



Boundaries, Sexuality and Mobility: a study of Chinese queers studying in the UK

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Introduction

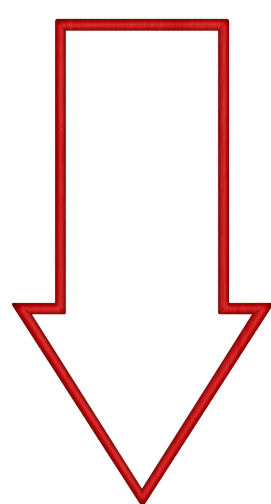
This article focuses on Generation Z Chinese queer who study in the UK. For Generation Z Chinese queer, life is filled with the word 'blur', a blur caused by the boundaries that are constantly being crossed and the ever-changing situations in life. This article records how Generation Z Chinese queer who have studied in the UK engage with the 'blur' and discovers how sexuality and mobility are intertwined in their overseas experience.

Methodology

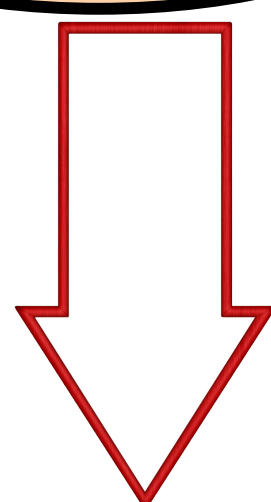
This article is based on an ethnographic study I carried out for five weeks in London, it was chosen because of its diversity and the large number of queer events during pride month. In this study, I conducted participant observation in the pride month parade and interviewed 12 self-identified Chinese queers who are currently studying in the UK or had experience of studying in the UK for more than 6 months. Most interviews are conducted in person and last about two to three hours.

Main Findings

Parents: the other, the us, the stretched



Community: the language, the solidarity



mobility: the present, the future

The other:

The dichotomy of married or unmarried in China rationalizes Chinese heterosexual parents' guidance of their children's transition from 'asexual' to 'sexual'. The 'othering' of parents enables them to label other sexual orientations as 'sexually immature' behaviours.

The us:

Exposed to the potential pressures from society and the extended family, parents will try to hide the sexuality of queer children from the public. However, this 'coming in' of parents is not a 'we' moment to be celebrated, but rather a further invasion of private space and an exposure of the parent's shame over queer's identity.

The stretched:

For many queer Chinese, study abroad offers a period of time and a space that allows them to temporarily free themselves from the struggle between 'deviant' sexuality and heterosexual marriage expectations from their family. The continuous changing bargaining power of both parties, during the period of study by Chinese queers, leads to constant negotiation between the parties.

The language:

The linguistic affinity act as a productive force for queer solidarity which is always transnational and even transracial. The Sinophone queer community offer Chinese queer a way to escape from the national identity as Chinese and a place to stay with people with share background. The formation of the Chinese queer community in the UK is the result of the intertwining of queer identity and ethnic identity.

The solidarity:

Higher visibility of queer did not result in increased solidarity among Chinese queers due to the changing role of the Chinese queer community in the oversea context. Chinese Queer Community in UK no longer act as a sanctuary.

The future of Chinese queers who studying abroad lies in their present, as mobility offer both Chinese queer a new definition of home and the braveness to escape. 'Mobility is life, and mobility is home'.