traditions, a variety of interpretations, more and less positive, of how youth are affected by socialisation processes can be found in the literature.

### **3.2 The condition of youth in Japanese society**

The literature on Japanese youth is found against the backdrop of a society that has undergone widespread changes over the last three decades, many though not all of which have stemmed from global economic shifts. The weakening of Japanese economic power as a result and the subsequent social consequences that have accrued can be traced to the late 1980s and early 1990s when the long period of post-war growth came to an end. These changes have been responsible for growing social dislocation and economic instability and have led to a society in which confidence has been significantly undermined as a result (Kingston 2013). This lack of confidence has particularly impacted on youth, and the society that young Japanese now enter as adults has been described as 'precarious' (Sakurai 2004). Chapter 1 introduced the contrasting experiences that moulded the youth of different generations (Sugimoto 2014). The ways in which the current generation has been formed and pressured hold clues as to how those who become university students today perceive their daily lives and the practices that fit within the markers of their collective identity.

Japanese society has also been described as one of increasing risk (Kingston 2013). Though not an uncommon aspect of societies around the world, it is a disturbing prospect for a nation that is traditionally highly risk-averse, as indicators such as high levels of savings and sluggish rates of consumer spending would suggest (OECD 2015). Moreover, the risk is falling inordinately upon youth and poorer sections of society where there are a growing number of youth problems. These include school withdrawal (*futoko*), school bullying (*ijime*), the lack of meaningful, secure employment (producing the 'freeter' generation, namely, young people employed on temporary contracts with few, if any, prospects or benefits), and the socially isolated youth who stay at home (*hikikomori*). These problems are witness to the precariousness of life for young Japanese people today (Goodman *et al.* 2012). In addition three additional factors have exacerbated this; declining government assistance particularly in terms of income support, increasing social atomisation, and sharply reduced

forms of help from the extended family (Kingston 2013).

A further factor that impacts on the place of youth in society is the growing poverty problem in the country. Japanese living standards are now below the OECD average, and its relative poverty rate, showing the percentage of those earning less than half the median income, stands at over 16 per cent – sixth highest out of 34 countries (OECD 2015). The consequence of this is that increasing numbers of families who wish to send their children to university are burdened with heavy financial commitments if they wish to fund education of a family member beyond the mandatory period. This places considerable stress upon students and is manifested in several ways. Many are forced to take part-time jobs working long, unsociable hours in order to obtain enough money for living expenses and illustrate one of the aspects of ‘struggle’ for nontraditional students especially (see Christie 2007; Leathwood and O’Connell 2003). Psychological effects include feelings of guilt at causing a significant drain on family monetary resources, as well as elements of denial that surface in forms of disengagement. Such pressures have clear implications for campus practices, as impacts affect many facets of campus users’ lives.

This insecurity has been further increased by the weak responses of government, schools and universities. Government action has primarily emphasised fiscal rather than social policies and is based on the current economic ideology of ‘Abenomics’ (after the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe) which argues that a more ‘economically efficient’ nation is the prerequisite for building a modern, stable society (Sugimoto 2014). While benefiting some, these policies have largely failed to help young people (amongst other groups) and have left many believing that Japan is now “a society whose concern with social justice has become tenuous in favor of economism” (*Ibid*: 256). Some commentators see the situation even more starkly, arguing that youth are likely to experience “bleak futures where their dreams and aspirations seem impossibly remote” (Kingston 2013: 87). Japanese youth themselves have deep misgivings. In the



International Survey of Youth Attitudes 2013, 79.4% of Japanese youth surveyed admitted to being worried about their future, compared to 60.9% of U.K. youth in the same survey (Japanese Cabinet Office, 2014). This situation is partly responsible for the growing social alienation and disconnection felt by Japanese youth, which has been variously described as the 'indifferent generation' (*shirake sedai*), 'passive' and 'depoliticised' (Kotani 2004). Establishment figures have called on youth to show flexibility, creativity and dynamism, while at the same time expressing doubt that young people are even able to call upon these attributes (White 2004). An increasingly evident feature of the gap that separates this generation from its elders is the perception of young Japanese who feel that the establishment does little to address their concerns (Ackermann 2012). These conditions offer a clear indication of the instability that runs through the lives of many young Japanese. Entering a university is not, for many, evidence of achieving a high-status position in society (as a majority of 18 year olds move into tertiary education) but rather marks a not-altogether-welcome new source of anxiety for which the chances of success often appear slim.

### **3.3 Japanese cultural characteristics central to university life**

In attempting a discussion of this subject, one problem becomes immediately evident, namely, the vast amount of literature that exists on Japanese sociology and anthropology, much of which is highly contested (Stevens 2015). I negotiate this problem in three ways. First, I have focused only on the literature dealing with Japanese youth cultural characteristics more likely to be reflected in, or pertinent to, everyday life. Cultural characteristics that deal with specific events such as rites relating to death, religious ceremonies, etc. are given less emphasis on account of being less likely to affect the daily activities of university students. While no cultural characteristic is dismissed, I endeavour to focus on those characteristics that seem to play some part in affecting the practices that

this particular group of Japanese performs. Second, I use the ethnographic data of Japanese university students that I have gathered as an indicator of which cultural elements are of relevance, for example, the cultural tendency of young Japanese to follow (and often, feel obliged to follow) the guidance of elders, not only adults, but in the case of university students, those in the years above. Third, I attempt to investigate how cultural characteristics can inform, or be informed by, those geographers, sociologists and philosophers who provide the theoretical basis for this thesis, in order to show how these theories may apply to practices conducted by Japanese specifically, and how common practices of Japanese may be mirrored in other cultures.

Sociological studies of Japan have evolved in a variety of directions over the last forty years, yet they have regularly identified a small number of enduring national features. In recent years, these features have taken on subtler forms metamorphosing from being composed of broad elements in inflexible models, for example, the contention that Japan is a culture built on group identity (Benedict 1946; 1974), that Japanese society is vertically structured (Nakane 1970), and that social relationships are based on varying degrees of dependency (Doi 1981), to a more eclectic mix with more nuanced contexts. As discussed above, these blanket descriptions of Japanese society have been challenged by the revisionist tradition, but have also been as a result of extensive ethnographic studies (Kondo 1990; Stevens 1997; Lee-Cumin 2004). Japanese are infused with Buddhist and Confucian values from China as well as the native Shinto religion and it is known that these cultural features have shaped opinions in many areas (Osborne 2003).

### **3.3.1 Concepts of ‘*amae*’ ‘*gaman*’ and the ‘*senpai-kohai*’ relationship**

In Chapter 2, I discussed the relevance of aspects of Bourdieu’s habitus, particularly how a ‘feel for the game’ is relevant as a kind of *meta-competence* to the performance of practices. This is especially important given the presence of the concept of *amae* in Japanese society. *Amae* is defined as “a dependence

upon the benevolence of others” (Doi 1974: 17), in which those in a position of being able to provide support, are encouraged to do so. Recipients of *amae* are allowed a measure of self-indulgence in their actions, particularly in domestic situations and therefore the concept also involves a degree of forbearance. *Amae* is important to practices because of its link to Japanese social structures in which subordinates, having no rights, relied on cultivating feelings of kindness and nurturance from those in positions above them (Wierzbicka 1991). In terms of the Japanese university, it is the reliance that students have on significant others, and the indulgence that these others will allow them as they learn from their individual and collective experiences. However, *amae* is very much a two-sided coin. In the university environment the recipients of *amae* – predominantly students – have to demonstrate that they are worthy of receiving *amae* and in order to maintain the possibility of benefiting from the benevolence of others, elements of symbolic capital have to be acknowledged and accepted even if recipients (students) perceive that position (of academic staff, for instance) has been unfairly exploited. For example, professors will often have students do menial tasks like photocopying or test marking for no remuneration even when such tasks take a considerable amount of time. As a result, *amae* is an active part of Japanese socialisation that serves to aid the maintenance of institutional harmony and, most importantly, have an influence on the practices that are conducted within it.

A second fundamental cultural norm is that of self-restraint (*gaman*), often associated with the related concept of determination (*ganbari*). It might appear that these two concepts have a degree of mutual exclusiveness, but to Japanese sensibilities, the two can be combined in the way we can say that it requires determination to exercise self-restraint. It has a prominent place in the experience of young Japanese because during the period of pre-tertiary education students are commonly exhorted to study or practice as hard as they can. The expression “*ganbare*” meaning, “Do your best!” is often heard as a form of encouragement for any task that students are required to complete. It can

even be used as a parting greeting between students as they finish a day on campus and return home (Davis and Ikeno 2002). Universities in which the education provided is largely simulated (to be discussed below), compensation is provided through extravagant events such as sport days and university festivals (McVeigh 2002). It is in the practices that make up these events in which aspects of self-restraint can often be seen, although, they are also visible in comments students make about their studies.

A further cultural value that becomes significant from secondary education onwards is the *sempai-kohai* system in which a clearly understood hierarchy based almost exclusively on age (though sometimes ability and experience) influences the relationships between students and other members of an institution. It is a cultural characteristic that continues to be perpetuated because it is attractive even to those at the bottom of the scale where access to the higher levels is guaranteed, for students at least, and for which in theory the benefits are bestowed without discrimination following the exercise of a little patience. In schools and universities, it is a system that is clearly marked, from 'freshman' to 'senior' although it has been argued that, with increasing diversity amongst student populations (more returnees and mature students) age is becoming less important as a marker of status (Davis and Ikeno 2002).

Engaging with cultural characteristics is a challenge for practice theories in the question of how their influences might be observable as part of practices, and how within the language of the 3E Model they might affect the dynamics of practices. How can notions of obligation and duty, group identification, harmonious social relationships, and status and hierarchy (Sugimoto 2005; Nakane 1970) be identified in routine activities? As a nation that is generally held to be strongly group-oriented, could the Japanese be more likely to respond to pro-environmental practices that are promoted via collective social interactions? Can cultural values help explain particular practices? To a large extent, cultural characteristics are relevant to the understanding of the *meanings* of practices,

though they can still influence the materials and competences connected to a practice. As a result, the cultural tendencies of particular groups or nations may contribute more to the study of comparative practices. Nevertheless, the socialisation of Japanese and the cultural perspectives that define them play an important role in their daily practices, no less so on the university campus.

### **3.4 The status of Japanese education**

In this section, I consider the role assigned to higher education following the end of the Second World War, and how, following the bursting of the economic bubble that witnessed the climax of Japan's rapid development, universities have found it difficult to adjust to new conditions. The moribund nature of tertiary education is the focus of the next part and is followed by a discussion of the effects. One effect common to many campuses in Japan is the absence of processes and structures capable of providing meaningful intellectual challenges to students. Instead, students are cosseted as much as possible so that they can be pushed through a system because, in the end, it is what they, their parents and society expect. However there are cases where, even when circumstances strongly indicate that it is against their interests, students are pressured to complete their degree programmes in order that the legitimization of the system can be maintained.

When the current education system was established in 1947, it was primarily seen as a means of preparing young people for entry into employment. It was the state's clear intention, working with key corporate entities, to have at hand a large pool of workers ready to contribute to "the general goal of economic national statism" (McVeigh 2002: 38). To secure and maintain this, government control over curriculum content up until the end of high school was deemed necessary, with one consequence being the stifling of student creativity and independent thinking (Kumagai 1996). This remains a basic feature of the

system. As well as inhibitive government involvement, pre-tertiary education is also characterised by a strict disciplinary regime which not only monitors exam performances, but also student dress, manners, and use of honorific language (*keigo*). The reward for students completing this period of strict training is a period of relative freedom at university where forms of mild resistance, such as dyed hair and lax attendance at classes, are tolerated. These students find themselves temporarily released from the burden of society – a period that one observer has called ‘counterdisciplining’ – in which the attention of society is diverted until the corporate world is ready to receive them (McVeigh 2002: 180). A major function of the university then has become that of a depository to keep young people until they are ready for the employment market (Refsing 1992).

The period of secondary education in Japan comprises compulsory junior high school from twelve to fifteen years, and high school from fifteen to eighteen years, which though optional, is mandatory in all but name. Research has shown that primary school education places significant emphasis on traditional Japanese values (Hendry 1986; Tobin 1989) in what Holloway (2000) calls ‘relationship-oriented’ schools, and which concentrate on ‘building the children’s ability to form relationships with peers and learning basic class routines’ (Aspinal 2015: 171). Whilst the secondary sector endeavours to maintain these values, the significant shift toward strictly controlled, fact-dominated classes (*Ibid*) including an almost obsessive concern with particular testing formats (Park 2014) has led to strong criticism. Higher education has been a particular target for such criticism because of the argument that Japanese university graduates are singularly ill equipped for moving out from under the protective educational umbrella following graduation (Kingston 2014; Honda 2004).

### **3.4.1 Socialisation in pre-tertiary education**

In this part I discuss three major elements of the socialising process that takes place in Japanese secondary education. It is important to consider this at length because the regimented nature of Japanese pre-tertiary education ingrains a

number of habits and understandings that students bring with them when they enter university. The period of pre-tertiary education starts from junior high school until the end of high school, that is, from aged twelve until eighteen and plays a major part in forming the university student. The three aspects I discuss arise out of the obsession in secondary education with academic testing and the hierarchical positioning that is the central concern for students, parents and institutions. These networks and communities are central to the development of socio-educational practices that continue until the end of tertiary education. First, after a brief look at the types of tests used (following Park 2014), I discuss how a narrow concept of assessing academic ability, namely, the aptitude for rote learning, affects the self-actualisation of students with the result that many come to perceive academic activity (and by extension, learning generally) as an inaccessible, elitist tool of differentiation and oppression. These evaluations are often quickly reached but subsequently, slowly or never adjusted, and as a result, serve to cement students into particular levels that have an impact on the kind of high school or university it is deemed within their ability to reach (*Ibid*). Second, I comment on how the classification of students in this way is supported by a variety of socialisation process within school which society reinforces through its acceptance of hierarchical positioning. This has long-term social consequences including a sense that an individual's future role in society is largely determined for them at this stage. Finally, I examine how the regimented daily routine found in many high schools encourages an often negative, residual reaction among students that carries over to the university environment.

As implied above, students are exposed to an intensive process of 'educational stratification' (Rohlen 1983: 121) on entry to secondary school. This centres, unsurprisingly, on academic testing, which represents a powerful instrument of egalitarian policy in education and is done with scientific precision. The tests are constructed as either multiple choice or short responses, for which mostly unequivocal answers are expected. Even where students are asked to write about social issues, scope for ambiguity and interpretation is carefully eliminated

in order to assess students as 'fairly' as possible.<sup>3</sup> This form of learning is central to the idea of promoting egalitarian education in Japan, reflecting the belief among educators that there is a direct causal, and measurable connection between the amount of material memorised and the effort made by an individual student (Refsing 1992).

The first major element of socialisation in secondary education is how, for the purpose of differentiating between students, success at rote learning is conflated with academic aptitude generally. Consequently, from junior high school on, the boundaries within which 'an able student' can fall are predicated on the specific ability of memorisation, whilst downplaying other assessment procedures and marginalising individual differences. Few students are positively reinforced by test results, while many experience the beginnings of disengagement and alienation.

Within the 3E Model employed by this thesis, how might we view this method of education, and the 'community' that promotes it? How much is this the catalyst for particular practices and the stimulus for university campus practices? There are several points to consider. First, whilst knowledge may be egalitarian, material access to the knowledge that is required for passing exams to specific Japanese tertiary institutions certainly is not. While textbooks, libraries, and websites provide a common and universally accessible foundation, it is the private and closely guarded supplementary material of higher-level schools (and to some extent, cram schools), which emphasises the importance of materiality of knowledge in Japanese secondary education. Second, this materiality links with competence; not only of the students themselves, but also the skills that are brought to bear by teachers in assessing the knowledge gaps of individual students as well as the most promising areas of study. Schools are differentiated

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<sup>3</sup> In one case told to me, a student prepared for a question on the issue of euthanasia by using an equal number of supporting and opposing arguments supplied by her teacher, which were then rote learned (Field Diary).



by their ability to provide knowledge of 'quality', i.e., the knowledge that leads to passing entrance exams for particular schools (Refsing 1992). From a wider perspective, echoes of this inequality of knowledge can be seen in Florida (2002) who posited that people in cities were likely to have higher levels of education. Students are able to enter higher-level universities not only as a result of their own efforts but also through a combination of quality materials (including access to them) and competences, again, not only their own but those of significant others. Third, as implied above, students with the aptitude for rote learning are those for whom the meaning of education, schooling and academic pursuit has the most resonance. Both virtuous and vicious circles result from the dynamic relationship of these elements working together.

The second major element of socialisation relates to how the data from this narrow assessment procedure is interpreted and used to establish hierarchical positioning. One way this is done is by using tests that are not criterion-referenced. In theory, criterion-referenced tests would allow for any number of students to be deemed academically 'successful' provided they had met the curriculum objectives of the subject for which they were being tested. Rather, students are graded according to a standardised bell curve with the large majority of examinees placed in the middle, and small numbers at each end. 'Successful' students in academic terms are therefore narrowly defined and restricted to the top percentiles (Park 2014).

Whilst this form of assessment is not uncommon in education, the perception that this creates in Japan is highly significant, and the consequences far-reaching. First, it does much to undermine the legitimacy of other socio-educational goals and broader understandings of what constitutes valuable educational and learning processes. Second, these assessments not only impact upon the students' understanding of their own academic abilities, but also translate into the wider school environment, and in the formation of social relations between students. Le Tendre (1984) has argued that it is during this

period that hierarchical relationships between Japanese students come to the forefront, initiated not only by age differences but also as a result of academic stratification. Students learn to place themselves in a hierarchy based not only on academic ability but also on social standing within their schools. These processes are powerful because the idea that assessing students on (supposed) objective criteria corresponds to the most equitable form of assessment is widely accepted among school administrations, parents and the education authorities in Japan (Kumagai 1996). After many years, Japanese students entering university have a strong sense of their place in the educational hierarchy and, once assigned to a particular level come to passively accept it. Unsurprisingly, this demotivating realisation leads students to disengage from the learning process, with consequent implications for campus practices related to academic activity.

The influence of this academic assessment and testing however has other social consequences beyond separating students according to academic ability and assigning them a social position within school. The placing of students in this way is used to encourage students to accept that hierarchical positioning will impact their adult lives and define their identities (Park 2014). Hierarchical positioning is not just a part of the internal structure of individual schools, but also exists between schools. Commercially produced mock exams are used by students to predict which universities they have a chance to enter, however this widely accepted measure (known as *hensachi* – ‘deviation score’) is also used to rank schools that have a good reputation for getting students into them. Further, schools and universities increasingly engage in activities akin to headhunting and offer unconditional places to promising students based on their grades in the first term of their final year (Sugimoto 2014). A further issue is the custom of making early assessments that become very difficult to change and serves to disadvantage students who mature later, or have different (un-assessed) skill sets. Park (2014: 94) quotes a student who, in his first year at junior high school laments what he believes to be his lost opportunity to get himself classified as an academically promising student. As a result, though a growing proportion of

eighteen-year-olds become university students many are resigned to having their academic ability already determined and that tertiary education has little to offer other than a route to employment.

A further aspect of socialisation that reinforces the educational hierarchy is found in the careers guidance services that high schools provide (*shido*). As well as general guidance, schools establish contacts with companies for the purpose of helping students into jobs or universities. Once again, particular high schools will have access to the 'better' universities and established companies. In addition, Park (*Ibid*) has argued that social class also exerts influence upon student perceptions of their academic ability and future occupational aspirations. Unsurprisingly, students from working class families have been found more likely to resign themselves to a low academic position.

The third element of socialisation is that which occurs as a result of the daily life that reinforces the socialisation of students into socio-educational hierarchies. One way this is entrenched is through the regimentation of school life, facilitated by Japanese attitudes regarding the importance of group identification (Kumagai 1996). The superficial aspects of equality that suffuse daily life in secondary education serves to accentuate the differences that are emphasised through academic evaluation. For example, students are almost universally required to wear uniforms, and rules regarding behaviour in school are highly exacting. Beyond the concern over test scores, competition amongst students is often deflected into a focus on self-discipline. After-school clubs spend large amounts of time working on micro aspects of a particular activity – for example, students belonging to tennis clubs will practice the same particular shot for several hours at a time. In addition, emphasis placed on training is seen as an end in itself, being a shared activity that has involved cooperation with members of a group. A member of the university football club told me that he enjoys the training more than playing in competitive matches (Field Diary). However self-discipline often carries with it the expectation of unquestioning obedience to seniors that

sometimes leads to physical abuse by teachers and bullying among students (Aspinal 2014). When entering university, habits deriving from regimentation and self-disciplining experiences are often evident in the conduct of campus practices.

### ***3.4.2 Background to higher education in Japan***

Higher education in post war Japan grew as a reaction to government economic policy and the demands of the corporate sector for a compliant workforce in order to rebuild the country. Before and after the 1980s when the country's economic decline became evident, perceptions of tertiary education were markedly different. These changes were the result of economic, social and demographic causes. Tertiary education in Japan predominantly takes place in private universities, which host 80% of all registered university students (MEXT 2011). Consequently this sector has borne the brunt of the changes, although, being largely conservative in outlook, they are most likely to resist or fail to assimilate such changes effectively. In contrast, national and public universities have largely avoided the effects of these changes (Akabayashi 2015).

As stated above, following the end of the Second World War, the primary purpose of higher education in Japan was to produce young adult graduates who were ready to be diligent and hard-working employees in the support of the country's capitalist development. This was achieved through extensive state intervention and attention to economic interests (McVeigh 2002). Universities played their part in legitimising and entrenching the hierarchical systems that began at junior high school and centred on academic abilities and which aimed at channeling students, through academic classification, to particular universities and companies. As a consequence, a major role of the university once a student entered a 'suitable' institution was to act as a 'depository' that would complete the socialisation process and turn out a graduate who would be able to adjust quickly and efficiently to the work environment (Refsing 1992). The healthy economic climate meant that the adjustment from education to employment for

those completing their schooling was a relatively smooth and efficient one. It relied not only on a system that allowed students to graduate in March of a calendar year and begin employment the following month through the so-called 'periodical blanket recruitment', but also on a highly developed and mutually beneficial relationship between schools, universities and companies that facilitated graduate placement into company positions (Honda 2004). In this period of rapid economic growth, educational institutions, in tandem with government and the business sector, successfully played their part in serving the national interest by providing the human resources to power the growth. The expediency and superficiality of the relationship was rarely questioned during Japan's period of rapid development. The emphasis on preparing adults for employment came at the expense of other legitimate and educational objectives for higher education, but was viewed as an acceptable price to pay for the economic benefits that accrued (McVeigh 2002).

The end of the 'bubble' period marked the beginning of great economic and social changes in the country that brought an end to this expedient relationship. As the economy weakened and the consequent social ill effects turned into chronic problems, it became clear that the role of universities as mere depositories was inadequate and that the system of transition from education to employment had become ineffective and outmoded. These large-scale changes in society have precipitated an existential crisis for many higher education institutions, which are now struggling to redefine their role in society. Unfortunately, the causes of these problems, (some originating in external economic and social aspects, with others being internal to the nature of education in Japan), currently militate against meaningful responses to the crisis, which have, to this point, involved papering over cracks rather than any engagement in wholesale reform. I will now examine these causes.

### ***3.4.3 Causes of Japan's moribund tertiary sector***

As might be expected, a primary cause of the negative impact on higher

education arises largely from the economic changes to which the country has been exposed. First, as the economy has shrunk and businesses have chosen (or been forced) to restructure, there are no longer enough full-time, contracted jobs for graduates to fill.<sup>4</sup> A further squeeze on graduate recruitment has been the growing tendency for companies to promote from within rather than provide more expensive on-the-job training needed for new recruits (Sugimoto 2014). Consequently, competition among university graduates for stable, permanent positions in companies has become intense. Unfortunately, because of the hierarchical positioning of secondary and tertiary institutions, many graduates from universities that are outside the elite few are put at an additional and serious disadvantage from what are essentially discriminatory practices as companies, using the hierarchical 'university designation system' cherry pick from the more highly regarded institutions. This system is so central to considerations of employment that around 50% of firms in Japan refuse to consider recruiting from any but the top institutions (*Ibid*). This has led to large numbers of youth having to accept temporary, part-time contract work, to the extent that workers in these low-status, unskilled occupations (the so-called *freeters*) now comprises 40% of the workforce (*Ibid*). A second factor having origins in the changed economic circumstances is the demand by the country's economic leaders for more diverse and flexible graduates. Companies are no longer merely looking for graduates whom they can shape to fit their own particular corporate culture, they claim, but are also seeking employees who will bring the benefit of specific skills that businesses can quickly utilise.

A perceived major advantage of receiving a tertiary education, promoted by the institutions and organisations that make up the Japanese educational process, is the widespread belief in the value of obtaining qualifications regardless of their

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<sup>4</sup> Of course, the economic downturn has also had a negative impact upon the country's industrial sector where numbers of blue-collar workers have similarly declined. The effect of this has been more direct on high school leavers seeking employment rather than university graduates (Park 2014).

actual merit. This 'educational credentialism' (McVeigh 2002; Sugimoto 2014) is a significant motivator in the pressure brought to bear by parents upon sometimes-reluctant children to attend university, and the sense of grievance that some students harbour as a result of the need to jump through a series of often arbitrary, institutional hoops. Many young Japanese have experienced this sense of dissatisfaction (White 1987; Lee-Cunin 2004). The supposed value of gaining status qualifications is affirmed in several ways: through the ranking of universities (according to prestige rather than research output or academic attainment), the association of particular companies with universities (which leads to students applying for disciplines for which they have no interest in order to enter a particular university and, in time, a particular company), and the action of parents and students who attempt to enter certain high schools that have a high success rate of getting its students into reputable universities (Sugimoto 2014). Attempts to get companies to interview potential recruits without requiring them to reveal which university they attended have failed (clearly because it is addressing a symptom rather than a cause of the problem), and the pursuit of inappropriate credentials for their own sake continues to drive much educational activity, despite widespread acknowledgement of the problem.

Other causes, not directly linked to the changing economic circumstances, have also had a highly significant effect on higher education. First, demographic data show that, as well as becoming a 'greying' society Japan's population of 18-year-olds is steadily declining. Following the peak year of 1993 that saw 810,000 new entrants to university, numbers have continued to fall (MEXT 2011). Moreover, although the number of 18 year olds leveled out in 2008, it is set to further decline after 2018 (*Ibid*). Second, there was until very recently, a remarkable growth in private higher education institutions rising from 274 in 1971, to 589 in 2008 (Asonuma and Urata 2015) despite the fact that since 2007 the number of places available at university has roughly matched the number of high school students applying (MEXT 2011). Today, the number of universities stands at over 700 (UniRank 2017). These two conditions, namely, declining

numbers of 18-year-olds and an over-abundance of tertiary institutions, together with the economic changes, have had several effects on institutions and students, including the ever-wider casting of the recruitment net in order to fill spaces. To some extent this reflects the discussion of the 'new' university students in the UK who are partly defined as comprising students from groups who would not normally consider attending university (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003). The effects on Japanese institutions and students I consider next.

#### ***3.4.4 Effects on institutions and potential students***

An argument can be made for regarding universities as victims of historical circumstance in the way that, post war, they were exhorted to provide socialised, well-adjusted future workers for the growing economy. Their role was determined by the economic conditions of the time, and by government/business influence and pressure rather than considerations of how tertiary education might serve more diverse and enriching social, cultural and economic, roles in the country's development (Hendry 2012). Today, under quite different socio-economic conditions, universities face two major challenges. First, they are once again under pressure from the government and corporate sector, this time, to initiate major reforms in order to supply graduating students with more appropriate and specific skill sets, including greater social skills (Akabayashi 2015). Second, in the light of declining numbers of eighteen-year-olds, many are fighting for institutional survival. These two challenges are intimately linked as focus on survival in the short term has mostly taken preference over reforms to promote long-term educational quality.

The dwindling number of students has brought about intense competition amongst universities as they attempt to secure enough entrants to keep their institutions solvent. Additional pressure is brought to bear because each university has to achieve a minimum enrolment if it is to receive a government subsidy (Akabayashi 2015). In this, the hierarchical system wields a largely negative effect on smaller, less well-known institutions. As stated above, it is



common for universities to have close relationships with particular high schools whose teachers, in advising students on which tertiary institutions to choose, tend to promote the universities which are perceived to hold an equivalent status. However, as numbers decline, universities are attempting to make up for the shortfall by developing links with more schools, generally further down the hierarchy, causing a squeeze that gets tighter lower down the scale. The consequence of this has been a growth in aggressive marketing by universities, including weekend open campuses held almost every month, regular visits to high schools by department heads and administrators to give demonstration lessons (*mogi jugyo*) and make sales pitches, and increased outreach, generally through mailshots, to parents of both current and potential students, all of which, intensifies competition even further.

Whilst it might be imagined that competition would stimulate movement towards greater quality in the system, this has not happened. Rather, there have been two negative consequences. First, as the large majority of private universities struggle to attract students, claims for what they are able to provide have become increasingly hyperbolic. In some cases, universities do not have the capacity to provide the students with the advantages and opportunities they claim to offer.<sup>5</sup> Second, as a result of the attention given to recruiting, efforts to improve educational standards have been perfunctory. Universities have responded with, at best, piecemeal short-term efforts, and at worst, superficial window-dressing, for example, in the use of buzzwords for department and course names ('global' being particularly popular), to attract students and government funding (Nguyen *et al.* 2005; Akabayashi 2015). At the same time, despite a major effort by the government to deregulate higher education in 2004,

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<sup>5</sup> Students recruited for a two-year Master's programme in this university's 'Global College' found that, in one semester, there were no available courses for them to take in which they could obtain credit. This situation placed them under pressure because they were then required to earn two years' worth of credits within three semesters if they wished to complete the programme on schedule. Though anecdotal, this gives a sense of the level of concern of some institutions to reach their quota.

institutions that seek genuine reform continue to have their hands tied by still being required to follow detailed regulations concerning course content and department structuring (Akabayashi 2015). Moreover, government financial support in the form of general subsidies has continued to decline since 1985 (Oba 2005; MEXT 2011). The struggle to maintain student numbers is both a cause and an effect of the poor efforts to provide a more appropriate form of tertiary education. Universities that are making genuine attempts to improve their standards are hampered by the ‘university designation system’ that continues to favour institutions on their perceived status and not the quality of education they endeavour to provide (Asonuma and Urata 2015).

#### ***3.4.5 Implications for campus practices and sustainability***

How this might impact on the practices of new students can be broadly imagined. First, for most potential university entrants, the concerted preparation and concentrated discipline of the past is no longer a prerequisite. The falling numbers of youth and an over supply of institutions means that with the exception of the top thirty or so institutions, real competition for university places has largely disappeared. Entry to a university can now be a relatively easy task with the period of “examination hell” that many (though not all) aspiring university entrants went through in the days when choice was more restricted and focused on elite institutions are now the experience of only very few young people. Second, as the overall number of potential students decreases, entry requirements for all but a few universities have dropped, resulting in greater numbers of students entering tertiary education who lack both the commitment to the institution that recruits them, and the social skills and study skills generally seen as the necessary tools for university life. In addition, there are increasing numbers of students who find the non-compulsory routine and the increased freedom and self-responsibility difficult to cope with. This is particularly true at the lower end of the hierarchy where “the gap between students’ readiness and the school’s expectation is the largest” (Akabayashi 2015: 19). This situation invites contrast with the discussion in the UK regarding ‘dumbing down’ as a

result of the policy efforts to expand the consumption of higher education (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003). Indeed, in Japan, it is an open secret that many, if not most, private universities will now accept any applicant, provided that they are not perceived as potentially disruptive or anti-social.<sup>6</sup> Third, although the belief remains dominant that a university education is the only acceptable route to secure a respectable occupation, there is also greater scepticism among students that universities can in fact fulfil this 'core' function. This conflict is an aspect of the 'simulated education' (McVeigh, 2002 discussed below) in which universities engage. Fourth, as the generation of youth that has been the first to grow up in the ubiquitous world of IT and the diversity that access to it provides, there is an increasing degree of ennui with the traditional form of much of the university experience. As a result of these factors, we can conjecture that for some students expectations for engaging in daily practices do not get fulfilled, for others there are practices that present a level of hardship and frustration, while still others conduct practices that cannot be comprehended by the institutions that accommodate them. A university campus has always been a place in which some level of conflict is played out through daily practices, for example, in the resistance to academic demands, the expectations of academic and administrative staff, and the social frictions that inevitably occur among young people who are competitive. However, in the context of Japan, the growing misalignment between the survival strategies of universities, the expectations of economic actors, and not least, the aspirations of an increasingly wider range of 'nontraditional' students (Christie 2007) means that the effects on campus practices are likely to exhibit greater instability and change.

Two major implications for the sustainability of practices in Japanese universities

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<sup>6</sup> Until recently, professors who interviewed prospective students and who awarded an aggregate score of less than 70% to a high school applicant were required to meet personally with the chancellor to explain their decision. Rather than incur the implied disapproval or offer reasons to justify the award of a low score, professors preferred to acquiesce in the convention that a score of 70% was the minimum that could be given, thus allowing the interviewed student to be classed as a 'successful' candidate.

arise from these points. First, with falling student numbers and an over supply of institutions, many universities, in struggling to remain in existence, are less likely to consider how to make their campuses more sustainable, especially if such action undermines their recruiting power, for example, when sustainable use of campus facilities and services require the sacrifice of convenience. Second, in the case of Japan, where 'nontraditional' students are predominantly young people whose identification with the traditions of university is weak (along with a commensurate doubt in the ability of the institution to fulfil its perceived role), it is relevant to ask how committed students will be in their campus practices to principles of sustainability, especially efforts that do not emanate from the students themselves.

To conclude this section, the malaise affecting tertiary education in Japan today has come about because of its inability to adapt to changed economic and social conditions. It continues to suffer from the consequences of assigning higher education the role of employment agency in which the "boundary between education/schooling and employment/economics is blurred, and learning spaces and sites are dissolved" (McVeigh 2002: 10). Major government reform aimed at allowing universities greater freedom have been unsuccessful as universities continue to be hindered by government restrictions and bureaucracy. In its role as an employment agency, Japanese higher education used to represent a guaranteed route to a permanent, stable position in a reputable company. Now that a university degree is no longer seen as such, universities have lost a measure of credibility. Tertiary education continues to be in a sclerotic state because of historical factors (difficulty in changing existential purpose from that of a depository) and social factors (institutional survival in the face of over supply of universities and the lower population of 18 year olds). Such threats have caused a conservative reaction manifested in short-termism, and, in the face of government restraints and unfavourable conditions, a lack of will and ability to implement meaningful reforms.

#### **3.4.6 The geographies of students and campus life**

The geographies of students, and the connected geographies of education and campus life provide the direction for some of the analysis of student campus practices that is the focus of this thesis. Student geographies have over the last twenty years seen an expansion in these areas of interest together with the use of more qualitative research methods (Holloway *et al.* 2010). This has occurred for several reasons. First, the recognition that education is not simply a result of *inter alia* social and economic processes, but that research on education can also be employed to question and speculate upon these processes (*Ibid*). Second, the highly significant consequences of the neo-liberalisation of education has led to research on 'new' universities to cater for growing numbers of students (see Read *et al.* 2003). Whilst the contexts differ, these geographies have informed several of the areas explored in this research. For example, the literature on 'nontraditional' students (for example, Christie 2007) has provided a concept that can be used to describe Japanese students who might not have considered university on account of their academic record and students who, in the past, would have sought employment rather than enter higher education. Of most significance to this thesis has been the shift to attaching greater significance to the student population and its agency (Holton and Riley 2013), and the voices of students whose practices inhabit the campus (Holloway *et al.* 2010).

In response to the call of Holloway *et al.* to perceive students as " subjects rather than objects of education" (*Ibid*: 583), student geographies have also covered the experiences of students at university. Whilst the experiences and discipline that students have acquired in their secondary education in Japan plays an important role in forming their expectations of university life, research in the UK suggests that early experiences at university are also highly formative (Leese 2010). This thesis shows how the understandings that new entrants have about appropriate, expected or possible roles contribute to the what, why and how of campus practices. Of course perceptions get negotiated as students confront

the reality of particular campus environments, but it is reasonable to assume that the experiences of high school and early impressions of university will colour how they relate to the university campus.

A further relevant area of research in student geographies concerns the concept of transition and how researchers have made use of Bourdieu's habitus (1990) and concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Using habitus, Holdsworth (2006) explores the ways in which students adjust to the new environment of university, especially relevant for Japanese youth who neither envisaged becoming a university student and/or whose social skills make the transition a challenging one. Similarly, Leese (2010: 241) investigated how 'new' students having little cultural capital in terms of "social class, family background and commitment to education" found transitions more difficult, and as a result suffered feelings of isolation. Students experiencing these difficulties in transition will likely be less engaged with many campus practices and might seek to minimise their time there.

### ***3.4.7 Institutional simulation***

In this section I discuss Brian McVeigh's argument that the student experience of tertiary education in Japan exists within a context of 'institutional simulation' (2002: 15), by which he means that, despite the appearance of intellectual activity, little genuine academic work or development takes place. Rather, what does occur at universities represents an elaborate and highly developed performance that serves a social rather than an academic purpose, and, this mannered and routine activity I argue, influences the practices of campus users. Although some degree of institutional simulation can be found in almost any organization, I go on to contend that simulation is central to tertiary education in Japan and the student experience of university, and examine the reasons why. Following on from this I explore the connection between student identity and practices, including how high school experiences have led many to the view that intellectual activity is elitist and often merely a tool for differentiating between

students and for marginalising them. Finally, I look at how these disparate parts contribute to the forms that campus practices take: how simulated education, negative associations with learning, reasons for being a university student, and the particular environment of the university campus relate to the materials, competences and meanings of the practices that students actually conduct.

As discussed above, tertiary education in Japan post war was directed towards the perceived needs of the state and the economy. While Japanese education generally has been successful in producing well-socialised young adults, it has not achieved this through a stimulating and diverse tertiary educational system. Rather, it has been through a mechanical, inflexible approach reminiscent of Taylorism, operating through a form of 'institutional simulation' involving "high levels of mendaciousness [where] students, instructors and administrators pretend they are engaging in higher education" (*ibid*). Although tertiary education is the primary exponent of simulated education, supportive processes through all levels of education, as well as political and economic influences have aided it. Similarly, the educational methods that emphasize rote learning and the passing of tests, which reinforces the understanding that the acquisition of knowledge is passive and a stage along the road to future employment, have provided it with additional support.

Simulation is institutionalised in many ways. In university administration, for example, the key objective is to ensure that all students graduate, therefore administrative procedures allow for students who are close to expulsion to receive numerous 'last chances' to secure the necessary number and category of credits. Likewise, academic staff is expected to provide a relatively easy passage for students and to exercise leniency over assignment submissions and course requirements, especially with fourth year students. Simulation engenders a low level of institutional identification on the part of students therefore universities seek to compensate for this by pressuring students to take part in school festivals to stimulate (and simulate) university spirit. McVeigh argues that

such events aim at providing legitimacy for institutions in what he calls a law of ritual compensation (*ibid*: 144). This identifies an inverse relationship between genuine academic activity and the formality placed upon rituals such as matriculation and graduation. The less *bona fide* an institution's academic programmes are, the more its students will be compensated by the spectacle and ceremony of lavish occasions. These occasions are also used to paint on some much needed veneer of authority for, in an echo of how students in high school are required to bow and greet teachers when entering a room, students at matriculation and graduation, this time in their specific departments rather than in their classes, are similarly ordered to stand, bow and sit (in language reminiscent of military commands) when degrees are conferred.

It might be asked why students do not offer any serious resistance to simulated education. There are a number of reasons. First, the strong sense of group identity that Japanese possess makes it difficult for students to openly resist (Kotani 2004). Students who enter university are those who have learned to inure themselves to the often inconsequential and aimless routines of school life and who, moreover, know that it is in their interests to be passive and obedient. In other words, they learn to conform (McVeigh 2002: 100). Second, and related to this, grudging acceptance is the common way for students to avoid standing out from others. Students who speak out in class, or offer opinions, run the risk of being intimidated. Third, as most students are products of the Japanese educational system, they are, quite naturally, unable to conceive of different ways of being a student. This issue is highlighted in the periodic debates on the difficulties that 'returnees' have in assimilating back into Japanese society after a lengthy period outside the country. Returnees re-entering the Japanese school system are often victims of bullying and abuse, and experience frustration and stress at the minimal freedom they have to express themselves, in both senses, as students (see Kanno 2003; Ford 2009). Fourth, with a greater awareness of future uncertainty and the difficulty in securing worthwhile career paths, students are cautious about being a source of resistance, particularly in seminar courses



which are compulsory for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years, and where seminar teachers are perceived to have a powerful influence in helping students find employment. Fifth, many students believe that entering a university allows them to enjoy what is traditionally a time of greater freedom, especially from the pressures that society exerts during the two periods of compulsory schooling and employment that sandwich the university years. McVeigh (2002: 118-120) calls this a time of 'counter-discipline' (in contrast to the disciplining period up to the end of high school, and the 're-disciplining' period that follows entry into employment). Nevertheless, resistance does exist and manifests in a variety of minor ways, which I discuss in Chapter 8 in my analysis of student resistance within the context of practices.

Lack of effective measures to address educational shortcomings has resulted in the entrenchment of the debilitating factors that make entry into working life such a stressful experience for many. For the large population of youth who become university students, their doubts that even a college degree might not be enough to secure them a worthwhile occupation is a factor in understanding the way that they use the campus. To reiterate, Japanese society today is one that offers young people little in terms of support, as shrinking government services provide minimal help and institutions of education lack the leadership and/or resources to make the changes necessary to benefit young people.

### **3.5 Conclusions**

The context in which Japanese university students live out their daily lives is not, of course, restricted to the institution to which they belong, nor to the campus on which they conduct their university lives. This chapter has shown that perceptions of youth (from both young people themselves and other sections of society) and the particular social conditions arising as a result of national and international factors in the political, economic and social spheres, have both had

notable effects. Even more significant for the cohort of Japanese university students, the experiences that make up their educational history have been crucial. Some of these effects are visible in the manner in which practices are performed and will be referred to in the analysis chapters.

This thesis extends the understanding of Japanese university students in a number of ways. First, it adds to the ‘revisionist’ writings on Japan, neither glorifying nor bashing the country, it places the activities of students at a middle-ranking university in the context of the economic, social and political uncertainty in which it is forced to react. This work also responds to the call made by Holloway *et al.* (2010) for more qualitative research in this area and so provides a depth of detail that is not present in recent, current literature (for an exception, see Lee-Cunin 2004).

Second, in the literature on Japan in English, a large majority of the work in the revisionist tradition covers the problems of Japanese society and education from a wide viewpoint (Kingston 2011; 2014; Babb 2015; Sugimoto 2014). There is some literature that views these problems through the voices and concerns of specific groups of people (Goodman *et al.* 2012; Matthews and White 2004 [on youth]; Park 2014 [on high school students]; Nakano 2005 [on community volunteers] are exceptions) but none that focuses on the activities of one of the country’s largest youth groups, namely university students, as they confront the challenges of Japanese society under an established neo-liberal government that is instituting significant social change.

Third, much literature on Japanese society speaks to the attitudes and values of its people and how they regard the society they inhabit. It is perhaps natural that a lot of attention of the literature on Japan that is in English focuses on ‘unique’ Japanese cultural characteristics, and often interprets the activities of differing groups primarily through these prominent cultural landmarks. By employing practice theory, this predisposed form of analysis is reduced. Little work has

been done which focuses on the actual activities of groups, and nothing that employs practice theory for the purpose of developing insights. This thesis makes a contribution to the literature on practice theory applications in an eastern milieu. While acknowledging that cultural aspects are useful as an aid to analysis, the starting point has been the practices of the subject population itself rather than using cultural characteristics as the starting point.

In the next chapter I turn to the particular university campus in which data was collected and the methodology employed in its gathering.

## Chapter 4: Methodology and case study

The data that make up this thesis have been gathered using an ethnographic approach. In later chapters these data are described, and interpreted, using concepts and language of practice theory, mainly but not exclusively those that are employed by the 3E Model (Shove *et al.* 2012). As a result, campus practices of Japanese students are described as being made up of elements (see Chapter 2) that form bundles and complexes, establish links with each other, and are performed by practitioners (*ibid*). Following the interpretation of data the intention is to explore how practice theory generally, and the 3E Model specifically, could be developed and applied productively to a Japanese context. As discussed in Chapter 1, the stimulus for this research is the global problem of human-induced climate change to which daily practices in the form of inconspicuous consumption, contributes. In the same chapter I also provided a justification for why the cohort of Japanese university students should warrant serious study. A greater understanding of how the practices that this group carries out can lead to more informed ways of reducing energy use, consumption and waste as part of long-term, sustainable responses (Shove and Spurling 2013). The practices of students engaged in tertiary education who represent a large proportion of all Japanese youth and who, moreover spend much of their lives between the ages of 18 and 22 years on a campus, offers an opportunity for understanding how practices are conducted and, consequently, how they might be changed.

In this chapter I present the reasons why an ethnographic approach was the most appropriate research method and describe the data gathering activities. First, I discuss why this approach was adopted and discuss some of the issues that arise from this decision (4.1). I argue that ethnography was the most appropriate and effective means to employ for the understanding of practices on account of my experience as a long-term observer of the community of students

/ campus users during my years as a member of the academic staff. I describe the circumstances surrounding the context of the research including my position as an employee of the university that provides the location for the study. Next, in section 4.2, I introduce the university at which the research took place, including a description of the campus. The campus is the backdrop in which the practices under analysis take place and therefore, as a crucial domain, I discuss in detail two complementary definitions that include not only its physical dimensions but also its social components. I then look at how practices are identified as the object of analysis, the range of practices that are found on campus, and discuss the challenges that emerge in observing them (4.3). Following this, in section 4.4, I discuss the methodological approach for explicating the practices that take place at JIU. I next go on to describe the particular data-gathering methods I employed (4.5) namely, a field diary, guided campus walks ('go-alongs') and interviews before going on to discuss the relevant ethical issues that employment of these methods involved (4.6). I offer some conclusions in the final section.

#### **4.1 Employing the ethnographic approach with the 3E Model**

The choice of ethnography as the method for data collection for this thesis was made for two major reasons: first, given the circumstances that pertained to myself as a researcher and the audience I wished to study the approach was the most appropriate; and second, there are several points of connection between ethnography and practice theory which I argue makes their association beneficial. In the following paragraphs I discuss each of these reasons fully.

Given that conducting ethnographic research requires the researcher to have appropriate access to the location and the people who are the focus of the study, my position at the university provided me with several immediately apparent advantages regarding the crucial aspects of what Reimer calls 'opportunistic

research' (1977 in Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 28). First, in this situation, ethnography is most effective for facilitating the gathering of data, particularly in the observation of students as they move in and out of various hub locations. In all locations where I conducted observations I was, as a result of my status, accepted or trusted by members of the cohort. Access to the observation sites chosen was straightforward in practical terms and, as all sites were on one campus, distance between them was minimal. Second, as a full-time faculty member of the university where the research was conducted, no gatekeeping issues were relevant either for access to the locations or observation of the campus users, as the university authorities had given approval for my research activities. Third, being well acquainted with the campus and the places where I wished to carry out my observations I was able to identify the most effective locations. In contrast to locations such as campus-located private offices, kitchen areas, etc., all of the places selected were openly accessible for legitimate campus users. I was able therefore, without restriction, to take notes, and occasionally when opportunities presented themselves, engage students in discussion. Fourth, I was aided by the fact that non-Japanese teachers and students are regular users of the places where I conducted my observations, and so my presence there was neither threatening nor overly distracting to other users. Moreover, my presence, not being unusual, meant that it had minimal effect on the people I was observing and negligible influence on the activities that took place in these locations. Finally, the familiarity I have with the campus gave me an extensive understanding not only of the designated usage of particular locations within the campus, but also how users engaged with them in more creative or provocative ways.

The second major reason for choosing an ethnographic approach is because it most suits the application of the 3E Model in a highly specific, cultural context. The model arose out of the practice theory tradition and one of the reasons it was developed was to answer the criticisms that the general, abstract tendencies of practice theory had little application in attempts to understand the

‘real world’. This thesis employs the 3E Model in the specific context of an educational institution. It assesses first, how the model responds to the challenge and reveals insights into practices, and second, how the particular situation – a university in Japan and its cultural milieu – could reveal ways that can develop the theory/model and build upon it. The context provided the opportunity to observe a large range of practices as they were performed at specific moments, locations and times by a variety of practitioners. In contrast, the approach also allowed for an analysis of practices as entities, and the myriad ways that practitioners perceived these entities. The methodological approach employed in the thesis serves to highlight the differences between practices as performances and practices as entities (see Chapter 2). The 3E Model represents a significant advance in the empirical application of practice theory, and to add to its analytical capabilities makes a contribution to the understanding of quotidian practices and the implications for sustainability under the practice theory banner.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) have stressed that, while at the most fundamental level, ethnography involves the “deliberate and systematic” application of commonsense notions it is also a “distinctive analytic mentality” (*Ibid* 4: 230). The 3E Model, too, can likewise be described in such terms: a defining characteristic being its resolve to scientifically and rigorously interrogate the workings of practices whilst being comfortable in the contingency and unpredictability that practices, as dynamic, ever-evolving entities, embody. A further point is that, in responding to the growing calls for more practical applications of modern practice theory (discussed in Chapter 2), the empirically grounded language of the 3E Model allows much of the abstractness that characterises initial efforts to pin down a research problem in ethnography to be skipped. In addition, the infrastructure of the campus and organisation of the university day made areas of interest and topics of concern relatively easy to identify. Christensen and Røpke (2005: 2) have argued that a focus on practices can serve to highlight the “dynamics and changing patterns of everyday life”. In

looking at campus practices at a Japanese university I have used ethnographic methods to employ practice theory tenets and the 3E Model empiricism in order to interrogate these patterns; specifically how the practices conducted by campus users originate, persist, develop and change, and how the meanings of these patterns can be interpreted.

A further reason for adopting an ethnographic approach for this thesis is that, like any theory, practice theory makes many, often hidden assumptions, and can be hide-bound to the bias and values of the researcher. The benefit of an ethnographic approach is that it acts as a continual reminder of the importance of exercising reflexivity that freedom from ideological lines of thinking can encourage, as well as aiding the awareness of both the role and influence of the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

## **4.2 Campus description and its physical and social boundaries**

The campus at the center of this research is that of Josai International University (JIU), founded in 1992. It is located in Chiba Prefecture, adjacent to the Tokyo Metropolitan area, and is around 90 minutes by train from the centre of Tokyo and an hour from Narita International Airport. It is an institution that places importance on both the study of English and on providing content classes *in* English for those who have a measure of fluency in the language. The Ministry of Education (MEXT) permits the university to use the term 'International' as it requires students in all faculties to take English classes for at least one year, and is also seen as an attractive recruiting point. At the undergraduate level there are eight faculties, namely, Nursing, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Social Work Studies, Social and Environmental Studies, Management and Information Sciences, Media Studies, International Humanities, and Tourism. There is also a Global College in which both Japanese and international students at undergraduate and graduate levels can earn part of their degrees in English through an All-English Program (JIU pamphlet 2016). There are around 6,000 students at the university

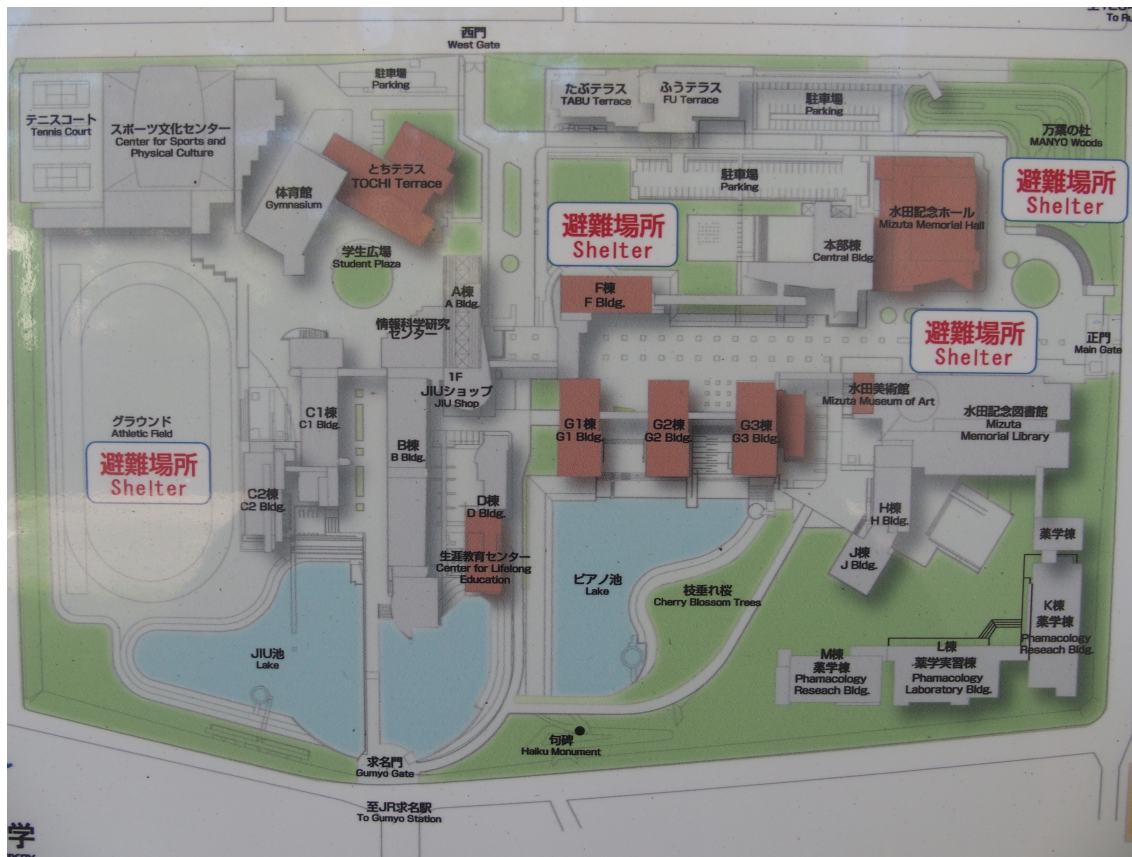


with approximately 100 from western countries and around 500 coming from the Asian region, mostly China<sup>7</sup>. According to one league table the university is ranked 232<sup>nd</sup>, out of 710 institutions listed (Unirank 2017), but is unranked in both QS and Times Higher Education listings for Japan.

The campus itself is relatively spacious, with lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories and dining halls interspaced with avenues of trees, lakes and gardens, and a museum of art featuring the *ukiyo*e woodblock print collection of one of the founders of the university. Indeed, the campus was the recipient of an award from the Japanese Institute of Landscape Architecture in 2006 for its design that, in featuring walkways that link many of the buildings, alludes to the connections that global engagement fosters and an outlook that promotes international exchange (Lubarsky 2002). The architecture of specific buildings too originated from designs with similar objectives, for instance, one purpose of the library is to “enable students to respond to the needs of the age of internationalization and information technology” (JIU Library Information, 2002).

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<sup>7</sup> Although this thesis argues that the socialisation and cultural norms of Japanese students play a role in how campus practices unfold, it is necessary to recognise this small but significant number of non-Japanese campus users. As Hopkins (2011) showed in his work on the contested experiences of Muslim students at an English university, evidence of contradictory experiences of university campus social spaces – tolerant and diverse but exclusionary and hostile - may contrast with the majority of users.



**Image 4.1** Campus map of Josai International University

Describing routine campus-based student practices as the collective activities that occur within the context of this campus however requires a more nuanced sense of what the campus actually is. It can be described in physical terms but equally important given that this thesis is an analysis of social practices is a consideration of the social dimensions of the campus. I now deal with each of these in turn.

As a measurable form of space, the campus setting of JIU is relatively straightforward to define. First, it is uncontested in terms of the physical space it occupies. For example, the ownership of the land has the requisite legal status, and the university is recognised by local and national government as an institution providing tertiary education. Second, it is a clearly mappable space, bordered by fences and signs with security posts around its perimeters, while within its confines is an infrastructure appropriate to the needs and expectations

of its users. Although the physical boundaries of the campus have, within the time frame of this study, been expanding, notably with the addition of buildings for the Nursing Faculty, these boundaries are nevertheless clearly demarcated and understood. Thirdly, the infrastructure of the campus allows the incorporation of routines that are directly related to academic purposes with those activities that are only indirectly related. I make this distinction merely to illustrate that while much campus infrastructure has dedicated purposes, the campus space at JIU (like campuses everywhere) is used for many other reasons, sometimes pursued synchronously and often involving considerable overlap. As a typical campus it provides facilities that allow the conduct of practices to extend beyond those directly connected to the pursuit of an educational qualification, but which are acceptable or even expected parts of student life. Consequently, practices such as leisure pursuits (through clubs and societies), showering (as a result of sports activities), and even sleeping (for instance, in quiet, lounge areas around the campus) take place alongside the more predictable practices of studying, socialising and taking classes. Collecting data on this diversity of practices requires sensitivity to the way the physical structure of the campus at JIU facilitates activity.

There is also however a social sense in which the campus can be described and which has significant impact upon the practices that take place there. Hopkins (2011) has written on how the narratives of students from differing backgrounds reveal contested views of the university campus, and that these understandings influence “the production of knowledge [and] lifecourse trajectories” (2011: 158). A campus embodies within its student users a strong connotation of instrumentality, namely the pursuit of what is, for most, the primary objective for becoming a university student: to graduate at some point with a recognised qualification. In practice theory terms, this dominant instrumental motivation can be included as part of the ‘teleological motivation’ (Schatzki 2001) of practices, and which Røpke and Christensen (2013: 53) describe as “a complex of practices necessary to complete an intention.” The term used by Pred (1981) - ‘a

project' - illustrates succinctly the sense that it is a concrete objective that continually exerts greater and lesser presence on the lives of students both through their daily activities and their long-term planning. Although as Warde argues, certain routine practices may emphasise "doing over thinking, practical competence over strategic reasoning, and mutual intelligibility over personal motivation" (Warde 2013: 18), the activities of students are nevertheless still being shaped by the underlying 'project' for which the campus spaces continually and constantly provide a reminder. In other words, while personal motivation is already embedded in the practices of mutual intelligibility, the spatial distinctiveness of the campus space may serve to bend or alter certain practices as a result of the specific socio-spatial structure. In the practice of eating in a dining hall, there is intelligibility in that the action contributes to the strategic completion of a(nother) day on campus. Although it does not have a high degree of instrumentality in terms of a student's primary reason for being on campus (for it completes no presentations nor improves no essays), it nevertheless has strategic value.

In addition, the overriding 'project' is one that is conducted over a clearly defined and fixed period of time and involves activities that are, in general, recognised and understood. These circumstances all have a direct bearing on the practices that get performed. Therefore, practices aimed at securing graduation can be seen to take place on a continuum according to their degree of instrumentality: at one end there are the practices that directly assist students in their progress towards graduation (submission of assignments etc.) while at the other are practices that although not undermining or preventing progress towards the primary objective, may not necessarily advance it in any appreciable way. These practices may be divided into those that relate to the identity of students, for instance involvement in club activities, and those that meet important physiological and social needs such as eating, relaxing, socialising and sleeping, which are vital if educational objectives are to be realised (Maslow 1943). In terms of practice, this instrumentality is an aspect of what Wenger calls

‘community coherence’ and is a result of the negotiation of joint, collective purposes by those who, despite having myriad purposes for being on campus, are united in their geographically and socially shared space (Wenger 1998: 77). Therefore, even psychological and physiological needs, occurring as they so often do in social community, can be practice-driven.

In this thesis, considerations of space also constitute a central pillar of analysis therefore it is necessary in describing the campus to consider the social aspect of campus space – its spatiality – and the issues of data collection. In contrast to the physical confines of the campus, the spatiality of the campus may be perceived as continually evolving, and both produced by, and a product of, the practices that occur within its physical and social parameters. Perceiving the campus as a social space as well as a physical one, allows the consideration of how aspects of space may exert influence on practices and not simply be a neutral location in which activities are conducted. The emotional connections that campus users establish with the spaces in which they conduct their practices make up valid (and valuable) material for such an analysis. Practices that take place then, are those that are part of both the physical and social understandings of ‘the campus’.

#### **4.3 Identifying campus practices and the problems of observation**

While Chapter 5 discusses in detail the campus practices chosen for analysis, I will limit the discussion here to a focus on how campus practices were identified and issues concerned with the problems of observation. Given that social practice theory requires the placing of practice at the centre of analysis, I will first discuss how campus practices were identified before looking at the various challenges that were posed by selecting observation as a methodological approach.

#### *4.3.1 Object of analysis: campus practices*

While it is possible to specify the physical and social boundaries of what is meant by the campus at JIU, it is impossible to attempt to narrowly identify the kinds of practices that take place there. Within the campus structure, practices can more or less centre on the primary purpose of being a student. The fact that this purpose can be defined in quite concrete terms implies that at first glance, 'campus practices' can be identified as a subset of the routine practices found in society at large. However, students also engage in a much wider range of secondary purposes that, together with the extensive amount of time they spend on campus both on a daily basis, and cumulatively over several years, means that student practices on campus differ little in range from routine practices generally. As a result, the label 'campus' describes only the kinds of practice that take place within its physical/social confines. Nevertheless clearly some highly place-specific practices, such as laying a floor or assembling a wardrobe can be discounted from a list of campus practices, while, conversely, practices connected to the taking of notes, the discussing of assignments or reading of papers are very likely to have a prominent position (see Coates [2007] for studying-related activities and Cheng [2004] for activities related to social aspects of campus life). There is therefore, in categorising campus practices, likely to be an emphasis on certain student-linked practices over others, but within a range that varies little from ordinary off-campus life.

Campus practices can be identified in two ways. Some campus practices can be said to mirror practices that take place in almost any location in the sense that they provide fundamental support for the reproduction of daily existence (that is, eating, resting, washing, and so on). They provide the platform from which we can identify a second category of practices that, facilitated by the campus, more closely align with the instrumental purpose of the university. In this sense, some practices (for example, note-taking) are more likely to be conducted and are more likely to be central to the campus day. This in turn is strongly influenced by the way Japanese students perceive the instrumentality of their campus life,

routines and habits that have been formed from their previous educational experiences, and the particular society-wide circumstances that shape their decision to become university students.

#### *4.3.2 The challenge of observing campus practices*

There are several challenges that an ethnographic approach poses for the analysis of data through a practice theory approach. The first is that many campus activities resist straightforward categorisation and moreover, are not always amenable to observation. Some practices, or parts of practices, may be completed in the briefest of moments and/or involve very minor body movements, as noted by Laurier and Philo who studied the micro actions of people in cafes (2006). Indeed, for most of each day, practices interweave with each other (Schatzki 2013) and may end, be interrupted or dropped at any point in time. Some of these practices may be connected and take place consecutively or concurrently (*ibid*). For example, students walking across campus between classes will often exploit the 'dead time' (Røpke and Christensen 2013: 58) required to walk between locations by using their phone, listening to music, or responding to a message on social media. I dealt with this problem by deciding that the key point of the observation was to identify and recognise *collective* practices. In contrast to Laurier and Philo (2006), where the tiny actions, gestures and facial movements they recorded were important because they concerned personal relations in a communicative sense, these micro cues were of less significance in seeking to understanding more about collective practices.

A second challenge, stemming from the theoretical basis of the 3E Model, is the extent to which it is necessary to separate the components of particular practices in order to secure meaningful analysis. As described in Chapter 2, Shove *et al.* (2012) identify three elements of practices – materials, competence and meaning – that provide a concrete focus in helping to disentangle the constituent parts, but which are crucial to understanding practices as a dynamic, interconnected process. The act of separating these parts is not to understand

how practices work, but it is nevertheless essential in order to gain an insight into how they combine to create the continually evolving relationships that make up practices. In choosing to analyse practices in terms of providing ways for changing them in sustainable directions, I conducted observations of practices as they unfolded as part of normal, daily campus life. For example, in observing the practice of students eating lunch in a dining hall, I was able to label the constitutive activity of queuing as a practice because of the presence of (1) materials, represented by the barrier that indicates the place to queue, and the tray needed to carry the food; (2) competence, identified in the knowledge that students exhibited in knowing where and how to queue, as well as why; and (3) meaning, in the decisions students made to eat in the hall, as opposed to elsewhere, and to choose, for instance, a healthy yet quick lunchtime option.

The role that each of these elements play in particular activities can be given more and less attention according to the significance they have in completing the practice. While it is possible to envisage other actions, such as, choosing from food options and selecting a seat, observational analysis allows a differentiation of acts that can be seen as highly significant from those that are less so. This then avoids the problem of having to accord equal importance to every act. A further differentiating tool that was employed was to consider how likely a particular act had sustainable implications. This was not always straightforward to assess, however, in general the use of resources and energy that took place in the implementation of practices allowed me to identify sustainable implications.

One response to this can be to emphasise a key factor in understanding practices, namely, that practices are significant in a social (and potentially sustainable) sense because of the *dynamics* that characterise them. In observing students in the conduct of their daily practices, it was important to recognise the flow that their actions represented for it is the dynamism within and between practices, (together with all that the concept implies such as change,



contingency, unpredictability, and so on) that is a key to effective analysis. Warde makes a distinction between integrative, dispersed and compound practices. Integrative practices are those that mutual understanding allows us to describe examples in terms such as 'cooking' or 'studying', while dispersed practices are those that facilitate the doing of practices, such as explaining, or describing something, or involve specific motor functions (Warde 2013: 20). Compound practices are those that, like eating, combine elements of both (*ibid*: 24).

In conducting observation, I regarded practices in this way in order to provide some analytical differentiation of the seamless, and seemingly chaotic, activities of a typical campus day. In Warde's terms, integrative practices allow descriptions of student practices in mutually comprehensible ways to others as meaningful social activities. Integrative practices then, are more than the sum of their parts and it is this that instills them with social significance (and potential for being prodded toward sustainability). In detailing these then it was necessary to go only as deep as reasonably necessary to show some effect. As Shove *et al.* (2012) state, one way of defining practices can be "anything that practitioners themselves take to be as such" (121). Whilst dispersed actions are vital aspects of practices, it is only in the relationships that they form collectively do they become meaningful in a social sense. In other words, it is through the dynamics of practices that they become significant. In terms of social meaning, many of these 'dispersed' actions are relatively inconsequential – that a student may join the queue for lunch option A instead of B, is by itself, of no real social import – rather it is the combination of dispersed, integrative and compound practices that produces socially recognised forms of practice which then takes on social significance. Whilst queuing is an essential aspect of the practice of 'eating in a dining hall', by itself, it cannot advance the completion of a day on campus without being combined with other activities.

In summary, the discussion of how to identify the practices that were to be

analysed, took into account (1) the confines of the physical and social campus, (2) the problems concerning the observation of practices, and (3) the extent to which a campus practices occupied a central position in campus daily life. From this, campus practices were categorised under four general headings, namely, the practice of being in lectures, the practice of studying, the practice of eating, and the practice of socialising/relaxing. Although wide-ranging, these four categories do not of course include all campus practices and exclude, for example, specific sporting activities, and meetings of campus administrators. How this reasoning impacted upon the methodological approach is dealt with in the following section together with the decision to analyse the three central elements of the 3E Model separately as one empirical deployment of the 3E Model.

#### **4.4 Methodological approach for explicating campus practices at JIU**

As indicated above, I have chosen four categories of campus practices for analysis. There are several reasons for these choices but the divisions are not meant to imply that these categories have a distinct separateness. Indeed, a single vignette of a group of students together in a lecture hall demonstrates that aspects of all four categories can be identified in an almost synchronous relationship. The students are eating rice balls and, with their textbooks open, discuss study points between making chatty asides while at the front of the hall the professor sets up her PowerPoint presentation. Warde (2013) has argued that to understand what practices are, we need to investigate how practices are socially coordinated, that is, how they are shared with others, and the use of this yardstick determined the divisions that were chosen. As discussed in Chapter 2, dividing practices into small micro segments not only moves away from how practices are actually conducted, but also runs a greater risk of arbitrary classification and skewed attention.

The first reason for the choice of these categories was the decision to focus on student practices only. I do not consider the activities of campus users involved in campus security, cleaning, food preparation, etc., or those of administrative or academic staff, except where their activities might impinge directly on student practices. Whilst it is undoubtedly true that issues of sustainability exist, for example, in the offices of the administration and in the processes and practices that are carried out there, the decision to focus on students was made because students represent the majority of campus users and their actions on campus have a significant influence on its ability to be sustainable. Moreover, as their practices take place in openly accessible spaces within the university, students can be more easily observed, compared to other campus users. Additionally, students have fewer inhibitions about being observed than say, office staff, where there may be issues of confidentiality, perceived staff competence, and access. Notwithstanding, there are many other practices conducted on campus that are not analysed here, including club activities in gymnasias, sports activities on playing fields and scientific experiments in laboratories. However, I argue that these practices are not found across the whole spectrum of student practices, but rather, are confined to particular groups, faculties or departments. The focus on practices that take place campus-wide allow a higher chance to gather insight into the nature of campus practices and to find sustainable implications.

The second major reason for the choice of these categories was that by keeping them general, they facilitate analysis. In truth, these categories can more accurately be described as *combinations* of practices for within them they can encompass a wide range of activities. However, there are advantages that such a classification provides. First, the broad range provides the essential context that enables small but significant moments of practice, identified through vignettes, to be flagged or isolated for analytical purposes. At the same time, the general categorisations allow the sense of the broader flow of campus life, together with the multi-practice engagements that take place in the normal run of things, to be maintained. A further advantage of keeping broad categories is that

it bypasses the problem of analysis when it is unclear as to exactly *what* practice is being conducted. For activities like sports, the boundaries of a practice are clearer to identify than every day routine practices, where boundaries are much harder to detect and because of the simplicity of many routine actions, multi-practices (through multitasking) are common. To return to the example above of the students in the lecture hall, it is problematic to label these practices for, in just a few brief moments, several categories of practice could be identified. However, I argue that, by keeping deliberately broad categories, even where there is a diversity of practices, they can fit within what is the *primary* purpose of the combination of activities, in this case 'being in lectures'. Keeping all these actions within one category, as in this example, the category of 'being in lectures', allows the overall dynamics of the scene to be retained. This allows the inimitability of particular moments to be seen without over-categorising them and as a result obscuring, as much as revealing patterns. This example leads to my final point regarding practices and their spatial locations.

A further reason for the choice of these categories of practice is the spatial and temporal markers provided by the campus itself. Each category has a matching spatial location in which they predominantly (though it should be noted not exclusively) take place, for example, eating practices in the dining halls. Earlier I described the campus as the theatre that hosts the performances of its users, and where infrastructure and the dedicated uses of spaces, together with strict routines, play a large part in encouraging the conduct of some practices over others. In the vignette presented above, I would argue that, were the group asked to describe what they were doing, they would certainly reply that they were taking a lecture (or about to) despite the fact that they were also engaged in eating-*like*, and relaxing-*like* practices. In other words, students would identify themselves as engaged in a lecture primarily because of their location. Spatial considerations may therefore have significant influence in determining what practices are taking place. Although routine practices, as multitasking actions, can be conducted in a number of locations, places as part of the infrastructure

can help to resolve cases of unclear classification. For example, a student sitting eating while making notes in a book would, if located in a dining hall, be seen as primarily eating, whilst a student doing the same thing in a classroom, might be deemed to be primarily involved in studying. This classification has implications for analysis in the way students describe their activities during guided campus walks and interviews.

A final reason for the choice of these prosaic practices engaged in on a daily basis is that an analysis of them might reveal ways in which actions towards a more sustainable conduct of such practices on campus might be obtained. As the example presented in Chapter 1 of the energy-wasting blower switch in photocopy rooms illustrated, a practice theory approach may provide options for action that have been obscured as a result of the dominant approaches taken to considering sustainability issues, and that were discussed in Chapter 2.

## **4.5 Data gathering methods**

In the following section, I look at the three main methods employed for the gathering of data. I first discuss the field observation diary, and detail the locations in which it was recorded then in the next part I examine the guided campus walks ('go-alongs') that were conducted, usually with pairs of students. Following this I describe the interviews, first how students were recruited, then how they were conducted including some of the issues that arose from them.

### ***4.5.1 Field observation diary***

A field observation diary was kept from October 2013 until July 2015, generally twice a week during the fifteen-week semesters. Each observation lasted for around 60 to 90 minutes for a total of approximately 85 hours. The diary was conducted primarily in four locations, namely the student hall, the library and two separate dining halls, all located on one campus (see photographs 4.1 to 4.4)

and each location was covered once every two weeks. These locations were chosen on account of the large numbers of students who would use them, and they represented places in which the key campus practices were generally carried out (see Chapter 5). In addition they were easy to access and, as areas in which there was continual movement of students entering and leaving, represented places where observation could be unobtrusive. The student hall consists of two main areas, partially divided by a low wall with one area sunken and accessible from two sets of double steps. This sunken space tended to be the calmer of the two, located as it was, further from the entrance, and, as a result of the wall and lower level, slightly detached from the general traffic in and out of the hall (photograph 4.1). The space contains tables and chairs and, being located next to the windows, receives a lot of natural light. Students tended to stay for a longer period in this space, although the activities they conducted there tended not to differ from the other main area of the hall. This part, the busier of the two, contains a shop, a row of vending machines and a photocopy machine, along with tables and chairs, some of which are placed in rows.

The library is an expansive space of high ceilings and spacious layouts. It comprises three floors accessible from a central atrium and containing, along with study desks, spaces and carrels, AV areas, newspaper desks and computer terminals. The ground floor tended to witness the most activity, whilst study rooms and desks on the first and second floors were used less commonly. Most observations in this location took place on the ground floor although observations were often split between two or more locations (photograph 4.2).



**Photograph 4.2** The student hall with sunken area in the background

The two dining halls, situated at two ends of the campus, differ in a number of ways. Dining Hall #1, the older of the two, is a ground floor facility with food purchasable through meal tickets bought in advance and presented at appropriate serving hatches (photograph 4.3). It is spacious, but less airy and with lower levels of natural light than its newer counterpart (photograph 4.4). Dining Hall #2 was built to meet the demands of an expanding campus when the university opened new faculties of pharmacology and nursing. It is spread over two floors, with the ground floor providing hot food in two locations, the first offering dishes via a line system paid for at the end, while the second requires the purchase of a meal ticket in advance. Users have access to complementary green tea and water and a microwave to heat food brought in from outside. There is a convenience store on the first floor.





**Photograph 4.2** showing the ground floor of the library

Observations in these locations were usually conducted at regular intervals throughout the academic year and at selected times of day in order to witness busy and quiet periods, and occasions when activity and movement occurred in short bursts or was spread out over a longer duration. Each observation session lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The diary was sometimes conducted from one spot only (in order to be able to witness students' entry and exit from a particular location) but on other occasions from several positions within each location for the purpose of observing a variety of activities.





**Photograph 4.3** Dining Hall #1 at a busy lunchtime

In conducting the observations several areas of interest were considered. These included *inter alia*:

- (1) How materials, competence and meaning comprised the practices in which students engaged and interacted, and how these dynamics led to the launching, strengthening, weakening, and abandoning of other practices.
- (2) How practices were affected by spatiality (i.e., physical and social aspects of the campus) for example, room temperature, furniture arrangements, friendship groupings, noise levels, etc., and how spatiality impinged upon student relationships and the choices made to conduct particular practices in certain spaces.
- (3) How practices reflected specific Japanese socialisation and cultural norms, particularly that of university sub-culture (for example, feeling of 'in-group' membership).
- (4) Given the fact that users were not in completely private spaces and were

sharing resources, locations and physical space, how this affected the conduct of practices and, in turn, aspects of campus sustainability.



**Photograph 4.4** Dining Hall #2 showing tea dispenser and microwave

These questions were formulated from an already extensive knowledge of observational locations, the conditions (including the restrictions), under which observations take place, and a clear understanding of the kind of students I would encounter.

#### ***4.5.2 Guided campus walks***

This activity involved students walking through certain activities that were central to their daily life on campus. Eleven of these data gathering sessions were conducted, each lasting between 45 minutes to one hour and involved pairs of students on all occasions but one, when three students took part. The method involved students taking routes around the campus to explain their routines and

works from theories of bodily movements in the flow and mobility of space and place. Spinney (2015: 236) has argued how these walks or 'go-alongs' help to "enhance/shape recollection of sensory and affective encounters" as respondents are encouraged to put themselves in the place as they normally experience it, while Evans and Jones (2011: 856) find support for the idea that the act of walking allows participants to access more "place-specific data than sedentary interviews". Bergeron *et al.* (2014) reinforces the claim that more detailed data can be gathered as well as pointing to a greater involvement of the participants, however they also found that the interviews were more prone to interruptions, repetitions and fragmentation, and questioned the effectiveness of this method with regard to gaining data about daily activities (*ibid*: 120).

Nevertheless I argue that such sensory and affective experiences can be a part of collective practices, for example, in the feelings that many students encounter on finding a long queue for food in the dining hall at a busy lunchtime. Also of relevance is the link between 'go-alongs' and spatial practices. In Kusenbach (2003) 'go-alongs' are seen as ethnographic tools that can reveal "various degrees of environmental engagement and also about the various *qualities* of this engagement" (*ibid*: 469). Movement around the campus may appear to be neutral process of going from one place to another, however, the campus walks intended to reveal how the spatiality of the campus and movement around it impacted on practices. For example, how mobility affected the connections between practices, the conduct of practices that occurred synchronously with movement around the campus, and how the links between mobility and practices were affected by changing weather and particular times in the university day.

Campus walks were done with pairs of students rather than individually as it was found that students would tend to produce more as a result of their exchanges, sometimes comparing what they did while at other times surprising each other with their routines, habits and justifications. They were recruited through the

snowball method and several students who agreed to be interviewed said that they were willing to take part. The students were asked to take me to places on the campus where they regularly went, which included classrooms as well as places they ate lunch or carried out club activities. I allowed them to choose which places to go and in what order, though this was mostly dictated by the physical layout of the campus. The purpose of walking through was twofold. First, by occupying the physical spaces in which they conduct their activity, students were more able to recall detail, as their habitual actions facilitated reflection on their actions (Kusenbach 2003). Secondly, by doing the walk together questions could be asked at the moment of relevance, for example, when showing me the place where she would sit in a dining hall, one student made a very determined line to a particular place. Her manner caused me to ask why she opted for this seat especially, and she answered that it was because it was the most convenient place to access a socket built into the adjacent pillar.

Engaging students in this walk-and-talk activity allowed me to interrogate the way elements of practice impacted upon the actions of practitioners, not only in the conduct of micro-actions but also in wider practices and campus movements, for example, when large numbers of students moved from one location to another in the conduct of their daily activities. Data were collected through a small recorder carried in a pocket, and students were encouraged to talk about the routes they generally follow and why, which I would usually respond to with follow-up questions and prompts for more details. On these 'go-alongs' I adopted similar areas of research interest that guided my observation field diary in that attention was paid to the role of the three elements, the spatial effects on practices both within and between practices as the students moved around, and whether any Japanese cultural norms or socialisation were evident in their practices.

#### **4.5.3 Interviews**

Interviews constitute a method of gaining understanding of the social practices

of collective practitioners and represent a rich source of data for this thesis. Hitchings (2012) has defended the use of interviews in ethnographic research arguing that they can be a powerful tool of self-evaluation and reflexivity. Hitchings also makes the point that although practice theory aims to de-centre the individual, as individuals we are still “entirely able to talk about relatively mundane actions” (*Ibid*: 67)

A substantial amount of the data presented in the analysis chapters come from the interviews conducted with students. A total of 27 individual interviews were conducted between July 2013 and July 2015 each lasting between forty and seventy minutes. Individual details of the interviewees (all Japanese nationals but some with parents of other countries) can be found in the appendix but, to note briefly, most of the students belonged to the Department of International Exchange Studies in the International Humanities Faculty and, at the time of the interviews, the majority were in their second, third or fourth years. As the department name suggests, these students are interested in exchange programmes in other countries, primarily for the purpose of developing their language skills, and following graduation, seek work in the hospitality industry, such as in hotels. The university’s proximity to Narita International Airport and the perceived prestige that this brings is used for recruiting students, and indeed, many students have part-time jobs in the airport’s shops and restaurants while a few find full time work, sometimes as ground staff and cabin crew, after graduation.

Using the interview as a form of data gathering throws up three areas of concern in the context of this research given the ethnographic requirement for data to be as ‘natural’ as possible for example, securing reduced researcher bias and unsolicited comments (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Data might be affected by (1) the method of recruitment, (2) the format and conduct of the interview and (3) the use of English as the medium of communication. I will deal with each in turn.

Recruitment was done through a standard snowball technique combined with what I call, a 'tell-me-later' approach, employed to ensure that minimal pressure was brought upon students to take part (see Section 4.6 on ethical issues). The students were chosen for being the most accessible to me at the university on account of many of them taking my courses and from attending events such as guest lectures. In addition, being in the same faculty meant that I represented a more familiar figure to them than academic staff in other faculties. By recruiting students to whom I was known, even if not personally, would help students who agreed to be interviewed to feel comfortable.

On finding a student willing to be interviewed it was necessary to ensure that the interview format and conduct, as well as approach to the topic, produced data that fulfilled as far as possible the need for natural and unsolicited discussions. Two things required careful attention, namely, the interview conditions and the nature of the interview questions. First, the interview location and manner in which it was administered were such as to encourage students to feel relaxed. At the same time, through a brief reiteration of the purpose, students were reassured that answering questions about their activities on campus was a relatively non-controversial subject. Students were reminded that confidentiality was guaranteed, and informed that they need fear no potential awkwardness over topics that might arise. A possible delicate area was the concern that students, in revealing what they did, might feel that particular actions reflected negatively on them, and therefore would hesitate to talk. Although this is something that could not be avoided, I argue that any such effects were ameliorated by the fact that (1) many students were well acquainted with me (over a period of years in some cases), and as a result, a measure of mutual trust was present and (2) students understood that the things told to me were unconnected to their 'dominant project' – that is, of successfully completing their years at university. This was sometimes evident in the confidences that students would sometime divulge about the university, often given in a conspiratorial way



and in a manner that implied a mutual understanding of the quirks of the university and a mutual distance from the official stance represented by Japanese academic staff. In this way, I endeavoured to ensure that any student who agreed to being interviewed was as relaxed as possible and free from inhibitions.

In considering the effect on data of students using English as the medium of communication, of those interviewed, a large majority was communicatively fluent. Although students had the option to speak in Japanese, or a mixture of English and Japanese (*champon*) almost all were confident in expressing themselves in English. Even though (as can be seen in the extracts presented) grammatical errors are common, such mistakes rarely impeded comprehension. In addition, a large number of them had experience of overseas study and many of them for as long as a year. Furthermore, from the informal approach I took to the interviews, I was able, without breaking the flow, to sometimes suggest words, both in English and Japanese, if I felt the interviewee needed some support, and students, knowing my familiarity with Japanese, would substitute Japanese words or expressions when they couldn't recall the English equivalents. That students enjoyed speaking English to foreign staff was for some an additional attraction for taking part in an interview and an opportunity to use English.

Another factor was that, communicating in English, the students' second language, often serves to place the content of an interlocation at a remove that does not exist when using the first language. This distance encouraged students to speak more honestly and express feelings and opinions that otherwise may have been inhibited by the cultural requirements of Japanese, in which ambiguity is easier to express (and accept), but criticism much more difficult to voice. In addition to this, I was also able to exploit the general attitude in the university, which tends to view foreign staff as slightly detached from the official representativeness that Japanese staff embodies. A consequence of this is that

students often feel more at ease around foreign staff for they do not carry the same restrictive or punitive power that Japanese staff is often perceived to have (Lee-Cumin 2004). Generally, interviewees seemed content talking about their daily lives and sometimes would adopt confidential tones in talking about matters they considered of a sensitive nature.

As can be seen, the range of students invited to provide data for this research could be said to represent a specific group of students at this university. For example, no students from the Faculty of Business Information and Management Faculty were interviewed. However, I argue that the relationship that exists between the students interviewed and myself produced data of greater value as a result, and that interviewing students not part of this group would have been less fruitful. Students who were both unfamiliar with me, and having contact with foreign staff only through English instruction would have found the task more difficult and less data would have been gathered.

An additional issue related to the interview process centred on the topic itself. The process of bringing to mind and talking about actions that students may have only rarely considered or vocalised, represented a challenge for the interviewees. Talking about practices, rather than doing them, cannot help but feel less natural for the interlocutor and introduces concerns about interviewees ability to offer detail and the extent to which they can recall. Students were at first unsure as to how much detail I wanted from them so I indicated this by prompting students or simply pausing and as a result I was usually able to obtain detailed descriptions of the activities they did every day or routinely on campus. Moreover, often students seemed faintly amused to talk about mundane things. They spoke enthusiastically about their habits (sometimes acknowledging their quirkiness) and often took it as compliment that I should express interest in their daily lives to such an extent.

Whilst endeavouring to avoid gathering details that reflected my own bias, the



research questions and boundaries provided areas of interest for the interview. As a result, I attempted to keep topic-opening questions as neutral and as wide as possible, and then follow from student cues and responses areas that might provide more interesting or relevant details. Questions were divided into three categories; daily activities on campus, places on campus, and student perceptions of the university. A fuller list of questions can be found in Appendix 1, but some key questions included

- (1) What places do you spend the most time in and why?
- (2) How long do you take for lunch? Does it vary and do you eat in different places?
- (3) Do you find the campus easy or difficult to use, and in what ways?
- (4) Is university life as you imagined it or different?
- (5) How do you think the university (as an institution) sees you?
- (6) Do you think the campus is good for the environment, and do students think about this?

#### ***4.5.4 Method of data analysis***

Following each occasion writing the observational field diary, margin comments were sometimes made linking observations with possible theoretical connections and themes that emerged elsewhere. Data gathered for interviews and campus walks were collected through audio recordings then transcribed. Transcriptions were made within three days of the interview or walk and included several non-verbal cues such as pauses, laughter, and occasionally other emotional reactions that communicated meaning beyond the literal meanings of the words. Themes under which data were initially stored followed that of the campus practices deemed to be most common (see Chapter 5), but other categories emerged as more interviews were held and comments and themes could be cross-referenced. Some themes were identified by what emerged from the students' words and phrases (i.e. the most common) while other themes coalesced around themes from practice theory such as material use of technology or from socialising factors such as simulated education. Because the

number of interviews was not prohibitively high, it was possible to read them through many times and become familiar with the tone and manner of each interviewee which often allowed the identification of contrasts and similarities within themes, and the “distillation” and “condensation” of data done through coding using key words (Basit 2003). The data could also be methodologically triangulated across data from observation, ‘go-alongs’ and interviews to strengthen the validity of the categories.

#### **4.6 Ethical Issues**

Several important issues regarding the ethical considerations for this research were carefully assessed in order to minimise any concerns regarding data gathering. These issues related to (1) the field observation diary, (2) interviews and student feelings of obligation. Gathering data through observation was considered ethically acceptable because of two factors arising from the wider context. First, the fact that observation took place on a university campus served to lower barriers of reluctance and hesitancy that might pertain in spaces entirely open to the public. Students almost certainly recognised that I was an employee of the university, and being non-Japanese, most likely a member of the academic staff. As a result, students decided that I posed no threat and mostly was of little interest to them. Second, because the university is categorised as an international university, requiring all students regardless of faculty to take English for a minimum of one year, students generally have fewer inhibitions or reservations about engaging and in some cases, it raised their level of curiosity and willingness to interact. Third, although many of those under observation were minors under Japanese law, my observations had no covert aims, and represented no threat to any of those observed. Moreover, I was able to explain the purpose of my presence when asked. This happened on only a few occasions, although in almost every case, the questioners were students who were known to me and had approached me primarily to engage in conversation.

The most serious aspect to consider in recruiting students for interview was to avoid situations in which students were put under obligation to accede to an interview request. In other words, I sought to avert any possibility of students agreeing to be interviewed as a result of my position. I used two methods aimed at reducing these concerns. The first was the snowball technique in which I asked those who had already helped me if they could both recommend students who might be willing to take part, and asked them to mention the request in advance. Some of the students who were recommended contacted me directly, but with others I made the initial approach. To avoid any sense of pressuring potential new interviewees, I operated under the assumption that the student already interviewed had given them the details of my request. In alluding to it, I was deliberately vague, and if the student showed no understanding, I would take no further action. If a subsequent opportunity presented itself, I casually reminded the student who had made the recommendation about it, but if I received no direct contact, I made no further attempt to involve the student. This technique secured around a third of the students I interviewed.

The second technique I used was what might be coined a 'tell-me-later' approach. Students in the department and foreign teachers regularly engage in social conversations, especially in hallways and open lounge areas. On such occasions, and when appropriate, I would hand a small sheet to a student or students. The sheet was a brief, carefully written introduction in Japanese that explained my request, and asking them to contact me if they felt they were able to help. The sheet was deliberately kept short so that it could be read quickly and, on most occasions this technique was employed, students would reply straightaway that they were happy to be interviewed. Although it could be said that approaching students directly in this way was itself a form of mild pressure, I made careful attempts to exert as little as possible, by (1) casually but promptly initiating another subject of conversation ("So, how was your weekend?"), or (2) pretending to be in a hurry in order to imply that I didn't have time to hear their

decision right away. This allowed the students, by not having to answer, to ignore the request without having to be explicit in their refusal. I was particularly conscious of ensuring minimal feelings of obligation as refusing requests for help can often be particularly difficult for Japanese especially given that students in Japan often feel a degree of obligation toward teachers (the concept of *amae* – see Chapter 3). Pressure was additionally lessened because I approached only students with whom I had some acquaintance, either through my involvement with the Students' International Development Society, or through them having taken courses of mine in the past. I was particularly heedful not to invite students who were, at the time, taking any of my courses in order to avoid any linkage between my request and the course. In concluding this section, I ensured that at all times in my relations with students I reflected on my positionality.

There were a number of other ethical considerations that I now consider. First, there were no other groups, other than student volunteers, engaged in the research. No drivers or first aiders were required as the campus had both a sick room and campus nursing care in the case of any sickness or emergency during interviews or campus walks. Second, no potential hazards were present on account of all data collection occurring on campus and in safe locations, and no participants were at any time at risk of physical or mental harm. All data was gathered inside the campus where university insurance cover applied. Third, prior to the interviews and 'go-alongs', students were asked to sign an informed consent document to ensure that they fully understood the terms of their participation and that they could withdraw at any time without a reason being given. The document also reiterated the purpose of the research and how the data they provided would be used, and assured participants that any quotations used would be anonymised. The document also confirmed that the participant was neither an advisee of mine, nor were they enrolled in any of my courses for the duration of their involvement. Japanese was used during this process to ensure that any potential participant fully comprehended what they were being asked to do. Fourth, there was no necessity for travel other than inside the

campus confines where all places could be accessed on foot and via safe, and clearly marked pathways and access areas. Fifth, no communication issues existed as I am a competent speaker of Japanese and Japanese nationals were present on campus on every occasion that research was conducted. Finally, Japanese ethical norms as outlined in the university guidelines were adhered to, including the provision that students should be made explicitly aware that if they experience any discomfort as a result of taking part in the research, then they would have recourse to consult with their advisor or their head of department. The requirements for research at the university are comparable to those in the UK and include (1) a code of conduct check sheet; (2) an application for approval to conduct research and an analysis of all relevant ethical issues; (3) a document providing an explanation of the research to the participants and their agreement to take part, together with an explanation of the internal process in place for any participants who want to disengage from the research; (4) a document detailing the activities that participants will be asked to take part in, including the identification of any students, or groups of students (for example, students currently enrolled in a course taught by the researcher), who would be ineligible to take part; and (5) an informed consent checklist. These required submissions on the part of the researcher are subject to the approval of the university's Research Ethics Committee.

## **4.7 Conclusions**

In summary, the data collected for this research is drawn largely from a field diary, guided campus walks ('go-alongs'), and interviews. The field diary, conducted over a period of almost two years provided insight not only into the activities of students on particular days and in specific locations, but also, in its longitudinal form, allowed insights into 'busy' periods (such as around examinations and university festivals) and the natural progression of student activity as each grade developed a familiarity with the campus and developed

their identity as campus users. Guided campus walks enabled participants to take a more active position in contrast to the passive expectations that students often had during interviews. The 'go-alongs' allowed participants to show me 'their' university, and often, to tell me about the tricks and 'inside knowledge' that they had gained from their experiences. The animation of the students on these occasions was, I argue, evidence of the authenticity of their voices. The interviews nevertheless represent the mainstay of the data presented in this thesis, primarily as a result of the volume of data generated that was then coded and collated in order to extract pertinent themes.

Although there were of course limitations (which I will cover in the final chapter) I argue that, as a faculty member of the university for 16 years, I was able to bring forms of understanding gained from my experience of working in the specific environment of a Japanese university, and the campus of JIU. In the next chapter, I begin a description of the four most ubiquitous campus practices, chosen also for their connection with issues of daily sustainability, namely, being in lectures, eating on campus, socialising/relaxing on campus and studying on campus, and identify and discuss their features and characteristics.

## **Chapter 5: Defining and explicating campus practices, and current issues of campus sustainability**

In this chapter I go into further detail on the methodology used for selecting and categorising campus practices under the four general headings. As stated earlier, they were chosen primarily for their centrality to the campus day and for their suitability for exploring possible sustainable changes. To reiterate, the categories are: the practice of being in lectures, the practice of eating, the practice of socialising/relaxing, and the practice of studying. I examine each campus practice at Josai International University (JIU) in turn, highlighting their key characteristics using practice theory language in order to fully interrogate the nature of each practice. At the same time, I identify some of the sustainability issues that connect with the practices and that arise as a result of the way they are carried out. I close this chapter with a brief discussion drawing out some of the implications for campus sustainability.

### **5.1 Explicating campus practices and issues of campus sustainability**

In this section, I take each of the four categories of campus practices in turn and discuss how they are carried out at JIU. I describe their parameters, and, using student comments as well as insights from the field observation diary I identify the major features. In addition, I identify some of the sustainable issues that are connected with the practices.

#### **5.1.1 *Being in lectures***

A fundamental campus practice for students is the practice of 'being in lectures'. In Japan, lectures are mostly given in traditional, teacher-centred forms in which little student participation takes place. Therefore, the practice is characterised by considerable passivity and the approach to both educational principles and methodology of teaching and learning are highly conservative. Classrooms and

lecture theatres constitute by far the highest number of discrete spaces accessible to students, and the required presence of students in such spaces represents a core activity for all, thus making it essential to include the practice of 'being in lectures' in the analysis. Although this categorisation might suggest that students are seen as only passive recipients of the lecturer's presentation, I interpret the 'be' verb here in an existential sense, that is, that students are physically present in specific places at specific times and, whether they want to or not, they are conscious and fully aware of that physical presence. Given this, we can conceive of different degrees of 'engagement' from say, catatonic passivity up to enthusiastic active participation (even beyond the lecture space, for example, as a consultation with teachers outside the institutionally designated time) that would be included in the practice of being in lectures.

Being in lectures and classes is a practice because it is made up of a number of actions that take place in space and over time, and is something that can be discussed, arranged, and negotiated by both practitioners (students), co-practitioners (lecturers), and non-practitioners (course organizers, administrators, etc.), (Shove *et al.* 2012). It can be conducted well or badly and is partially measured and manifested in the award of an academic grade to the practitioner.

The practice has three distinctive characteristics. First, engagement can be said to take place even by those with a strong demeanor of passivity on the part of the student practitioner. Student practitioners can conduct large parts of the practice not by initiating activity but by merely responding to the directions of others mainly, but not exclusively, the professors who, though co-practitioners, traditionally play the more active role in the practice. At the extreme, practitioners can conduct the practice while being largely emotionally and intellectually disengaged or even alienated, but merely by being present, they are still engaged in the practice of 'being in lectures'. Second, this practice carries a strong sense of obligation on the part of the student practitioners. This



obligation, originating from the demands of co-practitioners and non-practitioners, requires student practitioners to show personality traits such as forbearance and patience. Of course, the degree of passivity, engagement and obligation varies from individual to individual; some practitioners will choose to be highly active for the duration of the practice having chosen their courses because of genuine interest while others conduct the practice merely as an activity marking time. Yet each extreme can be categorised as the practice of 'being in lectures' and open to analysis as such. Finally, the practice attracts practitioners as a result of its position in the infrastructure of university and campus life, and as a routine, expected activity. It does not recruit adherents (or 'carriers') by having intrinsically attractive characteristics, such as the promise of adventure, personal challenge or even convenience, though this may appeal to some. Rather, practitioners become carriers of the practice primarily as a result of having become students – a status that many see as a necessary progression of their life course and an essential element of their identity. These three aspects will be shown below to have influence on how the practice is conducted. One student commenting about the purpose of lectures, said

Mostly I think for me education is something that you can do or you can get because you are *young*, I mean, because of my age. I'm eighteen [so] if I don't know something, then I can ask someone, it is not embarrassing, it is usual, but if I am thirty and if I don't know anything about the world, then that *is* embarrassing (Tomoko, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

This interesting opinion illustrates the student's belief that being part of university and taking classes is something that she needs to do in order not to feel inadequate later in life. Attending university is about securing an insurance policy for future responsibilities.

In considering how these observations might speak to issues of sustainability,

several points can be made, some of which relate not directly to being in lectures but to room allotment and timetabling. First, the traditional form of lecturing means that inappropriate allocation of classrooms and lecture halls in which courses containing small numbers of students take place in large classroom spaces. This occurs because many students register for classes at the beginning of a semester but then change their minds, or drop the class after one or two meetings. In my role as an advisor to some students, some students would adjust their schedule as a result of changing circumstances regarding their part-time work, or simply because they found the content of the courses too difficult or dull. However, there is no process for making adjustments. A second issue relates to energy waste that occurs when classrooms are vacated at the end of lectures but heaters/coolers and lights are left on and there is a considerable wasting of energy as a result.

Second, the most common form for professors to disseminate their lecture content is through the use of photocopied handouts, often stapled and printed on one side only. Efforts to recycle are lukewarm and use of an intranet for students to download lecture materials does not exist in the university. Despite being the generation that has had full exposure to IT (Sugimoto 2014) the reasons that students do not do this at JIU are twofold. First, the compulsory media information courses that all students are required to take comprise only the most basic of IT competencies, and second, there is resistance among senior staff to adopt this method over traditional methods. In this area, the challenge is targeting the practices of professors and administrators rather than the practices of students who, though engaged in the practice of being in lectures are largely powerless, particularly in Japanese institutions where student power and input into their learning outcomes is almost non-existent.

The most important aspect of considering the sustainability of being in lectures relates to the students. The central point to reiterate is that, in JIU (and Japanese universities generally) being in lectures is characterised by passivity

and obligation. Possible actions on the part of students to enhance the sustainability of lecture attendance are therefore minimal. During lectures, students consume little in terms of energy, they use few materials with the exception of those required and supplied by lecturers, and they are where they are because it is what the university demands of them as students. In considering the practice of being in lectures using the 3E Model (Shove *et al.* 2012), there is little that students can do to increase the sustainability of the material and competence elements of this practice. Where the model might offer insight into how a campus can become more sustainable lies in a reflection of the *meanings* that attach to lecture attendance. It can be envisaged that students who became more engaged in the learning process might be able to initiate change in some of the problems described in the previous paragraph. How these meanings can be changed would however almost certainly require the involvement of the university as a whole.

### **5.1.2 Eating on campus**

The physiological component of the practice of eating clearly distinguishes it from the other campus practices under consideration, but little else about this practice is straightforward. Warde (2013: 24) considered the practice “especially complex” on account of it comprising several integrative practices (that is, practices that are recognisable entities such as ‘gardening’), which makes it a “composite or *compound* practice” (*ibid*). For Warde, eating includes the integrative practices of provisioning of ingredients, cooking, the arranging of meal times, and the consuming of food which includes the preference for certain types of meals. As a campus practice, pursued by student practitioners, the practice of eating is somewhat simpler as a number of these integrative practices are absent. The majority of students do not need to bring their own ingredients, or to cook them. Further, although they are engaged with a few aspects of when and with whom they will eat, this is simplified for them in several ways. Because of the university day and their own class schedule there is little organisation and few arrangements to be made regarding the timing for having

the food ready at an appropriate moment, ensuring there are adequate utensils and crockery, and so on. The remaining aspect, the actual consumption of food and the degree to which it is enjoyed – its gastronomic features (*ibid*: 24), is the only aspect of this compound practice that is wholly relevant to campus eating practices. Nevertheless, it remains a practice that is difficult to elucidate, although it has two major characteristics.

The first characteristic is that eating is a clearly visible practice. It is visible in its display of dexterity and competence that involves unambiguous and easily recognised patterns of bodily movement. It is also visible in that it is conducted usually within view of others. Eating practices on campus are not private as they are at home which means that social considerations of etiquette play a role. At the same time it has become acceptable to eat at any time of day and in almost any location (though not as a general rule during lectures). This is partly due to two factors. First, Japanese have traditionally been reluctant to eat outside accepted times and locations (for example, in the street, and on trains) believing that to do so demonstrates a lack of forbearance and decorum. However, public eating, possibly due to the perception that lifestyles are getting ever more hurried (Southerton 2013) is increasingly common and this is reflected on campus. The second factor is that in 2015 a convenience store opened on campus making the consumption of take-away food more accessible. As a result, eating on campus has become much more ubiquitous.

The second characteristic is that eating practices are almost always conducted in tandem with other practices, and often subservient to them. Even students eating alone, (and making it clear that it is their wish to do so by sitting in isolated parts of the dining hall) invariably engage in other activities, often having study materials as well as their phones close to hand. Even when other practices are only conducted intermittently, rarely do students focus solely on eating. One student who brings his own lunch confessed that

This is bad to say, but I usually go to the library to eat because I don't want to waste time (Touichi, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

This student appears to imply that time spend eating represents time taken away from doing other practices and represents an impediment to getting on with activities that were more valuable to him. A large number of students however eat together and are clearly engaged in the practice of socialising/relaxing as they do so. Some students have more specific purposes for going to a dining hall for lunch:

I go to the English Café. Sometimes there are my friends, and foreign friends, so I can speak English and Chinese... but the dining hall is so crowded. I don't like this atmosphere (Ryuji, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

In this case, the student's primary purpose of going to the dining hall, despite not enjoying the experience, was to maintain his language skills. Students also predominantly engage in socialising/relaxing practices following morning classes or before the commencement of the afternoon session, but will also work on last-minute studying practices for tests or presentations.

It is also interesting to note that the only part of this compound practice to be relevant to the campus practitioner – food choice and quality – is often not a motivation for using the institutional facilities. Some students have preferences for particular dining halls because of the friendliness of staff, while others will choose the dining hall that is located closest to their previous/next class. Many of course will choose the dining hall where most of their friends congregate, while others will eat there for pecuniary reasons: "I always buy *katsudon* [breaded pork and rice]. It is a reasonable price", one student commented (Suguru, 3<sup>rd</sup> year). Students often choose the dining halls over other places on account of the extra services that they provide, for example, free hot tea and use of microwave ovens for heating food brought from outside. Eating practices engaged in

beyond the dining halls were naturally less involved (i.e. mainly snacking or involving the consumption of cold food), and students eating from packets of food whilst preparing for a class could be described as either eating while studying, or studying while eating depending on where the activity takes place and on how the students interpret their actions.

Clearly there are many issues relating to campus sustainability around the practice of eating. A primary concern is the use of resources, although some aspects of campus eating are more sustainable than beyond the campus confines. The use of washable chopsticks and not the one-time use, wooden disposable forms (*waribashi*) and standard drinking bowls (*chawan*) for green tea instead of paper cups are movements toward sustainable campus practices. However, the dining halls at JIU were designed to handle the capacity required for the lunchtime rush (See Chapter 4, photograph 4.3). This means that for long periods, these large spaces consume resources unnecessarily. While areas are sometimes cordoned off for purpose of reducing table and floor cleaning, the lighting and heating of these spaces are maintained. While the 3E Model elements of materiality and competence (Shove *et al.* 2012) are clearly in evidence here, the temporal nature of dining hall eating is also significant, including the artificially created demands on dining room resources as a result of timetabling. A second issue concerns the amount of plastic used for wrapping convenience store food but which is almost entirely discarded. The campus makes no provision for the re-cycling of these resources. The large number of waste bins around the campus does not encourage the separation of rubbish but are there only in order to facilitate the convenience of campus users.

### **5.1.3 Socialising/relaxing on campus**

There is no adequate term to cover all the senses in which students take time to unwind. I argue that the most straightforward way is to combine the two terms, 'socialising' and 'relaxing'. I ascribe the term 'relaxing' as having connotations of quietness, calmness and relative inactivity including students seeking to rest in

their own company. In contrast, I define 'socialising' as the activity in which students enjoy taking a break in the presence of others, enjoying some form of social interaction. Of course, those socialising are also relaxing, and the terms are not intended to be mutually exclusive.

I would first like to define socialising/relaxing by what it is not – it is not what students do when they are attending lectures, studying, or dealing with administration officials. Socialising may cover eating practices (for example, snacking) and some study activities for example, study review. In addition, although it involves enjoyment, I do not classify 'socialising/relaxing' as including sports, or taking part in club activities, for these are activities purposefully selected by students, represent specific and not 'everyday' practices, and include specific preparations and actions that are meaningless if they do not do the activity. For example, covering a table with newspaper and filling trays with ink would be meaningless if the student was not intending to practice calligraphy. Nor does it include sleeping because socialising/relaxing is essentially a social activity, conducted in a conscious state (see Harrison 2009). This practice particularly could be described as being composed of bundles of different practices and covering a wide range. Moreover, the practice can be conducted in almost any location, from classrooms, to dining halls, and outside locations. It is the practice that groups engage in for short periods at any time of day, as well as for longer periods, and much of the campus day is taken up by this practice.

Turning the 'collective' social practice of socialising/relaxing into a more sustainable practice is a challenge because of the sheer volume of different activities involved. However certain aspects of the practice are common, and the use of the smartphone is the major material requirement of most activities in this category. Because of the dominance of this device it would appear to be unrealistic to pursue sustainable change through decreasing the use of such devices. However, practice theory can be brought to bear is in strengthening aspects that aid movement toward sustainability while weakening those that

undermine it. The observation field diary has many examples of groups of students who I classed as socialising together, but where their use of the smartphone varied considerably.

An especially interesting vignette I observed was that of a student, sitting in a group of four around a table in the student hall. This particular student was writing a comment on a social media website with her phone when her friend sitting opposite said something. The girl responded with a few words then reached out her hand (the one that was not holding the phone) to take a rice cracker from a communal bag on the table, chewed for a moment and carried on writing a message. Her friend spoke again, saying that it was time they should go to class. The phone user once again responded verbally, and reached out her hand to pick up her coat, which was on an adjacent chair. At no time during this did she look up from her phone. She stopped looking at her phone only when her friends all got up to leave. However, I also observed other occasions where some groups would spend almost all their socialising/relaxing time engaged in conversation, and as a result, would glance only rarely at their phones. In other examples, students divided their time more evenly between direct contact with a friend and attention to their phone. In interviews, several students said that they purposely kept their phone switched off when with friends because they felt it was rude, or said that they would only look at their phone if someone else did first.

Although some research suggests that young Japanese are highly comfortable with social media because first, they use social media to maintain already close relationships and second, because they experience awkwardness in situations of direct communication (Ishii 2006) there have been indications over the last few years of a backlash to the social media revolution (“Everyone could know what I was doing’: the millennials not using social media”, *The Guardian*, 17 March 2016). Campus observations suggest that this may be happening in Japan, and efforts to promote greater personal contact, that is, to alter the



meaning of the practice of 'phone dependency' when socialising/relaxing, could support the movement toward sustainability in this area. Taking different approaches to the links that bind the students at university could do this. It is a common experience among Japanese university students that their closest friendships are formed during their first two years when they not only share classes together, but also share the same free time, and in the department of International Exchange Studies, also share the same study tours and periods at overseas universities. Although, conceding that significantly lower levels of overall energy consumption are unlikely to result, reduced phone usage is a move toward more sustainable campus practices, and therefore efforts to undermine the link between the extent of simultaneous phone use and socialising, through, for example, popularising the idea that it is 'cool' to connect with friends without the prop of a phone may be a way of bringing change to a practice that appears to be completely dominant.

#### **5.1.4. Studying on campus**

Students undertake this practice in many areas of the campus. Although the library remains the most common location, the practice of studying has both expanded to more locations and changed in the way it is performed. The first characteristic of study practices on the JIU campus is that they are increasingly location-neutral. In other words, almost anywhere can become a study space and represent a viable space for study. "I study in the gym changing rooms sometimes," one student revealed, "while I wait for the judo club to start" (Ryuji, 2<sup>nd</sup> year). The second characteristic is that studying has taken on a strongly social component in that students will choose to study together as they perceive several advantages to doing so. Another student told me,

I study 70% on campus, 30% at home. After studying at JIU I go with my friends and we eat somewhere, or we take the train home together (Asuka, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

The growing number of locations in which study is conducted combined with its changing nature from being a less solitary to a more communal practice is an example of change brought about through a recursive relationship between the two. The library, as a central institutional service provided a possible stimulus for this. In maintaining its relevance for students by going beyond the traditional provision of books, newspapers and journals and expanding to include many aspects of IT, the range of study practices has also expanded as a result, with one effect being that it has become a less self-contained activity (for example, in the way students gather around a computer monitor, or view a DVD together). At the same time, as study practices have changed this has led to an expansion of acceptable boundaries for study in which social interaction was an element of study practice (as students discussed what they saw on the screen). As social interaction became a more central component of study practice, study began to be acceptable in places where social interaction, rather than study, was the predominant practice, for example, the student hall and dining halls. This in turn, has fed back into the form of studying that takes place in the library.

A third characteristic of study practices is that they have become disjointed. Study objectives for students at JIU can be very precise; tasks are such that some degree of accomplishment can be gained in very brief amounts of time. For many of course, indifferent application results in the practice being punctuated by considerable social contact for much of the activity. For many students at universities ranked below the top 30 institutions (as indicated in Chapter 4, JIU, at 232nd is a middle-ranked university in Japan) academic study has negative associations, usually as a result of perceived failure at high school, or, from the belief that attending university is meant to be, following past experiences of this period in a Japanese young person's life, a time of freedom to do what they wish while having few responsibilities. Consequently, many students wish to turn study into a social activity because for many Japanese university students studying is an onerous practice only made palatable by doing together with others. The campus environment directly encourages the

socialisation of study. It is a source of resentment for many for two major reasons. First, the historical circumstances that were described in Chapter 3 about tertiary education as a depository prior to entry into employment served to undermine the purpose of education and study. Second, because the period of university study is regarded as a period of less-than-serious study, students will also conduct the practice in most other locations, such as dining halls, student halls and other openly accessible spaces, as well as the library. Again, like the practices of eating, and socialising/relaxing, it often combines with other practices and, as for these other practices, an activity will be labeled as 'practice of studying' when it is the primary purpose of the practitioner.

One of the most ubiquitous uses of resources on campus is, of course, paper. Students are often required to buy books for appearance's sake. One student told of one course where after buying an expensive textbook the teacher failed to use it once, for which she was understandably frustrated. Another student told of being required to buy a book written by the professor or risk failing the course! Photocopy machines are conveniently placed for the use of both professors and students in many parts of the university. There is no provision for students to pass on books second hand to students below them as for some teachers acceptance to the course is the purchase of a brand new book. These are some of the sustainability issues connected to the practice of study.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

In this chapter I have defined what is meant by campus practices and noted that while some practices such as eating and resting are, by their fundamental nature, indistinguishable from any other location, other practices are facilitated by the campus in order to achieve the instrumental aims of its users. It is necessary to reiterate that the four categories of campus practices are not all-inclusive, but were identified as a result of data analysis (predominantly field diary

observations) as being the most ubiquitous, accessible, and relevant to the aim of exploring ways of creating a (more) sustainable campus.

In order for a thorough analysis of campus practices using practice theory and the 3E Model of Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), it has been necessary to first examine the characteristics of the campus practices. The practice of being in lectures has been shown to involve passivity and obligation for the students. As such, the extent to which students can take sustainable action is limited. Such action may have to originate from teachers, university authorities, as well as powers beyond the university. The data imply that there is a potential for bringing sustainable change among the student body as the comments by Tomoko (p.146) suggest that there is a wish among students to be more involved in their learning.

The practice of eating on campus, falling within the realm of practices that are fundamental to the physical and mental wellbeing, implies that efforts to engage more closely with sustainable objectives may also require input from outside the campus. Nevertheless, there are some issues that could be addressed by campus users in this area. A particular problem that was confirmed in this analysis is the complexity of eating practices, in that they occur at all times of day, and often in conjunction with other practices, obscuring how action might make them more sustainable. Clearly, some aspects of campus life that are controlled by the university (especially the temporal structure of the university day) could address some of the problems of wasted energy in terms of dining hall capacity, which alternates between being under-used and over-crowded. The practice of socialising/relaxing represents an equally challenging practice for identifying areas where greater sustainable could be pursued on account of it being deeply embedded and diverse, impinging on all activities that take place on campus.

Studying on campus is a practice that my analysis has indicated is evolving in

several ways, and appears to be one open to possible sustainable change. However, a dissection of campus study practices would suggest that there are few areas where meaningful sustainability could be brought about. The first characteristic, namely that the practice is occurring in a greater variety of locations, means that it might be harder to identify potential across-practice sustainable modifications. Similarly, that it is becoming a social activity with a growing diversity of synchronous activities may again undermine any action aimed at greater sustainability.

Whilst in this chapter reference has been made to how the 3E Model (Shove *et al.* 2012) might interpret campus practices, in the next chapter, I turn my attention to a more detailed look at how the elements of the model can be employed in understanding campus practices more fully.

## **Chapter 6: Dissecting the elements of campus practices and implications for sustainability**

In this chapter I analyse Japanese student practices using the 3E Model and justify the decision to conduct part of my analysis through a focus on each of its three central elements. As Shove *et al.* (2012: 22) have emphasised, in everyday life the elements of materials, competence and meaning and the features that comprise them are bound together in many inter-dependent ways. However, as they have also argued, elements “have somewhat independent lives” (*ibid*: 120), and that, though elements may transform each other when they come together in practices, certain aspects of these elements could be said to have “generic features” (*ibid*: 43). Therefore, as central cornerstones of the model, I argue that a systematic and methodical look at each element and the characteristics that distinguish them is vital if we are to understand how those characteristics might combine, negate, undermine, intensify or repel each other in the normal processes of daily campus practice. The separation into three is a heuristic device, and recognises that elements are not “purified of each other” on account of the fact that elements are “always co-constitutive and never found ‘pure’ empirically” (Matt Watson, personal communication, 2015). Moreover, although this part of my analysis focuses on each specific element, I do not avoid discussion of dynamic aspects when they serve to illustrate a point.

However, I reiterate that a narrower focused examination in which the characteristics of individual elements can be highlighted, even when they are analysed in terms of their integration into performances, may produce an insight into their potential as part of dynamic relationships. Breaking down these elements may also provide insight into the nature of practice-as-entity and the extent that the role of a particular element might contribute to the meaning of a practice. This approach will be balanced in the next chapter where I cover the more dynamic aspects of element interconnectivity. To appreciate fully the dynamism of elements that the 3E Model represents requires a thorough

understanding of the characteristics of each element, and that the two forms of analysis presented in this and the following chapter – discrete and holistic – are complementary.

The first section of this chapter then, discusses campus materiality (6.1) with the aim of analysing the characteristics of this element and how it has an impact on campus life. This is followed by a look at future sustainable implications for campus materiality (Section 6.1.1) and contrasts with the previous chapter in which current issues of campus sustainability were covered. A similar process is then carried out with the elements of competence (6.2) and meaning (6.3).

## **6.1 The materiality of campus practices**

Campus practices require practitioners to actively assemble specific materials in order to conduct practices successfully. In the case of being in lectures and studying, some materials are, fairly obviously, identified by course curricula, the professors who run them, and the tasks that they assign. Materials that are intrinsic to these practices, such as laboratory coats for pharmacy students, stethoscopes for nursing students (as well as more common items like textbooks) are explicitly required, while other items such as notebooks, dictionaries, computers, and so on, carry implicit expectations. In describing how practices evolve, the 3E Model considers the effects of the historical development of materiality. Regarding campus practices, the purpose of these materials have changed little historically, despite the development of more student-centred theories of education and teaching methodology, and point to the relatively stable nature of practitioner materiality relating to the practice of being in lectures and studying. Likewise, the meanings attached to the performance of these practices have also held stable.

The main factor that explains this concerns the effects of policies made by

Japanese governments regarding the objectives of higher education and the tasks assigned to universities to secure those objectives. In following government guidelines, Japanese universities continue to deliver education in highly conservative and traditional forms and meanings where classes and courses are almost entirely teacher-centred and classroom-based (Lee-Cunin 2001). At JIU for example, although the buildings that comprise the campus are only between five and twenty-five years old the spaces they provide cater for traditional forms of teaching and learning only. As long as teaching methods and learning styles in Japanese universities continue as they are, the materiality of these particular practices will be composed of a core number of objects that fulfill established functions. In this case, the meanings ascribed to the purposes of tertiary education have a significant influence on the materiality involved. The consequence for materiality has been the maintenance of stable and enduring practices even though the meanings of entities envisaged often differ from how practitioners perform them. More will be said about the effects of infrastructure on practice later in this section, however it is clear that there are strong historical connections that continue to influence the materiality for teaching in Japanese tertiary institutions.

In Shove *et al.* (2012) the authors acknowledge the contribution of Science and Technology Studies (STS) in connection with the position of objects in practices. The greater attention accorded by the 3E Model to the role of objects helps to reveal the connections between practices and the objects required to carry them out. In looking at campus practices, the influence of technology can be clearly seen, for example, as in the changes from dictionaries to electronic dictionaries, blackboards to slides, and also in convenience, such as *Post It* stickers for marking places and pens for highlighting. The structure of the practice however retains (on Japanese campuses at least) a traditional form serving to restrain the evolution of materiality used in lectures beyond the purpose of upgrading and ease of use.



While the materials and, to some extent, the competences of these practices engage with technological change, the meanings ascribed to their use show less movement. Established practices continue to seek outcomes in much the same way that they have historically, but the manner of their performances evolve, sometimes erratically and unevenly. For instance, textbooks continue to be the staple mode of dissemination for course content but are increasingly printed on sustainably sourced paper. Also, rather than being recipients of large numbers of handouts, in some universities (though not JIU), students are expected to secure lecture materials for their courses through intranet downloads. In the comment below, a student describes the process she followed in doing some translation work for an English native speaker, a 'traditional' activity for students of the department to which she belonged. However, the task was done, not through face-to-face meetings and exchange of paper documents, but almost completely electronically.

Joshua asked me to do some translation work and I exchanged [messages] on LINE [*an instant messaging application*] with him, so he sometimes asked questions about translation and I answered him. Even it is text, I still have a chance to learn new words and expressions (Kazumi 1<sup>st</sup> year).

Although the student could have chosen to perform the task in a more traditional way, the availability of technology allowed her and her fellow student to complete the activity in a different manner. Helping a foreign student with Japanese translation is a common activity in a department where a proportion of students are non-Japanese, but the materials available to conduct the practice led to innovative ways of performance. In addition to the form of materiality however, was the fact that the method was also convenient. In *Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience* (2003), Elizabeth Shove showed how these concepts can act as catalysts in changing practices. The evolving practice came about as a result of the combination of convenience and technology. Without the

material technology, a new way of performing the practice would not have been available, but without the convenience, even given the presence of technology, the students would have been unlikely to complete the task in the way that they did. Although the practice-as-performance evolves in different ways as new materials and competences are taken up, there is in contrast little evident change in the practice-as-entity.

Although not exclusive to campus practices, use of smart phones is, unsurprisingly, ubiquitous on campus and a central component of all campus practices, especially socialising/relaxing. From a practice theory standpoint, the most important observation is also one of the most obvious: for students, the mobile phone is a material component that is central to almost every daily practice. It occupies a significant position in some practices and a peripheral though meaningful purpose in others. It has become what Wallenborn (2013) describes as part of the 'extended body', and is an object that, on any given day, can occupy the attention of students for almost the entire time they are present on campus. It is also a tool that has central importance in the practice of socialising/relaxing, competes for equal importance in eating practices (where eating and phone use are carried on coterminously) and has the potential to interrupt, cut short, or redirect the performance of all other practices. One student commented that, "The only time I don't use my phone [for contributing to social media websites] is during my English classes" (Shiho, 3<sup>rd</sup> year). On campus, it is the ultimate colonizer of students' time (Shove *et al.* 2012: 65).

A major reason why the phone is such an ever-present object on campus is that the campus infrastructure provides an environment that is highly conducive to continuous use. Comparative research indicates that Japanese are prolific users of texting and instant messaging functions (Baron *et al.* 2010). In contrast to calling, texting is an activity in which students, during their daily life, rarely need to exercise restraint. It can be done freely in many open campus spaces, and, involving little body movement or noise, is unlikely to disturb others, a

consideration that is important amongst Japanese. Moreover, although there exists very strict monitoring of phone use in Japanese high schools, there are no institutional restrictions on their use in universities. As a result, students carry their devices openly in their hand or pockets for immediate access, enjoying the new freedom. Moreover, sources of electricity to recharge their phones are accessible everywhere. The student hall, international hall and computer rooms have regularly spaced electrical sockets for the primary purpose of recharging phones/computers while sockets in classrooms, lecture halls and dining halls allow students to recharge their phones at will. Students will even charge their phones during lectures, leaving them against the wall or on the floor, although the small number of such sockets in many classrooms means that there is sometimes competition among students for access to the outlets.

Another factor responsible for their universal presence is the lack of any social taboos regulating mobile phone use (an aspect connected with the meanings associated with phone use). Even in lectures and classes where it might be expected that students would feel it necessary to exercise restraint, texting, and other inconspicuous usages, are common. This maybe because students in lectures with high numbers of attendees can easily conceal their activity, although in some cases the collusion of many academic staff who turn a blind eye to the practice is likely to encourage such use. One student commented,

In the class *Japanese International Relations*... there are so many students that [because of the high number] people play with their phones all the time (Hana, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

Moreover, even in the few situations where it is institutionally frowned upon, such as during formal entrance and graduation ceremonies, or classes where teachers have expressly prohibited their use, routinised, uninterrupted operation appears to be so embedded that students will merely use their phones surreptitiously. The infrastructure that supports phone use (phone networks, the

availability of wi-fi, etc.) and which increases the extent of convenience and accessibility has affected the meanings surrounding the acceptability of phone use. It has eroded the social understandings of where phone use is proscribed. In his discussion of the generation gap, Tetsuo Sakurai (2004) argues that one effect of the phone function that enables a call to be accepted or refused is that it leads to young people being able to exert obsessive control over their human interaction. Rather than risk unplanned social interaction they prefer to maintain relations with only a select group with whom they feel comfortable. The use of materials here clearly connects closely with deeply held meanings that are inextricably attached. Perhaps, more than any other object, the phone illustrates the point of how “social relations are ‘congealed’ in the hardware of daily life” (Shove *et al.* 2012: 10).

However, there is evidence (cited in the last chapter) that, among some students, a tipping point has been reached – that users of mobile technology are resisting the control that the instrument exerts over them, and that what Davis *et al.* (2010) call ‘asynchronous interaction’ (a process that involves strategies aimed at resisting the addictive control that technology exerts) is gaining ground. One student remarked, “If I don’t have any plans to meet my friends, I always try to put my phone in my bag so that I don’t get distracted” (Yo, 4<sup>th</sup> year). Phone use can be seen in some ways to contrast with the materiality of study discussed earlier in that, while the basic materials and competencies are unchanged (or only slightly modified), the meanings of phone use have seen significant expansion. In other words, although performances change little, the meaning of phone practices-as-entity enlarges greatly, to include as it has in the last few years for example, instant messaging.

### **6.1.1 The materiality of campus ‘stuff’ and infrastructure**

The smartphone may be the most visible of objects that have a powerful presence on campus, but it is not the only object to be so. In the process of turning nursing students into qualified nurses, objects of specialist purpose such

as stethoscopes are clearly integral to that process and first year nursing students are required to purchase one before taking up their studies. Materiality plays several important roles here. The use and carrying of a stethoscope, for example, has a symbolic meaning, as well as being 'part of the uniform' (or the identity) of nursing students by which fellow students and other campus users recognise them. One student commented, "I have never been to the nursing building. I'd like to visit, but all the students in their white coats put me off!" (Emiko, 3<sup>rd</sup> year) and suggests a degree of intimidation, also. It further represents a clear, defined, practical purpose that is deeply integrated within the practices of studying and being in lectures. Whilst the example of stethoscopes is an unusual one, we can see similar, albeit less strong, effects with other materials of campus life, including computers, specialist textbooks, bags and folders. It illustrates a central aspect of materiality: certain materials of practices create a powerful magnet around which they gather meanings that are strengthened through collective identities.

In Shove *et al.* (2012) the importance of historically evolving design and its application is discussed as an aspect of materiality. The authors describe how the materials and skills required for the building of horse-drawn carriages contributed to the design and production of early car bodies, and that the materials (and competences) from, *inter alia*, cycling, and the use of machines, were able to migrate across to the practice of car-making (*ibid*: 26-27). Similar instances of evolving material design, and materials that jump practices, can be identified in the campus dining and student halls. Historically, the infrastructure of the dining hall in Japanese universities has been configured to provide cheap, quick and easy-to-consume traditional food, such as rice dishes, and noodles. It is a configuration that continues to dominate and is reflected in the materiality found there. Cutlery, crockery, chopsticks, trays and so on, are easily accessible and returnable. Configurations are formed around speed- and convenience-facilitating features manifested in the positioning of barriers for queuing, the location of cash registers, the arrangements of tables, and the spatial separation

of the areas for the serving of food, from the areas for the returning of dishes and plates. Within the infrastructure of the dining hall, materiality has evolved. In separate areas located away from the main food-dispensing section of the dining halls, microwave ovens are now available for students to heat up their own food. The presence of microwaves is a result of the universal familiarity with them following their adoption in domestic eating practices. The migration of microwaves from the home (and from the food preparation areas of restaurants and institutional dining kitchens) to the food consumption area, where operative competence is assumed, represents a changing practice to institutional dining.

According to the 3E Model, infrastructure is also a part of the element of materiality (Shove *et al.* 2012). Clearly, on a university campus, much of the infrastructure is of a dedicated nature. In the practice of being in a lecture, the infrastructure provides materials to meet the different needs of both co-practitioners, namely, tables and desks for students, microphones and lecture dais for professors that allow the practice to be mutually co-performed. Nicolini (2012: 4) discusses how objects and infrastructure play a dominant role in the doing of practices and they “both participate in the accomplishment of the practice and make this accomplishment durable over time.” The positioning of chairs, tables and projector screens in classrooms help to establish the roles of the practitioners. However, materiality has also affected the way that infrastructures are used. For example, the presence of computers and DVDs is an attraction for some students to go to the library for other than study purposes. In answer to the question, “What places on campus do you spend most time in?” one student replied,

I think the library, because in this semester, I am not taking so many classes so I have free time and I go to the library and watching DVD and studying English, using computer or something. I watch DVD once a week because it's mostly very busy – there are so many people who want to watch DVDs (Honoka, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

This student equates the library with the practice of relaxing rather than study, and implies that it is a common connection made by many students. It has been noted that the use to which materials are put can sometimes evolve as users establish new links beyond what designers and manufacturers intended (Shove *et al.* 2012). In the case above, the changing materiality in a campus building can also lead to a change in purpose of that piece of infrastructure. Although the provision of computers and DVD players was meant primarily to encourage the use of different media for study purposes, it is clear from observations that DVDs are watched for entertainment purposes as well, although, for language students especially, the watching of second language films may be classed as a form of study. Nevertheless, a link between the purposes of a university library and the practice of entertainment in order to pass the time has been formed. In this case, materiality, in the case of DVD players, has brought about a change to the traditional meaning of a dedicated campus space, that is, evolving performances have brought about a change in the meaning of the practice-as-entity. It has also blurred the boundaries of the purpose of the library as a result of cross-practice innovation.

Other essential materials are those that are connected to the needs of the infrastructure of the university itself. Within classrooms, laboratories, the library, first-aid practice rooms, and so on, are the important materials that provide the infrastructures with meaning, from chalk through to information and communication technology. In the practice of being in a lecture, the student-practitioner is in a co-dependent relationship with the teacher-practitioner, neither being able to conduct the practice of being in a lecture meaningfully without the other. The infrastructure provides materials to meet the different needs of both co-practitioners, namely, tables and desks for students, and microphones and lecture dais for professors that allow the practice to be mutually co-performed. When practitioners invest in materials like textbooks, or when a group assembles in the same classroom or laboratory each week, the

collective experience of the practitioners establishes a bond of sorts that can affect how the practice is realised (Shove *et al.* 2012). Moreover, this is emphasised in the way materials are utilised for example, practitioners without a required book may find themselves isolated from the rest of the group. Indeed, the purchase of materials is implicitly intended to strengthen the commitment of practitioners and serve as a symbol of group solidarity. Similarly, the presence of a group of practitioners meeting regularly in one place and sharing activities engenders more cooperative or collegial relationships between practitioners (*ibid*). It can be seen here how materials are deployed in securing particular meanings to practices and how such practices are subsequently carried out. I will now discuss some of the implications for sustainability that this analysis of the element of materiality suggests.

#### **6.1.2 Implications for sustainability of campus materiality**

For Shove and colleagues, a key determinant of the constitution of practices is the way elements integrate. Well-established links between elements are difficult to reform, re-direct or break (Shove *et al.* 2012: 21). From this starting point, we can surmise that when aspects of materiality are central to a practice, they are more likely to retain their prominent position and resist any change in their roles within a practice. We can deploy this concept for campus practices, and conjecture on the implications for sustainability.

While there are elements of materiality on campus that are extremely powerful, there are examples of campus practices where the links with associated materials are weaker. For example, many students purchase textbooks that they rarely use, or never even open. These items are not the daily physical props that facilitate the performance of being in lectures and studying, and their existence serve to illustrate that not all the materials of campus life play a powerful role in campus practices. Objects that are of predominantly instrumental purpose, may serve to endow their owners with membership of a particular (academic) group with temporary status, but once the instrumental purpose disappears then so



does its symbolic value. An analysis using practice theory allows us to identify where it might be fruitful to undermine particular links for sustainable purposes. An implication for campus sustainability here suggests that where links between practices and the materials that permit their performance are weaker, actions that can undermine the material-practice link may help to initiate a shift towards greater sustainability.

The potential for this can be seen in the comment, “I wish I didn’t have this [textbook] I don’t need it. It takes [up] space in my room” (Shiho, 4<sup>th</sup> year). For this student, the links between objects of materiality and meaning dissolved quickly once the instrumental purpose was completed. With the link broken, there is the possibility for a new link to be established, for example, the creation of a system in which her book could be recycled and used by other students. Undermining other links between materials and their meaning could present opportunities for increasing campus sustainability. Identifying when materials lose their meaning could also be significant, for example, placing containers for recycled paper inside, or just outside classrooms could establish a new practice based on the termination of links with materials from classes that are no longer needed.

Whilst particular infrastructures that make up the practices of being in lectures and studying may remain central, deeply embedded as a result of tradition, and therefore difficult to change, the fact that the particular material forms which facilitate performance continue to evolve suggests that this is where the potential for sustainable change can be located. A practice may become open to alteration in the spaces where technology is able to affect the conduct of these traditional functions, especially in the ability of technology to ‘upgrade’ the performance of traditional activities whilst providing for greater convenience. Technology offers the potential for recalibrating traditional practices and promoting new relationships between a practice and the materiality that supports its performance, for example, in course content dissemination where essential

objects have moved from blackboards (almost entirely the preserve of teachers) to computer slides and from paper handouts to intranet downloading. Further, these evolving material forms could undermine older links of meaning as the increasingly common practice of student computer presentations, widens the acceptability of practitioners other than teachers having responsibility for contributing to course content. Part of the sustainable issues for campuses like JIU is that the traditional form of tertiary education is the cause of several sustainable issues, and therefore, challenging these older formats may lead to practices that can help move practices in new directions.

Of course, increased use of technology is likely to involve increased energy use in terms of the embodied energy that devices contain as well as short product life cycles, and may undermine rather than improve campus sustainability. However, evolutions in the direction of practices need not only be technological, but could find inspiration from traditional Japanese culture. More traditional objects may still form up in new configurations to produce new ways of conducting practices. In the practice of eating on campus for example, students who bring food from home often use traditional *furoshiki* to wrap their lunch boxes. The *furoshiki* is a length of material usually made of cotton and with a long historical provenance. In the past, food was put in a wooden, lacquered box of divided sections (to keep the various items of food separate), then tied with the *furoshiki* in such a way as to make it easier to carry. The practice of using the *furoshiki* has evolved and still continues today among young Japanese because its use is convenient and multipurpose. Traditional boxes have been replaced by plastic containers of various sizes (often several boxes for one meal), but the traditional method of tying the *furoshiki* adequately serves the new purpose of holding the containers firmly together inside school bags. Moreover, when it is time to eat, the unfolded *furoshiki* doubles up as a napkin on the table or lap of the person who is eating. In addition, it bestows on the user the status of someone who possesses knowledge of what it means to have good table manners. This example shows many things about the relationship between

objects, competence and meaning – a central aspect of the 3E Model – but the point I am making here is that current or historical cultural practices may well carry implications for future sustainable practices (Shove *et al.* 2012).

The observations in the previous section have several implications for campus sustainability and potential practice change regarding mobile phone use. Although there are significant environmental impacts connected with the production and disposal of phones (Scharnhorst *et al.* 2005), the routines and opportunities for usage are the most pertinent to a sustainable campus. Although I argued in the previous chapter that less phone use would equal a more sustainable campus the picture might be less clear as a result of the complexity of factors that measure daily energy consumption of mobiles including the type of handset, operation systems, applications and type of network used (Rice and Hay 2010). However, it is clear that the phone is so deeply woven into the conduct of daily life that while any attempt to break the links with unsustainable use would represent a serious challenge, practice theory can still, through a closer look at the elements that make phone use such a powerful practice, identify possible ways that could be effective.

The example of migrating technologies, as in the case of microwaves placed in dining halls illustrates that that this may contain implications for sustainability as there is potential for objects from other locations, for example, the reduced-energy use of modern Japanese vending machines, to cross more comprehensively than at present, or other appliances of the domestic kitchen that may move the institutional dining hall in a more sustainable direction.

In sum, there are two points that can be drawn from this. First, as the analysis reveals, much of the materiality of campus life is instrumental. This means that following a short period of use materials serving this purpose are often discarded. Identifying items of campus materiality and changing their form, digitalizing them, for example, would result in the saving of resources, or in cases where this could

not be done, processes to recycle might be instituted. Campus life is fundamentally transitory and recognising that materiality is part of this, could make it more sustainable. Second, the links that exist between technology, convenience and sustainability are highly complex. New technology may both support and undermine efforts toward campus sustainability and therefore it is necessary to examine the relationships with other elements to identify other possible sustainable openings.

## **6.2 The competences involved in campus practices**

In the 3E model, competence is understood to comprise of (1) various types of understanding, such as appropriate ways to act, and (2) practical forms of competence, as in the skills involved in close hand-to-eye coordination, training, or the specific manipulation of objects, for example, driving and snowboarding (Shove *et al.* 2012). Practices that can be observed on campus take place because the elements that constitute them are available and pertinent. It is necessary to think of competences in the same way.

The competences visible on campus are often those connected with temporal and spatial practices and involve mental competences (that might be called 'common sense' competences) rather than specific manipulative body skills. Crucially, these common sense practices are highly contextual and based on knowhow. In addition, these competences are more diffuse and can be found in many forms of activity. This can make them difficult to both identify and determine their significance, but nevertheless such competences are required if a practice is to be conducted according to normative expectations. Further, they are competences that evolve as the practitioners of JIU campus practices move through their years at university, in other words, as practitioners become more proficient at conducting the practices in which they engage.

Many of the competences involved in campus practices are to do with movements from place to place that occur on an ordinary day. In considering the competences required for the practice of being in lectures, several forms can be identified. On any day, and at several specific times, large numbers of students can be seen moving purposefully around the campus in what Seamon (1980, quoted in Cresswell 2004) calls a 'time-space routine' – a 'place ballet' – and in a manner that exhibits several kinds of competence (see also Lefebvre 1991). Over a relatively short period of time, practitioners acquire knowhow that allow them to conduct competently the daily entry into the correct classroom at the most convenient time (what some professors might call "the last moment"), predict how punctual the professor is likely to be in starting the class, and assess the availability of seating (as well as conducting *aisatsu* – a formalised, but brief, social greeting – with classmates). Further, prior to reaching the classroom the student needs to show competence in other areas, for example, knowledge about possible room alterations or special university events that might impinge on their usual schedule. The first action of many students on arriving on the campus is to check their department's notice board to see if there have been any room changes or cancellations before deciding what they will do next. The competences that practitioners develop as their knowhow deepens, directly affect the actions that they take in the conduct of the practice. Moreover, competences change as *individual* experiences build up to *collective* experiences with the latter coming to dictate what passes as 'normal' practice.

Practitioners must also be competent in their organisation of time. This is especially true of students in their first two years when schedules require them to take many compulsory courses. It is not intended to imply that this is a particularly challenging task but two factors are relevant. First, most Japanese students graduating from high school have had very little experience in being self-disciplined with regard to time management (McVeigh 2004). Many have relied on parents and teachers to help them meet their schedule requirements. For some, finding themselves in an environment in which their distinctive

schedule requires them to negotiate new spatial and temporal challenges can be daunting. Second, until graduation from high school, many Japanese students experienced an education that was highly restrictive and controlled, and one in which they were expected to follow detailed instructions in many areas of school life (Lee-Cunin 2004). This is markedly different from what they find at university where the more relaxed atmosphere represents a significant challenge for many unaccustomed to such freedom and who, as a result, will seek regular guidance and support from administrative and academic staff as well as fellow students in the years above them. The competence that some students exhibit then can be affected by the socialising experiences of their previous educational background.

In addition to the competences of movement and time are the competences that practitioners employ to maximise their options and secure their preferences. The structure of the university day (five ninety-minute blocks separated by a fifty-minute lunch break) serves to frame practices throughout the day, with a consequent honing of competences in order to satisfy practice needs. Similarly, a restrictive regime operates regarding the locations in which students move. One student, for example, stated

I come to this [dining] hall just once a week – the day I have classes at this end of the campus (Kazumi, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

She was aware of how her schedule within the university day inconvenienced her, but was equally aware of how she could minimise the disadvantage. For students, competency requires having the knowhow that allows them to make decisions in calculating how best they can move around campus within the temporal restrictions that are imposed upon them. Of course, not only is this competence employed for meeting the requirement of the practices of being in lectures and studying, but also for the practice of socialising/relaxing, too. Another student commented of one dining hall that

I eat here because it is where my friends eat, even though the staff is not so friendly (Yukiko, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

In this example, competence not only makes optimum movement from place to place highly relevant, for instance, from lecture hall to dining room to library in order to fulfill requirements for their life project, but competency also involves decisions that impact on the quality of a campus user's day to enable meeting up with friends, having a pleasant dining experience, and so on.

Much of the competence found in campus practices originates in the accumulated experience of its individual users. As students move through their academic years their experience exerts an important influence on the evolution of campus practices. One student illustrates how his campus competence had evolved in the following comment:

If I am late out of class, I won't go to Fu Terrace [one of the dining halls] because it gets too crowded, so I go to the other one, even though it is further away. You can sit down there (Suguru, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

This comment illustrates the argument that not only do "lives of practitioners and practices intersect" (Shove *et al.* 2012: 39) but that campus practices-as-entities are performative, inextricably linked to the competences involved in their performance in space and time. Almost certainly, among his group of friends and acquaintances, and perhaps among a wider group of students who prefer a more sedate lunchtime atmosphere, this student's personal 'career' can be seen to have had influence on others' conduct of practices. Each student's experience can be located within the evolving campus practices of the different, but connected, experiences of other users. Moreover, as students advance through the years as a student, their performances of practices change. In the first two years, students are more likely to spend time in groups, in places such as the

student hall and other lively locations. As students reach the third year onwards, they tend to congregate less in groups, preferring to spend time with one or two close friends and meet less on campus.

Competence of campus practices is not only a result of experiential knowledge specific to the particular campus to which students belong. Shove *et al.* (2012) describe how competence in the form of knowledge from one place can travel from one location to another in a process of decontextualisation, packaging and recontextualisation. On a campus this knowledge is largely composed of state guidelines and stipulations related to the administrative and academic structure required to secure the legitimacy of the degrees that a university will confer. In addition, the examples set and experience acquired by older institutions may also migrate to newer organisations. As mentioned previously, the university campus at which this research was conducted was established only in 1992 and many of the procedures governing student progress and the everyday life of the campus originates from already established competences, and many competences that arise from student practices on campus are structured by detailed administrative guidelines and requirements. Much of this competence comes in formalised activities, and which, for much of the academic year students are required to engage with it, for example, the requirement to collect grade sheets twice a year from their advisor's office on specially designated days. Many of the processes and policies that are adopted are compulsory and beyond the capacity of individual institutions to decide.

### ***6.2.1 Implications for sustainability in the area of campus competence***

It has been argued that competencies for student campus users are very much connected with the infrastructure of the university and the administration's control of daily life. This therefore implies that to pursue more sustainable campus practices through altering campus competencies would appear to lie beyond the practices of campus users. The question is whether the competencies that are part of campus practices can be seen to have sustainable



impacts, and if so, how might changing the competencies lead to a more sustainable campus. In other words, if the knowledge that students positively pursue in order to make them 'more competent' were to have sustainable features, a more sustainable campus might result.

There is unlikely to be any difference in the sustainable consequences between the competences that underpin the practices of students who have an intimate knowledge of the campus from those without such knowledge. Efficient use of the campus does not equate with sustainable use. Competencies on campus can be seen as accumulations of knowhow that lead to a stable set of practices. As Shove *et al.* (2012) emphasise, the continued reproduction of the elements that make up a practice require continual renewal if the practice is to survive (*ibid*: 24). For example, some students have acquired the competency of eating their lunch in a classroom. It is a valued competency for these students because the classroom (which they can comfortably warm/cool according to the season) is close to either the classroom in which they took a lecture prior to lunch or the classroom in which they will be studying after lunch. This competency represents a convenient, comfortable and time saving option for the practice of eating, even though it is certainly energy-intensive.

The students are able to continue this practice because of the maintenance of several links. First, the administrative system responsible for the students' timetable makes it preferable for them to eat lunch in a classroom rather than in a dining hall or student hall, which is less conveniently located. Second, the temporal structure of the campus day leads students to feel that getting to and from a dining hall would not give them enough time to eat in a relaxed, enjoyable manner, therefore eating in a classroom is a welcome solution. Third, the presence of contingency which led the students to discover, fortuitously for them, an empty classroom (with available heater/air conditioner), helps in establishing a practice that is likely to be reproduced many times subsequently. The central role of contingency makes it difficult to identify ways in which practices can be

pushed in more sustainable directions. As Shove *et al.* (2012: 39) state, “institutions involved in developing or circulating the elements of which practices are made rarely control the manner in which they are combined”.

However, such links can be broken when it is considered that it is not necessary to consider “stability and routinization [as] end points of a linear process of normalization” (*ibid*: 24). Competencies then may be seen very much as contingently created. The students in the scenario above might be encouraged to see their competence in a different (and more sustainable light) if food in the dining hall was cheaper, or, instead of having a lecture after lunch, they were free and therefore could be more leisurely in taking lunch in a dining hall even if it was located in a more distant part of the campus. This could include extending official lunchtimes (an action that was taken in 2015 when lunch was increased from 40 to 50 minutes). Other solutions might include the staggering of lunchtimes to avoid the crowded and noisy atmosphere that many students dislike.

Røpke and Christensen (2014) explored the competencies connected with movement and practices in which they showed how daily activities, involving practices that are spatially and temporally separate, contribute to the consumption of energy. They argue that frameworks established through previous practices create a web that influences the performances of both current and future practices (*ibid*: 53). As campus users, similar webs, created by both past campus users and campus infrastructure, influence current users and lock in certain competencies. Changing campus competencies may involve undermining such webs.

Wenger (1998: 238) has identified competence as being about initiative and knowledgeability. Initiative contains the sense of contingency discussed above, but for knowledgeability Wenger adds an active sense in which knowledge can be applied. Interestingly, knowledge carries with it a sense of responsibility in

that, according to Wenger, it also has accountability. The competence of campus practices therefore could be adjusted in such a way that knowledge carries with it the requirement to exercise judgement and, as suggested above, connect growing campus competence with the knowledge to carry on practices that promote sustainability on campus.

Unsustainable aspects of certain process and procedures may need to be addressed by bodies beyond the university campus. To make individual institutions more sustainable it may be necessary to consider what can be done in the policies and processes that cover all institutions – in other words, the codifications that help to standardise the many aspects of running a university (Shove *et al.* 2012). Although universities are not restrained in the same way as primary and secondary education in Japan they have their own particular challenges and issues (as outlined in Chapter 3) that make changing the competencies across universities in Japan problematic, but which nevertheless continue to affect the necessary competences at JIU.

### **6.3 Campus practices and their meanings**

The effects that the meanings of a practice have on the performance of that practice are, I argue, of a different (but no less/more important) quality than the effects on practices of materials and competences. A characteristic of the meanings of practices is that they are often multi-layered and inconsistent in the manner in which they stimulate performances (though, of course, once a practice is performed it becomes concrete and its meaning confirmed for that particular iteration). Meanings can (1) be responsible for generalised influences on practices for example in the wide scope of perception contained in what it means to be a student, (2) involve direct historical links as in practitioners' experiences of education, and (3) create an understanding of what actions are appropriate for a student to do on a university campus. Several of these points

bear upon the meanings of campus practice-as-entities and campus practices-as-performances. In the former, meanings constitute the definition of roles and the perception of expectations that student practitioners' hold, while in the latter meanings reflect the way students manifest those roles, and create and pursue their expectations (including subsequent efforts at modifying them). Many of the meanings that influence campus practices come from a variety of origins outside the campus. Some meanings of campus practices are formed before students are physically present while other meanings accrue when students begin their campus lives at specific locations but, to reiterate, the impacts of meanings on practices are no less or more significant than the other elements.

In Schatzki (1996), meaning includes 'teleoaffective' aspects including "ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods" (Schatzki 1996: 89). However, in Shove *et al.* (2012), it is more simply described as "mental activities, emotions and motivational knowledge" (*ibid*: 23). This simplification is partly to illustrate that meaning as an element of practice has equivalent status to the other elements, but also as a reminder that it is still an inherent aspect of practices and not found in a multiplicity of separate, outside factors (*ibid*). This simplification allows the focus of analysis on actual practices to be maintained and avoids the distraction of considering factors beyond practices, such as practitioners' attitudes and why they make the decisions they do.

A second key characteristic of the element of meaning is that it affects practices at the time of performance. 'Meaning' then "represent[s] the social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment" (Shove *et al.* 2012: 23). This then also implies that at different times, and on different days, the same practices can and do have different connotations which alter the performance of a practice. It also means that a performed practice is characterised by its practitioner's affective state at that moment (contentment, frustration, hurriedness, etc.), distinguishing it from the more disembodied nature of the

entity itself. To illustrate this point, one student tells about her normal habit of studying in the library:

On Wednesday I don't have third period but I have fourth, so I am always free third period but my friends all of them have class, so I have to be by myself so I go to the library for one hour. If my friend asks me to hang out, I go with them. I think it's nice to hang out with them sometimes, because I don't normally spend time with friends outside of university because I live in Chiba and most of them live in Togane (Saoko, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

This student habitually studies in the library on a Wednesday yet the meaning of the practice of study is contingent upon specific circumstances. On days when she is by herself, the practice of study is important to her, and significant for her university life. Moreover, it connects with the wealth of other meanings of her action including what it means to be a student – for her at those particular moments the practice of study is the one that connects most with her sense of being a student. However, when she has the opportunity to meet a friend, her connection with the practice of study is weakened and is pushed out in favour of the practice of socialising. Socialising no less than the practice of study legitimises her identity as a student. Research in student geographies suggests that these two aspects are vital in terms of student contentment. Wilcox *et al.* (2005) argues that forming friendships and being able to draw on the emotional support is a crucial factor in whether a student remains at a university beyond her first year, while Holton (2016), using Bourdieu's notion of social capital (1996), highlights the difficulties that students can experience in adjusting to student life. For this student, there is no contradiction in the deeper sense of what these practices signify but at particular moments, meanings, stimulated by contingency, can result in different actions.

Another way of looking at the role that meanings have in practices is to consider

them as continually evolving questionings and reassessments. The meanings that help produce a particular performance of a practice are continually being tested for their legitimacy. A campus practice can sometimes result in confirming student identity, while at other times undermining it. In addition, as Chow and Healey (2008: 362) argue, the “socio-spatial environment” of the campus can challenge a student’s sense of belonging and reduce the importance of their home as an identity marker. Shove *et al.* (2012: 55) conjecture that meanings evolve through “dynamic processes of association” causing some sets of meanings to dominate and others to retreat, thus impacting on how practices are conducted. Many of course originate from processes of historical collective socialisation. For example, an increasing significance accorded to the category of ‘freshness’ over that of ‘hygiene’ led to changes in bathing and laundering practices (*ibid*). In considering campus practices, categories of meaning that are pertinent for campus users could include being popular, having freedom, being successful (in terms of obtaining credits for eventual graduation) and, relevant for Japanese, being accepted as part of a group, all of which are significant to the identity of being a student. The example below shows how a student came to question the meanings she had held about being a student of JIU.

I: Has your university life been how you imagined it?

S: Kind of same, but kind of different.

I: In what way?

S: Like, the stereotype that the university student is always free [student laughs], is not very busy, have really free time and can sleep anytime, but I can’t. I thought like, I can take any classes what I like, but the truth is some classes, I am not interested in that but I have to do it. It is a kind of disadvantage, definitely (Yuriko, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

The practices that this student conducted (or was prevented from conducting) led to a change in their meaning, and, in a recursive way, these meanings led to a change in the practices she conducted as a student at JIU.

A further feature of meanings is that they can work as contradictory mixes of affective aspects, which influence the use of materials and the development of competences in various ways. For example, in the practices of being in lectures and study, meanings are a composite and confused collection of positive and negative points. The practice is able to 'recruit' practitioners because it compels them to take part, but as often as not practitioners are reluctant carriers of the practice on account of the fact that their 'life project' (Pred 1981) would be undermined should they fail to complete. The collective force of the practice, which carries a momentum that often makes it easier to accede to than resist, accentuates the individual sense of duty and obligation to conduct the practice. As a result, they are generally 'committed' and loyal carriers of the practice in its performance even while they question its legitimacy as an entity. What this illustrates is that, as a result of this wide range of meanings, materials and competences are similarly diverse in the way they engage in the conduct of a practice. The meanings that make a practice therefore are central to its reproduction and preservation, even when large variations in qualities of materials and competences are evident.

The meaning of being in lectures then can cover a wide range of performances. This is illustrated in the following quote. In describing some lectures as being "very boring" a student stated that she either works on other, unrelated but academic tasks, or uses her phone. She also commented that

In some classes I have to do something, and some interesting class, I take notes. I don't use phone for dictionary [then]. If I am interested in the class, I don't use phone for anything, I just listen to the class (Yuriko, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

For this student, the meanings attached to being in class can be described in three ways. First, as 'disengagement', where she does other acts unconnected

to the lecture; second, as 'forced engagement', where she carries out required tasks dutifully; and finally, as 'voluntary engagement', where she actively focuses on the class by taking notes and participating. In each situation, the conduct of the practice varies greatly in accordance with the meanings that the student attaches to the practice.

As collective experiences of co-practitioners is passed on, the boundaries of what the practice is legitimately seen to include becomes wider to the point where individual students can find no contradiction in acting in very different ways when conducting the practice. The meaning of being in lectures can change from one moment of production to the next and have an impact on the conduct of particular carriers. For example, a student in the Faculty of Humanities with a deserved reputation for being hardworking, highly motivated and engaged during her lectures, is also quite at ease being disengaged in some classes, "If I feel there is no meaning for me [in a particular class], I don't take notes, so I talk with my friend" (Kami, 2<sup>nd</sup> year). The range of activities that are acceptable to conducting the practice allows greater leeway in actions that can become part of the normal conduct of the practice.

In connection with this, practitioners also demonstrate a wide range of teleoaffectivity, which similarly produces different performances of the practice. For example, practitioners who arrive early, sit at the front, ask questions, and visit the professor's office for clarification contrast with those who arrive late if at all, sit at the back and choose to talk with their friends. And yet, as a practice of instrumental purpose, some form of performance must occur thus ensuring that the practice continues to be reproduced. A further aspect of this relates to the institutional meanings that the practice of being in lectures is given and which insures that it retains a central position in campus activity. Finally, the stability of the practice 'being in lectures' is not purely due to the relationship formed by its elements. It is a dominant practice on campus because the practice has legitimacy well beyond those who are actually carriers of the practice.



Practices that fall within the category of socialising/relaxing are mostly carried out because inherent characteristics encourage their reproduction for their own sake. Meanings that become part of practices of socialising and eating are deeply influenced by the context that students find themselves in: the infrastructure of the campus, other students with whom they share it, and the various social practices that operate as significant aspects of their lives.

### ***6.3.1 Implications for sustainability of the meanings of campus practices***

If we are to successfully interrogate how meaning relates to practices, it is necessary to (1) focus on associations that have a wide acceptance and (2) not allow the fact that meanings are “unavoidably relative, situated and emergent” to distract from what they might reveal about the dynamics of how practices work (Shove *et al.* 2012: 53). Two associations that Japanese students attach to university life remain widespread. The first is the belief that attending university is an opportunity to enjoy a period of relative freedom from which, even with minimal effort, they will graduate (McVeigh 2002; Lee-Cunin 2004). The second is that university is a necessary rite of passage and often a financially onerous one on the way to secure future employment (Hendry 2013). These will be discussed with regard to practices more fully in Chapter 8. Here, in considering their influence on the meanings of campus practices and sustainability, the extent to which these views are well established appears to militate against the possibility of identifying successful ways in which they can be challenged. To do this would require the involvement of actors outside those engaged in campus practices, including national authorities.

It is therefore fruitful to consider associations that have a wide acceptance amongst students *inside* the campus environment. An example that was common in discussions with students was that of the inconsistent quality of air conditioning in summer and heating in winter. The Japanese Government under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

recommends that universities adopt a campus policy that permits buildings to be heated to a maximum of 20° in winter and cooled to a maximum of 28° in the summer. At JIU this policy is largely ineffective. Although the buildings on the campus are not very old there are large differences in the effectiveness of their heating and cooling systems. While in some buildings heating and cooling are centrally controlled others are not, and temperatures in classrooms that are exposed to many hours of summer sunlight can reach 30° or more. This causes some degree of resentment especially among students as illustrated in the following comment.

[Our campus] has an AC problem. In our classrooms the temperature is always set at 28°. Sometimes [it] is a big room and a lot of students, so it gets very hot and we cannot change the temperature, but like the teacher's office and main building [administration] office, it's like 22° or something (Yukiko, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

In some buildings where temperatures in classrooms can be adjusted, it is common to find the air conditioner put to the lowest setting (19°) and left on. Students therefore will move from place to place in order to find the most comfortable environment. One student said that

The places we stay around university are decided by where are the good aircons and the good heaters! That decides where we go on campus for most of the semester (Mideki, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

Many students however see the heating and cooling issue within the wider context of university and student relations. In the first comment, Yukiko feels that, as a student, she is unappreciated by the university and this is manifested in the different forms of comfort provided to students and to non-students. The meanings of the practices of being in lectures and studying are for students coloured by the knowledge that they are primarily valued for providing the

university with economic viability. Although a major resource waste problem for any campus is that campus users pay a fixed contribution to the cost of energy regardless of how much they use as well as how prohibitive the expense is to the university – (analogous to Hardin’s 1968 essay on The Tragedy of the Commons) – this is exacerbated because of the way the university perceives the students. Understanding that the university holds this economic relationship as crucial, students do not hesitate to make maximum use of what they feel they have paid for. In considering the point earlier about the association that entering a university usually guarantees exiting it with a degree, the instrumental meaning that their campus practices take on is then a likely cause as to why students are disinclined to follow entreaties to reduce energy use in classrooms because of environmental reasons. The point here is that the meanings that are part of campus practices are multi-layered and that direct appeals to saving energy (as well as caring for the planet, or even the victims of Fukushima) will not always carry the power that they might be supposed to have.

In their discussion of Nordic walking, Shove *et al.* (2012) suggest that the image of infirmity attached to the use of sticks for walking, was only challenged because other associations, namely that of taking a walk, connect with good health and the enjoyment of nature and, because these associations were already prominent in society, they were thus able to migrate. To bring about a reverse migration – the disassociation of the value of students and campus cooling/heating practices – the university would have to implement actions that indicated a change in the meanings of being a student and the purpose of campus life – in other words show equal consideration in the treatment of heating/cooling for all campus users. Campus practices would need to promote and institute new social conventions in which positive meanings of sustainable use of energy were connected to (positive) meanings of being a student and separated from the perceived favouritism toward professors and administrators.

Positive sustainable implications could also be incorporated into the meaning of

other daily practices, for example, regarding the use, purchase, and discarding of textbooks, or the form of attending lectures. When students assemble the materials of a practice, it helps to strengthen the grip of the practice on the students, thereby changing what the practice means to them. Materials themselves have meaning, and are significant beyond being tools to carry out a practice. As materials are employed in the day-to-day conduct of classes, they serve as collective reminders of the investment that the students have made. However, associating their disposal with methods and processes for recycling could strengthen such investments. For example, if the university encouraged greater re-use of textbooks, several issues of campus sustainability could be addressed. Students have often complained at the expense they incur when buying textbooks. They are open to the idea of having a re-used textbook store where they can both buy and sell course books. Many students, particularly in the first and second year, accumulate large numbers of textbooks that they acquire from courses that they have completed, and so, many simply throw away their books. Adopting a system in which students presenting text books in good condition to be re-used would receive points towards a discount on other materials or services, could lead to a reduction in resource use and would be a practice that would have popular support.

As discussed earlier, there is a degree of contingency in how practices are conducted as a consequence of their meaning. Although it might appear that the practitioners of being in lectures are part of a close network, it is only a temporary connection. Any closeness that exists comes from the short-term shared situation, and being obligatory is a bond that works for only as long as the practitioners remain together. Once the shared participation reaches an end, so too, by and large, does the bond. Shove *et al.* (2012) argue that close networks can bring about innovation, but the networks in this practice are short lived and any momentum that implies the possibility of change is lost when particular iterations of the practice end.

Clearly, there is scope for more sustainable use of materials that are used by practitioners themselves, e.g. books and equipment, but with infrastructure playing such a central role in the conduct of the practice, an analysis of how practices use the resources of infrastructure is crucial. In the case of car driving, it has been argued that the practice is moulded by spatial and temporal links, which connect the diverse practices facilitated by the infrastructure (Shove *et al.* 2015). In other words, people do not drive simply to make use of their driving skills, but do it mostly in the doing of other practices, such as collecting someone from a station, or going out to dinner (*ibid*). It is possible that the infrastructure of a university can be utilised in a similar way. A practice could become a more sustainable one if the infrastructure that permits it to take place could be opened up for other campus practices, or, in other words, if other practices could occur there as a normal campus activity. An infrastructure that is, according to Shove *et al.* (2015) more *extensive* is one to which more practices can adhere to and, as a result, bring about a more efficient use of existing infrastructural resources. The campus at JIU could become a location for a greater variety of practices, for example, through a closer involvement with the local community, including schools.

## 6.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I provided reasons for why dissecting each of the three elements of the 3E Model is a valuable form of analysis, and identified their impact on campus practices. For the element of materiality, I discussed the role that technology plays on campus, how forms of technology change even when functions do not, and how mobile phone use in social situations can vary considerably. A key point with campus materiality is that the many instrumental purposes to which materials are put on campus tend to 'lock in' their use in some form, regardless of their technological level. For usage to change in potentially sustainable ways requires that the meanings of these activities also evolve. This

by itself would offer no guarantees, but challenging the traditional reasons why particular campus activities are conducted could reduce the inertia that history tends to exert. Although evolving materiality may act as a spur to change, it cannot by itself (except by accident) promote movement towards campus sustainability. Nevertheless, identifying campus materials that have weaker links with the other elements of competency and meaning represents a promising avenue for exploring where sustainable changes might be possible.

Regarding the element of competency, I noted the connection with spatial and temporal aspects of the campus and how students develop competencies to maximise the efficiency and convenience of their campus day. Many of the competencies of campus users then revolve around the structure of the campus day and therefore efforts to increase campus sustainability need to challenge that organisation. Within the overall structure, individual students may develop highly developed competences that maximise their personal preferences, but these may or may not result in positive sustainable outcomes.

For the element 'meanings', I illustrated how they are multilayered and, when contingency plays a role, the choice of which practice is to be performed, can alter. This element also links with student geographies in that practices can be the result of student expectations and how they identify as students on campus. As a student's association with the campus and the university changes, meanings that she attaches to the practices she conducts, likewise develops. The implication is that, at particular points in their university education (which at JIU lasts between four and six years), students may be more or less predisposed to being engaged in sustainable campus practices. In addition, the degree of predisposition can be directly affected through university policies that allow students to see themselves as a more central and valued member of the university.

This discrete analysis of the three elements of the 3E Model (Shove *et al.* 2012)

has been intended to place practice theory in a more prominent position vis-a-vis the consideration of campus practices that this thesis is expounding. In the next chapter I move on to an examination of the *dynamics* of practices, that is, I focus on how separate practices recruit, link together and provide feedback in the production of practices as performances.

## **Chapter 7. The dynamics of campus practices and implications for sustainability**

In this chapter I build upon the discrete analysis of each individual element of the 3E Model, which was the focus of the previous chapter, and look at the dynamics that exist between the elements and how this translates to the JIU campus environment. I apply and develop the model in order to gain greater understanding of the Japanese context and how practices might evolve so that greater on-campus sustainability might be achieved. I consider how a central pillar of the model – namely the manner in which the dynamic interplay of elements produces practices – is manifested on campus and how/why practitioners reproduce, adapt, expand or abandon them. Practices that are observed on campus can be said to be ‘successful’ practices because they have attracted students to be their practitioners. How have these practices succeeded? I identify two major ways: the first concerns the inherent advantages and disadvantages possessed by the elements of a practice that aid (or deter) their implementation; the second concerns what Shove *et al.* (2012: 69) call ‘channels of recruitment’ through which practitioners are ‘recruited’ to new practices.

Shove *et al.* (2012) have argued that one way a practice evolves is through “changing populations of more and less faithful... practitioners” (2012: 63). For a university campus it is especially important to consider the manner in which populations of practitioners vary for, with each new academic year, the make-up of campus users undergoes a sudden and significant upheaval. This occurs at both graduation and matriculation when a large proportion of seasoned campus users depart and a group of new, initially uncommitted campus practitioners arrive. At regular intervals then, the campus practices in JIU simultaneously shed experienced practitioners and gain new practitioners (those recently enrolled) who have little prior knowledge of the particular daily routines of the campus they are joining. What effect does this sudden shift in the student



population have on practices and sustainability? There are several aspects to consider. The first aspect is how new students become introduced to on-campus practices and how they become committed to them. What facets of campus practices encourage or discourage take-up by the university's new entrants? Second, as students become established campus users, do they maintain a commitment to some practices but abandon others, and what facets of practices influence this? Third, what implications for sustainability can be drawn from the changing topography of practices? At JIU 'changing populations' have two forms. The first change is sudden and dramatic and occurs when new cohorts of students arrive (and old cohorts leave), while the second change is slow and gradual and found in the evolving lives of continuing students who are 'carriers' of practices (Shove *et al.* 2012: 69). Both represent a powerful force in the development of practices on a campus. As a result, the temporality of the rhythms that influence students as campus users (cyclical yet linear, as students 'start again' when they enter a new year but, by moving up, they 'progress' toward their eventual graduation) are distinct from those of Lefebvre (1992).

Through the interplay of the elements of materials, competencies and meanings, practices can be said to 'recruit' practitioners for their practices. At JIU, practices recruit from populations of potential practitioners through channels of recruitment that serve to attract, (but also fail to attract or deter) practitioners (Shove *et al.* 2012: 69). In line with practice theory, these channels do not exist independently of practices, but rather, are constituent aspects of them, and so evolve as a result of the changing "careers of individuals, practices and related infrastructures and institutions" (*ibid*).

In this chapter I discuss the dynamic forms that these channels of recruitment take on campus. One of the more powerful channels of recruitment is the student body itself, both as a single entity and as a collection of specific groups of students, that is, in the same sub-culture, be it based on faculty, department, advisor group, class, club or building. This raises the question of how the student

population, subject as it is to the changes in membership mentioned above affects recruitment, and thus performance of practices. However, important though it is, the student body is one of several channels working in dynamic interplay during the process of recruitment that include the infrastructural arrangements of the campus, campus traditions and expectations, university policies or guidelines related to campus use, and collective cultural understandings.

In section 7.1, I first discuss how the inherent advantages and disadvantages of campus practices work dynamically in attracting new recruits. I examine how recruitment to a practice is affected by the degree of social familiarity that potential practitioners have with that practice. Next I look at the extent to which a potential practitioner is familiar with the materiality (including infrastructure) and competences of a practice, and how the meanings of practice can have an impact on recruitment. I then consider the consequences of aspects of compulsion on practices. I illustrate these points with particular reference to the library, which is of central importance to the lives of students at JIU. In section 7.2, I examine some of the ways that channels of recruitment operate on campus, illustrating how these interfere with and encroach upon each other. These channels, including the student body (as a single entity, and as subsets), and other lines of influence such as the university authorities, establish links *between* channels and *through* practices at significant times. I posit that these channels have more and less effective 'recruiting moments' according to the stage at which a student's progress through their university life has reached. The next section (7.3) considers the links between practices, how practices respond to feedback, and how they adapt and change. The chapter closes with an examination of the implications for campus sustainability (7.4) and a concluding discussion (7.5).

## **7.1 How campus practices recruit students**

Before engaging in the discussion proper, it is necessary to clarify how I interpret the term 'recruit'. In Shove *et al.* (2012), the authors use the concept to discuss activities that practitioners take up for the first time, for example, hula-hooping, or an interest in punk music (*ibid*: 64). However, the campus practices on which this thesis concentrates are practices that are either fundamental to human life (eating and socialising/relaxing) or central to the role students as campus users have assimilated (being in lectures and studying). Consequently, very few of these practices can be called 'new' and therefore students, already practitioners, cannot be 'recruited' in the sense employed by Elizabeth Shove and her colleagues. However, the use of the concept in this thesis is still appropriate for my analysis looks at how practices in the specific spatial configuration of the JIU campus encourages campus users to take up a familiar practice but in a new form, in a sense, to recruit practitioners *anew*, as a result of a new spatial (and social) environment.

Campus practices then can be said to recruit students in several ways, which I examine in the next few paragraphs. All practices for the novice campus user initially share the same quality of strangeness in that they are either (1) new aspects of practices (for example, the procedures for library use as part of the practice of studying) or are (2) characterised by occurring in a location that is unfamiliar. To illustrate this, one student said, "I imagined this university [was] located in urban area, but it is countryside, also I didn't expect so huge" (Yudai, 2<sup>nd</sup> year). Some practices however possess inherent advantages for attracting new campus users. First, a campus practice will attract new recruits when it is able to tap into already established practice routines in students' lives, particularly if the practice is based on familiar social activities with well-established meanings and is location-neutral, that is, does not require a specific place in which to conduct it, such as the practice of socialising/relaxing. These features, apart from the basic psychological need that such a practice meets, enable it to quickly establish itself within the environs of the campus despite the

fact that practitioners are initially confronted with different spatial and temporal configurations as well as different groups of people with whom they share locations.

Second, a practice will attract new recruits when the performance of the 'new' practice nevertheless involves familiar patterns of competence and items of materiality that are employed in habitual ways. In this case, a practice will 'migrate' easily across contexts to become a new campus practice, and possibly, in the process of migration, take on new characteristics (Shove *et al.* 2012: 48). For example, although the specific configurations of the two dining halls at JIU means that the practice-as-performance of dining hall use is unfamiliar to new students, the knowledge that they have of the practice-as-entity means that the practice is more likely to recruit them. In the case of smartphone use, the familiar operations involved in IT use will continue to be used by students while the unfamiliar circumstances and roles will likely see the practice take on new features such as using their phone to register for courses, check schedules, do course evaluations, and so on. This is illustrated by the comment of the student below who told me about how she and her friends organised a new instant text messaging account:

With Ben and Haruka san I always do LINE with them in English.  
We wanted to do some way of using our English more, so we set up  
(Rie, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

Third, a practice that neither requires dedicated campus material/ infrastructure, nor the presence of other related practices for its performance is more likely to become an established campus practice than practices that are bound by such conditions. The practice of socialising/relaxing is again a good example in that although campus infrastructure and design can facilitate more wide-ranging or lengthy performances, the practice can be conducted in almost any location, and involves a minimal level of disruption (compared to the practice of playing a sport,

which may require a dedicated space, equipment, players, etc.). For practices that are defined by and connected to specific campus infrastructure, habits, or institutions, recruitment however is more difficult. The practice of eating is one that is bound very specifically to the campus environment. To attract new students with no previous loyalty to the practices of a particular campus, a practice such as the use of dining halls has to engender commitment through the provision of a service that is satisfying, cheap, convenient, easy to use, and so on. Although Japanese students are familiar with institutional dining (the practice-as-entity mentioned above), the specific practice of university dining may fail to attract new recruits simply because students are reluctant, for example, to develop the new competencies required for, say, purchasing meal tickets. The comment, “It was two years before Tomomi came to this dining hall [because] she didn’t know how to use it,” (Suguru, 4<sup>th</sup> year) illustrates how the lack of competence and the potential embarrassment that it may cause can be an inconvenience that discourages students from taking up certain practices.

Fourth, when a practice, such as the use of smartphones on campus, is one that the campus infrastructure implicitly encourages or accepts (in this case, through the availability of wi-fi and a policy regarding usage that allows access to student services), then such a practice is likely to take hold quickly on campus, especially in the case of a practice that was previously restricted or monitored (as is common with the use of smartphones in Japanese high schools). It will do this as a result of elements creating novel links: the identification of practitioners as students of JIU (adding to meanings of previous educational identities), the association of smartphone use with their educational circumstances (connecting materiality and meaning) and the esteem that comes as a result of exploiting innovative competences in a new environment.

A fifth characteristic that affects recruitment to new practices relates to the earlier discussion on the concept of what Pred calls the dominant project (1981), and through what Schatzki labels as “end-task-action combinations” (2015: 15).

Practices that embody these combinations are perceived to aid in the completion of the dominant project, in this case, graduation after a number of years at university. Practices that carry such inherent meanings serve to pressure students into following what are perceived as the necessary but sometimes burdensome practices that give their presence on campus justification. While the practice of studying in the library, for instance, may be disadvantaged in a similar way to university dining in that it requires students to learn new competencies, it benefits from the powerful teleological forces that underpin campus activities, in contrast to the voluntary practice of dining hall use that hinges on physical or temporal convenience. In this, and in the practice of being in lectures, some campus practices recruit effectively through their perceived compulsion and their close connection with the identity of being a student.

The perception of compulsion that attaches to some practices is however a double-edged sword in terms of recruitment. For others, while accepting that study has a presence in their campus lives, they are often nevertheless reluctant adherents to the practice. Compulsion exerts an influence in three main ways. First, although it ensures that commitment to such practices is strong, this commitment is always contingent on the benefits of such practices remaining evident to practitioners even if they are mistaken or unclear how such benefits will advance their goal. As soon as practitioners no longer expect an obligatory practice to result in benefits, even deferred ones, its hold will be undermined and likely abandoned. Second, while the sense of obligation ensures the continuation of a practice over time (however unwilling its practitioners may be), it is characterised by instability in the way a practice is performed as other practices compete for the practitioner's time and commitment. Third, in conducting a practice that employs aspects of compulsion, practitioners constantly probe for ways to render it more palatable and to ameliorate the perceived negative aspects. There is a continual renegotiation that makes the performances of compulsory practices unstable. While recruitment to a practice is aided by its obligatory nature, the conduct of such a practice is under constant

pressure to change.

Finally, recruitment to practices is affected by spatial and temporal factors. For example, when the location of students on a part of campus is perceived as being too far from the dining hall it will result in students being recruited to other eating locations (and practices), such as buying food from the campus convenience store, or bringing food from home. In contrast, students who wish to share their lunchtimes in large groups can find the spacious surroundings of the dining halls convivial. Likewise, temporal factors internal to campus life have a large influence on how practices are able to recruit. For example, on certain days, large numbers of students have classes either side of the designated lunch break which means that crowded conditions in the dining halls are a consequence, and so acts as a discouragement to recruitment to dining hall eating. Furthermore, temporal factors that are external to the campus will impact on some practices, for example, in the timing of buses and trains that will result in potential users rejecting a campus practice. In answer to the question, “Do you stay on the campus after classes?” one student replied, “I try to leave as quickly [as possible] because if we miss a train, I have to hang around an hour or so” (Rina, 1<sup>st</sup> year). Practices adapt to specific campus spaces or temporal arrangements through performances that shift around campus routines.

### ***7.1.1 The library as a place of recruitment***

The manner in which practices recruit can be illustrated with reference to student use of the library. Data from my observation diary suggest that the library has become a multipurpose infrastructure on campus and that its status represents an important hub of campus life similar to the student hall. Practices that take place there have evolved to cover a much wider range than previously while at the same time they have had an impact on practices elsewhere on the campus. Results from a questionnaire conducted by library staff (*JIU Toshokan no anketo*, 2015), illustrates one impact of these effects on the practice of study. The questionnaire revealed the growing use of, and demand for, group study rooms,

where up to eight students may congregate and study together in a more private space within the library. The fact that students avail themselves of library facilities merely demonstrates their competence in exploiting campus infrastructure. However, the growing popularity of group study rooms shows how study practice among campus users is evolving along lines dictated by the dynamics of study practices. Use of study rooms helps to make the practice more acceptable for many by adding a social purpose to the act of study, as indicated by the following comment:

Sometimes some of my friends come to the library, we always [gather] around computer 16, which is at the back of the library because usually there are no people at the back. [It's] not crowded, and also a little conversation; quieter (Takuma, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

This student shows that he is comfortable in combining aspects of studying and socialising in the library, which in its traditional usage as a space that caters only for whispered conversation suits the student. However, for some students, socialising/relaxing in the library is as legitimate a practice as study, and the lively atmosphere that is frequently observed in the library is a positive factor. Another student observed that

People come [to the library] when they don't have anything to do. Just killing time. Just sitting, relaxing or something (Moe, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

The implication here is that, for many students, the library is no longer the location for conducting a specific practice but has become generic in the sense that it is now a non-specific space in which to pass time or do any number of things. Yet another student commented:

I watch movies when I don't have anything to do, or use the computers (Momoko, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).



This comment is revealing in that the student did not elucidate the practice of *study* as something she did in the library. For her rather, what was more worthy of note was doing other things there, as the use of the library was not something explicitly connected with the practice of studying. Nevertheless, studying practices clearly do take place in the library. The following quote shows that the choice of the library as a study location was partly due to the convenience that allows other tasks to be completed there:

[When] Steve and I prepare for [a presentation] we always go to the library together and make *PowerPoint* and notes. We do that because you can charge your laptop or phone [there] (Hazuki, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

However, not all students are contented with the way study practices have taken on aspects of socialisation in the library, as the following quote shows:

Sometimes I use [the library] to write a report but sometimes it is so noisy (Moe, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

In this case, the growing number of practices to which the library is seen as an acceptable place to carry out caused this student to reduce her use of the library as a place to study. This illustrates that even when there is growing acceptance that a particular location can encompass a larger number of activities, it does not necessarily result in an increase in the number of practitioners.

Other students wishing to study in a more traditional way explore other options, as in the example of a third-year student who, during a guided campus walk, pointed out a place in a corner of the *International Communication Hall* as his favoured place for solitary study. The hall was designed as a place for Japanese and non-Japanese students to meet and relax together, with the international

element symbolised by wall clocks showing the time in various cities around the world. However, not being particularly popular with students, its calm atmosphere means that many students use this location (adjacent to the library) as a replacement location to study or to sit quietly, rather than the library itself. Students identified several reasons why they choose this location for their study. One reason is that the organization of seating space in the hall makes it relatively easy for students to isolate themselves. The presence of frosted glass that divides some of the seats and the structure of the space itself means that disruption is minimised when other people walk by.

I come here for study because the library is too noisy sometimes. Also I can eat here. [When] I sit here, [*indicating a corner seat*] I can work and nobody bothers me (Suguru, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

The student has accepted that the library is (no longer) a place where he can go for concentrated study. The comment reflects the changing nature of library usage, that link practices not only, or even predominantly, to do with studying.

In this section I have discussed the factors that encourage students to take up or resist particular practices and illustrated with reference to the library, an important central location on the JIU campus. In the next section, I look at how campus users (not only students in this case) become carriers of practices through channels of recruitment.

## **7.2 Diverse channels of recruitment**

My major argument in this section is that channels of recruitment often encroach on each other and the outcome of this has diverse consequences for the performances of practices. Within the university environment, channels of recruitment operate primarily through two socio-institutional structures: the

student body and the university authorities. In this section I discuss how channels of recruitment operating through “networks and communities” (Shove *et al.* 2012: 66) are responsible for the take up of practices as a result of these two structures, and how they go beyond what would be considered their normal range of influence. It is necessary to reiterate that these networks and communities are constituents of practices. I look at how the actions of the university authorities result in the dominance of some channels of recruitment over others (Strengers *et al.* 2015). Although discussed more fully in the chapter on socialisation I briefly show the relevance of the perceptions that Japanese students have of their peers, seniors and adults in their commitment to practices.

These socio-institutional structures differ in several ways. In the case of the student body, there are a wide variety of networks and communities in which channels of recruitment are located. These networks can be formal, as in those centred on practices based on academic criteria (students belonging to the same faculty), semi-formal, based on practices engaging abilities and interests (students belonging to the same club), and casual, resulting from practices formed as a result of social preferences (students belonging to the same friendship group or socialising at the same places and times). Regardless of the degree of formality and structure, these diverse networks are in a state of competition (mirroring actual practices) as groups of individuals not only join and leave, but, during the period when particular members are active, their evolving collective experiences also bring about changed objectives that modify practices within and beyond their specific groups. The knock-on effect of this turbulence results in continually evolving forces for change, as students move through the institutional process that ends at graduation.

In contrast, the networks and communities found in the university authorities are generally formal, and constructed around rigid, hierarchical lines. Comprised almost entirely of academic and administrative staff in which membership is stable from year to year, and student involvement is nearly always for the

purpose of advancing particular university policies. Channels of recruitment are composed of formalised rules and customs that are rarely open to negotiation. Consequently, the channels of recruitment are fewer, yet more visible; fossilized, and so less responsive to new situations, but clear in the kinds of practices in which they tend to recruit. While these socio-institutional forms can be separated for the purposes of analysis, they can often be seen working together in complementary ways that affect the power of their recruitment.

The power of the university authorities to encourage recruitment to certain practices can be seen in many ways. Clearly, the most direct channels are those that emanate from course teachers and advisors, and relate to practices such as being in lectures and studying. However, less direct methods include the co-opting of student channels of practice for the promotion of university-supported study practices, for example, participation in overseas study programmes. The older-to-newer-student channel of recruitment is one that is active in both socio-institutional forms. In belonging to the same faculty, students from academic year two and above have more influence on the practices of new students. To exploit this, the university authorities use students in a number of ways for example, by having them promote university programmes knowing that, in encroaching on a student channel of recruitment, there is greater legitimacy. To encourage students to join what can be expensive study programmes, older students are expected to use their position of respect in order to persuade reluctant students to make a commitment by showing how they, the older students, benefitted from such programmes in the past. The cultural characteristic of '*amae*' (the dependence on others for favours and/or understanding which in turn requires some form of 'repayment' in the future), and the *senpai-kohai* relationship in which experience confers power, are a significant factor operating in the recruitment to these practices.

In addition, the university requires students to take basic seminar courses (*kiso zemi*) in which first year students are given advice on courses to take, university

procedures, and university-wide events and deadlines. A central part of these seminars are the presentations that ‘successful’ older students are required to make about what are often under-subscribed courses or work placements, as well as their future career intentions. These meetings follow up the precedent set at the overnight ‘Freshman Seminar’ in which, older students first offer their experiences about the content of courses and their workloads, faculty members’ teaching styles, and campus life generally. These are key “recruiting moments” in the academic year. A student belonging to the Department of International Exchange Studies (IES), described the student members of his department as having special skills, likely to study more than students in other faculties, and also beneficiaries of special treatment by the university authorities. He said,

I think this university tends to spend money on IES students [i.e., the students are more highly valued] (Yudai, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

His sense of pride comes with a degree of responsibility to support the other students in his department.

I. Do you feel close to the students in this department, then?

S. Yes, I try to speak to everyone.

I. Is the junior/senior relationship important here?

S. Yes, because, if I became like *shakaijin* [literally ‘person of society – i.e., a working person] probably this situation [junior/senior relationship] happens a lot. The company has so many generations, older people, younger people, it happens always in a company so we have to adapt here [at university].

I. Like a kind of training?

S. Yes (Yudai, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

In the more informal interactions that take place within the student body, a powerful channel of recruitment is one that employs already committed and

experienced practitioners in practices that are common, highly visible, and conducted campus-wide. They include the use of tea-dispensing machines, automated check out systems for library books, the identification of the most convenient seating in various campus locations, and the optimum positions to occupy in dining halls. The students who act as major recruiters, providing “recruiting moments”, are those who have entered their second year and who, due to continuing extensive lecture commitments, remain regular campus users and guides, and therefore highly visible as models for inexperienced first year students. One student talked about the combination of age and experience as the reasons that younger students respected her:

I: Do younger students respect you because you are older?

S: Yes I think so, but also in my experiences because I have been to Disney [an internship programme with Disneyworld, Florida] and I can speak English so that makes them respect me more (Ruka, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

In addition, certain practices are common within particular faculties; for example, students in the nursing faculty tend to congregate in a certain area of the campus, as the location is convenient for access between two buildings that these students regularly use. Further, recruitment to particular practices occurs amongst students in the same year and faculty who find that common experiences encourage particular practices. In the first year, students share many potential “recruiting moments” together, through events such as the opening ceremony, academic orientation, ‘Freshman Seminar’ and the taking of several core courses, all of which serve to encourage recruitment to the community of JIU and cement the commitment of the first years to the university. Nevertheless, the most powerful channel of recruitment within the student body is the one that links older students to newer students, and recruitment to practices promoted by the university will often hinge on the willingness and ability of older students to be proxies.

As individual students move through their university life, channels of recruitment become more and less effective as a result of the changing tasks that make up their dominant projects, and the practices that they conduct on campus. In terms of time spent on campus, students in the first and second years tend to have full class loads for large portions of the semester and spend much of their campus time in groups of various sizes, while students in third and fourth years have a more tenuous connection to the campus and interact less with fellow users. The practice of being in lectures, or the practice of socialising/relaxing is conducted differently as students become long-time campus users. In addition, as students advance, they come to have less collective influence as their paths diverge. Of course, these have significant influence on many aspects of practice, not only recruitment.

Channels of recruitment however are also found to go the other way. As discussed in Chapter 3, many students not only question the meaning and purpose of study but also lack the competencies that would enable them to be successful at it. As a result, through their conduct of being in lectures and studying, students have forced changes in the practice of being in lectures: in a sense, ‘recruiting’ teachers to different forms of the practice. This includes obvious things like reduced homework assignments and more lenient standards of assessment, but also, as appears to be becoming unofficial policy at JIU, a greater acceptable number of absences from class. As already discussed, attendance at class has been seen as the primary marker for academic staff to evaluate the students in their courses. For as long as students attended class, they were generally certain to receive the credits they wanted even if they submitted little or no work. However, members of staff in the Centre for Language Education have been advised to now allow students up to ten absences out of thirty classes (a rise from a previous maximum of six absences) for English courses (Tim Cotton, Professor in the Language Centre, JIU; personal communication, 2017). There are factors beyond the campus that are

relevant to this, including the deep anxiety that universities in Japan have about students who leave and fail to graduate. Pressure is put upon advisors to do all they can to prevent a student from leaving, even when it could be argued that it is not in the student's interest. In addition, to make the point that the university regards the premature exit of students extremely seriously, when a student withdraws from university professors are required to make a statement at a faculty meeting to explain the reasons – a very unusual occurrence as faculty meetings in Japan tend to involve little participation. Although the struggle that private universities have in enrolling students is one cause of this, the feedback gained from students being in lectures has also had an important influence in 'recruiting' professors to different forms of educational provision.

It is necessary to recognise that the campus is not the exclusive location for channels of recruitment as outside networks may also exert some influence. For instance, this can include meetings and lectures organised by companies (*setsumeikai*) for the purpose of introducing themselves to job-searching students (*shushokukatsudou*); students on local internships or practical training in chemists, schools, and offices; students with part-time jobs; students planning and returning from overseas study programmes, even train and bus schedules, restaurant locations, and so on. However, despite students belonging to a variety of networks, when analysing campus practices, it is clear that campus networks and communities dominate through faculties, departments, classes, clubs, etc., that make up the two socio-institutional structures of the student body and the university authorities. The implication is that as students' attention moves toward the search for employment the power of recruitment to campus practices is weakened.

The campus infrastructure also assists and restricts in the recruitment of students to practices. Certain groups of students will socialise together only on campus, illustrating that shared location is important, and as a community, certain expectations exert collective action over individual preference that



becomes realised through the buildings of the campus. This pressure is illustrated in the following comment: “I think the candies and ice cream is too expensive [in the student hall shop] but everybody buys it... I go there to buy something to drink, sit and talk to my friends” (Yuka, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

Finally, I posit that the channels of recruitment found in the socio-institutional student body and university authorities are especially significant in the case of Japanese students, on account of factors in the social makeup of Japanese society. McVeigh (2004) identified several ‘conceptual domains’, including what he called ‘abilities’, ‘independence’ and ‘confidence’ that categorised student perceptions of others. Although in his research McVeigh’s focus was on university students’ views of adults, his conclusions are also appropriate for how younger campus users regard older students. The key domain of ‘abilities’ in which students respect adults because of their ability to do things ‘properly’ (*kichinto*), shows how younger, less experienced students will, with little resistance, be recruited into practices conducted by older students purely on the basis of their seniority, again revealing echoes of the *senpai-kohai* relationship. The degree of self-control that demonstrates their greater experience and social maturity (2004: 102) represents adequate justification for taking up a practice. In addition, McVeigh found that young students believe that older people are ‘other-oriented’ which, in the Japanese context, means that they are able to put up with problematic situations and act in selfless ways, while having the confidence to acquire an understanding of their position in life (*ibid*: 103-4). Though there is increasing questioning of the respect afforded to adults by young people in the light of economic insecurity in Japan, the socialisation of Japanese children and youth still emphasises deference to ancestors and elders (Kingston 2013).

To sum up, in this section I have explored some of the ways in which channels of recruitment work on the university campus. Two forms, the student body and the university authorities represent two ends of a spectrum and have different

degrees of influence according to the formality of campus practices. In the next section I consider how campus practices link together and discuss some ways in which they adapt and change.

### **7.3 Links between campus practices, adaptation and change**

How daily campus practices link together may reveal something about how such practices maintain and support each other or alternatively, how they may compete with and undermine each other, and what implications this may have for sustainability. Shove *et al.* (2012) describe practices as existing in *bundles* (loosely linked, but sharing some elements within a joint location or congruent time) and *complexes* (more tightly bound actions that are often co-dependent). For example, the tasks involved in the practice of doing homework assignments and the skills required in the practice of using the media centre computers for writing/printing could be viewed as constituting a bundle. The two practices are not mutually independent (homework assignments are not required to be completed at the centre) but nevertheless they share material elements such as notebooks and USB devices, as well as shared competences based around computer use. In addition, there are temporal links that may, for some students, connect the centre's opening times with deadlines for the submission of assignments.

An example of a campus complex of practices would be the various practices involved in being a member of the baseball club. As well as the obvious training practices that members need to engage in and which have meaning only for baseball players, members must also accept the intensive schedules. Moreover, members are also required to wear blazers bearing the university crest at all times while on campus and have 'appropriate' hairstyles or risk sanction, even expulsion from the club. All these practices are mutually dependent for members yet largely meaningless for non-members. The important characteristic about these links is that they have "emergent, cumulative and often irreversible effects

for individual practices... and for the spatial and temporal texture of daily life” (Shove *et al.* 2012: 81). In this section I look at the links that exist between campus practices and what effects they have on campus life. Does the historical development of these practices contain useful things that help understand the nature of their connections? Most crucially, do these connections suggest implications for how campus practices may evolve and change?

In discussing the importance of links between practices, Shove *et al.* (2012) emphasise that practices are “necessarily provisional, but relatively consistent, relatively enduring integration of elements” (*ibid*: 82). An analysis of relationships between elements of different practices provides a way to evaluate the strength or weakness of linkages between practices, even to the point where two formerly distinct practices become one practice, or alternatively, they decouple and produce separate practices.

Links between campus practices, for example between study and socialising/relaxing are also strengthening as a result of changing meanings to practices. One student stated, “I study 70% at university, only 30% at home. I can’t really study at my room” (Takashi 1<sup>st</sup> year). Studying as a practice at JIU is losing its solitary and private historical meaning, especially when it is pursued as a campus, not a home, practice. The changing use of the library as a place where students have come to combine socialising and study means that the locations traditionally the preserve of one particular practice are now combined with study practices. In other words, places in which study can be seen as a legitimate practice has increased. It has become acceptable for groups of students to study in dining halls, cafes, student halls, even, at this university, small spaces containing soft furnishings and low tables that are found outside the offices of academic staff.

The links between students are similarly significant in how campus practices get abandoned. The following quote shows the changing relationship that one

student had with the campus.

When I was a first year, I wanted to be with others, feel that I had my friends. I didn't have confidence. Being with others I felt easier, you know, we went to class together, went to the student hall together. But now, I have my special group of friends, though we don't see much on campus, I come to campus, do something then go home again. I'm okay on my own (Misa, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

Abandonment of campus practices occurs when students have changing needs for which the campus is less suited to meet. The shared experiences that produce close links between first year students have by the third year largely dissipated. There are several reasons for this. Students coming from Japanese high schools have many years of shared collective experiences that have characterised their school life to that point. High school graduation is, for many, a highly emotional experience as it represents the end of the close relationships they have had with classmates and club members. On entering university, it is initially, the desire to establish new, intimate bonds of similar intensity within a new group that motivates collective action among matriculated students. However, as students progress through their university years, an increasing amount of tailoring for both academic preferences and future career options begins to take place, as well as the increased maturity that comes with age. This naturally results in fewer encounters with those whom they used to share classes, lunchtimes and free time every day. As students follow more individual directions, the shared nature of their connections diminishes and they tend to maintain fewer friendships. Consequently, students become less frequently involved in collective activities. They eat and study together less often as their involvement in campus life becomes more irregular. Friendships that have survived are more likely to continue off campus. At the same time, this coincides with greater maturity and development of more independent lifestyles and the growing burden to begin the process of searching for employment (Okano and

Tsuchiya 1999). A third year talked about when she arrives on campus before a class:

S. If it is rainy, about 10 minutes before but if [I arrive earlier] I go to the library to read the newspaper.

I. Do you meet people or friends before a class?

S. When I was a first year or second year [I did], but now I often don't see friends. As a third year student my life has kind of changed so I don't, I am not going to spend time [with them] in the class (Momoko, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

The use of ICTs, as well as being part of practices themselves, also has several effects on the links that form between campus practices (Shove *et al.* 2012: 32). One effect is that links between practices have become more numerous, as ICT use has filtered into many aspects of social life and practices. A further outcome is that, with this diffusion ICTs have also caused a blurring between daily practices including those of meaning. The evolution of practices is continuous and as a practice expands it blurs the boundaries between itself and adjacent practices and this blurring encourages further stretching of the boundaries. No sooner are new boundaries made than new potential associations become possible.

To illustrate these points, for many years the use of portable electronic devices in the Japanese classroom was confined to an electronic dictionary. Among the foreign staff at JIU a policy to request students to put their phones in their bags at the start of a class was agreed. However, with the expansion of functions including access to online English-Japanese dictionaries, there is now tacit acceptance of mobile phone use in the classroom and devices are placed in full view. Indeed, in response to these changed boundaries, some foreign staff make it a condition of use that devices are used above the desk only, and not below it, presumably for the reason that the student is more likely to be involved

in 'legitimate' use if it is in full view of the teacher.

In classes conducted in traditional lecture style with little or no student involvement, the reduction in size of devices and the increase in the competence of covert, and not so covert use, has led to virtual socialising/relaxing practices taking place among students during lectures. Some students for whom the practice of being in lectures has a low priority the synchronous conduct of other practices while being in lectures is acceptable as when, on receiving an 'important' call, either asks to be allowed to leave the room in order to take it, or alternatively leaves the room without seeking permission to do so, or even conducts a call without actually leaving the room. ICTs then have linked practices that would have previously been seen to be inappropriate (those of being in lectures and socialising/relaxing) or difficult to conduct simultaneously (socialising and playing online games). The accessibility and infrastructural/material convenience has seen new links established and boundaries between practices eroded.

I have discussed how the changing dynamics of study practices has affected and been affected by the changing meanings of library use, and it can also be seen how this relationship has an impact on the links between practices. Changing conceptions of the library and its place in daily campus life has seen the meaning of this spatial configuration stretched in unforeseen ways, and I have discussed at length the way new links have been forged between the practices of studying and socialising/relaxing on campus. Evolving meanings of how a library is meant to serve the campus user has resulted in a space that is now not only associated with traditional library functions, but also as a place to pass the time, arrange to meet someone, and enjoy different forms of entertainment. The library is a focus for the linking of practices because it provides a location for their coming together thus creating the possibility of consequent modification and change. Studying and socialising in the library has, for many campus users, become a complex of practices. These practices have

become equally legitimate when conducted in the library.

Linkages between practices are also sometimes distorted as a result of the temporal structures of the university day. In Chapter 2, I discussed the concepts of Lefebvre (1991) who noted the conflict between social space and time, and more physiological circadian and cyclical forms. The former temporality impinges deeply on the conduct of social relations and both restrict and promote the practices of campus users. It is the random nature of the blocks of time into which the day is divided that create the links that exist between practices. In addition, chronological links exist temporally over time periods that are longer than a campus day. For example, a student cannot attend the last lecture of a course and expect to pass unless she has attended a number of previous lectures, and students may find that they cannot attend some courses unless they have registered prior to the commencement of the course. Further, the temporal confines of the campus day imply that practices are in regular competition with each other, for instance, many club meetings take place at lunchtime. Students who bring lunches from home will often eat during the meetings, but for others, eating lunch in a dining hall, or even from the on-campus convenience store, means that they are often unable to attend lunchtime club meetings, especially if they participated in classes before lunch, or have classes after lunch. The following comment illustrates how the student is constantly linking practices in contingent ways in order to fit within the requirements of the temporal confines:

Usually I spend lunchtime by myself, because I want to finish my work and homework as soon as possible, so usually I don't eat lunch, or eat a quick meal, eating and doing something, here or at English Café [a lunchtime event in which students eat while conversing in English with native English-speaking students and teachers], or next classroom, because after eating, I like to take a nap so it is not danger [of oversleeping] if I am in the classroom

where I have a class next! (Yuiko, 4<sup>th</sup> year)

On a campus, many of the practices conducted by the students are the result of other practices and often contingent upon them. During the time period of a student's university life, the institution (itself following the strictures of national government education policies), faculties and individual teachers are instigators of many of the practices in which students engage. Many of the practices conducted by students are part of "complex hierarchies" (Shove *et al.* 2012: 88), as in the practices of attending lectures and studying. The visible practices that are commonly witnessed on campus may be linked to decisions in meetings of academic staff, in administrative offices and government policies, and consequently have significant controlling effects on the conduct of daily campus activities.

Within the daily, routine practices found on campus we can find activities in which the meaning of a practice remains unaffected, but the materials and competence required to implement it has changed. For instance, professors who require students to be physically present at lectures now use a portable device through which students swipe their identity card to register their attendance. The materials and competence for this practice have changed but the meaning of the activity, registering attendance, has not. Similarly, with meaning unchanged, the practice of students writing the names of their absent friends as well as themselves on a class attendance sheet has been replaced by attending students swiping several ID cards as well as their own through the recording device. Also, registration for courses no longer requires students to submit paper copies to the administration but instead, to register their choices online.

Likewise, we can find activities in which an activity persists although the original meaning has disappeared. Among several faculties the school song is taught to incoming students at the 'Freshman Seminar'. The meaning of a school or university song in Japan once served the purpose of instilling pride among the



students and reminding them of their responsibility as representatives of the school's ideals (Eppstein 1987). In the nationally televised high school baseball tournaments, schools songs are sung both before and after games and strict protocols are observed with students standing to attention. Although there is little overt resistance to establishing similar closeness to the institution among university students, despite the efforts of the institution most students fail to either learn or subscribe to the intended meaning of the university song. Its original meaning is now abandoned, and the effort to have all students sing the song has been replaced with a choir performing the song at formal ceremonies.

Another cause of the adaptation and change of practices is the progress of students through their university years and the practices that they carry as they do. On Japanese university campuses there are a number of ways in which some sets of practices dominate. In terms of hierarchical importance, the most dominant practices are those of being in lectures and studying practices, which also include administrative tasks that students must negotiate if they are to graduate. Lecture attendance dominates temporally for first and second year students who commonly find themselves attending upwards of twenty, ninety-minute lectures/classes a week. However, for students in the junior and senior years, attendance at lectures may be a minor practice within the framework of campus use. Rather, the campus is a place they inhabit between visiting job fairs, interviews, and consultations with careers advisors. I have earlier referred to the expectation among many students that the years at university represent a hiatus between the intensity of life experienced at high school, and the responsibility that entering employment embodies. The clear dedicated purpose of a university campus and how its users identify themselves means that these different practices are continually competing with each other within a restrictive context that influences their potential for change. Some practices will ebb and flow, while others move from ascendancy to minor positions depending on the year of the students, their place in the system, and the faculty to which they belong. These practices compete against a wider

background of perceived expectations and linked to path dependences dictated beyond the campus in society at large.

### **7.3.1 Forms of feedback on campus practices**

In *The Dynamics of Social Practice*, Shove *et al.* (2012) discuss feedback in two thematic ways, namely as *monitoring* and *cross-referencing*. The themes are analysed with reference to practices-as-performances and practices-as-entities (*ibid*: 98–110). Monitoring considers how feedback may bring an evolution to a practice over time, while cross-referencing ponders on how feedback may change the links between practices. The authors reiterate that while it is beneficial to separate these concepts for purposes of analysis, the monitoring and cross-referencing of a single practice is connected, as indeed, single practices are connected to other practices in bundles or complexes.

Monitoring the conduct of practices is the process that “provides [individual] practitioners with feedback on the outcomes and qualities of past performance” that helps determine the future nature of that practice (Shove *et al.* 2012: 99). It occurs both during and after a practice and is influenced by previous iterations of the practice. It may be (re)assessed some hours or days later and be subject to a third party and formalised categorisation. Feedback may well be reflexive or unconscious, forming a natural assessment that results from experience. A student going to the dining hall on a particular day to find it crowded thus a longer wait for food, could choose to avoid the hall at the same time the following week. This is the most common form of campus practice feedback.

A campus practice-as-entity can be defined as the sum of all performances by practitioners past and present of a particular practice, in which a distinct set of actions that can be contested at any one time are grouped under one label. Monitoring the making of campus practice-as-entities is deeply influenced by the degree to which practitioners can dictate how they are enacted. The institutional straightjacket of a Japanese university prevents much of this from occurring and

implies that changes to practices-as-entities on campus through monitoring are unlikely to be significant under normal circumstances, though some campus practices have greater potential for change when conditions permit. Nevertheless, even given the institutional power of the university and the role of channels of recruitment (Section 7.2) it is still possible for students as campus users to create new forms of the practice of 'being in lectures'. Mention has been made of the unusual nature of the practice in the fact that students are mostly passive recipients in many ways of lectures – they do not, in most cases, control the development, the rules, conventions or necessities that define the practice, nor are they in a position to push definitions in unconventional directions. Even so, students do have some influence in shifting the boundaries of what 'being in lectures' means, particularly in cases where professors show themselves open to student feedback.

Yet, most boundary pushing is a symptom of passive resistance, often at the edges and in ways that circumnavigate, avoid or dilute the traditional meaning of what it is to be in a lecture. Because the practice is 'conducted' merely by students being there, they are therefore not entity formers, but entity *conformers*. The institution of the university ensures the inflexibility of entity formation with little room for campus users to contest. The closer a practice is to being circumscribed by the institution, the less potential scope for redefining entities. Eating is a practice that would appear to be less restricted. However, some aspects of the eating practice on campus, particularly as a result of the institutional nature of dining halls which place practitioners within the confines of the spatial (and temporal) dimensions of the buildings, make this a conforming practice. It is unlikely that student monitoring of eating practices could result in the reconfiguration of food counters, furniture arrangements, or opening times. Monitoring of these practices can only, once again, be limited to minor resistance.

However, as has been discussed, student practitioners can play some role in the

redefining of study and socialising/relaxing as entities, both in the places that it can be pursued (in dining halls, outside offices) and in the manner it can be conducted (as a co-dependent practice with socialising). In the practice of relaxing and socialising, it would appear at first glance that such practices are almost the total preserve of the student campus user to redefine, through monitoring and feedback. However, even here, the institution exercises some restraints in a number of ways. First, temporal restrictions include the locking of dining halls, student halls and classrooms by security staff following the end of the final class period at 6.10pm. Second, infrastructural limits and the natural inhibitions to socialising that exist in campus locations that have open access means that changes through monitoring and feedback to practices that would appear to be beyond the influence of the institution are still subject to conditions.

The second thematic approach taken by Shove *et al.* (2012) is that of cross-referencing, that is, how the feedback resulting from one practice may impact another. First, in the performance of practices, doing one practice excludes the possibility of doing another, particularly significant in the case of campus practices given the clear limits of the campus day. The nature of feedback may influence this. Positive feedback from a tutor, for example, may encourage a student to devote more time to on campus study and thus reduce the time spent on socialising/relaxing, changing the balance between practices. Feedback originating between students, especially in practices that have less institutional oversight for example, in club activities, will also impact on the links between practices. Membership of some club activities is highly prized and requires enormous commitment by members. Prior to the annual university student festival the brass band club will practice excessively, not only everyday but often through the night. Pressure of feedback brought to bear by senior members of the band will often cause younger students to neglect their classes and risk failing courses.

In cross-referencing practices-as-entities, Shove *et al.* (2012) make use of the

idea of statistical aggregation in which to analyse significant issues of concern. Such objects of concern, in the case of the university campus, might include future employability, or language ability. The university responds to this situation by collecting data on what students do following graduation or on their scores in nationally recognised language proficient tests such as TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) that are held on campus. From here, the university makes available to prospective students results that are presented as reasons for choosing the university. The campus tour is a central element of this promotional push aimed at illustrating the seamless flow of campus life. The importance of this is realised by some department heads who demand that once a potential student has attended an open campus presentation, then they should end up becoming an actual student. Of course, much of the impression of the campus is held within the infrastructure of the site, but the bringing together of practices is vital in promoting the university as a route to the employment of students.

#### **7.4 Conclusions: implications for sustainability**

There are several implications that can be drawn from a consideration of the nature of recruitment to campus practices. First, although the campus represents a new spatial environment for incoming students, they will bring with them objects, skills, practices and expectations that they will attempt to overlay on the physical and temporal structure they encounter. For example, where 'new' practices involve already acquired competences such as smartphone use, recruitment to 'new' practices could be expanded further to the benefit of sustainability. In situations where both the materiality (wi-fi, intranet) and competence of a practice is developed, then it is possible to create new meanings. For example, students could be encouraged to download course books rather than buying paper copies for which the student could gain some form of benefit.

Attempting to establish new practices, in this case sustainable ones can be disruptive to mainstream daily activities. Practices that are convenient for practitioners are not necessarily environmentally damaging if materiality and competence work as supportive elements. If a sustainable practice or action can be incorporated into routine practices then disruption can be minimised and potential for change is increased. As described, many practices are adopted because they contain learned patterns of competence, and/or are social familiar. Therefore, disrupting these links, in the case of unsustainable practices might be a method of enhancing campus sustainability.

As has been discussed, a significant number of practices on campus involve a degree of compulsion. It has been well documented how efforts to change practices through economic incentives and penalties have little long-term effects (See Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002; Knussen and Yule 2008). Once the threat of penalties or possibility of rewards is removed, people often revert to their earlier practices. However, what can be the focus of sustainable change are the smaller practices within the areas of compulsion. That is, given that students are compelled to take course and produce some proof of study, opportunities might exist within this captive group to identify elements that could be amenable to change.

It is clear that a practitioner beginning a new practice is likely to be challenged and require a high level of motivation. Therefore, it is easier to incorporate sustainable aspects to existing practices rather than instituting sustainable practices that are new. Incorporating together will lessen time competition and remove a possible obstacle to adopting an unfamiliar practice. In addition, the evolving nature of the library as a space for practices suggests that spaces can be more effectively exploited (as in the bookshop/café combination) so that times of optimal use are enhanced.

Finally, in considering the implications for encouraging sustainability in the two main channels of recruitment, it is clear that the closer we move to that of the university authorities, the more difficult it is to instigate change due to the stability and commitment of the practitioners (in this case, employees of the university, not students). On the other hand, for those in positions of authority, sustainable changes to campus infrastructure and meanings of campus practices could be instituted with little difficulty. In the case of the channels of recruitment that engage more with students, whilst it is easier to identify moments where practices can be made sustainable, the unstable nature of the population of practitioners represents a serious challenge. Some way would have to be found to provide a natural continuity in any configuration of practices that had sustainable benefits. A further way to affect recruitment is to secure different “end-task-action combinations” (Schatzki 2015: 15) where these are unsustainable. If an unsustainable activity no longer meets one of the aims of the dominant project (Pred 1984), then the practices of which it is made up will be abandoned on account of no longer representing desirable outcomes.

Many of the preferences that students have in the pursuit of their dominant project arise from their experiences and cultural background. It is to a consideration of this that I now turn.

## **Chapter 8: Socialisation and context through a practice theory approach**

This thesis posits that processes of socialisation, social norms surrounding tertiary education, and the meanings that Japanese society and its youth attach to the role of being a student, play a highly significant part in the production of practices on the Japanese university campus. I argued in the literature review that, while proponents of practice theory recognise the importance of historical factors in how practitioners engage in practices, the effects on practices of the socio-historical background of Japanese university students are particularly illuminating. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Japanese education system is highly prescribed, and from the end of primary schooling operates under an egalitarian ethos based almost exclusively on academic ability, which has resulted in a number of institutionalised peculiarities and socio-educational norms.

A key theoretical challenge for practice theory is how to perceive processes of socialisation as intrinsic to practices. A bridge can be built between socialisation and practices by viewing the former as taking place in the “communities and networks” that act as “crucibles” in which practices evolve (Shove *et al.* 2012: 66). Whilst socialisation is neither an element, nor an “external influence on the factors and drivers of behaviour” (*ibid.*: 143), it is a consideration in the what, why, and how of practices. Processes of socialisation manifested in the conduct of practices can be perceived as being present in the materials, competences and meanings, as well as the dynamic between these, which represent the core of the 3E Model. The effects of social factors can be observed in (1) the choice and use of materials that practitioners favour in their daily routines, (2) the emphasis on (and conversely the neglect of) certain competences, (3) the way meanings are bound up with identity formation and self-actualisation, and (4) the combination of these that contribute to the socialisation processes that have moulded the Japanese university student and thus, exercise an influence on their campus practices.



In Chapter 3 I described the three contrasting interpretations of the processes of Japanese socialisation. These three traditions are important because the diverse opinions that they present on the position of Japanese youth results in different interpretations of how students see themselves and their motivations for entering university, which in turn affects understandings of the nature of their campus practices. This thesis follows the revisionist viewpoint, which argues that a conservative elite exercises power in Japan by exploiting traditions of self-control through the country's ambiguous, traditional social structure in order to maintain the political and economic status quo (Sugimoto 2014). It questions whether "Japanese society [is] as 'uniquely unique' in terms of its level of consensus and social integration as so many seem to suggest" (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986: 11, quoted in Stevens 2015: 26).

It is true that some elements from other traditions still remain relevant, for instance, the importance of group cohesion, reverence of ancestors and the self-restraint exhibited in stressful situations (as in the response of the people of Fukushima following the earthquake and nuclear accident - see Horikawa (2017) for a powerful example). However, I argue that the revisionist interpretation more accurately reflects the social conditions and growing inequality of Japanese society in which its youth finds itself today, and exercises a more critical assessment of a system whose problems are widely acknowledged (Babb 2015). Further, it is the only tradition that seriously tackles the social problems that have emerged in Japanese society, including writings on the growing alienation of Japanese youth (see Kawanishi 2004; Inui 2003), and the instability and uncertainty which impacts on student identity (Cobbing 2015). Within the interpretations of the revisionist tradition, institutions of higher education have similarly failed to empower students by turning out "off-the-rack" graduates who, though well socialised, do not meet business demands for workers with more pertinent, transferrable skills (Kingston 2013: 34). The large numbers of youth who become university students have grown to doubt whether a college degree

is enough to secure them a worthwhile occupation (Reay *et al.* 2010), and is a factor in understanding the way that they identify with university life and their practices on campus.

In this chapter, I relate the discussion to the unusual culture that prevails in tertiary education with particular reference to the concept of “institutional simulation” (McVeigh 2002), which I argue has significant influence on the practices that take place on campus. I consider some aspects of socialisation, namely how Japanese youth perceive university life as a discrete stage in their lives, the economic demands that it involves and how these factors, combined with social norms, relate to the dynamics of the materials, competences and meanings of the 3E Model.

### **8.1 Socialisation processes and the effect on campus practices**

I have already discussed the various socialisation processes that take place at high school, most significantly the focus on exam taking and the hierarchical positioning of students both within individual schools, and within the education system as a whole (3.4). Many students, already alienated from the study process, are content to be complicit in engaging in simulated education, likewise, students who are resigned to their status and place in the hierarchy. The meanings of the practices that students engaged in at high school have become entrenched and strengthened through many years of exposure to the system by the time they graduate from high school (Park 2014). On becoming university students, several additional factors encourage further support of simulated education and directly affect student sensibilities and campus practices. These are (1) the start of the counter-disciplinary period (McVeigh 2004), where students are largely exempt from societal responsibilities, (2) the non-compulsory status of being a university student, (3) the effects of fee payments and the beginning of a service provider/consumer relationship,

described by Blewitt (2013: 51) as ‘the market model of higher education’ (see also Andersson *et al.* (2012)), and (4) the nature of university campus routine.

### **8.1.1 The perception of university life as an indicator of practices**

The activities of Japanese university students are of course influenced as much by the specific contexts in which they find themselves, as by the knowledge that they expect to enjoy a respite from the perceived pressures of society, the counter-disciplinary period (McVeigh 2004). Martin *et al.* (2014) have conjectured that student expectations are linked to their experiences prior to entering university, whether coming directly from school, or from more nontraditional directions, that is, as part time or adult learners, while Elliott and Healy (2001) found that student-centeredness and campus atmosphere are important to student expectations and satisfaction. Nevertheless, there are certain well-embedded expectations held by the population of university-students-to-be of how their university years will unfold and these suggest what are likely potential choices of practices when on campus. This can be illustrated by comparing the comments of three students. The first student talked about her expectations in the way a majority of Japanese students anticipate their university years to be:

I watched TV drama probably when I was elementary school, the main characters, four of them, were university students, and they really enjoyed their campus life, so many friends of mine imagined such things (Asuka, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

However, different expectations were also expressed. In the comments of the second student, expectations were more cautious and ambiguous.

I didn’t want to work straight away, and I knew that there wouldn’t be lots of options (Tomoko, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

This second student believes that attending university is the only acceptable way she can take a legitimate hiatus from the responsibilities she feels society will require of her in future. This student in fact desired to take a gap year doing overseas volunteer work but felt that undertaking this as an alternative counter-disciplinary activity would turn out subsequently to be disadvantageous for her. She wanted to believe that her choice of attending university was meaningful and although she wished to reject much of the simulation that she encountered, she was conflicted. This is illustrated in another of her comments:

The bad thing [about the university] is the difference in motivation between like friends, if... even if I want to... it's kind of difficult to say, I *like* my friends, but often they want to skip class, but I don't want to do that, but if I don't, then I don't have close friends, and since I don't take basic classes<sup>8</sup>, I don't have opportunities to make friends (Tomoko, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

This comment shows one of the difficulties that some students experience in cases when they are in opposition to the preferences of friends, a dilemma highlighted by Reay *et al.* (2010) in British universities. Tomoko was caught in a quandary between studying seriously and making friends, a position that was predicated on her desire to consider her university years as being more than a period of recreation. In practice theory terms, she found little meaning in some of the core practices of university and as a result, eventually withdrew from university. Tomoko found herself in a community of students who were largely content to conform to the counter disciplinary nature of the university experience, and the power of the network of friends to whom she wanted to belong had a serious impact on the practices she actually conducted and those she wanted to

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<sup>8</sup> This student was exempt from several core English language course taken by her fellow first year students on account of her high level of fluency when she entered the university.

conduct.

The comments of the third student show that she had few such concerns but was content to enjoy the juxtaposition of two favourable phases in her life:

I think in my life, now is the most good *kikan* [period], because I am already adult now, not a child, but I don't have any responsibility now so I really enjoy the combination (Misaki, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

This student felt able to identify university life as a stage in which she could enjoy herself, sandwiched between her early teenage years that were characterised by obligation and restriction and what she imagines her post graduation years of responsibility and caregiving might become. Engaging in the practices that support this view of university life appears straightforward for this student. It is also interesting to note that it did not occur to her to view her academic requirements as being a responsibility.

Not all students adjust well to the freedom they encounter. One reason stems from the experience of high school where the extent of institutional guidance and control makes it difficult for some students to exercise self-discipline and cope with the responsibility of making decisions for themselves (Lee-Cunin 2004). This is exacerbated by the perception of students who regard university as a reward for successfully negotiating the highly disciplined period of their secondary schools. As a result, students develop a resistance toward activities associated with the disciplining period, including perceptions of study, dress, and participation in institutional activities (Aspinall 2015). For example, directly after the formal matriculation ceremony, many students will dye their hair, it being the first time they can do so without receiving censure for it. The experiences of these students and others like them can be seen as the seedbed of the practices that they come to conduct on campus. For example, the

practices of Tomoko (the second student) were such that she spent time in locations where academic staff had their offices and where students met for language exchange sessions and mentoring (H Building – see map in Chapter 4) so that she could maximise her English speaking and study opportunities by meeting foreign professors or native English speakers. In the case of the other students however, most of their spare time was spent in the student hall, cafeteria or locations where Japanese students often congregated to either eat or socialise/relax. The socialisation processes that created the perception among Japanese youth of university as years of hiatus or years of self-development, for example, clearly acts as an indicator as to the categories of practice that students may tend to engage in, and the communities/networks that they may inhabit, when on campus.

### **8.1.2 The ‘necessity’ of university as an indicator of practices**

Attendance at university is of course, voluntary. Yet almost 70% of Japanese youth enter university or vocational schools on the completion of high school (MEXT 2012). Whilst this remarkably high percentage allows the government to claim that Japan has “universal access to higher education” (*ibid*: 3), this figure also indicates that, given the tendency for Japanese to follow expected paths, young people are under considerable pressure to attend university. This is illustrated by the following comment:

At first, I didn’t want to go to university but my parents wanted me to, so, now, I [am] planning after graduating university I will do something for myself, so, I came here. My mother decided [this] was a good university for me (Kami, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

The student implies that she is attending university out of respect for her parents, but that once she has discharged this duty she will feel free to do what she really wants to do. Pressure for her to join a tertiary institution was strong and based on the sense that she should acquiesce to her parents’ pressure. Meanings that

are a part of the practices she conducts are coloured by her sense of duty. An additional factor may be that, as Japan does not recognise young people to be full adults until the age of twenty, students feel compelled to follow parental advice (see Trommsdorff 2006).

The fact that a large proportion of Japanese youth feel compelled to attend university is a condition that produces a number of distorting effects on some campus practices, and add to the simulated nature of education. As has been discussed at length, the practice that has become most distorted is the practice of being in lectures. Although by the time students graduate from high school they have well-formed notions of what practices of study involve, the volitional yet still 'compulsory' nature of tertiary education causes these understandings to develop in new ways. Prior to 2004, students understood that in order to pass most of their courses at university they had only to attend classes. Other than this, students had few academic responsibilities. In 2004, as part of a reform process, universities were mandated to end the custom of awarding academic credits for attendance only, and professors were required to assess students on participation, course assignments, and so on (Akabayashi 2006). Attendance was to viewed as a given, and not to be a contributory factor to the student's final grade for a course. However, the implementation of the new requirements has been largely cosmetic (Aspinall 2014) as both the assigning and submitting of work is often dilatory and as a result attendance still effectively remains the major requirement for passing a course. Consequently, the meaning of the practice of being in lectures remains unaltered, for the community remains unchallenged as a result of the resistance not only from students but also from academic staff and administrators.

The resistance of students to the strengthening of academic requirements can perhaps be easily envisaged, however, an explanation of the stance of some professors and administrators is needed. As co-practitioners of the practice of being in lectures, many professors are content to allow the maintenance of the

traditional form of this practice in the belief that a focus on preparing students for their work lives by inculcating virtues of perseverance, patience and respect is a more important aim than academic achievement (Poole 2010). Another factor is significant here. At JIU, the meaning of being in lectures is not only (even primarily) for educational purposes but also for the continuance of the institution and the successful graduation of its students, both of which are linked. Changes that make this more difficult, as in increasing the amount of work a student needs to do to pass a course, is likely to be resisted. This simulated conduct of academic practices meant that before the 2004 reforms, many professors did not provide a curriculum or a class-by-class plan for their courses as it was simply deemed unnecessary. The result of this aspect of simulated education meant that the methodology of teaching was perceived to be of minor importance to professors. Some regarded the respect for which they owed their position solely to their academic accomplishments in their own specialist area rather than any particular concern with educational goals. Moreover, the position of professor endowed them with the right they felt, to focus on content rather than teaching goals. As a result, comments like the following are common and it is unsurprising that students prefer to utilise their time in other ways during classes.

Sometimes for me the lectures are very boring, so I do other things, like [write] an assignment [for another course] or I do TOEIC<sup>9</sup> study (Yuriko, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

Although academic staff is now required to put course curricula online in advance of the semester, teaching standards remain indifferent. Failing to appreciate new meanings that become part of the practice of being in lectures, many traditional professors still 'lecture' by reading notes and making little eye

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<sup>9</sup> Test Of English for International Communication



contact with the students. Faculty development meetings, required by the education ministry (MEXT), rarely put teaching methodology on the agenda as it is seen as irrelevant, or, even demeaning that it should be regarded as an issue necessary to discuss. The historical peculiarities of Japanese tertiary education are clearly largely responsible for the meaning element of being in lectures. This in turn reflects what might be called the limited range of competence and lack of motivation in expanding the range of materials to conduct the practice. Although this refers to the teaching of lectures as opposed to being in them, as co-practitioners, these comments apply to recipients as well.

Moreover, in institutions like JIU (outside the top 30 universities in Japan), the administration is regarded as one of the most, if not the most, fundamental part of the institution. It is therefore deeply involved in legitimising and supporting the simulated activities that take place to such an extent that professors wishing to challenge the counterfeit nature of course assessments lack the authority to do so. From the administration's point of view, failing large numbers of students poses an existential threat to the institution, and is frowned upon. As a result, the meaning of lectures is closely associated with the survival of the institution, and many professors participate in the simulation by declining to engage students or place meaningful demands upon them in class. Students rarely challenge this, but the reason is not, at least entirely, due to the desire to avoid any academic responsibilities, but because it is seen as part of the institutional culture. The students often express their dissatisfaction with the academic side of their student life through the common saying, '*shouganai*' ('It can't be helped'). It is a natural facet of university life and part of the process they must pass through to reach graduation. The quote of Yuriko above show that students do not openly challenge authority, although, as I will show later, they engage in small, symbolic acts of resistance.

Despite however engaging in considerable institutional simulation, the administration often shows disdain for the students, most likely based on fear

that if students were encouraged to take a more active role in their learning, institutional collapse might be the result. (Andrew Bucklow, Associate Professor, personal communication, 2016). As an institution relying on fee-paying students who, with numbers declining, have become less committed to the ideals of tertiary education, institutional survival has become precarious. Retaining students for the allotted period of their study is imperative, and to achieve this, some measure of compulsion is necessary, as in the practices of study and being in lectures. To the question, “Are you important to the university?” one student answered:

Not so important. [laughs] Because of *shoushika* [decreasing birth rate], the university has to keep student numbers, and the number is decreasing, so I think they don’t care about the [academic] level of students, just get the number, their priority is getting numbers (Mayuri, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

This comment illustrates how, on the one hand students are valued as contributors to the university’s economic viability, but on the other they are recipients of the institution’s poor educational legitimacy. This overarching sensibility has consequences for the conduct of particular campus practices, in actions, for example, that reinforce indifferent being-in-lecture and study practices, and more extensive socialising/relaxing ones. The meanings of being a student, together with the institutional culture referred to in terms of habitus by Grant (2017) and labelled as ‘institutional habitus’ by Reay *et al.* (2010), shows the strength of the communities and networks through which practices are conducted. I now look in more detail at the economic arrangements that pertain to this.

### **8.1.3 The financial dynamic of a university education**

A further factor that impacts on the practices that take place on campus is the strong connection that exists between the paying of tuition fees and simulated

university life. Unlike some western countries, it is almost unknown for students in Japan to take out long-term loans in order to fund their education (Hendry 2013). Instead, parents will often meet the bulk of the fees, while students take on part-time work to meet daily expenses (Sugimoto 2014). As a result, meanings and doings of campus practices are closely connected to the financial burden of attendance at university, some issues of which have been investigated by Mangan *et al.* (2010) and Christie (2005).

In Japan, the national government is responsible for funding the small number of public universities. A reason for the extremely difficult entry requirements is that student tuition fees are heavily subsidised. In contrast, for the remaining large majority of university students who enter private universities, fees are burdensome. Recently, there has been a growing awareness of the connection between these expensive fees and the 'service' provided by universities as a result of the neoliberal shift in higher education, and the influence of corporatisation (Olssen and Peters, 2005; Walkerdine 2011). Blewitt (2013) identified some of aspects of this by contrasting market and education values and ways that the former has influenced tertiary education. For example, he noted how the market is motivated "[t]o satisfy the wants of anyone who has the money" by providing products that can be sold to the satisfaction of the buyer as opposed to the ideals of education which are "[t]o satisfy the desire for knowledge of anyone who seeks it whether they have money or not" (*ibid*: 56).

The nature of simulated education in Japanese universities inadvertently exposes more starkly the strong equivalence between educational qualification and the purchasable 'product' that students think they are buying, and emphasises the resemblance to a contractual agreement between a service provider and a customer. The consequence of simulated learning is that there are few mediating factors (such as credible minimum academic standards, or sanctions for anti-social or criminal behaviour) between the fees paid by students and their families, and the credentials they are seeking to gain, with the

result that there is a clear sense of entitlement.<sup>10</sup>

As a result, the principal meaning that students bring to their practices on campus is that of paying customers having access to the use of facilities that will eventually meet their demand for an educational product, rather than practices where meanings associate with idealistic, non-materialistic goals. As a consequence of society's acceptance that the university years are a time of hiatus, Japanese students have acquired the understanding that they need only exert a minimal effort to gain a degree, and therefore the demand for greater academic effort, as manifest in the 2004 reforms, has brought about a underlying sense of resentment. This does not usually result in conflict because professors, administrators and students are still by-and-large willing to accede to the simulation. However, the sense of entitlement that fee payment induces means that students believe that if an institution accepts their fees, then, at some point, they will be recipients of a graduation certificate.

As part of the 'added value' that has come with neoliberalisation, at many institutions in Japan, full-time faculty members are now expected to take a serious interest in the pastoral needs of their advisees. When a student stops attending classes, the advisor in charge of the student is expected to attempt to discover the cause and put the student back on course toward graduation. In addition, many universities now hold regular Parent Teacher Meetings in hotels in many parts of the country in order to inform parents not only of the children's progress, but also to promote university programmes, even provide financial advice. To some extent, the shift to market tenets has been built upon traditional customs, for example, the importance in Japanese culture of face-to-face meetings (Nakane 1970). For example, if a student wishes to find out her grades on the day they are announced, she is not able to find out online or by calling the

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<sup>10</sup> Parents of students also exhibit this sense of entitlement. In one case told to me, a parent verbally abused a professor, complaining that the professor had not done enough to help her daughter graduate. The implication was that the professor should have done more to make sure that the student attended classes and received the necessary credits.

administration, but must meet directly with her advisor. Such practices are intended to keep the student connected through meetings and prevent them from becoming estranged from the university. These activities of 'added value' in which the university engages is intended to ensure that the simulation of education is efficiently maintained, although they do not, of course, alter the fundamental economic relationship that underpins the student-university relationship on campus.

## **8. 2 Social norms, motivation and the effects on campus practices**

Whilst the revisionist approach to interpreting Japanese society has rightly shown Japan to be a much less homogenous society than previously argued, there are nevertheless certain essentialist, collective characteristics that to lesser and greater degrees are found among Japanese. Those relevant to youth in tertiary education include (1) a tendency to group orientation, (2) avoidance of confrontation, especially any that may result in standing out, (3) a general acceptance of social hierarchy based on age, and (4) a passive acceptance of authority and established systems (Hendry 2014). Although the effects of these will vary according to socioeconomic factors (or, campus population), a combination of these characteristics of Japanese identity will have relevance in understanding campus practices.

For many, identification as a university student involves a degree of conflict that has an impact on how practices are conducted. For example, in accordance with the strong sense of group pressure in Japan (Kumagai 1996), attendance at university may be something that an individual feels she had to do (as in the student comment earlier). Second, students who were most alienated in high school as a result of the emphasis on academic attainment are likely to offer as much, if not more, resistance to academic challenges at university, on account of the non-mandatory relationship between institution and student (Akabayashi

2006). Consequently, some students are likely to adopt various strategies, such as disengaging from studies and refusing to undertake academic tasks, and focusing on club activities and practices of socialising/relaxing as part of maintaining the simulation of study at university. This dissonance does much to create new identifications for university students who manifest these identities in different ways.

Given the experience of control that was the major feature of their high school lives, most of these small acts of perceived resistance are symbolic rather than real. In a discussion about other students one interviewee commented

S: [Students] play a lot because they got freedom, live alone, can work a part time job even after 10pm because they are eighteen or nineteen, and can get enough money to hang out. So they think they can do everything, which actually, for university students is just play and hanging out.

I: Does that freedom affect the way they behave on campus?

S: Yes, oh yeah, in high school teachers always watch them, and if they throw garbage on the ground, [teachers] say, "You shouldn't do that." In university [though] the site is bigger and the teacher have a lot of work and jobs so they can't watch carefully.

I: What do students do that teachers can't watch carefully?

S: Well, leaving cans or handouts on the desk in the classroom...

(Shuko, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

As a direct reaction to the confining atmosphere of the secondary school, such minor forms of symbolic resistance can become part of not only academically related practices but in other practices that are not directly monitored, students enjoy the new freedom that a university campus brings. This freedom is enjoyed as students attempt to create maximum distance between the establishment and themselves.

It is worth remembering that identity is the result not only of sociological, but also historical and geographical factors (Mangan *et al.* 2010; Christie 2007). In addition, to gain further understanding it has been argued that it is vital to examine “young people’s experiences in educational spaces and the (re)production of a wider diversity of social identities” (Holloway *et al.* 2010: 594). Similarly, the identity of Japanese youth is not entirely predicated on their relative success and failure to pass exams, but also through the way that classroom spaces, for example, have formed their self-awareness as students. Within the spaces of the classroom, many are uncomfortable, and it is only within the spaces of the sports field or gymnasium that a stronger identity can be found. As a result, students will often passionately commit themselves to their university clubs. Within these spaces, peer pressure is often more powerful than that of the institution itself, and can sometimes take control over student lives. Of relevance here is a study by Hamarus and Kaikkonen (2008), which identified a link between peer pressure and bullying that the authors located within a cultural framework. Indeed, membership of (and identity with) baseball clubs and football clubs particularly are often seen as more important than the department that students are officially attached to, with the result that, practice sessions take place extremely frequently and last until the early hours. Nevertheless, for many, their identity as students is very much bound up with the club activities and exploits and once again locates practices within the communities and networks of practices that exist on campus.

As discussed in Chapter 3, universities are struggling to respond to what are perceived as the new needs for graduates today. From the data there is evidence that current students are realising that their futures will require them to take greater responsibility and that they cannot assume that graduating university will lead to the procurement of a high-status job. No doubt this realisation comes from observing the fates of those students graduating before them. As a result, new associations are attaching to what it means to be a

Japanese university student. We can illustrate the dynamic that exists between older and newer associations by examining the comments of two students. The first student has more traditional ideas about the meaning of being a student. She stated that her main reason for coming to university was, “to get a good job, have a great salary and have a better future.” In answer to the question of whether being a student was the way she imagined, she answered,

I think the way I imagined. I knew I had to study hard but I have a lot of fun here, and I am living with my friend because I wanted to be more independent. Here you have more freedom to do what you want to do. Also take the class that we want to take and want to study. That point is really nice (Yuka, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

Although she sees her university years in traditional terms as the hiatus stage of her life, she is also aware of the challenge she faces in finding employment and sees a direct correlation between her diligence regarding study and her life chances. She also conceded that

I didn't think it would be so hard about what I want to do with my future. I still have no idea about what I want to do, so I thought that if I go to university I would find what I want to do but I am still looking (Yuka, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

Her comments reflect the greater level of uncertainty surrounding the position of Japanese graduates today and represent an implicit rejection of the traditional expectations of conservative society, and reflects one of the issues related to the nature of the aspirations of young people (Brown 2011). In terms of the 3E Model, we can see how newer meanings of being a student are laid on top of older, but still visible, ones.

The second student is rather less optimistic about her future and her comments



show a more critical position regarding the benefits of Japanese education. In response to the question of why she became a university student, she answered,

I know that I need knowledge to be a good adult, and so, education is very important in life, so I chose to study and the purpose to go to university was to learn something that you don't hate, that maybe you like (Misaki, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

For this student, attending university appears to be a default option and something that she felt a sense of obligation to do. She implies that her experience at pre-tertiary level was an unsatisfying one, and consequently expectations for subsequent study were not high. This is confirmed in the following comments which also illustrates how, at JIU, efforts to make academic study more meaningful are rather piecemeal and often more superficial than actual.

I came here because of the Global College, because I thought I could learn something *in* English, not learn English. But then, this semester, I didn't have a lot of choices of classes and that was kind of disappointing and sad, that I couldn't choose like 'Women in Asia' or learning French in English (Misaki, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

Both older and newer meanings of 'being a student' can be identified here. As universities respond to student demands, which due to Japan's declining population is expressed in the choice of institution that students' make, meanings, as evolving classifications, continue to be renegotiated with consequences for campus practices. For example, as Reay *et al.* (2001) observed, some of these students can be described as young people who, up until 10 years ago when the number of university places on offer reached parity with the number of youth available to fill them, would probably not have thought

that going to university was an option open to them. However in contrast to Reay *et al.* (*ibid*), in Japan reasons for this are more to do with demographic changes and the strong cultural association with credentialism rather than social class or race (McVeigh 2002; Tomlinson 2008). In addition, implications also arise regarding the aspirations of students. With greater evident uncertainty, these comments also reflect the socio-psychological concerns of young people explicitly clear in the statement, “What’s a person like me going to do at a place like that?” in what Reay *et al.* (2001: 864) called ‘Knowing one’s academic place’. These changing meanings may in turn be influencing the conduct of campus practices, for example, as practitioners question their right to take an active role in the practices of the campus.

What practices then populate these positions? As implied above, the symbolic and social meanings attached to campus activities primarily derive from two sources; from student collective understandings of their role as students, and the likelihood that the university at which they attend will enable them to achieve their purposes for entering university. From this, effects may be observed in student performance of campus practices, particularly those of attending lectures and studying. For students who are endeavouring to make their universities work harder on their behalf, we can conjecture that there is a growing tendency to exploit the potential and use of campus facilities. For example, in the Department of International Exchange Studies, students are strongly encouraged to join study abroad programmes (for up to a year) or at the very least, attend study tours of two to three weeks. Following such experiences students acquire different motivations that affects their routine.

I: What is the most important daily thing you do on campus?

S: Most important to talk with teachers and friends in English. It is not getting worse, but it won’t improve [after studying abroad].

I: So your movement around campus is based on finding opportunities to speak English?

S: Yes. There are some friends who speak English, such as Mie or Kaori, but not always easy to find.

I: If you can't find anyone, what do you do?

S: I talk to Tim or Steve [professors]. I come to the third floor [where most non-Japanese professors have offices] (Hana, 2<sup>nd</sup> year)

It can be seen that the routine activities of this student have been affected by changing meanings related to being a student. In this case, the student is aware of how she can best utilise the (English-speaking) human resources on campus to achieve her aims.

In universities, government buildings and many offices, the temperature settings of both the heater and air conditioner are set, in line with government recommendations. The following exchange illustrates that the associations attached to being a student can also be of a more practical nature.

I: Have you noticed the reaction of students who go into a classroom and find the temperature blocked [on the heater/air conditioner]? Do they accept it or do they complain?

S: They complain. "Oh, I am paying. Why can't I change [it]? It should be cooler because I am paying." They complain a lot. I think [they are angry] with the university because they don't realize there is a connection with the environment. They just want to be cooler right now (Yuka, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

When students enter classrooms that are heated and cooled within specific temperature ranges, and respond by complaining about what they feel to be unfair treatment, they illustrate the underlying sense of entitlement arising from what is perceived as a contractual agreement between students and the university, discussed in the last section. The pecuniary association shows how the financial pressure involved in a university education plays a role in

structuring daily routine activity. It also includes a wider association that interprets private universities as a form of business complete with profit motives. In addition, by holding the school to blame for their discomfort shows not only a failure to connect meanings of environmental issues with the conditions in the classroom, but a willingness to see the university as less than invested in their futures – again mirroring the student-as-consumer philosophy. For many Japanese students faced with high tuition fees and the obligations that come with financial support from parents, to achieve their aim of graduating is a continual concern in their daily lives (McVeigh 2002). Without a guarantee of a job at the end of their four years of study, students become conscious of the considerable financial outlay they are making and have some degree of resentment that, despite such a financial commitment, following graduation they may find themselves without gainful employment (Hendry 2013).

Resentment can also be observed in the daily contact that students have with administration, which as stated earlier, often hold the students in low regard. One student said,

Sometimes I am annoyed by administration staff because there is something I want to ask them to solve quickly but their work is so slow. I think everyone has equal right to ask a question and have an opinion and teachers give us a chance so why don't they in administration? (Takuma, 1<sup>st</sup> year)

Another student was equally critical in implying that in order to achieve her objectives, she has to find alternative ways to using the administration:

S: [I was] planning to study abroad in the summer but they didn't inform me enough – they didn't tell me anything, and too late.

I: Not efficient?

S: Yeah, we have to find information by ourselves, so my senior

advised us, JIU don't do anything for you! (laughs) (Ruka 2<sup>nd</sup> year)

The socialisation processes that Japanese youth experience have other effects. The comment below illustrates how such processes together with associations of being in lectures exert considerable power over the practices that students conduct. The student confessed to falling asleep in classes sometimes. When asked why, he answered

S: Because the class is comfortable, or I feel too hot.

I: Do you ever ask the teacher to turn it up or down?

S: Yeah, I want to but it's... it's difficult to say in class (Why?) because everyone watch me and also everyone are just taking notes, so it is difficult, even though it is just easy to say, can you turn on or off. But I just deal with it (Ryoya 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

This also illustrates how Japanese social norms such as the expectation to exercise restraint (*gaman* – see Chapter 3) also play a role in the performance of a practice. The non-reaction of Ryoya is a combination of the perception he has of university life, the financial commitment he made and the social norms with which he grew up.

### 8.3 Conclusions

In this chapter I have identified some key factors in the socialisation of the Japanese student, namely (1) institutional simulation, (2) youth perception of university, (3) the financial burden of attending university, and (4) the norms that govern the campus life of the university. The communities and networks that exist in the campus milieu are seen to be extremely powerful and establish an historical legitimacy that is difficult to contest.

The nature of the perceptions and expectations of university that students possess have an effect on their ability to conduct practices. Students who perceive their time at university as a period of recreation can achieve the most comfortable match with the practices that take place on campus, and such practices can be conducted with little difficulty. Students who intend to enjoy their short-lived freedom, can spend a large period of their time in the student hall socialising with friends and still be confident of graduating at the time they expect. For those students with different expectations, or who envisage other meanings to the practices that they will carry out in their role as a university student, conducting the practices they desire may be more problematic. This was clear in the case of Misaki (p. 241) who found it difficult to either develop the competencies she sought, or engage with the materials of practices that would correspond to the meaning she attached to those practices.

In referring to the 3E Model, it is clear that, when considering socialisation and student experiences the element of meaning has a highly significant influence upon the practices that take place on campus. Social and historical factors combine powerfully in constructing the meanings to campus practices, and these meanings have solidified as a result of simulation. Some aspects are evolving, but the overall effect is one that inhibits the creation of new meanings, which in turn restrains the development and evolution of materials and competences. As a consequence, unsustainable components of practices are likely to remain unchallenged. Moreover, institutional inertia characterised by the existential challenge of the declining population of youth manifests in the exercise of greater control over students and academic staff alike.

Finally, for students who experienced pressure to enter university, the educational and institutional simulation that is a co-constituent of the practices carried out by other students, academic staff and administrators can serve to undermine positive self-actualisation and restrict the conduct of practices that do not support the dominant communities and networks. In the case of practices in

which students struggle to find intrinsic meaning, competences are avoided or minimised.

To conclude, by looking at the socialisation of students through the 3E Model this chapter has added to the literature of student geographies as well as to the development of practice theory through the application of aspects of the model. The campus, as a space that carries deep cultural associations, is highly implicated in the practices that are conducted there, and it is to the spatial and temporal aspects of this that I now focus my attention.

## Chapter 9: Spatiality, temporality and campus practices

“Loose ends and ongoing stories are real challenges to cartography.”  
(Massey 2005: 107)

Although aspects of spatiality and temporality have informed earlier chapters of this thesis, this chapter aims to expand and develop these concepts in the production of campus practices, and how these fundamental geographical cornerstones might be more closely integrated into the 3E Model. For the purpose of facilitating analysis, I make a differentiation between dominant, and what I call *expansive*, notions of spatiality and temporality. In section 9.1 I review the position (introduced fully in the literature review) taken by Shove *et al.* (2012) and argue that while their discussion engages with both dominant and radical understandings of spatiality, a further understanding of practices can be gained by considering more expansive interpretations. At this point (9.2), I first examine how, using traditional understandings of spatiality and temporality, the 3E Model can reveal aspects of campus practices. I then explore (9.3) how expansive notions can be used to exercise the model in new ways for the purpose of understanding how practices work. In this part, I draw on the work of Lefebvre (1991); Lefebvre and Regulier (1985); Southerton (2006; 2013) and Massey (1991; 2005). Following this, I briefly look at geographies of architecture as in, for example, the work of Lees (2001) before closing the chapter with a brief conclusion.

Dominant notions of space include *inter alia* being measurable, representable, confinable and politically neutral, and comprise what Horton and Kraftl (2014: 266-8) call ‘dominant assumptions’ about space and place. Schatzki (2009: 35) describes them as “features of reality that persist independently”, and identifies them as referring to *objective* space/place and time. For expansive notions of these concepts, I follow Keith and Pile (1993), and interpret ‘spatiality’ and ‘temporality’ as representing the complex relationships that they have with



aspects of the social, and which are often characterised as being dynamic, decentralising, politicised, and “always in process, never a closed system” (Massey 2005: 11). An awareness of these two interconnected yet conceptually distinctive forms came as a result of observations of the role of time and space in campus practices, and led to a consideration how they might be interpreted using a practice theory approach. In perceiving time and space in this way, I incorporate the contextual and social aspects specific to Japanese tertiary education, discussed in the previous chapter. This is not meant to imply that such a clear division exists in the literature on space and place nor do I intend to imply an overly chronological development or steadily nuanced evolution in the meaning of these terms. Further, I have avoided using opposite adjectives, for example, ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ so as not to imply that a polarity between these distinctions is the defining characteristic, for there is considerable overlap. To this extent therefore, the distinction is an artifice. However, I argue that it is useful in an analysis of how well both less and more established/controversial understandings of these basic geographical concepts integrate into the 3E Model. Employing expansive uses of spatiality and temporality in understanding practices may help us to more effectively respond to the challenge posed by the “loose ends and ongoing stories.”

While ‘dominant assumptions’ about the concepts of space/place and time have a great deal of relevance in understanding practices, their use in a discussion of the relationship between space/place and practices, and time and practices, is primarily descriptive. This is not to lessen the importance of such analysis, for traditional understandings of the effects of space/place and time provide important data on how practices are affected. For example, a traditional spatial/temporal analysis can show how campus practices are affected by the physical demarcation between faculties, the structure of places such as student halls, as well as the designation of selected blocks of time for specific purposes. However, using traditional understandings to explain practice would represent only a partial analysis. I argue that practice theory, particularly the variant on

which the 3E Model is based, has a greater resonance with the more dynamic understandings of spatiality and temporality such as those found in the work of Henri Lefebvre and Dale Southerton. The idea of spatiality and temporality being socially constructed or produced allows us to consider the influence of powerful 'social networks' (Shove *et al.* 2012: 66) that make up Japanese educational processes, and their role in campus practices. Moreover, a deeper understanding is likely to suggest how practices might be changed and thus contribute to greater sustainability on campus.

### **9.1 Perceptions of space and time that underpin the 3E Model**

As covered in Chapter 2, Shove *et al.* (2012) examined the role of space and time in practices in several ways, including the idea that space is a resource and a location for the conduct of practices. In addition, they also considered how (1) spatial aspects of elements affect their ability to travel between locations, and (2) how temporal characteristics of elements allow them to remain potentialities between performances. The authors concluded their discussion by saying they do not see space and time as equivalent to the elements that constitute the model (materials, competence, meaning), but recognise that they are significant in how practices evolve and spread (*ibid*: 134). While their analyses demonstrate how space and time impact upon practices in a variety of ways, I argue that there is room for a greater role for more expansive (and in Massey's (2005) more politically nuanced term, 'radical') notions of space. There are two advantages to this. First, expansive interpretations allows us to dovetail what makes space dynamic with the dynamic interaction of elements in the 3E Model, and how this relationship influences the production of practices. Secondly, a politicised spatiality enables the incorporation of the influential socialising processes (within what Shove *et al.* (2012) call 'social networks') that Japanese university students experience, and which were discussed in the previous chapter. This experience influences the way that students use campus space and the practices that they

conduct within it. If we regard spatiality and temporality as dynamic but not elemental, then we can incorporate these concepts more comfortably into the 3E Model without undermining the model's strength as a tool that locates practice at the centre of analyses of the social. In the next section I use the model to analyse the relationship between campus practices and traditional notions of space, place and time.

## **9.2 Campus practices and established notions of space and time**

In viewing, first of all, campus space through the framework of the 3E Model, the established perspective allows some relatively straightforward (though not always incontestable) analysis. Space engages with the elements of the 3E Model in ways that define, constrain, and enable practices. In this section, I consider the meaning of optimal space, the role of practitioners in making spaces, and the relationship between campus competences and space. I then examine how practices engage with *place*, and some of the important differences before closing with an analysis of the connections between campus practices and time.

In definitional terms, the area labelled 'university campus' can be both represented on a map and concretised in the boundaries – perimeter fences, gates, guardhouses and the like – that enclose the space. This clearly defined and finite space appears, at first glance, to exert spatial limitations on the conduct of practices however, much depends on how we understand a second definitional issue, namely, what is 'optimal' space for the performance of the wide diversity of campus practices. Campuses are, of course, designed in order to *facilitate* the conduct of campus practices, not to restrain them, and, although the vision incorporated in any design will always be modified as costs, materials, conflicting ideals, etc., are factored in, the default position is for a campus to enable what we might call standard campus practices to take place. All things

being equal, then, a campus tends to optimise the space for the conduct of practices (although a corollary to this might be that campus geographies tend to optimise the conduct of *dominant* ideas about what should take place on a campus). The key point here is that a campus that allows the optimisation of mainstream practices will be unlikely to witness the evolution of different practices. Where space is optimal, practices are slow to change.

The connection between practices and the ‘optimal viable space’ that they require is perhaps a little more nuanced. A relevant factor might be that of ‘affective capacity’, by which I mean, practitioners have different feelings and perceptions about what an optimal space for conducting a practice is. For instance, interviewees who eat lunch regularly in one of the dining halls do so because the location is convenient, the food is reasonably priced, and they can enjoy the company of friends. For them, the practice of eating lunch on campus is optimal. For others, however, these identical circumstances represent the worst possible conditions for the practice. To illustrate this, a student who does part time work for her department in a language laboratory said that she would often stay in the lab at lunchtime. Her reason for this was

S: ... there are so many people at the cafeteria, so I don't want to stay there. For me, lunchtime [should be] a relaxing time, so it is uncomfortable

I: In what way?

S: Well, noisy, and their talking topics, like is annoying for me

I: If it were quieter, would you be tempted to go over there?

S: Yes. (Shiho, 4<sup>th</sup> year)

In traditional, spatial terms, the dining hall might be seen as often functioning below its capacity, not only in the areas of the hall that no-one uses but also materially in that there are more than enough chairs, tables and utensils to cater for the number of campus users. At busy times, it might be seen to represent

optimal or near optimal conditions for the performance of this practice. However, for this particular student (and no doubt many like her), the dining hall does not represent an optimal 'viable practice space' for the reason that campus spaces carry with them affective components that determine whether spaces are felt to enable or inhibit campus practices. A similar position can be argued about spaces that contain multiple practices, irrespective of whether practices take place concurrently or successively. The sense of 'affective capacity' may determine whether practitioners who conduct multiple practices consider each practice has optimal space or whether multiple practices serve only to undermine performances of single practices.

The role that practitioners play in making spaces can be seen in several locations on campus. Campus users are active in turning spaces into optimal practice spaces as well as spaces where particular practices come to dominate. As was discussed in an earlier chapter, for many interviewees, the first floor of the library has become a location where they are no longer able to study, mostly because of the background hum of conversation that is found there. This can be seen from the following comments:

On the first floor there is a lot of people, there is space, table[s] for six people, but the table on the second floor is for each person, so I use there (Yuriko, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

I: What makes the library noisy?

S: [People] talking and moving around, and the TV booth, sometimes very talkative girls group near my desk (Yuiko, 4<sup>th</sup> year).

It seems clear that in this case space has been changed as a result of practice. Meanings about the role of study for students on this campus have evolved to include an element of social interaction, perhaps originating from the alienating

experiences of study at high school, but also reinforced by simulated education. Because students are no longer required by state and society to continue with education, they have become empowered to resist those elements to which they take exception. Using the library openly as a location for social interaction began as a small form of resistance, but it has become an accepted library activity. However, the space of the library itself has also encouraged the tendency to turn the area into a space where social interaction is more acceptable. The presence of 'TV booths' has served to mix study purposes with entertainment, and the first floor tables that allow for six people to sit together enables groups to congregate easily. In addition, for safety reasons, glass partitions that separated each place and acted as barriers to social interaction were removed. These spatial aspects have contributed to the change in library study practices in a recursive pattern. Practices not only change spaces, but spaces also change practices, depending on which has the greater catalytic power or offers the least resistance to change. The growing tendency for low conversation to become part of study practice in the library has proved to be a greater force than traditional meanings of library spaces, and the configuration of this particular library's fixtures and fittings and organisation.

Campus spatiality not only connects directly with the materials and meanings of the 3E Model but also has a direct link with the competences that are found there. Campus users quickly acquire the knowledge to exploit the layout of the campus to suit their daily routine and maximise their convenience. This knowledge – what we might call 'spatial competence' – including the directions from which campus users enter and leave as well as the routes users take as they move from location to location around it, is clearly influenced by architectural configurations. For example, students employ spatial competence in knowing where best to congregate for certain purposes, such as in front of gates, or at the intersections of primary pathways when waiting for friends in order to leave together. These configurations establish spatial linkages, such as between walkways, paths and bridges that direct the movements and flow of

campus users within the confines of the campus. Similarly, bus stops, the local railway station and car parks help direct campus users to particular patterns of transportation use. It would, of course, be possible in theory for students to select other options, but to do so would be to go against previously acquired competence, both their own and that of students before them. Although moving around campus may not in itself be called a practice, spatial competence can be responsible for affecting such things as (1) the time available for practices, (2) the kind of practices that may be conducted (in the directing of campus users to certain more accessible places) or even, (3) the enabling of practices (such as phone use, reading) done while users traverse campus spaces as a result of wide, un-obscured paths that are vehicle-free routes and allow users to feel able to multitask. Campus space then, can affect whether a practice is conducted, when and for how long it is conducted and even how it is conducted. Moreover, it affects the collective conduct of many practices and is co-constitutive in defining and re-defining the practices and required competences that spatial configurations may suggest. That these features are all representable, further underlines the fact that established meanings of space have an important position in understanding the practices that occur in these spaces.

In considering dominant perceptions of *place*, the picture becomes more complicated when we consider how place is also traditionally characterised (and, in one way, distinguished from space) as involving some emotional attachment (Cresswell 2004). Students clearly develop positive and negative emotional ties to the campus (see O'Rourke and Baldwin (2016) on the involvement of students in campus reorganization), but the question, in the language of the 3E Model, is how the meanings that attach to places (as distinct from meanings that are part of practices) manifest themselves in the conduct of practices. The idea that a space becomes a place because it accrues meaning on the part of the users can clearly be observed, in part, through the practices that are conducted there. Students' associations with particular places create the boundaries that surround the possibilities for practices within those places.

To illustrate this, during one field observation, several students in the student hall were throwing an American football-shaped soft toy to each other. They were confident and relaxed enough in their notion of what the student hall meant to them as a place to conduct what other users might consider an inappropriate activity. On one hand, the students were pushing the boundaries of what a student hall, as a place, means to the general (or generic) user. The activity posed a challenge to other users regarding its acceptability. Their actions asked the implicit question - "Is this activity so outrageous that you are willing to risk a potentially awkward confrontation to stop us?" The boldness exhibited by those who were playing was an indication of this. On the other hand, the students conducted their activity in one corner of the hall, away from where other students were reading, resting, and talking, and where it was clearly intended to keep disruption to a minimum, and in fact, avoid confrontation. The group of students also exhibited a measure of physical restraint and bodily control in the degree of enthusiasm with which they threw the ball, and how fast/quickly they would move to catch it.

Although their actions were a challenge to other users' sense of what consist of acceptable student hall activities, they were still cautious. Their self-restraint sought to reduce the possibility of being directly confronted by other students who might complain about the disturbance or inconvenience. This shows how the associations that students form with particular campus locations can directly impact not only on the kinds of practices that can be legitimately conducted there, but also on the way and manner in which they are conducted. The students were willing to stretch understandings of appropriate use of place, but not snap them. It is a natural consequence that, owing to the nature of campus users' routines, many of the buildings on campus become places imbued with emotional attachment. When meanings become personal as when people identify with a place rather than a space, the range of permitted activities (or practices) may expand. The practices that take place in a location like a student hall, where



users may identify affectively, are likely to be more diverse than those that take place in other campus locations, although factors of materiality and competence may play an important role.

As with traditional interpretations of space and place, we can perceive time similarly. Schatzki (2009: 35) describes 'objective' time as "succession: whenever events or instants occur before and after one another." The influence of objective time on practices can easily be observed, and is particularly marked when looking at the university day with its set lecture times, lunchtimes and so on. For example, lecture periods of 90 minutes that are separated by breaks of 10 minutes, and 50 minutes that represent the official lunchtime are structured in inflexible ways with no procedure for rearrangement but instead follow a strict, set order. These periods of time place a limit on what practices can be conducted. In reality, the effects of space, place and time on practices overlap and impact on each other, and, in dominant terms, the university campus can be said to be both a space and a place that is subject to temporal restraints.

### **9. 3 Campus practices and expansive notions of space and time**

As stated above, I posit that incorporating a more expansive perception of space and time within the 3E Model could help toward a deeper understanding of campus practices, particularly considering the radical geographical nature of space as developed by Massey. Massey provides several directions in which we can expand the application of space with the 3E Model. The idea of space as a "continuous becoming" (Massey 2005: 107) ties in with the continual nature of evolving practices which themselves are always becoming.

In this section I first consider how Lefebvre's ideas of social space and rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre 1991; Lefebvre and Regulier 1985) relates to campus practices, and link this with Southerton's work on temporality (2006; 2013). I then

relate practices to the concepts of 'power-geometry' (1991; 2005) and 'the chance of space' (2005), before examining how geographies of architecture as in, for example, the work of Lees (2001) can inform how we perceive campus practices.

### ***9.3.1 Lefebvre and campus space and rhythms***

The work of Lefebvre is useful for expanding the 3E Model in its spatial aspects. First, as a community, the university campus shares many similarities with his analysis of public spaces and in the way we experience them (Lefebvre and Enders 1976). The social nature of practice is intimately connected with the social nature of space (Lefebvre 1991). Exploring connections between spatiality and practice can bring out connections that give meaning to those practices that may contest how spaces are used, or practices that encourage resistance to hegemonic understandings of space. I argue that spatiality can be more prominently positioned within the 3E Model. By establishing closer links with the social construction of space, the model can be made more spatially sensitive.

As discussed in section 2.5.2, aspects of Lefebvre's production of space help reveal some dynamics behind the conduct of practices. For example, the dominant perceptions of how space is used – that is, the university authorities' 'conceived space' – strengthens the formation of practices-as-entities with the consequence that the mechanics of daily practices, that is, the materiality, competences and meanings-of-the-moment, are maintained, even when practices are a result of educational simulation. With attendance in lectures remaining the main guarantee of gaining credits, the other aspects of being in lectures are perceived to have little relevance, and while they are followed they are at the same time, disdained. The following comment made by a mature student compares her generation with today's students, but shows how both regarded the practice:

I was not so serious student [when I was young] but I think I was

better. Generation is so different because of *yutori sedai* [‘the comfortable generation’]. If we didn’t want to study, we just slept in class, but now they take a picture of the whiteboard, chat with friends, use their mobile, they don’t care about their image to the teacher (Mayuri, 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

The practice-as-entity takes on features of the ‘conceived space’ and is strengthened and maintained. It permits the practice-as-performance to continue to be reproduced despite having little practical meaning, other than the long-term goal it contributes towards.

Second, Lefebvre was also concerned with the disruptive influence of capitalism on social space and time, which from the arguments presented in the previous chapter, is relevant to the campuses of Japanese universities where capital relations take place. In the concept ‘production of space’ in which Lefebvre highlights how ideas of space can dominate and be perpetuated by ruling elites, it is possible to see how this is manifest on campus. The large halls and gymnasia in which the raised dais features prominently serve to separate the university hierarchy on days when they are most visible, namely, graduation and matriculation. In addition, the central positioning of the main building at the geometric centre of the campus contains the elevated offices of the chancellor, president, vice-presidents and administrative heads and serves to accentuate their position in the university. Furthermore, the structure of classrooms serves to promote the delivery of a traditional education that elevates the position of the teacher while pacifying that of the student. We can see a temporal parallel for this in the work of Lefebvre and Regulier (1985) who argue that linear time similarly imposes itself on cyclical time, as represented by the student sleeping in class because she is habituated to working late at her part-time job.

### **9.3.2 Southerton (2013) and the temporal dimension of the three elements**

In Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.3) I put forward the idea that certain temporalities that

maintain practices in a stable state (as argued by Southerton 2013) could represent temporal aspects of the elements of the 3E Model. In the concept of dispositions (*ibid*: 346), which Southerton adapts from Bourdieu, the time, duration, frequency and manner in which practices are conducted could be described as *meanings* manifested temporally. A second aspect of this is how a commitment to the performance of certain practices has origins in the cultural background and social group to which particular practitioners belong. An obvious illustration of this is that students as a group are more likely to conduct bundles of practices of socialising/relaxing for longer, more often and more intensively than other campus users. The temporal manifestations of dispositions can provide evidence of the meanings to which practitioners attach to particular practices.

In Japan the student population is changing as a result of the declining numbers of young people. As explained in Chapter 3, a growing number of entrants to university are seen as not being naturally suited to the environment of a tertiary institution (Reay *et al.* 2001), lacking not only the most basic of study skills, but also social skills as well (Akabayashi 2015). Although of a different nature, Japanese universities, like their English counterparts, are also engaging with a form of 'new student' (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003). By including 'disposition' as a temporal dimension of the element of meaning, it is possible that a more nuanced understanding of the different meanings that campus users attach to identical practices can be gained. For example, to the question, "Do you go to class early?" two students answered in the following way:

Yes, I prepare for the class, I would read through the notes I wrote last time. I might meet a friend, but if no one is there, I would read a book or just be quiet and think about my future or something like that (Rie, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

Yes, at least ten minutes before. My routine is to review before the

class, and then, if teacher is late, I take out some word cards and review for TOEIC, or sit *bouto suru* [vacantly] (laughs) (Kami, 1<sup>st</sup> year).

Although these comments have a number of similarities, an investigation into how these students (as part of a new collective disposition) might conduct the practice of study in temporally different ways could reveal differences in the meanings they attach to the activity.

Similarly, in referring to ‘procedures’ (Southerton 2013: 346) we can establish a link between Southerton’s concept and competences by tying the social appropriateness of practices to their temporal renderings, thus adding an extra level of nuance to the meaning of ‘competence’ as represented in the 3E Model. Appropriateness of ‘procedures’ on campus might include the answering of a phone call in the library, or how long after a class has started it is deemed acceptable for a student to arrive late. Students attending university are often expected to devote large amounts of time to developing the competences of certain practices. Students in the department of Management and Information Sciences, which supplies the majority of the members of the university baseball team, spend several hours every day on the baseball ground, students in the music society spend weeks of intensive practice prior to graduation ceremonies, and the students of some seminars spend equal amounts of time planning, provisioning, organising and running ‘coffee shops’ and food stalls during the university festival. While these practices might correspond to notions of appropriateness for the purposes of the university, other criteria of appropriateness might not be met, if for example, they were to lead to stress or other health problems for students.

The third “temporality of practice” namely sequences (*ibid*) connects with the material element of the 3E Model and describes sequences of practices. Southerton links the units of materiality of practices with their temporal strings, in

for example, the need for a student card to enter the library, or the purchase of a ticket before boarding a university bus. This also includes sequences that can last for lengthy periods as for example the need to bring specific materials for certain courses. Materiality involves the manipulation or use of objects and structures that rely on a particular arrangement of usage in order to perform a practice. Southerton's concept of 'sequences' provides a temporal dimension to this element.

### **9.3.3 Massey (2005): power geometry and the chance of space**

In Chapter 2, I explained Massey's concept of 'power-geometry' as a combination of power and knowledge that allowed the domination of colonial countries over those whom they colonised. In simple terms, power geometry equals power plus space/geography with the ability to affect future trajectories. I apply this term to the context of Japan in which the power and knowledge of its conservative elite is exercised over various levels from the education ministry (MEXT), to tertiary institutions and down to the students who attend them – the 'revisionist' tradition (see Section 3.1. in Chapter 3). Power geometry also operates in the specific conditions of a particular space/place (i.e. the university campus), where the presence of different forms of hierarchical and non-hierarchical power and knowledge (held, for example, by executives, faculty heads, administrative staff, academic staff, etc.), help construct the social relations that exist between campus users. Informed by global geo-historical processes, such as the neo-liberal "corporatisation of higher education" (Blewitt 2013: 55) and the specific political, economic and social context of Japan's post-bubble years, students are exposed to a power geometry exerted by the institutions to which they belong. As in Bourdieu's concept of the 'habitus', each group has specific understandings of the purposes for which the university exists and their roles within it. These understandings produce particular trajectories/geometries that groups follow and, in intersecting with each other, have an impact upon the implementation of daily practices. Practices are made more and less performable by the intersection of power-geometries, which also help to

reinforce aspects of institutional simulation.

To illustrate this, we can look at the important requirement for all students to consult regularly with their tutor. In Japanese universities, the allocation of a tutor to every student on admission is taken seriously. First and second year students particularly, who are not regarded as adults until aged 20 (*miseinen*), are obliged to maintain regular contact, usually twice a month, with their tutors who, for their part, are meant to take a personal interest in all aspects of their advisees' welfare, including acting in a *loco parentis* capacity. Also, as previously described, students must attend the university on a specific day, outside term time, if they wish to get information about their grades. Almost all full-time academic staff members therefore have advisees, and many staff will have upwards of 40 students under their charge. It is therefore a common occurrence for students required to meet their tutor to have to wait a considerable length of time outside their tutor's office, even those students who make arrangements in advance. In this case, the trajectory of the students' day is dominated by the key figure of their tutor whose own daily trajectory exerts power over theirs.

The consequence of this power-geometry, in causing students to have to wait, serves to restrict the range of potential campus practices available to them, and that are doable within the context of waiting. There are clear spatial and temporal aspects to this: students' potential practice is spatially restricted to the area around their tutor's office, and in temporal terms, students are prevented from fulfilling other appointments, arrangements with friends, or plans to catch a particular train or bus. The connection between power-geometry and spatiality/temporality can be developed further. A student may be waiting because others (including administrative staff and colleagues as well as other students) are taking up the time and attention of the tutor. While the tutor works within the familiar confines of her office, the student waits outside. Here we can see how spatial structures reinforce the processes that power-geometry

produces. Similarly, students who are waiting may feel that they are merely killing time, existing in a temporal vacuum, while the tutor, dealing with problems and facilitating their advisees' academic progress, may feel, at least, that their time is being taken up in an acceptable and legitimate fashion. Of course, tutors themselves may be affected or dominated by other power-geometries, as when the requirement to attend a departmental meeting that runs over time causes the modification or postponement of other practices.

From the understandings of each group (as described above) narratives form and intersect in ways that lead to changes in the make-up of elements of practices and consequently, in how they are conducted. The relationship between the elements that make up particular practices can change, within one practice. The narratives that are created by different groups produce modifications to practices and their elements. To illustrate, a material element that makes up the narrative of body comfort in the summer heat and humidity of Japan – the air conditioner – occupies different roles according to particular groups in the university. As stated before, official policy is that air conditioning should be set to a temperature of 28 degrees. However, offices of the administrative staff are held at 24° thus allowing administrative activities to be conducted from a position of greater comfort than would be possible under the supposed requirements. Staff can perform their various tasks more easily, thus increasing the likelihood of not only maintaining general standards of collective competency despite the summer conditions, but of developing the narrative that summer weather patterns are not a serious challenge to efficiency and comfort.

In contrast, classrooms, and the offices of most academic staff except department heads, have air conditioning locked at the official level that makes no allowance for variation in conditions. Therefore, for many teachers and students, the practices of attending lectures, teaching, etc., during the summer months, are conducted against the background of regular discomfort, especially in classrooms that have older, less efficient systems, seat large numbers of



students, receive large amounts of direct sunlight, or contain many electrical devices (such as language laboratories). Campus users who experience these conditions must inevitably experience a change in their abilities to perform their daily practices, and a narrative that supports the view that campus life in summer is debilitating. If we perceive 'communication' to include the ability of administrative staff and department heads to push their claims for why they merit being an exception to the rule, it can be seen that a group with "power over communication entrenches the spatial imprisonment of other groups" (Massey 2005: 26). By intersecting in both hierarchical and non-hierarchical ways, geometric (narrative) lines interrupt, re-direct and disrupt the trajectories of different groups, and thus affect the performance of practices within the dynamic relationships that are created amongst the three elements.

Power-geometry also results in differential flows of knowledge (from trivial information known to many: "Where do I catch the bus for Yokohama?" to the valuable advice known to a few: "How do I pass the re-sit exam?"). The specific nature of the university is "constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (Massey 1991: 28). Power-geometry allows a wider interpretation of daily practices by incorporating ideas of control and restriction. Students who eat lunch in a dining hall have their practice of eating controlled by various temporal and spatial restrictions. Academic and administrative staff has fewer restrictions, for while they can also use dining halls, in contrast to the students they can also use the cooler, more comfortable faculty dining room. This control exercises power over the choice of what they wish to eat, the time they have to consume it, where to sit, what activities they are able to do while eating (checking a presentation for the next class may not leave enough time to mail a friend asking her to save a seat in the classroom), and so on. Power-geometry may also impinge on student identity, and how spaces are contested on campus (see Hopkins 2011). The above examples illustrate the degree of inclusion/exclusion that is inherent in the campus space, and students (indeed all groups) experience campus spaces

differently, often accentuated in the simulated educational atmosphere.

In the second concept of Massey's I have deployed, namely 'the chance of space' (2005: 111-117), I argued that this brought a greater *spatial* contingency to the contingency that is already a feature of the dynamics of practices. While the conjunction of elements remains the central pillar in the explanation of practices presented by the 3E Model, the spatial arrangements within which practices are realised play a significant part in opening up, or even re-imagining the nature and form of practices, sometimes beyond what the elements would suggest as defining particular practices. For example, in a student computer room, it is possible, using the 3E Model, to identify not only most (maybe even all) of the elements necessary to conduct the practice of preparing a presentation, but also the potential dynamics that combine elements in unique ways to produce performances; from the basic material elements (computers, printers, electricity), competencies (of student and technicians) and meanings, as well as how particular dynamic relationships may result in a 'standard' performance (student prints out presentation notes, then leaves) to a 'non-standard' performance (computer malfunctions, technician prints student's notes on office computer). What the chance of space adds to an understanding of campus practices is in how space adds a new level of unpredictability and spontaneity.

In 'the chance of space', space and place are the locus for the bringing together of diverse practices in random, unpredictable ways, in what Massey calls a 'multiplicity of trajectories' (*ibid*: 111). In defining the term 'narrative', Massey includes social customs and scientific methods, as well as individual life stories. These narratives belong to both practices and practitioners and follow 'trajectories' that suggest spatial and temporal dimensions, together with the implication that consequences will result from the intersection of these trajectories. In the process of intersecting in 'the chance of space', practices may be impeded, obstructed, nullified, diverted or enhanced, all within the locations in

which “the chance of space” may function. On campus, where the dedicated purpose of a piece of infrastructure and the routines that surround it are strong (for example, a meeting room), the more it supports the practices (or what Shove *et al.* 2012 call ‘careers’) that dominate, and, in so doing, reduce ‘the chance of space’. Practices that are subordinate may be suppressed or marginalised. Conversely, in dedicated spaces/places where the purposes and routines are weaker or more widely diffused (for example, a student hall), then the more potential there is for ‘the chance of space’. From this we can conclude that infrastructures are not homogenous in their effects on the performance of practices, and that specific spatial and temporal elements exist that are more likely to encourage the disruptive potential of ‘the chance of space’.

Massey argues that within ‘the chance of space’ exists a ‘mutuality of chance and necessity... there is chaos *and* order here” (2005: 116/117). The element of necessity encompasses the purpose of a practice, while the element of chance emphasises the always-present unpredictability that may arise during the performance of a practice. ‘The chance of space’ opens up the greater potential of practice. To return to the student in the computer room who is preparing a presentation: ‘the chance of space’ encompasses events such as while working she receives a text on her phone telling her that her next class is cancelled, then a friend she hasn’t seen for a while enters the room, and while they catch up, she remembers a rice ball in her bag, which they then share together.

We can make a further conclusion about the role of temporality regarding campus practices. It was observed that as ‘the chance of space’ was a contingent part of spatiality, so is ‘the chance of *time*’ a contingent component of temporality. In other words, despite the inflexibility of the university day (marked by the ringing of chimes) there exists ‘surprise’ in which performances of practices will often vary.

I went to Professor Omote’s office last week. I wanted to ask about

my presentation. Well, I got there, and a few seconds later, Riri [the leader of the speaker's seminar group the year before who had since graduated] came there! I couldn't believe. I hadn't seen since last year. She thought to meet Professor Omote also because it was lunchtime but instead we went off (laughs) Misa, 4<sup>th</sup> year

The comment shows how the university temporal routine produced a moment of surprise and a rearrangement of practices.

These two connected concepts show us that student campus users are both affected by, and utilise power geometries and the chance of space, which goes some way to explain the propensity for randomness to which campus practices are open. We can conjecture that with students, power-geometry exercises considerable control over their routines and daily life, and therefore there is a tendency for students to take advantage of the random happenings and opportunities when presented to them through the 'chance of space'.

#### ***9.4 Geographies of campus architecture and practices***

How are the dynamics between materials, competences and meanings affected by and manifested in the campus infrastructure and architecture? The fact that perimeter fences abut onto roads illustrates how the campus designers were forced to consider the limiting aspects of space and the constraints with which the finite space presented them. This situation has become increasingly apparent, as expansion of the university following the opening of new departments has resulted in buildings being located much closer together, but how has this impacted upon the campus users and how might it affect practices? Rather prosaically, the construction of a new building for the nursing faculty at JIU led to the reduction of on-campus car-parking space with the consequence that both students and non-students were required to park at a separate site off

campus. Geographies of architecture can inform the social aspect of the university's development (see Jacobs 2006), in the way the overall design of the campus architecture invests purpose and intent to the university. In its promotion and advertising, the institution makes much of the fact that it is an *international* university (so categorised because all students, regardless of faculty, are required to take a year of English classes) and its architectural premise is reflected in the university's intention to provide a bridge between Japanese and other cultures.

It is manifested particularly in the frequent use of connecting walkways between buildings and the sense that all areas of campus are linked (See campus map in Chapter 4). These elements of architectural design are significant in both the mechanics of conducting practices, that is, in the physical relationships that can make action practicable or not, and in the social understandings that underpin the practices that students consider possible and appropriate. Meanings are additionally added by restrictions placed on areas where students cannot go that include administrative offices and some lecture theatres or gymnasias that are locked when not in use. The architecture of JIU is also intended to reflect and celebrate the specific history of JIU and the family responsible for founding the university. There are buildings that celebrate the family of the university's founders, for example the Mizuta Memorial Hall in which special ceremonies and university-wide meetings are held, and the Mizuta Museum of *Ukiyoe* that showcases the large collection of woodblock prints collected by the family.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways that young people identify as university students. The spatiality of the university campus also contributes to the continuing formation of identity, building on the students' relationship with high school architecture, which is remarkably uniform in Japan. While the spaces they inhabit as university students bear similarities to those of their secondary school days, the non-mandatory nature of university allows for a subtle, but nonetheless significant, change in the relationship towards the

campus spaces that they use daily, especially in the meanings that attach. As a student compelled to attend school up to the age of sixteen years, the buildings that comprised school were associated with their mandatory presence that dictated the way students engaged with school spaces. Though there was resistance, students were largely passive resisters. At JIU, although many buildings have the same purpose, they lack the institutional power inherent in spaces of secondary education. As a result, the university has to project legitimacy through other means. The buildings at JIU attempt this through a spacious, highly modern style that nevertheless incorporates older, traditional references.

The campus is so wide [big]. My impression is good because there are a lot of trees, and in April there is cherry blossom (Yudai, 2<sup>nd</sup> year).

This comment illustrates how the institution, having no mandatory power to hold students seeks instead to impress through large-scale campuses, tradition (in the planting of cherry trees whose blossoms in April are a well-known symbol representing the challenge of a new academic year), and ceremony. The identity that this specific form of spatiality constructs affects practices in a number of ways. For example, clubrooms are often places where students gather in a proprietorial manner in which they enjoy a sense of ownership. Similarly, places like gymnasiums cover a variety of spatial perceptions as they provide meaning both to the practice of basketball, for example, while also providing a sense of identity that students feel in belonging to a basketball club.

However, Lees (2001) illustrated that a much more dynamic relationship between architecture and the people who use it operates in spaces like university campuses. Students entering JIU may gain a sense of the symbolism behind the campus buildings, but they will also gain a sense of how they will perform their daily practices based on their perception of what being a student

means. Using the concept of spatiality allows us to witness how specific places can undergo a continuing process of re-defining, as meanings that attach to them, and the meanings of the practices that occur within them, exert more and less powerful, even if irregular, influence upon each other (Lees 2001). The architecture at JIU is meant to socialise but also intimidate. Its use of English signs is intended to impress and point to a globalised future in which students can only be a part if they conform.

To illustrate this, it was, at one time, common for students to use the student hall as a place to consume various kinds of instant foods, some of which required hot water, and which could be purchased from the shop inside the hall. To enable this, several hot water dispensers were placed on a table outside the shop for students to help themselves. However, following an incident in which a student was scolded by hot water, the university administration decided that this service, which had been provided for over 10 years, should be discontinued, and the hot water dispensers were taken away. Subsequently, the shop removed all products that required hot water in order to be consumed. The consequence is that students, not surprisingly, no longer eat hot noodles in the student hall, although it is not forbidden to do so. One student commented,

It is really inconvenient now we can't eat hot food here anymore. It was good for me some days when I had a class near here [before lunch]. I could enjoy. Now I don't come anymore. (Yukiko 2<sup>nd</sup> year)

Another commented,

I didn't used to come here because the smell of food was too bad, but now I don't mind it [coming to the hall]. (Yuka, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year)

These comments reveal several things about the change in use of the student hall. In the first comment, we can see how, before the removal of the water

dispensers and the ending of sales of instant hot food, the student related to the architecture of the hall mainly for its convenience, in terms of campus geography and temporality. The re-imagined role of the shop, no longer supplying what was perceived by some as a convenient service, led to the abandoning of a practice by one student, but, with the ending of unpleasant, lingering food odours in the hall, saw the taking up of a practice by another. The change in the use of the student hall indicates that campus architecture is always in a state of continual renegotiation over its daily use, and thus mirrors the dynamic state of campus practices.

## 9.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I have shown how more radicalised/expansive notions of spatiality and temporality can be used to develop the 3E Model in new directions. Whilst issues of space and time are considered in Shove *et al.* (2012), I have argued that the model could integrate these geographical concepts more fully, and that this could be done through notions of spatiality and temporality. In acknowledging that spatiality and temporality include “aspects of the social,” the social and cultural aspects of Japanese tertiary education became an area in which the 3E Model can engage. The authors of the 3E Model already allow for some consideration of this in their discussion of “communities and social networks” (*ibid*: 66), and the work of Lefebvre (1991), enables us to add to this, for he shows how the meanings that are part of, for example, the practice of being in lectures, are created not only by the practitioners-of-the-moment, but also by the ‘conceived spaces’ of the university itself. Incorporating these ideas allows for new areas to be explored in the conduct of practices.

In developing the 3E Model, I also utilised the work of Dale Southerton (2006; 2013), arguing for a complementarity between his interpretation of dispositions, and the element of meanings. Through a consideration of dispositions, temporal



aspects (how long, how often, etc.), of the meanings of practices could be investigated. Similarly, Southerton's use of the concept of 'procedures' provides a temporal dimension for the element of competence, while 'sequences' provide a temporal insight into how the use of objects may require particular arrangements in order to enable a practice to be performed. These temporal features serve to add to the texture of how practices come to be conducted.

The importance of power-geometry can be realised by recognising how materiality, competence and meaning of practices can be restricted or re-interpreted as a result of its influence, and the creation of trajectories that impact on the potential for practices, as well as the spatial variables within which these potentials can be realised. In contrast, the 'chance of space' and the chance of time, point to the uncontrollable contingency of practices. These concepts illustrate that while the performance of practices are grounded in the moment of action, the elements that make them often have special spatial and temporal properties.

Finally, I have shown how dynamic perceptions of space and time can be comfortably synthesized into notions of the dynamic relationship of the three elements of the model, with the implication that this connection may be open to further exploration.

Next, I will bring together the analysis of the previous four chapters in the final discussion and conclusions chapter.

## **Chapter 10: Discussion and conclusions; practice theory and sustainability**

This thesis is the result of research conducted on the campus of a Japanese university with cohorts of Japanese students. A primary purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of their daily practices, which in turn might then inform efforts to make campus life more sustainable, given the significant effects that climate change is likely to inflict on the country in the future.

One main contribution of this thesis is that by using a practice theory approach and the application of the 3E Model (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012) a greater understanding has been gained about how Japanese students attending a university in Japan conduct their daily practices. Use of the model revealed that the daily practices on campus are mutually interwoven – that almost all the practices analysed can occur not only at any time during the campus day, but that they are also often interdependent. For example, the practices of socialising/relaxing, eating and studying can all occur naturally while being in a lecture. Practitioners have been shown to move with fluidity between the practices that make up the majority of their daily actions.

A second contribution is the expansion of the model's applicability to include analysis of aspects of the socialisation processes of Japanese university students. Although there is some research on the educational experiences of modern Japanese university students (Aspinal 2015; Kingston 2013; Kotani 2004; Lee-Cunin 2004), this is the first study to apply a practice theory approach in order to focus on the lives of students on campus in a tertiary institution. Application of the model has revealed how experiences and expectations contribute to the “communities and networks” (Shove *et al.* 2012: 66) that operate on campus, but that these networks sometimes create tensions around student identity, as well as influencing the meanings and competences of particular practices. For example, study practices continue to be defined by

societal associations of university as a time of recreation and, for some students, being part of a network in which this meaning dominates the practice of study, results in the undermining of opportunities to develop competence in the practice.

A third contribution made by this thesis is the establishing of a greater role for spatial and temporal dimensions of practices within the 3E Model. By employing more radical notions of space (Massey 2005) and time (Southerton 2013), the study opens up new understandings of the relationship between practices and these important geographical concepts. If practice theory is to further challenge the dominant theories of understanding human activity, and take a more prominent position in finding effective means of achieving sustainability, there needs to be a more central role for these concepts. I have shown in this thesis that radical notions of space and time can be comfortably accommodated within practice theory and the 3E Model in particular.

A final contribution is that the thesis adds to the literature on campus geographies (for example, Hopkins 2011; Andersson *et al.* 2012) through the analysis of how young Japanese relate to their campus through their practices. Building on concepts of simulated education (McVeigh 2002), youth perceptions of university, the financial burdens and Japanese social norms, this thesis shows how practice theory interpretations can lead to new understandings.

The research had four areas of interest expressed through four research questions. First, in making the case that the theoretical cornerstones of practice theory offer greater potential for understanding how people conduct their daily lives than dominant theories (the 'ABC' approach (Shove 2010), for instance), the study was conducted using the 3E Model. Nicolini has argued that the 'practice turn' has been responsible for "altering the perception of what constituted 'central problems in social theory', generating new areas of interest, and legitimizing marginal research interests and communities" (2012: 43). The

research question that framed this background was, “What practices do Japanese students conduct on campus, and why do they conduct them in the way they do?” I have shown that student practices are a complex mix of the dynamics of the three elements in which Japanese cultural and social nuances are integrated along with the spatial and temporal characteristics of the campus.

The second area of interest concerned the context of the study. Clearly, the first research question could not be explored fully without reference to the fact that the practices under observation were those of Japanese university students and that the location for the study was a mid-ranking private university situated north east of Tokyo, Japan. Whilst all cultures are unique, the post-war experiences of Japanese instigated changes of enormous significance throughout society, which continue to have lasting effects. These advances have included political, social and economic changes, but it has been the focus of this thesis to concentrate on education in the tertiary sector, and how universities have situated themselves in Japan’s post-war development. The more modest focus of concern of this research was how a practice theory approach might incorporate the socialising effects of these events in order to gain further insight into the campus practices of Japanese youth, and the research question here sought to investigate how the application of a practice theory approach to a Japanese context could help develop the theory. I conclude that socialising effects are a basic aspect of practices – not a separate element nor an outside factor but rather, when a practice occurs as a result of a unique, contingent and dynamic interactions between materials, competences and meanings, socialising effects serve to colour their conduct, as well as reflect social customs.

The third area of interest was a focus on how the 3E Model might be developed. A university campus was the proximate context of this research and the activities of the students on it were clearly influenced by the spatial configurations of the campus. In *The Dynamics of Social Practices*, Shove *et al.* (2012) discuss the relationship between space/time, and practices acknowledging that, while not

elements, these concepts were important in the conduct of practices. I argued that the integrity of the 3E Model, including the clarification and simplification of concepts that facilitate and encourage empirical research, is not undermined by a closer integration of spatiality and temporality, several important interpretations of which (for example, Massey 2005), are found in human geography. In arguing for the significance of spatiality – the relationship between space and social interaction – the research question sought to investigate how spatiality affected the conduct of practices and the understanding of practice theory. I have shown that spatiality and temporality are inherent to practices.

The final area of interest arose from the question of how the results of this research could be applied. It could be argued that, to paraphrase Karl Marx's famous aphorism, this research has sought to understand practices but the point however is to change them. Has a practice theory approach opened up possibilities for instituting sustainable changes in the practices of students as they go about their daily lives on campus? Therefore, the research question that directed this area of interest was, "What are the implications for sustainability in the particular context of Japanese universities?" I conclude that while practice theory enables, in this case, a deeper understanding of how students conduct their daily lives on campus, a practice theory approach does not make instituting sustainable change any less complex. Practice theory may indicate where meaningful efforts at change could take place, but not always how to do this.

## **10.1 Summary of findings**

In this thesis I have shown how the 3E Model of Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) can be applied to a university campus in Japan, illustrating that the empirical emphasis of the model is transferable across cultures and contexts. This study is the first to employ a practice theory approach to a Japanese university campus and it illustrates how the practices that students conduct are

often contingent upon a host of factors including how specific locations are perceived, the origins of a practice, and the temporal influences and demands of the campus day.

I divide this section into five parts. First, I discuss in detail the instrument employed in conducting this research, namely the 3E Model, and how it was utilised and expanded. I then consider the findings starting with the diversity of practices that the research revealed (10.1.2), aspects of socialisation and their influence on practices (10.1.3), the influence of spatiality and temporality on practices (10.1.4), and finally the implications for sustainability on Japanese campuses (10.1.5). Following this, I move to a discussion of the implications for sustainability in a wider sense (10.2) and look at some political implications (10.3). Section 10.4 identifies some limitations of the study and areas for future research before some final conclusions (10.5) close the chapter.

#### ***10.1.1 Application and development of the 3E Model***

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there is now a large body of literature employing models grounded in practice theory although it is comparatively sparse in contexts outside western countries. This research sought to address this deficit. The model was chosen on account of its empirical simplicity and conciseness, in contrast to the mostly abstract discussions of the theory and its characteristics prior to the appearance of the model. The work of Shove, Pantzar and Watson has been important in highlighting the possibilities of practice theory as a theory appropriate for our times, that is, the characteristics that distinguish the theory from other social theories are those that are of most salience in the world of today (Nicolini 2012). Even more fundamentally, practice theory represents a (re)turn to a focus on the (social) activities of ordinary people in order to understand why people do what they do, a move stimulated by the growing concern about anthropogenic influence on the world's climate. In this sense, the model is effective. Through its three elements it facilitates a close examination of the activities of campus users and allows conjecture on the strength of the links

that form them. As Hargreaves (2011) observed, sustainability can be advanced through identifying the links that cause unsustainable behaviour and severing them, therefore a closer understanding of these links is a crucial first step. However, it is not only about the breaking of links. If we are to achieve a greater level of sustainability, it will be necessary to look at the much more complex relationships that not only produce practices, but that also impact upon the spaces in which they occur and the social norms that they reflect. This thesis has attempted to reveal some of this complexity.

Building upon the three elements, this research also sought to develop the model by linking it more closely with concepts of space and time. While Shove *et al.* (2012) examine the role of these concepts I have shown that there is flexibility within the model to provide a greater consideration to the forces of space and time. I have done this by incorporating expansive variations of these concepts from Massey (2005) and Southerton (2013). I have attached temporal dimensions to the three elements in order to enable interpretations of how elements work separately as well as dynamically to help understand campus practices. I argue that understanding practices can be deepened through the deployment of constituents of space and time and thus add an extra dimension to the power of the 3E Model.

Finally, I also demonstrated how socialisation processes, not explicitly a feature of the model, can nevertheless be incorporated not only into the dynamics of practices as explicated by the model, but which also can be found within the separate elements of the model. The element of meaning can be seen to contain aspects of socialisation, however, aspects can also be observed in the elements of materiality and competence of practices as well. In this case, the simplicity of the model is one of its strengths. It allows specific aspects of context (i.e. the effects of the socialisation of Japanese youth) to be engaged without undermining it.

### **10.1.2 The diversity of practices**

The contribution of this thesis to the understanding of practices of Japanese students on campus (and to the literature on student geographies) reveals them to be highly diverse and intertwined. In many practices contingency works from moment to moment underlining the diversity that takes place both within, as well as between, practices. The extent of the practices is not inhibited by the instrumental nature of their surroundings nor the tasks that they conduct. The research analysed four primary bundles of practice that take place on the campus. Although these were not exhaustive, it provided a useful framework in which to analyse the complexities that were present. Taking a practice theory approach, the characteristics of these four categories were identified, analysed, then re-combined to help reveal how practices are produced.

One of the most significant findings was that there was invariably a practice that could be called the 'primary' practice. By this I refer to the practice that took the predominant attention of the practitioners. It was the practice that a practitioner would be most likely to identify as conducting should they be asked. It was also the practice that socialising factors relevant to the university environment (and to a lesser extent, the wider milieu of tertiary education) would lead practitioners to name. A primary practice was most often a bundle of practices in which, under normal circumstances, several aspects would be present and, in this sense, builds on Warde's (2013) concept of *compound* practices. However, while a particular practice was the primary practice at one particular time, other 'subordinate' practices were, in many cases, being conducted in the 'pauses' between performances of the 'primary' practice. It was found that, for most of the daily campus practices that were observed, practitioners were continually carrying out subordinate practices within a primary practice. It shows how practices are extremely flexible, adaptive and enduring.

A further point about primary practices is that their position as such was often determined by spatial and temporal factors. They become primary practices on



account of the location or the time at which they are conducted. For example, students congregating in an open area on one of the floors of academic staff offices would have on the tables both study materials and food items. Outside the time designated for lunch, the primary practice would be study, but within the lunchtime period, it would be eating, even though there was no difference between the activities that were taking place.

The importance of this finding is that, while it has not been disputed by practice theorists that practices are often complex combinations of many significant and minor actions they are, in the context of Japanese university students, more deeply embedded in spatial, temporal and socialising factors than has been appreciated. I cover in more detail the influence of socialisation in the next section.

### **10.1.3 Socialisation and practices**

The key finding here is that, although socialisation processes are relevant to how practices are conducted, it was only as a result of the research that the extent of these socialising influences became clear. The fundamental social elements of Japanese society, particularly those connected with educational experiences, were shown to have significant influence on practices. It has been argued that contemporary Japanese youth are less affected by traditional social values (Hendry 2014) but they still nevertheless exercise considerable influence. First, the most significant feature of socialisation is that which surrounds the simulated educational environment of Japanese tertiary institutions. Its hegemonic nature means that it is generally un-noticed by the majority of campus users, but its influence is ubiquitous. It was found that aspects of socialisation, especially fundamental social norms such as respect for elders, dependence upon others, and self-restraint/determination (the '*senpai-kohai*' relationship, '*amae*' and '*gaman*' – Chapter 3) played an important role in the performance of practices. This was illustrated in the example of the student who preferred to feel uncomfortably cold in the classroom rather than ask the teacher

to turn on the heating. Self-restraint, as a passive non-action suggests that practices may often continue to be stable as a result of not being challenged, or re-envisioned which would allow the possibility of new relationships between elements. A finding is that aspects of socialisation play a more central part in the performance of practices than was at first perceived.

A further finding that came from the emergence of socialising aspects was the perceptions that students had of their university and the campus. Some of these originated in factors beyond the campus itself, in, for example, the engagement of business and government with tertiary education, and the social pressures on young people to commit to four years at university despite the enormous expense. Other factors, within campus, however were also significant. While this study did not make comparative analyses with the significant numbers of students from overseas whom JIU hosts, it was clear that Japanese students have a complex, often contradictory relationship with their campus.

#### ***10.1.4 Spatiality and temporality***

The key finding here is that practices not only have deeply embedded spatial and temporal dimensions, which was demonstrated through the connection of Southerton's (2013) 'temporality of practices' – dispositions, procedures and sequences – and the three elements of the 3E Model, but that spatiality operating through 'the chance of space' (Massey 2005: 111) engages with the conduct of practices at a deeper level. We can make two suppositions from this. First, the routine around which the campus day and its practices revolve is a more and less loose framework within which surprise can lurk. Within this idea we can argue that practices have a greater degree of contingency, even in 'instrumental' locations like that of a university where the core activity is the pursuit of a degree. Second, we can conclude that surprise is a greater/lesser characteristic of particular places. Areas that witness regular through-movement or congregations of people during significant times (for example, the student hall) will contain more 'surprise' than other places. This dynamic perception of

space can have substantial influence on practices.

We can make a further conclusion about the role of temporality regarding campus practices. Expanding upon Massey's 'chance of space', we can also identify 'the chance of time' that emanates from the contingency of temporality. While the temporality of the campus day would appear to be restrictive, there exist moments when practices can be unexpected, and practices that would normally be followed within particular temporal markers are subverted, as when students decide to sit and eat under the cherry blossom trees near the Piano Pond instead of sitting in a classroom. The chance of time may provoke a rearrangement of practices arising from the contingency of circumstance.

#### ***10.1.5 Actions for sustainability***

In this study I have discussed issues relating to sustainability in as concrete terms as possible in order to establish links with the common campus practices the analysis sought to understand more fully. As a result, a narrow, context-related and practical measure of sustainability encompassed in the question, "Are there sustainable implications arising from what the 3E Model reveals about practices?" was seen as suitable for the task. While some of the wider implications of this question are drawn out in the next section, this part confines analysis to the direct findings of the study. To reiterate, future possible sustainable actions were identified from analysis of the three central concerns of the study namely, the elements and dynamics of campus practices, their spatial and temporal aspects, and the social environment in which the campus users are located. The consequence of this is that, although students would give comments and opinions about paper waste, air conditioner use, etc., during interviews and 'go-alongs', I did not pursue the attitudes that underpinned those comments. Further, the precise measurements of energy consumed by specific practices could have been an area to explore however I argue that this would have deflected from the main scope of the study. In other words, the theoretical and empirical foundations that form the parameters of the study have served as

the primary source for identifying potential areas where sustainable action might bear fruit. I make three observations on this.

First, actions for sustainability might potentially be grounded in the finding that students in their first two years are motivated by practices that originate from strong, collective forces – a result of the nature of campus life for students in their ‘freshman’ and sophomore years. The collective nature of many activities engenders a strong sense of shared purpose and identity, (a residual feature of high school tradition), and allows for the possibility of identifying moments in which sustainable features of a practice could be embedded within the university campus routine, for example, in actions related to practices of study and dining hall eating. Exploiting this collective force could be an effective route to developing sustainable campus practices.

Second, following the trend of combining practices observed on this university campus, the greater utilisation of spaces could become more sustainable through encouraging places to be sites of multiple practices. Data showed how students use spaces in large numbers of different ways, thus actions to encourage such a move would utilise this convention. Recruitment could be facilitated by the widened usage that a dining hall may acceptably be put to, for example, as a place to socialise with friends, or as a place that is comfortable for studying, particularly outside mealtimes. If sustainable directions for campus practices can be identified, the direction that students follow in pursuing their ‘dominant project’ suggests that a greater chance of change may come, as indicated above, from attention focused on students in their early university years rather than later.

A third implication for sustainability is the potential for combining modern and traditional aspects of Japan in a sustainable co-existence. In Chapter 6, I discussed the example of the student who wrapped her lunch in a traditional *furoshiki* cloth. While she felt that this was a convenient way of carrying her

lunch, it was also sustainable in that the plastic containers for her food items were re-usable together with the *furoshiki* that was employed as both a napkin for her lap and a way of carrying her lunch containers. Also, it is common in Japan for business people to carry collapsible fans during hot weather, although this is not so common with young people. Instituting such practices on university campus might require student support to stimulate it, but, in considering the effects of spatial and temporal factors on practices, opportunities for this might be effective for initiating changes to practices at certain times and locations. These ideas could build upon Asian understandings of the human-environmental relationship where links with nature connect with traditional Buddhist views (Aoyagi-Usui *et al.* 2003).

It is important to recognise why some practices will be harder to affect than others. Reasons for this may stem from entrenched meanings, but may also be the result of endemic materiality or competence, or as a result of complex interconnections with infrastructure. It has been shown how technological transitions (Geels 2005a) and transition pathways (Geels and Schot 2007) impact upon the ease/difficulty that transitions can take. Similarly, some practices restricted to a specific location in a specific context (say the library at JIU) may correspond to a 'niche' and therefore more amenable to change, while other campus practices that include society-wide influences from many quarters may resemble 'landscapes' or 'regimes' and therefore resistant to change. For practices, meanings associated with individual institutions have closer associations and possess greater possibilities of change through the activities of the campus users. The fundamental tension that students feel about the nature of the simulated education that they are receiving makes them less likely to have empathy with objectives the university supports for reducing energy waste. Students feel that instead, university authorities consider their needs less important than the future of the institution.

## 10.2 Implications for wider issues of sustainability

The wider implications for sustainability suggested by this thesis can be drawn out through a consideration of two approaches within practice theory of how societies might advance toward a sustainable transition. First, I consider the arguments of Shove *et al.* (2012), who state that practice theory analyses require tailored practice theory strategies if they are to be meaningfully and sustainably realised. Second, in reference to the work of Spaargaren (2003, 2011) and others who argue that there is room for a greater foregrounding of the effects of human agency on practices, I support the argument that in societies like Japan, located outside the countries of the global north, the significant social presence of collective practices and those who conduct them offer potentially unique opportunities to achieve sustainable progress.

In their chapter on how an approach based on practice theory might respond to the challenge of promoting sustainable behaviour, Shove *et al.* (2012: 143) focus on several aspects that can be divided into two key parts. The first part of their basis for action concerns how movement toward change needs to be both emergent and embedded. Rather than attention focusing predominantly on causal effects, action should be pursued from an analysis of the processes of practices. In the course of daily life, actions to promote change need to emerge as a consequence of the evolution of particular practices in their course of recursively re-producing themselves as continual functions of every day activity. An emergent action aimed at change needs to be “embedded in the systems of practice it seeks to influence” (*ibid*). This thesis has described the experiences of Japanese university students over a period of years and revealed the processes of practices they encounter as they progress through a tertiary education programme. An analysis of these processes may offer potential actions in the pursuit of wider sustainability within Japanese society.

Second, action based on a practice theory method would need to focus on

“shared social convention” (*ibid*). In the literature review I discussed the arguments of Clammer (1997) who noted how, in the Japanese context, social conventions impact significantly upon consumption. The thesis has shown how some of the cultural norms of Japanese also help to frame the practices that occur on campus and reinforces the importance of focusing attention upon such conventions. Therefore, more attention could be usefully directed toward the sustainability implications of action on Japanese national and cultural characteristics specifically, and in relation to this thesis, the educational experience of youth and their identification with the category of university student.

The particular forms of social conventions that pertain to Japan clearly imply the need for targeted specific responses, and, employing an approach that fits within specific “clusters or sets of consumption practices... situated within a limited number of domains [of] everyday life” (Spaargaren 2011: 815) might be promising. The action that constituted Cool Biz was based on the scrutiny of shared social convention of formal business wear, and this focus could be employed in other areas where social conventions have clear sustainable consequences, for example, in the common practice of buying large numbers of elaborately packaged souvenirs for family, business associates, friends and neighbours.

This thesis has also illustrated the complexity of student/youth identity not least in the way potential sustainable directions may be gleaned from an understanding of how aspects of identity can carry sustainable potential as practices and contexts evolve. This has been illustrated in the discussion of Evans *et al.* (2017) in which the concept of ‘citizen-consumers’ reflects a more subtle understanding of how continually evolving group roles and responsibilities may have unforeseen consequences for sustainability. Similarly, to conceptualise the group at the centre of this study in terms of ‘student-consumers’ may open up new sustainable directions and practice

theory applications. This leads to the second approach in which we can consider the sustainable implications of this thesis.

The approach of Spaargaren posits that while the consideration of practice remains central to analysis, greater agency can be perceived in the way practitioners insightfully manipulate their knowledge of the “virtual rules and resources” of practices (2011: 815). The implication contained within this is that greater sustainability can be achieved not only through changing practice elements but also by focusing on the relationships between practitioners and the practices with which they skillfully engage. Research conducted on sustainable consumption in China by Liu *et al.* (2015) found that making objectives “recognizable and perceptible” (14) is crucial for engaging people in sustainable practice. Likewise, a study conducted in Vietnam highlights how relationships of trust help maintain traditional market shopping practices in the context of food safety (Wertheim-Heck *et al.* 2014). Given the shared commonality of Asian culture that the studies quoted above share with this thesis, wider implications for sustainability may be drawn out through a further look at the Japanese culture of dependency (*amae*) and senior/junior (*senpai-kohai*) relations that have been explored in this research.

As argued by Spaargaren, moving towards enhanced sustainability is “about attempts to change the reproduction of practices, systems and networks” (2011: 815). Some of the conclusions reached in this thesis may help to move Japan in a more sustainable direction.

### **10.3 Political implications of changing campus practices**

In Chapter 9, I explored a central argument of Massey’s that referenced the political nature of space:



[I]magining space as always in process, as never a closed system, resonates with an increasingly vocal insistence within political discourses on the genuine openness of the future... to escape the inexorability which so frequently characterises the grand narratives related by modernity” (2005: 11).

Implied within this description is the dominance of neoliberal capitalism and the theories of constant economic growth that continue to drive the political discourse of modern societies following the end of the Cold War. Japan mirrors many other countries in this respect, and I have explored some of these issues through the literature of student geographies (for example Chow and Healey (2008); Read *et al.* (2003); Olssen and Peters (2005)). Massey argues that alternative narratives and trajectories (and, I argue, practices as well) are unable to gain purchase as a result of the hegemonic power that resides in current political systems. The poor state of Japanese tertiary education is a testimony to this. The call by Elizabeth Shove (2010), Gordon Walker (2015) and others is a challenge to the hegemony that “positions governments and other institutions as enablers” that control the conversation on action against climate change, and which not only “places responsibility squarely on the individual CO<sub>2</sub> addict,” but “deflects attention away” from the many organisations that could be part of instituting change to sustainable practices, as well as from those that are culpable for climate change (Shove 2010: 1280). This thesis is an effort to provide an alternative understanding to the dominant “grand narratives”.

#### **10.4 Limitations and areas for future research**

Although this research has been conducted over several years there are a number of limitations and areas where future research might be valuable. First, it is clear that a greater sample of students across several departments at the university would produce stronger conclusions. Although I argue that data

collected predominantly in English presented no barrier to communication, it could be argued that interviewing students from the university's most internationally-minded faculty might have produced some skewing of results, and that therefore, interviewing students who would be more comfortable speaking in Japanese would have achieved a more appropriate balance. In addition, the involvement of other universities in Japan would have added an extra area of comparative data analysis with possibly different outcomes. Further, in choosing to use the concepts of 'power geometries' and 'the chance of space' as a theoretical extension of the 3E Model, I bypassed the possible contributions of other theorists in this area, for example Nigel Thrift whose work in non-representational theory could have contributed to unraveling more about the complexities of daily campus life. Finally, links to the work of Bruno Latour and actor-network theory may have provided a complement to some of the practice theory analysis (Laurier 2011).

A possible future area of research could include the contingent of foreign students at Japanese universities. Whilst the numbers and proportion of foreign students to Japanese compared to universities in the UK and elsewhere is low – only 230,000 in 2016 (JASSO 2017) – how these students relate to the campus environment and the simulated nature of Japanese education would be a further contribution to student and campus geographies. This thesis has sought to raise the profile of spatiality within practices and from this positioning a further possible area of research may be directed to a closer examination of infrastructure and spatiality. Whilst some research has been conducted (see Shove, Watson and Spurling 2015), connections between growing understandings of space and time and the infrastructures that provide the arena for practices would add significantly to the literature.

## 10.5 Final conclusions

The findings of this thesis reached through the application of a model grounded in practice theory offer at least two ways in which researchers might proceed to develop practice theory further. This thesis has shown that the integrity of the 3E Model's central characteristics – simplicity and empirical elegance – can be maintained even with the addition of new features. I have demonstrated that widening the model's scope has not undermined its theoretical and empirical clarity. Second, as practice theory is increasingly being used in differing contexts throughout the world, it is perhaps an opportune time to investigate how the (local) socialisation processes and experiences of groups of practitioners may add to the understanding of practices. I do not advocate that such processes should detract from the focus on practices, or provide the main impetus for understanding practices – to do so would be to put the cart before the horse – but prudent consideration of these important aspects of practices could provide further advances in understanding human activities.

Practice theory has for some time now been providing new ways in which we understand the social world. If we are to achieve the sustainable changes in society that evidence now overwhelmingly suggests are necessary, it is vital that we open up new avenues for the understanding of our daily, prosaic activities. It is hoped that, even in some small way, the conclusions of this thesis will assist in pushing modern society toward greater sustainability.

## **APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **A: DAILY ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS**

1. What are the places on campus that you spend most time in? Why?
2. What is the most important daily thing you do at university?
3. What do you usually do when you arrive on campus? Why?
- 3a. Does this vary? (for example, if it is raining). How soon before your class (or meeting/ club activity) do you arrive on campus? Why?
4. What do you do before you go to your classroom? Do you ever go to class early? Why?
- 4a. If class finishes early, or is cancelled, what do you do?)
5. What is the purpose of taking classes, do you think?
6. What are the good things / bad things about taking classes?
7. How do you feel about the atmosphere in your classes?
- 7a. When you are in class, what things do you do? How do you take notes? Do you use any equipment? Electronic devices? Do you do other things in class?
- 7b. Do students do any unusual things during class?
8. What do you usually do at lunchtime? Where do you go?
9. Do you eat with someone, or do you eat alone? Does this vary? Why? What do you do while eating lunch (when alone or when with friends)?
10. How long do you take? Does the time you take for lunch vary? Do you eat in

different places? Why?

11. What do you usually do after your last class of the day has finished?

12. Do you study on campus? Where do you study? What do you do in the library? Do you study alone?

13. What do you think about the atmosphere in the library?

14. What are the good things / bad things about the library?

15. How convenient is campus for meeting friends? Do you socialise on campus?

11. What things do you usually do by yourself? What things do you usually do with other students/friends?

16. Does your routine vary according to the weather or the season?

17. Have you changed in the places where you go since your 1<sup>st</sup> year?

18. Have you changed in the things that you do on campus / in library/ student hall/ classrooms since your 1<sup>st</sup> year? How?

## **B. PLACES ON CAMPUS**

1. What are your general impressions or feelings about the campus?

2. Is the campus here easy, or difficult, to use? In what way?

3. Is there anything inconvenient about the campus? What is it?

4. What places do you use most in university? Why? How often do you use them and what do you do there?

5. How easy is it to move from place to place on campus? How often do you use places that are at the center of campus or at the edges of the campus?
6. Do you do any other activities here not directly related to study, eg club activities? If so, where do you do?
7. Do you do things in some of these places that are unusual, or not what most people may do there? (for example, eat lunch in a classroom because it is convenient for your next class, or sleep in the library because it is quiet)
8. Are there any places on campus that you never use? Why not?
9. Are there any places on campus that you don't like to use? Why not?
10. Is there anything that would be good to change about the campus that is related to your every day life?

### **C: HOW UNIVERSITY IS CONCEIVED BY STUDENTS**

1. What was your primary purpose in coming to university?
2. Why did you come to this particular university?
- 2a. 1<sup>st</sup> years: What was your impression of orientation at the beginning?
3. Is university life different from how you imagined or expected it?
4. Have you changed your view of what it means to be a university student?
5. Do you feel free to develop in your own way at university?
6. Are there any restrictions that affect your university life?

7. How do you think the university (as an institution) sees you?
8. What words would you use to describe the institution 'JIU'?
9. Have you had any experiences that may have changed the way you feel about being a university student, or about being a student at this university?
10. What are your biggest worries related to university life?
11. How would you describe your relationship with (a) other students (b), academic staff, (c) administrative staff?
12. How do you think the academic and administrative staff see you?
13. After you graduate do you think that you are going to be well prepared for the next stage of your life? Why (not)?

#### **D: ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS**

1. Do you think the campus is sustainable (good for environment)?
2. Do you see any waste? In classrooms, dining halls student halls (other places you use a lot)?
3. Are you able to recycle things, eg books, files, photocopies, etc?
4. Do you wish for a more sustainable campus? How?

## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF CONTRIBUTING INTERVIEWEES

All students are members of the International Exchange Studies Department in the Faculty of Humanities, unless otherwise stated. Total number of students: 35.

Page quoted	Name & year at time of comment	Note
146, 227, 228	Tomoko, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	
149	Touichi, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	Male student
150, 154	Ryuji, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	Male student
150, 176	Suguru, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Male student
154, 227	Asuka, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	
162, 175	Kazumi, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	
163	Shiho, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Dept. of International Culture
164, 242	Hana, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	
165	Yo, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	
165	Emiko, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	
167	Honoka, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	
169, 252	Shiho, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	
175, 186, 271	Yukiko, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	
181	Saoko, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	
182, 183, 232, 253	Yuriko, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	
184, 230, 260	Kami, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	
186	Mideki, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Dept. of International Culture
195, 270	Yudai, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	Male student
196, 260	Rie, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	
197, 202	Suguru, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	Male student
199	Rina, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	
200, 244	Takuma, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	Male student
200, 201	Moe, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	
200, 213	Momoko, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	



Page quoted	Name & year at time of comment	Note
201, 214	Hazuki, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	
205	Yudai, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Male student
206, 244	Ruka, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Dept .of International Culture
209, 240, 243, 271	Yuka 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Dept. of International Culture
211	Takashi, 1 <sup>st</sup> year	Male student
212, 267	Misa, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	
215	Yuiko, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	
229, 240, 241	Misaki, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	
234, 258	Mayuri, 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Dept. of Environmental Science
238	Shuko, 4 <sup>th</sup> year	
244	Ryoya, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	

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