Time and the Academy
A Study of Satellite Imagery, Time and Possibility in a Pandemic

Introduction

In *Universities in the Flux of Time: An Exploration of Time and Temporality in University Life*, the authors explore the notion of time in the university. 'Time', they write, 'constitutes a *sine qua non* condition of human beings. We exist in time and organise our existence and activities around time, consciously or subconsciously' (Gibbs et. al 2015, p. 1). Time is also 'intimately implied in the idea of history. Universities have their own time profiles, with their past, their presents and their futures, a time horizon that is always moving.' Time also bears on academic life, research paper deadlines and teaching timetables impose themselves on staff and students. Time also has a subjective character, rooted in felt experiences (2015, p. 2). Time may be felt collectively as one academic institution holds a quite different pace and rhythm from another or individually as students study and balance other life circumstances, pressures and changes.

A research paper itself often unfolds as a complex coordination of timescapes, the subjective timescape of the researcher, the timescapes of interviewees, the institutional time of deadlines, arrangements for term end; the historical time unfolding in the news and the geographic timescapes of where and when a paper is produced. Time is continually searched for, unearthed, lost, undone in blind alleys, pivots, redirections, refinements. Papers often bleed into one another in ideas and form and time gifted, one paper's loss may be another's gain. Subjective experiences of anxiety, pressure, relief, despair are often unwritten ghosts in the final print. The recursive dimension of *re*search further attends to the sense that research time is time revisiting, returning, reevaluating the course of one's study, time like memory in the film Kaili Blues 路边野餐 flows downward and returns to itself in the mountain.

In *Ethnographies of Modern Education: China and Beyond*, the sense of time emerged as an exploration of educational models across time, evolving and transforming at particular historic and geographic junctures. From Emile Durkheim on moral education in 19th Century France to Max Weber on science as a vocation in early 20th Century Germany, John Dewey on pragmatism and education in the United States, Liang Shuming and Tao Xingzhi on rural reconstruction in mid Republican China, the traces of time, historical, geographical, evolutionary and revolutionary were sensed as material, situated and discursive, navigated by thinkers and reformers in times of societal uncertainty and change. The traces of time on the institution were felt in Weston's account of Beijing University and Veysey's on the emergence of diverse institutions on the eastern and western ledges of the United States (Weston 2004; Veysey 1970). Time, in Liang Shuming's account of China in the early Republican era, held a subjective state of unease 'about the brave new world of unlimited technological salvation' and a 'spiritually polluted Western industrial modernity' emblemised in the vast network of foreign concessions and treaty ports along China's eastern coast. The time of 1927 was

conceived later as a moment of revolutionary fervor and ideals converging on China's countryside, of "numbed nerves suddenly becoming aware of the pain", a 'new consciousness […] to the special character of [China's] original social structures and to [China's] inevitable future" (Alitto, 1979, pp 9 - 10 / 194).

In the news today, 23 January 2021, I read a Nature article, 'Why did the world's pandemic warning system fail when COVID hit? Nearly one year ago, the World Health Organization sounded the alarm about the coronavirus, but was ignored' (Maxmen, 2021). Nearly a year ago, many of the interviewees I spoke with were studying at university. As the pandemic progressed and alarm grew in March 2020, borders began closing, rushed plans were made to return home, flights criss-crossed anxieties and unknowns of university closure. The sense, in the spring of 2020, as offers emerged to the Academy in parallel to a growing pandemic emergency outside, was that the program, commencing in September 2020 would run in a partially online form, arrangements would be made, students would return at a point during the fall semester. The pandemic situation in the world for many countries did not improve. Here, the news today 26 January 2021 was marked by figures from the Office for National Statistics of deaths in the UK from coronavirus exceeding 100,000. The next news item spoke of life and time returning to normality by the spring through a mass rollout of vaccinations.

Time and the university illuminates something of the critical juncture of the present. The pandemic has in many ways fundamentally altered the conceptual boundaries of the university. At the beginning of the research project, I wrote down three hypotheses of time and the Academy: H1: During the pandemic, the university and home have interacted in novel ways, creating new experiences of time, space and duration. H2: Time is not universal, but situated and material, where the individual lives, works, studies informs the experience. For one, I thought: did the semester feel shorter for students who have been on campus versus individuals who are studying remotely at home? Have students in winter in the northern hemisphere experienced the temporality of the semester differently to individuals in the southern hemisphere in the summer where days are lighter and longer? H3: Imagining the university in pandemic times, satellite images might form a new method of doing sociology.

This series of hypotheses was formulated alongside a set of questions (see Appendix 1), starting with walk me through your week. I had imagined generating a diagram in the model of Pierre Bourdieu's of all the different timetables and timezones of individuals, tracing a sense of the synchronicity and the subjective clockwork of studying in pandemic times. Following the first two interviews, I evolved the questions to focus on what each individual was doing in the weeks and months prior to the Academy commencing in September 2020. Each individual had a unique story to tell, often of how the rhythms of the pandemic inflected their plans. I also wanted to compare the experience of time during the semester of students at Beida with students studying remotely abroad. To do so, I adjusted the interview question set to focus on the rhythm changes on campus (see Appendix 2). I was sensitive to exploring difference in experiences of the

semester on campus and off campus. Studying or attending lectures in the middle of the night had also generated a bias toward my sense that time had been more of a foe than a friend to students in Europe. I soon developed a more nuanced understanding of the different timezone commitments and how resilience was a unifying theme beyond an oversimplified distinction of time and its experience as a condition of one's nearness, distance to, or falling in, just the right goldilocks time-zone synchronicity with Beijing.

I also came to recognise how the home and university were differentially experienced. For students on campus, feelings of being away from family and friends were arriving at a time of plans made to return home for Spring festival amidst the uncertainty of a re-emergence of case clusters and health monitoring in Beijing. For students, studying at home, the university and home had merged into a close assembly of rhythms throughout the semester yet feelings of drift in time and a desire to reach the campus fluctuated between hope and isolation, new information and the weight of waiting. I was interested in how time is situated and material; the hidden infrastructure of study in walking and spending time outside with friends or family; the diminishment of this infrascape through pandemic measures and regulations; and on campus, how the rhythms of daily life in Beijing and the academic life of the university changed; the balance between physical presence and remote learning; the alteration of lecture times and feelings of time as fast or slow; the hope for students abroad to arrive soon, mirrored by the hopes of students abroad and the reality of time passing, autumn arriving and winter moving through, and in the southern hemisphere, spring turning to summer.

Literature Review

In *China in Transition,* a core course of the fall semester at Yenching Academy of Peking University: time and transition as concepts motivated our weekly discussions. I wrote a final paper in December exploring how *compression* and *percolation* traced an element of the temporality of change in China in the last 30 years.[1] I had initially thought of writing a final paper on the educational component of China's Belt and Road Initiative with a particular focus on educational cooperation between China and Indonesia. In 2016, the Ministry of Education developed the *Education Action Plan for the Belt and Road Initiative*. A recent book - *China and Europe on the New Silk Road: Connecting Universities Across Eurasia* - traces the emergence of China as a global driver of education and the internationalization of Chinese higher education institutions: China, 'for long seen as the "sleeping lion" and a follower in scientific and technological development, and as a generous exporter of high-fee paying international students, has been developing its own higher education and science system at unprecedented scale and speed. China has now the world's largest system of higher education, with over 44 million tertiary education students enrolled. Over 12 million graduated in

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[1] For Zhu, *compression* as a dynamic marks the Chinese development model apart from earlier East Asian models in the 20th Century. 'Development that unfolded over the span of a century and a half in the UK, and fifty years in Japan, has been compressed into even shorter periods in more recent developers. Development has been compressed in the sense that it is accelerated. At the same time in the context of deepening global integration, levels of simultaneity and international interdependency that are quantitatively and qualitatively different from prior models of development have emerged.' Compression, Zhu notes, 'challenges the developmental state, whose efficacy will depend on how well policy makers are able to understand these new conditions, learn, seize opportunities, adapt, and develop innovative solutions in concert with a wide range of actors, domestic and foreign' (Zhu, 2012, p. 62). In contrast to 'compression', the philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers suggests that 'percolation' might be a stronger analogy for historical transition 过 渡: 'like the Amur or the Yukon rivers, history filters, abandons, retains, returns, forgets, lazes around, freezes, or seems to sleep among multiple traceries and suddenly, without our being able to foresee it, brings about a linear flow, a straight line, irresistible, nearly permanent, as if immortal. History flows, but other historical possibilities "dry up", incapable of resisting the grand narrative taking shape, and it is all those absent histories, all the questions that weren't asked or were left unanswered, that delineate the true space of percolation (Stengers, 2010, p. 237).

2017 from 2,631 higher education institutions (UNESCO 2019; MOE China 2019)' (van der Wende et. al 2020, p. 4).[2]

The preface notes how the book, a collection of articles from scholars across the world, was 'facilitated by a series of seminars, in Utrecht (March 2018), Oxford (October 2018), Beijing (April 2019), and Shanghai (October 2019). A final international conference was due in Hanover in May 2020 but was postponed due to the outbreak of the Corona virus' (2020, p. vi). There is not therefore a chapter in the book on the critical juncture of the pandemic and its effects on the internationalization of Chinese higher education institutions. In 2008, Kirby notes, 'no Chinese university ranked above 200th place on Shanghai Jiaotong University's Academic Ranking of World Universities. By 2019, four were in the top 100. In 2017, the Chinese government further launched the Double First Class Universities Program built around a core group of forty two leading Chinese universities' (Kirby 2020, p. 25). Kirby notes, among developments such as the Schwarzman Scholarship and Yenching Academy program, a Tsinghua Southeast Asia Center opened in Indonesia in 2018 and a Latin America Center in Santiago, Chile in 2019. PKU further recently established a business school in Oxford. In the same volume, Welch and Postiglione explore how 'Xiamen University opened a $300 million campus in Malaysia in 2016, home to 4,600 students as of 2019 and with an aim to host 10,000 on its 150-acre campus' (2020, p. 27).

Kirby further notes the emergence of "One Belt, One Road" research centers in New Silk Road countries, funded by China's government and universities, raising the question: 'Is there a "Chinese model" for universities that may be exported along the New Silk Road? Is there such a thing as "a university with Chinese characteristics"?' (2020, p. 30) I was interested initially in how time was a relatively absent sociological concept from the studies. How is time imagined in the Chinese university? Could the unique international coming together of the Academy enable a comparative study of time and the academy across different universities? I was also interested in the Belt and Road as one paradigm of time, constructing a new sensibility to the shape of the future. I had hoped initially I might be able to interview students studying in China from Indonesia to understand how they envision their futures and their pasts, their plans to return or stay in China, the types of programs and fields of study they intended to work or undertake further study within.

In 1927, Tao Xingzhi founded the Xiaozhuang Normal College in Nanjing to train teachers and educators, who were then sent to staff rural schools that Tao was establishing in rural China. Though the school was closed in 1930 by the Nationalist government, it was reopened in 1951, five years after Tao's passing, by one of his students Wang Dazhi and in 2000 was renamed Nanjing Xiaozhuang University. I noticed a strong contingent of Indonesian students and a number of collaborations in programs between Nanjing Xiaozhuang University and Esa-Unggul University of Indonesia in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature

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[2] The project China and Europe on the New Silk Road: Connecting Universities Across Eurasia is further documented at https://www.academicsilkroad.org

College Life Indonesian Students in Nanjing Xiaozhuang University

Brief Introduction of Indonesian student at Nanjing Xiaozhuang University

and a 2+2 Bachelor Computer Science in Informatics Engineering where students would spend the first 2 years at Esa Unggul and the second 2 years at Nanjing Xiaozhuang.[3] I also noted the 'Tao Xingzhi Educational Ideology Research Institute' on the Nanjing campus. On YouTube, a number of videos showed student life for Indonesian students. I wanted to understand how educational globalisation is a lived experience in Southeast Asia and whether Tao Xingzhi's philosophy of rural education as a physical pragmatism adapted from John Dewey of 'knowledge-action' (*zhixing*) was drawn into the lifeworld of students' hopes and aspirations for their home communities or whether this was an unrealistic view, diminishing the universalising impulse of a competitive hyper-global education system where career and financial pressures and intense competition with peers compresses the time of students to a functional stream of degree - job - future above all expansive aspirations of rurality, reform and return.

I was also interested in the role of religion in the experiences of student life and time. I had read how in September 2018, China's State Administration for Religious Affairs announced plans to pursue a partnership with Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations, on education and religious affairs as part of growing university-to-university cooperation between China and Indonesia (Rakhmat, 2018). I then read in the Jakarta Post from February 2020 how students returning from China and Chinese Indonesians had suffered the effects of misinformation about the novel coronavirus outbreak. A 19-year-old student at Jiangsu Normal University returning to his hometown in Muaraenim regency, South Sumatra was met with suspicion and outright paranoia from locals who were not convinced that he was free of the deadly virus (Savitri and Syakriah, 2020).

I was curious to what extent students studying abroad in China today from Indonesia might themselves form a group of scholars trained abroad and returning to adapt a broad swath of Chinese university practices, a century on from a similar dynamic between China, Europe and the United States. I was also interested in understanding how the critical juncture of the present and forces of misinformation and anti-Chinese sentiment might affect the long term plans of educational cooperation and collaboration between Chinese and Indonesian universities. I pivoted from this project following a discussion on each individual's research

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[3] http://wsb.njxzc.edu.cn/35/b6/c7572a79286/page.htm, http://ie.njxzc.edu.cn/c3/2c/c5581a49964/page.htm

papers in December and my realisation that the empirical research component might be limited by time, language and distance in connecting to an Indonesian cohort of students in China. Listening to individuals in the class outline their project plans, I shifted the focus of the project to an empirical study of time and the university via the unique institutional timezone ballet of the Academy during the pandemic.

Much of the literature on time and the university broadly traces a story of compression. 'The global phenomena of digitization, globalization and privatization point to a university world that is characterized by fast production, consumerism, privatization, and bureaucratic efficiency, their combined effect transforming the very *being* of universities, its relationships with knowledge as well as individuals' interactions with others and educational practices' (Gibbs et. al 2015, p. 5). In *Universities in the Flux of Time: An Exploration of Time and Temporality in University Life,* the scholars, predominantly from Europe and United States, ask 'how might the coming of fast, linear and fragmented time be changing the different facets of the university? Is academia a subcontractor for industry and business, supplying faster and faster new knowledge and a workforce adept at handling fast time and incessant time? What alternative temporalities might there be and how might space be created for them?' (2015, p. 4). If the university is now a 24/7 setting, how does academic time balance to personal and family time? 'How might we try to explain the current obsession with contemporary change, by the 'velocity of change' itself, of globalization, of expansion and contraction of time and by the progressive erosion of foundational disciplines within the university?' (2015, p. 5).

At the time, I pivoted from the project on educational collaboration on the Belt and Road, I also found a series of papers steered by Michael A. Peters, a Professor of Education at Beijing Normal University. In *China's Internationalized Higher Education During Covid-19: Collective Student Autoethnography* (2020), a paper published in the Journal of Postdigital Science and Education in May 2020, 16 autoethnographical texts are juxtaposed, detailing student experiences at Beijing Normal University in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic from 15 February to 01 April 2020. A key question the authors broach is: 'how do students, connected virtually but separated physically in an internationalized university, deal with disruption brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic?' The student testimonies, the authors note, 'offer reflections on Covid-19 and Chinese international education, experiences of online teaching and learning, reflections on university coping mechanisms, an account of realities and feelings related to changes in academic life, and discussions on coping strategies in Chinese international higher education' (Peters et. al 2020, p. 968).

Several of the autoethnographies write to moments of uncertainty and change in the early months of the pandemic. A graduating student at the university writes how, 'unlike traditional spring festivals, which are always full of joy, this year's holiday was full of loneliness and anxiety because of the sudden outbreak of Covid-19. As a graduating student, I returned home during vacations, and my supervisor said we would end a time-critical project soon after the spring festival. But this is now delayed, and my planned summer international exchange project has become unrealistic. Many young people on social media said that they

played the role of educators in their relationship with their parents, by persuading them to draw attention to the virus and take protective measures' (2020, p. 982).

Another international student describes the changes at the university. 'We continued to wait, sometimes patiently, sometimes in desperation, frequently with a malaise that comes only hard-earned, from having not left your apartment for weeks on end, from the feeling of never knowing when this interminably cruel holiday might end. Within a few weeks, those of us within China's field of HE, i.e., students, lecturers, etc., were met with messages from our respective university faculties. We were informed that, regardless of the continued national health emergency, without so much as a gap in scheduling, classes would continue as planned. The one caveat, all classes would now be held online. I wondered aloud, and not so politely, at how this would be possible. How could an entire nation take classes online? This was a government decision which touched every single level of education. From compulsory education at grade one, all the way up to Ph.D. level graduate courses, everything would now be held in one form of virtual classroom or another' (2020, p. 971).

At the time another book emerged in the literature by Ronald Barnett, Emeritus Professor at the Institute of Education, University of London, not far from where I am. Barnett's broader works include: Philosophers on the University: Reconsidering Higher Education; Ecologies for Learning and Practice; Knowledge and the University: Reclaiming Life; The Thinking University; The Idea of the University; The Ecological University; Imagining the University; Being a University. I was drawn to the front cover images of three of his collaborated books, visualising the sense of the university as a cosmic body radiating outward, or of points networked into a star-like universe, a shimmering lake ripple. In *A Will to Learn: Being A Student in an Age of Uncertainty,* Barnett explores Schopenhauer's idea that the 'will is primary, and the intellect, secondary' in a modern educational context.

Barnett describes how for the student in the fast-paced modern conditions of the university, 'the will is the foundation of educational energy. It brings a sense of the future, and a purpose in that time horizon. Through their will, the student is propelled forward, and is given the courage to engage with the unknown for, no matter how well planned are their curricula, there are bound – at the level of higher education – to be major elements of unpredictability. The will supplies a steadiness that sustains the student over time, amid its vicissitudes' (Barnett 2007, p. 20). 'If Schopenhauer is right', Barnett writes, 'we need to rethink utterly what we take higher education to be. No longer can we construe it as a mainly epistemological project, even if we supplement it as a practical project in which we explicitly embrace an agenda of skills. Following Schopenhauer's lead, we have, instead, to put the will *first'* (2007, p. 22). Barnett draws on Schopenhauer's philosophy to ask three counterintuitive questions: 'what are the responsibilities of tutors as individuals and of universities as institutions towards the nurturing of this will? What might they do – whether as individuals or as institutions – to develop and to nurture this will? How, in turn, can that will be turned into positive energies? (2007, p. 21).

Reading the autoethnographic collaboration of the students at Beijing Normal University and Barnett's philosophical reflection on the role of 'will-power' in student life, I was drawn to the question of how a cohort engaging in a university semester in a mixture of online and offline rhythms during a global pandemic imagined time and its experience. What furthermore was the role of will and drive from a distant satellite, or a ghostly campus? To what extent could 'will' as a concept be applied to a digital context of education? When the university and the domestic sphere interact, how is time understood in relation to each assignment? To extend the cosmic, maritime imaginary, was time felt adrift and unmoored or locatable, markered by specific islands on a weekly horizon? How was time apportioned and felt as an evolving category of experience over the semester? How did students at home or on campus experience a new spatial and temporal identity of the university? What was the general understanding of 'resilience' as a kinaesthetic and temporal structure of feeling? Reading the autoethnographic accounts of the students at Beijing Normal University, I decided I would draw on an element of autoethnography, tracing how the interviews and research paper emerged in synchrony and moments of divergence and doubt. I wanted to trace compression as an ontological bearing on research and to illuminate to the fore the unique timezone ballet of online ethnography and interviews.

I also found in Pierre Bourdieu elements of time. In *Time for Bourdieu: insights and oversights*, Atkinson (2019) explores four elements of the experience of time and its social structuring and cataloguing in Bourdieu's work: (i) the general temporal structure of consciousness; (ii) timings in and of fields, or their rhythms and pace; (iii) timings imposed by agents in certain fields on people who are not agents in those fields; and (iv) time 'binds' or 'squeeze'. 'Habitus', Atkinson writes, 'is closely connected to the projection or *forecasting* of possibilities, the positing of the future, making it 'thematic' in consciousness as something to be considered and mastered ' (Atkinson 2019, p. 953). In a study on time, class and privilege in career

	Pseudonym	Gender	Type of university	Degree level	Place of origin in China	Funding source	Employment status	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation
1	Wang	F	Redbrick	Master in marketing	Chongqing	Family-funded	Work, China	University professor	University professor
2	Meng	F	Redbrick	Master in health and medicine	Chongqing	Family-funded	Work, China	Civil servant	Housewife
3	Bing	F	Post-92	Bachelor in marketing	Sichuan	Family-funded	Work, China	Businessman	Businesswoman
4	Jing	F	Russell group	Master in marketing	Sichuan	Family-funded	Work, Australia	Businessman	Businesswoman
5	Man	F	Russell group	Master in crime science	Beijing	Family-funded	Work, United Kingdom	Businessman	Businesswoman
6	Chang	F	Russell group	Master in finance	Sichuan	Family-funded	Work, Switzerland	Businessman	Businesswoman
7	Yi	F	Russell group	Master in environment	Beijing	Family-funded	Study	Businessman	Businesswoman (PhD)
8	Xiao	F	Russell group	PhD in geography	Yunnan	Government-funded	Study	Businessman	Civil servant
9	Nong	F	Plate glass	Bachelor in accounting	Jiangxi	Family-funded	Study	Businessman	Businesswoman
10	Ting	F	Plate glass	MPhil in engineering	Fujian	Family-funded	Study	State-owned enterprise	Banker
11	Chuan	F	Redbrick	Bachelor in business studies	Jiangxi	Family-funded	Study	Civil servant	Civil servant
12	Ji	M	Russell group	Master in engineering	Liaoning	Family-funded	Study	State-owned enterprise	Accountant
13	Dao	M	Redbrick	Bachelor in maths	Shanghai	Family-funded	Job offer, United Kingdom	Businessman	Businesswoman
14	Dong	M	Plate glass	PhD in engineering	Shanxi	Uni-funded	Job offer, United Kingdom	Journalist	Nurse
15	Pan	F	Plate glass	PhD in maths	Shandong	Uni-funded	Work, United Kingdom	Wage earner	Wage earner
16	Tong	F	Redbrick	Bachelor in accounting and finance	Shanghai	Family-funded	Study	Banker	Banker
17	Qie	M	Post-92	PhD in computer science	Shenzhen, Guangdong	Uni-funded	Work, United Kingdom	Doctor	Doctor
18	Shi	M	Russell group	PhD in material science	Shenzhen, Guangdong	Family-funded	Study	Banker	Banker
19	Huan	F	Russell group	Master in second language education	Beijing	Family-funded	Work, United Kingdom	Civil servant	Civil servant
20	Xian	F	Russell group	Master in economics of education, PhD dropout	Beijing	Family-funded	Work, China	Businessman	Civil servant
21	Li	M	Post-92	Bachelor in accounting and finance	Guangzhou, Guangdong	Family-funded	Work, United Kingdom	Banker	Banker

imagination, Cora Lingling Xu, the director of the *Network for Chinese Education Mobilities[4]*, explores from in-depth interviews with 21 Chinese international students 'how time, class and privilege intersect to shape these students' career imagination' (Xu, 2020, p. 1). 'In contrast to the policy discourse in countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark and Singapore that tend to statisticise international students as lifeless figures that constitute graduate employment indicators', Xu explores 'the subjective career wishes, plans and imaginations of the students and finds that career imagination is class-differentiated, embedded within and influenced by broader temporal structures' of family and province (2020, p. 2).

Atkinson further notes an oversight in Bourdieu's work whereby in his development of the unit of sociological analysis as a singular field, a certain scope is lost of the 'pressure born of tension between fields', of time binds and 'the experience and management of *competing* schedules and demands on one's time coming from *the different fields one is in* (Atkinson 2019, p. 961). 'Bourdieu', Atkinson notes, does suggest that 'when referring to an individual as they appear across multiple fields we might talk of their 'social surface', which can be taken to mean the totality of their dispositions across spaces of struggle as distinct from those defining their field-specific habitus.' Yet Atkinson suggests Bourdieu does not build on this. In contrast, Edmund Husserl, one of the founders of phenomenology, develops the idea of the individual's *world horizon* as an idea of all the fields and circuits structuring an individual's lifeworld.

I was interested in the question of how the university and home as specific fields have come to interact during the pandemic. I also understood that the relation between home and the university was different for scholars on the program in China. At the time of conducting interviews, many of the scholars were making preparations to return home to their families for the Spring festival under a tightening pandemic situation. I heard that faculty members were advised to stay on campus. In many senses, the pandemic has magnetised fields and their interaction, and drawn open the cosmicity from Bachelard in the normal everyday rhythms and speeds we undertake. In this sense I was curious as to the 'world horizon' of individuals in the cohort, to the cultural, situated and material dimensions of time and of how the critical juncture of the present was perceived, acted in, and motivated toward imaginations of the current and future university, the sense of career and place and future pathhood after the experience of university from a satellite during the pandemic.

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4 https://chineseedmobilities.wordpress.com

YCA Fall 2020 Course Schedule

Interviewee	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Heart of the week
Student, Germany	7 - 9am Chinese homework / catch up on uni admin, women in contemporary china	Development of chinese civilisation, 2am - 5am at beginning it was 1am to 4am. // attended live and by end wasn't able to… sleep until 8am ‖ seminar style…. 8am - 10am chinese class Uni work rest of day 3 times a week go running with family ‖	1-3pm CIT,	Topics in China studies couldn't attend live Women in contemporary China 7am - 9am Critical Conception Chinese 11:40 - 12:40am	Chinese class at 2am	Development of chinese civilisation… read book a week… 500 words		Wednesday, CIT, Thursday women in contemporary china… write a discussion each week… academic cycle
Student, India	Breakfast with family Monday 10am class in leadership development Auditing quant reasoning 10am 4pm Monday After 4pm, Chinese assignments for Tuesday Play Indian classical music, practise for at least hour a day Delph exam French language exam After 4pm, more relaxed	One class Slightly higher level chinese class than supposed to be in, 12pm India time the class is at Free by 3pm, have lunch, finish work for economic thinking of chinese entrepreneurs 1000 word assignment due every Wednesday Tuesday free-est day of week, go out for a walk, India second highest number of covid-19 cases, New Delhi one of highest infected cities in India, not outside for too long, max 30 minutes Market close to where he lives, walk to on Tuesdays, buy some grocery items Living with parents so mundane adult	Wake up at 6:30am for China's Financial System, 9am free, have breakfast, do a few readings, between CFS and CIT, also try to squeeze in some music practice and French practice, chinese class takes a lot of time out of schedule to study French Day ends after CIT. TV a big part of life in India, most evenings chill out with family and bond over tv shows,	Depending on whether academic English or TIC, get up early or late, no classes until 2pm, the economic thinking of chinese entrepreneurs. sometimes have meetings… recent graduate curriculum advisor… 2 - 5 pm ethnographies of education class Chinese homework try to submit before dinner time.	Chinese class, not overly structured, travel days, sister lives in Jaipur, completing her residency at a government hospital in Jaipur, went at least 4-5 times, especially after Diwali Wednesdays, Thursdays, Monday Focus on French, Chinese class difficulty took a lot of time, used pinyin at HKU but at academy using Chinese characters	Meeting with tutor, calisthenics teacher	Family days, meet relatives who live nearby, one of aunts or mum host a luncheon for relatives If not travelling to Jaipur go to Delhi gardens	Chinese class took a lot of time to do the homework, new characters a difficulty, Time difference is 2.5 hours with Beijing,
Student, Kenya	13:40 Contemporary Chinese Chinese tutoring session 10am Afternoon 2pm contemporary chinese society	10:10am chinese language class 13:40 Chinese perspectives on global migration Yenching Global Symposium - 9pm - 10pm back to back meetings - midnight - 1am bed	04:10am China's financial system Stay up for 15:00 China in Transition Another YGS meeting right after CIT	08:00 Economic Thinking of Chinese Entrepreneurs 10:00 Chinese practice	05:00am Chinese language class, usually watch the recording	Routine changed, halfway through semester moved house, September and October in an apartment, wasn't a small space, not many lights in house so annoying everyone trying to sleep, solar lamp, dining table, schedules would start at 5am, sometimes my schedule end at 7am	Go for a run 3 - 4 times a week, in the apartment, small hills, swimming wouldn't study outdoors Work in the closet.. laundry basket in desk…. Light in the closet… here outdoor activities usually in evenings, water plants or swim…	Tuesdays / stroke Wednesdays - try to space out
Student, China	08:50 China's Diplomacy and Global Governance (online) Usually the Monday morning and Tuesday daytime was when I prepare the reading materials and some of the reading assignments for the courses in this week.	11:50 Understanding Chinese Society	09:50 Cultural Dimensions of China's Foreign Relations 20:000 ChiIna in Transition on Wednesday afternoon I have a part time job.	08:50 Academic Writing, some weeks 16:10 Ethnographies of Modern Education: China and Beyond	13:00 Marxist Political theory, odd weeks. Thursday night and Friday night, um I will sometimes attend some of them online events in YCA. Oh, and Friday morning I've been auditing a class. Weekend is also pretty flexible.		stay up more (literally) and more caffeine…. discussion and online events take place at 10pm or 11pm… and sometimes I would get too excited to reach the inner peace before sleeping in that case I went to bed at 2am and had to wake up the next day at 8am or 7am (on brutal Friday to audit a class)	offline socializing with friends in Beijing I guess? Adapting around the timezone differences stay up more (literally) and more caffeine…. discussion and online events take place at 10pm or 11pm… and sometimes I would get too excited to reach the inner peace before sleeping in that case I went to bed at 2am and had to wake up the next day at 8am or 7am (on brutal Friday to audit a class)

Findings

Monday

I spoke to a student from Germany on Monday, first interview. She walked me through her week, I had the timetable on my share screen. When the satellite image was introduced, I asked her to describe a general cultural orientation to time where she lived. She described Hannover, *a big city, life was rushed… commuter belt… traffic in the morning.. parents go to work at 7am or 8am and finish at 5 at 6… many people cycle to work along a similar route as the train lines*. She pointed them out on the image. It turned out she lived beside her primary school. I asked her to describe the general timetable in a German primary school. *Five hour school days… outside for break.. red alarm bells for rainy break…. PE was inside…Secondary school 1.5 hr lessons, 20 mins break…. sports club were common… football twice a week*. She had taught at a secondary school in China, where the days she remembers were much longer.

The conversation moved to this time last year, what was she doing when the pandemic started growing in the news, she was still studying in the UK at the time, in February news began filtering that Germany would close its borders, she jumped on a flight and stayed in Germany until May when she briefly returned to London to sort out her accommodation and see friends from her course. I asked her about whether she had experienced different institutional cultures to time. In German secondary school, students studied 11 subjects at all times, school was 40 hours a week with a lot of homework. At university in the UK, she learnt two languages, the time was more independent and the week gravitated around a seminar format. The university was relatively small, there were 12 people in her language class, she had a History of China class, one two hour lecture each week followed by a one hour seminar. She met her Japanese teacher thesis advisor every two weeks. Her sense of the university as a physical form had been heightened by the pandemic, she spoke of wishes to do a PhD, her hopes to go to China and to use the Beijing Library. We finished our conversation on the hour mark as a Yenching Global Symposium event was starting in another Zoom link. A seven number code, a secret doorway, satellite beaming over cold space, wave pattern, hot servers, vast milliseconds of arrival, in the intercity. Connecting…mic muted, camera on, a routine visitation of ghosts.

Research itself follows a visitational logic. I gained a sense after the first interview of how the interview flowed, what made sense and less in sequence. I held doubts as to whether I could understand my interviewees' experience of time in the semester through such a brief encounter. In Cosmopolitics I, the philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers describes time and history: 'Like the Amur or the Yukon rivers, history filters, abandons, retains, returns, forgets, lazes around, freezes, or seems to sleep among multiple traceries and suddenly, without our being able to foresee it, brings about a linear flow, a straight line, irresistible, nearly permanent, as if immortal. History flows, but other historical possibilities "dry up", incapable of resisting the grand narrative taking shape, and it is all those absent histories, all the questions

that weren't asked or were left unanswered, that delineate the true space of percolation (Stengers, 2010, p. 237).

I held a sense of the research question I wanted to understand, pandemic time, the university and the home, the novel interactions and experiences of academic time, space and duration. I struggled with the elision of this mental image with the reality of capturing time in an image. The pressure of a deadline merged with the question set, the rush of coverage to a topic in totality, tell me about time, primary school, secondary, university, the semester. I worried about the broadness of the questions. I thought of changing the question set to focus on the latter questions, tell me about the present moment, hopes, plans for the future, the sense of fatigue, energy levels, metaphors of time, what was the semester like? Like spinning plates, juggling, overload, 'learn to glisten through the weeks'. I sent myself emails the week prior whilst I was writing an essay on the metaphor of water and *wu-wei* in the Daodejing. I was sensitive that time and the university is itself a sensitive dial.

Tuesday

On Tuesday, I spoke with a friend from India in the cohort. He described how family time was foundational to his week, on Sundays he would meet relatives who live nearby. If not travelling to Jaipur to visit his sister working at a government hospital, he would go to Delhi Gardens with his family. Before the pandemic, many of the people who live in South Delhi would take the Delhi metro to Gurgaon. I looked up Gurgaon following our conversation. Gurgaon is about '30 kilometres southwest of the national capital New Delhi. It is India's second largest information technology hub and third largest financial and banking hub', that despite being 'India's 56th largest city in terms of population is the 8th largest city in the country in terms of total wealth.' It is also headquarters to many of India's largest companies and home to thousands of startup companies'[5]. I asked him about the pandemic effects on the rhythms of life where he lived. He described

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[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurgaon

how even though the Delhi metro is operational, many people don't use it as there is not a lot of trust that the trains are sanitised. Many people who work in Gurgaon are working from home as offices stay shut.

We discussed how schools are shut, his younger cousins are studying from home. When we spoke there was a wedding going on outside. Weddings, he said, are a big thing in New Delhi. The satellite image traced a different story to that of my first interview. I asked him to tell me, if he was comfortable, the name of his primary school. I entered it however was taken by the search function to another school with a similar name. Once we arrived at the image, he described the area, how sport, despite the playing pitch I had noticed (see the red point on images below), was not a huge element of the school. Similar to China, he said, competitive grades and exams were important. He would wake up at 6am to get to school on time by a school bus. School would start at 07:20am until 01:45pm and he would return home at 3pm.

A friend in the cohort from China whom I did not speak to in person but via responses to the question set I had sent as a primer on WeChat, described a different element to her primary school. '*Primary school was more fun (students took classes in the morning and early afternoon, in the late afternoon I would either play with friends or go to* 民乐乐团 *where students play traditional Chinese instruments together. During the weekends I spent more time outdoors travelling or going to visit my grandma in another county in Gansu Province. The secondary school schedule was more fixed, taking classes during weekdays and mostly doing homework on weekend. On Friday night and Saturday night the family would dine out and on Sunday we would have some outdoors activities*.' I was interested in understanding more how the family structure interacted with schooling in both of their experiences. Utilising the historical imagery function of Google Earth Pro on the primary school in Delhi, in the year 2000, the image on the left, you can make out the yellow school buses in the southeast corner of the school in the red square. In the image on the right from 2020, the school buses are not visible.

The growth of development in the surrounding area and perhaps most starkly, the change in the landscape from relatively arid to green and laden with foliage opens up an interesting temporal avenue into the conservational energy of the primary school's architectural form inside developmental modernity. I noticed
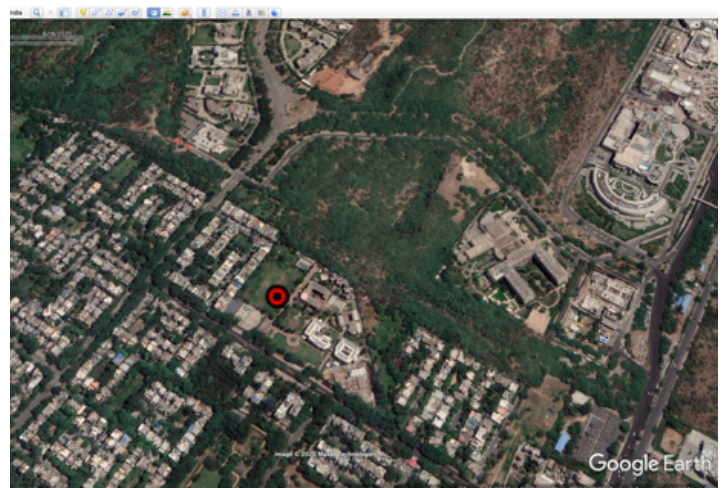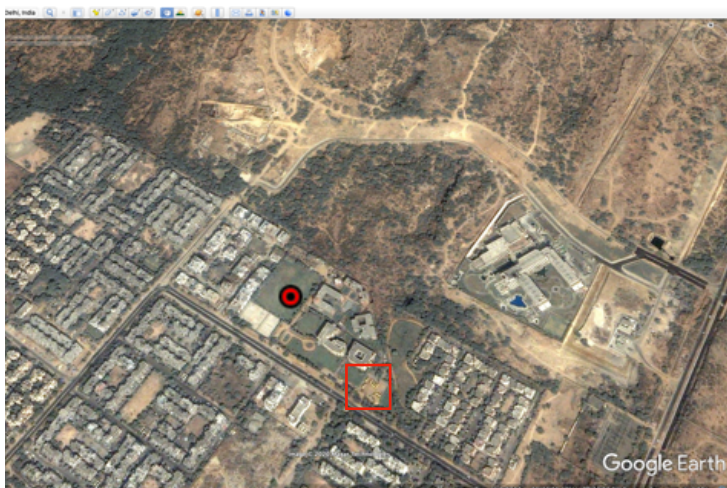
that my first interviewee's school in Germany also had a relatively unchanged form from 2000 to 2020. Unfortunately, I was not able to draw a comparison from this study with a primary school in China. In relation to the pandemic effects on education, he told me of friends studying at the University of Delhi whose studies were affected by the pandemic. *The university did not have the infrastructure in place to deliver online classes, students were unable to purchase books. In India students do not usually carry electronics into the classroom.* The pandemic had on one level introduced video conferencing into the classroom, forcing the technology equation into the Indian education system. He spoke otherwise of how the pandemic had changed his plans for the second year at Beida, introducing an element of slowing down to his own sense of trajectory.

I found time following the interview to walk outside in Brockwell Park, a park beside the flat I am staying in. I spoke to my sister on the phone. She is a primary school teacher in Southwest London. She conducts her lessons online and alternates with other teachers the weeks she goes into school. There are seven children whose parents are key workers and who still attend the school. Some of the children do not have access to laptops or computers at home. The worries that many children from poorer socioeconomic circumstances will fall behind better equipped children was a prominent feature of her discussions at school. A little down the road at a primary school my mum worked at until December, the worries differ in relation to entrance to private preparatory schools or the continuation of private tutor lessons. The image on the left 1999 was how I remembered the playgrounds, I would have been 5 years old and possibly a dot under a roof in the image.

The school in the left red square was where my mum worked for 26 years through our childhood. The larger school a little way along the road is where my sister works today. The image on the right from 2020 shows the changes in the playgrounds, the hyper-stimulation of colours and features against the grey simplicity of concrete and a sponge football, hoofed over *the fence of no return*, as I remember it. My sister spoke of the strong element of physicalising learning at her school, they undertake projects in the community, they study maths through physical experiments in the playground. In contrast, my mum spoke of her school as focused on the preparation of examinations and music. The differential effects of the pandemic on children's learning through time, class and privilege has magnetised many of the feelings of the deep inequalities in the UK education system.

I read an article in the Beijing Review by a friend in the fifth cohort of how China's 260 million students - from primary schools to university graduate level courses - were brought online during the pandemic. She described it as the largest educational experiment in modern history. Her own experience had encompassed tutoring students in Wuhan via WeChat on their English pronunciation and listening. When she put out a message for any student who was unable to attend school, 'her phone was flooded with messages from parents and friends.' Her grandparents, born in late 1920s England, were baffled by her phone constantly pinging, "Who's that?!" they'd ask, and a look of total disbelief would envelop their faces when I would tell them it was my students from Hubei' (Lock, 2020). The question of technology in education returned several times. I also wondered to what extent satellite literacy might foster inter-cultural connections, story-telling and understanding of the worlds we have all arrived from and of whether job interviewers should be able to see where an applicant started life.

Wednesday

On Wednesday I spoke with a friend from the U.S., following a Zoom meeting of the *Mental Health* group established by students at YCA. He was in his final semester of university when the quarantine started in Pittsburgh. *I*n college during spring break, everyone went home but he stayed living on campus. He showed me his university on Google Earth. I was not aware before but Google Earth Street View is available for many U.S. university campuses, illuminating for one the differential visibilities of universities on Google. During the tour, he showed me the library, the large glass building in the image to the left. The Fence on the right is a tradition at his university. I could make out trees that I always associated from films with the U.S. university, the U.S. flag on the quad. For him, a strong sense of memories returned to fill the conversation. He spoke of the university, the curricula, the huge amount of creativity, *everyone seemed to be a thinker outside the box*. He wrote an essay each month. The university had a technical school but a large population of humanities scholars too. Many of his friends didn't study humanities but were engineers or coders. In contrast, he noticed a sense that the Academy appeared to have a strong humanities focus - Politics and IR, Law and Society held the overwhelming contingent of the cohort.

In *The New Silk Road and the "Idea of the University"*, Barbara Sporn and Marijk van der Wende develop nuances to 'the black and white picture of STEM versus social sciences-humanities in China, suggesting a

continuum of internationalization pathways that have been explored by different institutions (Sporn and van der Wende 2019, p. 349). At the same time, van der Wende et. al note 'the shift in global research in China towards engineering and away from the humanities (OST 2019). The preference for STEM over humanities and social sciences may be seen by China as an internal recipe for economic growth and social and political stability' (van der Wende et. al, 2019, p. 9). The authors pose the question of 'how Chinese universities can grow into truly world-class institutions, especially regarding their ability to bridge "the two cultures" of the sciences and the humanities, in order to generate interdisciplinary and innovative work?'(2019, p. 12).

I found an essay later by Gong Renren, a retired Professor in the Law School of Peking University and Head of the Institute for Human Rights 人權研究院 decrying the 'ever-deepening crisis in the Chinese humanities and social sciences' and offering 'an elegy for the long-lost world of pre-1949 Chinese academia, a warning about the bedevilled state of the country's universities under a reinvigorated Party ideology and a caution about the global blight of metrics- and ranking-driven, industrial-scale for-profit education.' Gong notes how in 'more technical academic research, if you just have enough money you can simply buy in top-of-the-range equipment and lure world-famous scientists with the promise of exorbitant salaries', a process Tsinghua University has spearheaded in recent years. Gong further notes that 'the funding model for the humanities is markedly different from the sciences, in particular since the research produced by scholars in these fields is born of the accumulation of knowledge and the formulation of unique insights over the long term.'

Ren Xiao further explores the compression of time in the burgeoning field of area studies in China, writing of how 'universities have been incentivized to demonstrate that they are relevant for the Belt and Road Initiative in order to compete for government recognition and the funds that accompany it. To this end, every institution tries to produce policy briefs and hopes for a few words of praise from one or more leaders in the upper echelon.' However 'this competition for recognition and resources can be detrimental to area studies because it can breed quick products and studies not based on solid research.' Gong's essay closes stating how 'if the situation outlined in the above continues, and if the Humanities and Social Sciences at China's universities continue to lag behind, they will remain a drag on the 'Double First-class University Plan'. They will also hold back our society as a whole and the very civilisation that it professes to support.' Time and compression in this sense is a complex structural dynamic that is navigated with political sensitivity.

I spoke with a friend in the cohort from Kenya straight after my interview on the U.S. campus. She walked me through her week. She described her routine during the semester. From September to October she was in an apartment, she used a solar lamp at the dining table, her schedule of early morning lectures would sometimes rub with her family's work days. She would sometimes work in the closet using a laundry basket as a desk. I said she was Harry Potter. She would go on a run 3-4 times a week. Behind the apartment, there are small hills to run in. She traced the route out in a line of green highlight. In the satellite image to the left from 2001, the housing developments and golf course are absent. Before moving apartment, she moved to

her grandma's house as the wifi was being installed in her new home. It was not open planned like her prior apartment and so she could study without disturbing others. In her new home, she works in the closet using a laundry basket as a desk. I said she was Harry Potter. I asked her to describe to me the general workday in Nairobi. Generally, for people employed, a workday might be 8am - 5 pm. For her aunt, she would leave home at 6:20am in the morning, drop off cousins at school, go to the office and come back home at 4pm. She works for a Swiss firm, and the work in the office is done in shifts since the pandemic began. In Nairobi, roads often separate residential areas from poorer areas. I asked her to describe to me her primary and secondary schools. She studied primary school through O-levels in the same school in Dar-es Salaam, a hot coastal city in Tanzania. Sometimes the electricity failed at school so they took classes outside, the school-day finished at 2pm. They did P.E. and had library sessions and gardening classes outside.

In the evenings, she usually swims and waters her plants. She was planting in the garden during the semester, a pod of cocoa beans she had received for her birthday in November, they would take five years to grow. She had plans to work on a small veggie garden during the break and some vermi worm composting. I sent her a photo of the remnants of snow in London from yesterday. She asked how the winter had compared with previous ones. I wasn't sure. I asked how the summer was. She said how it had been weird. For the last two years, we've had unusual rain more frequently. She doesn't live in the tropics but the climate seemed to be changing. I asked if she meant huge storms and remarked how London in the summer was now reaching 40 degrees Celsius. She described how it could rain all night until the area floods and be bone dry by noon the next day. I told her of hopes to gather stories of climate change through the cohort in the spring semester for China in Transition. It started growing on me that the idea of this paper was pod-like, or a seed-bed of time traces. She described to me how she undertook her A-levels, the first year in Kenya, in a very remote village where the average temperature was 10 degrees. She had P.E. at least twice a week. You could eat dinner outside. For her second year of A-levels, there were no classes outside, the day started at 07:30 - 08:00 and was finished by 2 or 3pm.

At the end of February, early March, the whole city of Nairobi went into a panic, a frenzy, hoarding stocking up on toilet paper, gas, canned food, like the world was ending, sanitiser purchases had to be limited. She didn't expect it to affect the masters program. In her interview for the Academy she was asked about the

pandemic, she remembers we had the option of deferring but imagined this thing wouldn't last that long. I asked her to describe to me whether she had experienced different institutional cultures or sensibilities to time. She showed me her university in Mauritius, describing a slower pace of life. Sometimes they would go to the beaches. She studied for three modules tops, the campus was built on a sugarcane plantation owned by a sugar and ethanol conglomerate. At her university, four courses in business management, social sciences, computing and electrical systems were offered. I was surprised by the remoteness and relative newness of the building. The project was funded by a Ghanaian entrepreneur, Stanford Business School educated, who used his Silicon Valley connections to find financial backing back in 2004. I read on wikipedia how in 2014, at a TED Conference in Brazil, he announced an expansion of his vision for a new network of 25 African universities, training and educating 3 million leaders by 2060. For most students, tuition is waived, provided they promise to return to Africa after graduating from college.

We watched the campus in Mauritius be built in real time, moving through the historical imagery function of Google Earth from 2015 to the present day. The satellite images on the left below are dated 08 January 2017; to the right the images date to 10 March 2020. I noticed later the proximity of the university to the major port of Mauritius and observed the level of cargo capacity increase between the years. This told another story to the Silicon Valley - African university network. In 2018, a report in Xinhua read: 'A glittering "Eden Garden," located at the heart of China-built Jinfei Economic, Trade & Cooperation Zone (Jinfei Zone) in western Mauritius, will symbolize the Indian Ocean Archipelago's march toward modernity. Just like its name "Eden," this gleaming complex that blends Chinese architectural prowess with Africa's aesthetic beauty is a crown jewel that is a spectacle to behold (Xinhua, 2018). I later read a report from January this year of how China and Mauritius signed a Free Trade Agreement, 'with the Port being sought as a key offshore

gateway for Chinese trade and investment into Africa.' I thought of how the structural link between port developments and tertiary education institutions is not intuitive but might point toward new avenues of satellite-led research in the internationalization of Chinese universities. I also wondered how the port and the university and the program might represent a case study for a future volume: *China and Africa on the New Silk Road: Connecting Universities Across the Indian Ocean*.

Many of the faculty members had studied in America or the UK and brought elements of those academic cultures. They had also previously worked in major private equity and consulting firms in Africa. I gained a sense that the corporate dimensions of the university were prominent. We spoke of the form of the university after the pandemic. She told me how the pandemic had re-affirmed for her the possibilities of providing education to more people. *Education not limited to a physical location but with a virtual element, taking modules online, studying around broader work patterns*. She also suggested that the idea of the university as an experience and the university as an institution could be separated. *University could never be replaced by online interactions as much as we are advancing technologically*, though she was curious as to the possibilities of virtual reality in education. Holding these conversations with Google Earth as a ballast generated a sense of the physicalism of university. I wondered how the balance between universities as a physical campus and as a digital offering might play out on the African continent next to Mauritius and how the educational component of the Belt and Road might evolve as a digital/physical model. I was also curious as to how different approaches and understandings to time and temporality in the university, intercultural understandings of stress and mental health might be researched from different perspectives to the predominantly U.S / European scholarly focus of the *China and Europe on the New Silk Road: Connecting Universities Across Eurasia* project and book.

Thursday

I received a response to the question set from a student in China on Thursday morning. She described how Beijing is super fast paced. At top universities like Beida and another university she studied at previously, students have a pretty hectic daily schedule. They take classes and look for internships, prepare for the interviews, work at student events, time moves fast. She described how in contrast, primary school was more fun, she would visit her grandmother often in another county in Gansu Province. I was loosely familiar with Gansu province. My Chinese language partner was from Gansu and he had shared photos of his travels in the province. In July 2018, I travelled through Gansu on a train toward Shanghai from far western China. I remember the sense of the largeness of the landscape, the open sky, the mountains, rivers, electricity pylons charging in a storm. I watched Kaili Blues during the semester. In one of the closing scenes (small square below), school children run along a path to school as three boys spin a tyre along an adjacent road, the green mountains tower over the scene. I know the landscapes are vastly different but I wondered how school was experienced in rural regions of Gansu province and the possibilities of satellite stories.

She then wrote of her secondary school, the schedule was more fixed, taking classes during weekdays and mostly doing homework on weekend. On Friday night and Saturday night her family would dine out and on Sunday they would do some outdoors activities. She described how the pandemic had changed rhythms at Beida. It has pushed schedules later than the normal times and made her feel a little isolated. Before the pandemic, she wrote, I was one of those in the tide. Her evenings have been longer and mornings are mostly spent sleeping or trying to stay awake for online class which was a little hard when the class is on a screen. Her schedule made her feel a little isolated from the normal Beida student, diligently waking at 7 or 8am every day for breakfast, having lunch at 11am and dinner at 5pm. I asked her to describe for me what studying on an international program during a pandemic has been like.

She described the pandemic like a show with a resonant script and other great actors and actresses to be a part of it with, only now during the pandemic, 'it's like the director told me, oh those actors can't make it to the shooting site but you will interact with them via screen to finish the show.' She spoke of how the time to get to know about the other actors is growingly limited and indirect, *the way I play this show is also getting different which makes it hard for me to engage as fully as I could in previous shows. It's a bad analogy but this is how I feel.* I asked her to describe to me what it was like when the pandemic started to grow in the news where she was. Did she expect it to affect the masters program? Back then, she thought it was only going to be in China. *As things were getting controlled in here, I once thought the program will be fine since the travel ban on China would be lifted. But I didn't expect the pandemic to end up everywhere and international students would not be able to come to China.*

She described to me how time felt like it was moving faster during offline classes compared to the ones she undertook in her dorm. *Taking online classes in the dorm without knowing what's going on outside definitely made me less sensitive to time (and also it feels it goes slower…).* I asked if she felt a sense of living in a historic moment, or how she imagined the 'university' will change after the pandemic e.g. remote learning and international exchanges. She said she felt it. She also wondered whether international exchange

programs would still exist but in a virtual way, and described how this might make it hard for university to convince students that it is still worth as much as the on-site exchange program. That *maybe there would be more remote learning programs (each with a lower price) in the future for the university to survive?* Of her hopes and plans for the future, I asked her whether the last year had changed her sense of the path ahead. She described her plans for an exchange program abroad in September, and a plan for going on an exchange during the Academy as something she had been planning since her fourth year in college. *But the last year has changed things.* She described how onsite international exchange is way better than an online one (so if the one she was applying for is online, she is more likely to reconsider the time to study abroad). The other change was that although she still really wanted to go, she had to keep the bars low in case she got too upset if she was informed the program was cancelled or just turned online, and *making alternative plans (an internship, job seeking) ready for the change (sigh).* I gained a sense of the differing pressures on a student in China.

Friday

I came across the story of the Beijing Ancient Observatory in the morning I opened a WeChat to see an extension of the deadline. Originally built in 1442 during the Ming Dynasty, the observatory today is located just south of Dongcheng District, on Lines 1 and 2 of the Beijing Subway to Jianguomen Station. I found a photograph from 1895 and from the 2000s. In the former, a man is stood in the distance to the right, perhaps the keeper of the stargazing instruments. I thought of Liang Shuming who would have been two years old, possibly kicking his legs in the air nearby in his family home in Beijing, and Cai Yuanpei travelling south to Nanyang Public School, drawn into new questions of western science and technology by the recent defeat in the Sino Japanese war. In *China's Universities 1895-1995: A Century of Conflict*, Ruth Hayhoe describes how 'the widely accepted date for the founding of the first modern university in most Chinese research on higher education history is 1895, when *Beiyang gongxue,* the forerunner of Tianjin University was founded, followed by *Nanyang gongxue* (later Jiaotong University) in 1896, and the Imperial University (Peking University) in 1898. The latter photograph, taken some time in the 2000s shows one of the ancient instruments, an azimuth theodolite. In the background the dome of the Marriott Hotel dwarfs the skyline.

I read how the first time zone plan for China was proposed from this observatory by the Central Observatory of the Beiyang Government in Peking in 1918. The proposal 'divided the country into five time zones: Kunlun (UTC+05:30), Sinkiang-Tibet (UTC+06:00), Kansu-Szechwan (UTC+07:00), Chungyuan (UTC+08:00) and Changpai (UTC+08:30) These time zones were ratified in 1939 by the Nationalist Government in the Standard Time Conference, hosted by the Ministry of Interior of Executive Yuan. Because of the Second Sino-Japanese War, it was also stated that Kansu-Szechwan time shall be the sole national time during the war time. After the war in 1945, these five times zones were implemented nationally. In 1949, after the Chinese Civil War, the Central People's Government abolished the five time zones and announced to use a single time zone UTC+08:00 named Beijing Time (北京时间)'[6]. I imagined the Academy today in its own mode of stargazing. I thought of the emergence of new universities along the Belt and Road and of the temporalities and lived tensions of academic life in the fast-lanes of globalisation. I thought of the weight of history this semester, the gravitational pull of Beijing time, the midnight lectures, the timezone ballet and the sense of transition, percolation, compression. I thought of the conceptual possibilities of the university and its limits, where time is not touch but transmission.

I found an image of Weiming Lake in winter, posted by the Academy online 24 January 2019. In an earlier essay for Ethnographies of Modern Education, I had written of how urbanisation, parental anxieties, social media technologies, intensive child and school performance monitoring, teacher salary and work pressures, and private tutor and commercial education companies have compressed the time of childhood and the time and space for children to creatively interact, laterally discover, and morally experience perspectives and lives different from their own. I also wondered how financial modes of thought and practice have impinged on the

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[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_time_zones_of_China

values of the university, the compression of space in urban living; the marketization of curricula, staff and students and the de-physicalisation of mental experience. As financial concerns have eclipsed broader concerns for faculty and students, to what extent have temporal anxieties over individual careers, life trajectories diminished the sense of geographic possibility and vitality in education? This was a large part of the image from which I wanted to situate conversations with my peers in the Academy. I wanted to understand their experiences of education where they grew up; to see what their schools looked like; to understand where they had studied this semester. 'Geographic capital' in Bourdieu's analysis is perhaps a less explored dimension of *habitus*. I was curious what Bourdieu would write today with access to satellite imagery.

Analysis

I'm struggling with the analysis section ₜₑₛ ₀₂ ₑₑₑ. If the literature review, the findings were like an expanse unfolding out of the train front, rain, pylons, the pulse of a gathering storm, traceries, trajectories, momentum eclipsing coherence…Analysis is the return to the site on a simulator, noting the curve of each trackline, the mistakes, the rain gauge, momentum decelerating into… a weather report, a financial report of the cargo, a disciplinary report of the driver, the crew, the passengers. At the beginning of the research project, I wrote down three hypotheses of time and the Academy: H1: During the pandemic, the university and home have interacted in novel ways, creating new experiences of time, space and duration. H2: Time is not universal, but situated and material, where the individual lives, works, studies informs the experience. H3: Imagining the university in pandemic times, satellite images might form a new method of doing sociology. I sent a WeChat message to a number of friends before I had constructed the question set, 'I'm planning it around individuals' experience of time during the semester / when the university becomes the home or a campus with online classes, I was thinking of using the timetable from the term as a basis and asking individuals to walk me through their week differentiating mainly between inside time and outside time (e.g. walking), also q curious as to cultural differences, sensibilities to time, e.g. experience of prior university, and how the pandemic and the program have ran parallel, feelings of living in a historic moment; hopes, plans for the future.'

I worried mid-way through the week and interviews of whether I should have focused on one specific element. I also encountered difficulties asking for individuals' time when each were experiencing their own labyrinth of end of term deadlines. I quickly realised the distance from the research object in my mind and the reality of a one hour conversation. The questions I imagined: did the semester feel shorter for students who have been on campus versus individuals who are studying remotely at home? Have students in winter in the northern hemisphere experienced the temporality of the semester differently to individuals in the southern hemisphere in the summer where days are lighter and longer? were not answerable but emerged closer to prompts for further conversation. The most lasting feature of each conversation was the satellite imagery and the words that emerged around it. It suggested a novel visual method of staging sociology and a possible

research avenue in the *Network for Chinese Education Mobilities* or *Connecting Universities Across Eurasia*, Southeast Asia or the Indian Ocean looking at the geographic diversity and vitality of a key academic program and its international pathway of experiment out of Beijing.

In *Imag(in)ing the University: Visual Sociology and Higher Education*, Amy Metcalfe notes the increasing emergence of visual methods in educational sociology. Metcalfe notes how the study of campus culture is increasingly concerned with observing faculty and student interactions in a given context. Paul Temple notes: 'the creation of a community and its culture turns the university space into a *place*. As a result, locational capital becomes transformed through the mediation of an institutional culture, into *social capital*' (Temple 2009, p. 22). The 'look and feel of a campus', Metcalfe writes, 'is part of the cultural milieu in which students and faculty co-construct their spatial aspirations for the campus and academic life'. Living through a pandemic has in other ways stretched the conceptual boundaries of the university in space and time and forced a series of research avenues into the open: the role of technology in educational provision, the feelings and balance of university as a physical experience and a digital offering; the dialectics of distant satellites and gravitational core campuses in the place-making of university.

Critical theories of time and late modernity have often critiqued the compression of life. In 1992, the French anthropologist Marc Augé created the term non-place, for those 'generic places, bus depots, train stations, airports that do not confer a feeling of place.' In 1995, Paul Virilio would warn that through the burgeoning of networked cyberspace we face 'a loss of orientation' whereby 'instantaneous' communication flows will lead to a kind of 'mental concussion.' In contrast to the pessimistic views of technology, isolation and social anomie, I sensed a strong resilience and togetherness in the timezone ballet of the semester. There were elements of searching for lost time, a hope to arrive soon and meet the fellow cohort and faculty, a deep gratitude for the time and effort placed into each course. There was also a sense at times of feeling adrift, not knowing how much time to spend on an assignment, the lightness of encounter, going to dinner, talking, experiencing a new city was replaced by a more constricted seriousness of four walls, a camera, a claustrophobics of pandemic rhythms and alterations outside. At the same time, the demands of time also served as a ballast, occupying and focusing the mind of many students on and off campus.

 I further wanted to understand how time is imagined at Beida, whether time is increasingly rationalised by market and commercial pressures, the pressure on students to find a job, a competitive job market, one student mentioned to me the internet companies, the 9-9-6 expected work-life culture, meaning 9am - 9pm, six days a week. Much of the same pressures are present in the UK, a large number of friends from university moved directly into corporate jobs where the working culture is 7am - 7pm. Compression in this sense seems closely related to urbanity and capital. At university, we attended lectures, had to write one essay a week and had tutorials on a weekly basis in which we were expected to discuss and develop the ideas in our essays with a tutor and fellow students. Looking back, I remember the sense of pressure within a semester that was only 9 weeks long compared to a 5 month semester. Yet at the same time, the requirement of one essay a week focalised and acted as a ballast to the temporality of the week. I did not speak directly to individuals for

whom the financial pressures of the semester were intense and created their own spatial and temporal demands of the week. I also did not interview any members of faculty for whom the experience of time and temporality to academic life during a global health emergency is another significant, missing dimension of this study. It was only at the conclusion of the interviews that I thought of the question to ask each individual of their knowledge of or understanding of Peking University in history.

Viewing the universities in Mauritius and the U.S. I sensed something of the geographic diversity and experiences of the Academy. Using satellite images generated a focus to many of the interviews on the physicality of time and the university. The interviews often tracked onto thoughts of the future shape of the university. One student discussed how technology has in many ways been forced into the equation of higher education in India with a potential positive long term effect on the provision of university curricula. Another spoke of how 'the university is not only the classes, it's the people, the atmosphere, the dorms, the rooms, a feeling. Remote learning it can be called a university or a synthesis of courses, but it's not a university.' Hopes for the future also circulated around this idea of the university as a physical experience which, though temporarily de-physicalised, would return once more. For one student, her plans for PhD study and for the feeling one gets at a university were re-energised by the experience of studying remotely at home. These were tempered by the worries of the effect of Britain exiting the European Union on tuition fees for a European student and the financial pressures of time after the pandemic on scholarship opportunities.

In many of the conversations, the Google Earth technology ended up naturally gravitating toward the individual's university. I gained a sense of one university's relative newness in Mauritius. Utilising the historical imagery function, we observed the university being built in 2017 on a sugar plantation owned by a sugar and ethanol conglomerate. She pointed out how much of the property on the island is controlled by five

families. In relation to time, we discussed the university's plans. She also spoke of the relatively calm temporality, the remote location, the nearby beaches, the warm weather. With another student in the United States, I was shown his university in Pittsburgh between tributaries of the Allegheny River. Knowing the famous name of the university, I was surprised by the compact size of its campus. During the conversation, as I zoomed in on a feature known as 'The Fence' (a fence students paint between midnight and sunrise with messages they then stand guard with as long as they want their message to stay) the technology accidentally switched to street view, placing us both in a campus-level photographic rendering of the university. Our conversation continued as a virtual tour through memory, space and time. At the conclusion of the conversation, I noted on Google Earth, the search-bar also gave results for a university campus in Qatar. Comparing the campus designs, there were similarities. In this way, the satellite imagery search functions of Google Earth Pro might aid projects tracing the globalisation and internationalization of universities. I was reminded of the book - Seeing the world: how US universities make knowledge in a global era - in which the authors trace the emergence of U.S university research centers in the Middle East and related regional area studies. In the literature review for the project, I noted a parallel emergence of Chinese university research centers on the Belt and Road and wondered whether the BeiDou satellite system in China is being drawn into sociological research on the internationalization of Chinese universities.

My expectations of the research and the conversations that evolved also grew into a broader sense of the possibilities of visual methods and online sociology, and turning the unique circumstances of the present juncture into a productive opening on the conceptual possibilities of the university. Next semester, I had been hoping to undertake a project on climate change and the Anthropocene through film, exploring how the cohort might form a nascent community for sharing, resourcing and connecting environmental stories of the Anthropocene. I was also interested in how a nascent network might interact with wider institutions regulating time, resource and capital. I feel a similar drive to explore how satellite imagery might enable institutional comparisons and conversation of the various international pathways and contact points of universities across different oceans. There is something in satellite imagery that steers this sense of possibilities. Each red circle on the globe above forms the current university home of a member of the cohort I briefly shared and experienced. Vastness is not often a concept levied in educational sociology however a broader field of inquiry of the compression of time in education might explore how the time being compressed is itself more complex, multiple and spatially diverse than a singular stream. In this sense, I hope that when we do all meet at the heart of the timezone ballet, the vitality of time, difference and possibility is kept in motion to the possibilities of education in geography, satellite and home, far from our own.

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Appendix

1. Interview Questions - First Iteration designed for a student studying off-campus

General Idea for the Study

H1: During the pandemic, the university and home have interacted in novel ways, creating new experiences of time, space and duration.

H2: Time is not universal, but situated and material, where the individual lives informs the experience (e.g. did term feel shorter for students who have been on campus v.s. people who are repeating patterns at home, have northern hemisphere students in winter experienced the term differently to individuals in the southern hemisphere in the summer where days are lighter, longer)

H3: Imagining the university in pandemic times, satellite images might form a new method of doing sociology.

Questions

The Semester

1.   Walk me through your week

2.   What was your routine? Lectures at unusual times, adaptations in where in house undertaken - how long did you generally spend outdoors, indoors studying?

3.   If you had to locate on this timetable, the the heart of your week.. where did the rest of the week gravitate around?

4.   Have you had to adapt your timescape around family members, friends? How have you adapted around the timezone differences?

Time as Situated and Material

1.   Walk me through time outside of studying in this course

2.   If you had to describe a general cultural orientation to time where you live, what would it be? For instance, do people generally work certain hours? Commute into the city? Is there a sense people are rushed, move fast or a slow pace of life?

3.   How has the pandemic changed rhythms, experiences, sense of time where you live?

4.   Where you went to primary and secondary school, what was the dynamic between inside study time and outside time?

In Search of Lost Time

1.   Describe to me what studying on an international program remotely during a pandemic has been like? (e.g. when the university becomes your home, has the sense of university time and time outside of study changed?)

2.   What was it like when the pandemic started growing in the news where you were? Did you expect it to affect the masters program? What were you doing this time last year?

3.   In relation to education, do you feel like you have experienced different institutional cultures or sensibilities to time? Do you feel like you draw on these experiences today?

4.   Do you feel a sense of living in a historic moment? How do you imagine the 'university' will change after the pandemic? e.g. remote learning, international exchanges

5.   What are your hopes, plans for the future? Do you plan your time far ahead? Has the last year changed your sense of the path ahead?

2. Interview Questions - Second Iteration designed for a student studying in China on campus

General Idea for the Study

H1: During the pandemic, for international students, the university and home have interacted in novel ways, creating new experiences of time, space and duration. On campus, the pandemic has also created new rhythms and experiences of time and study.

H2: Time is not universal, but situated and material, where the individual lives and works informs the experience. (e.g. did term feel shorter for students who have been on campus v.s. people who are repeating patterns at home? Have northern hemisphere students in winter experienced the term differently to individuals in the southern hemisphere in the summer where days are lighter, longer?)

H3: Imagining the university in pandemic times, satellite images might form a new method of doing sociology.

Questions

The Semester

1. Walk me through your week

2. What was your routine? How long did you generally spend outdoors, indoors studying

3. If you had to locate on this timetable the heart of your week.. where did the rest of the week gravitate around?

4. How have you adapted around the timezone differences?

Time as Situated and Material

1. Walk me through time outside of studying in this course

2.   If you had to describe a general cultural orientation to time where you live, what would it be? For instance, do people generally work certain hours? Commute into the city? Is there a sense people are rushed, move fast or a slow pace of life?

3. Where you went to primary and secondary school, what was the dynamic between inside study time and outside time?

4. How has the pandemic changed rhythms at Beida?

In Search of Lost Time

1. Describe to me what studying on an international program during a pandemic has been like?

2. What was it like when the pandemic started growing in the news where you were? Did you expect it to affect the masters program?

3. In relation to education, do you feel like you have experienced different institutional cultures or sensibilities to time? Do you feel like you draw on these experiences today?

4. Do you feel a sense of living in a historic moment? How do you imagine the 'university' will change after the pandemic? e.g. remote learning, international exchanges

5. What are your hopes, plans for the future? Do you plan your time far ahead? Has the last year changed your sense of the path ahead?