

Abstract

This project is a study of an iceberg of the new media—the Internet. It examines a case of this extensive subject of research—A Chinese study abroad Bulletin Board System (BBS)—to demonstrate the characteristics of this new public space, as well as examine whether this space is also a site for transnational imagination of both home and abroad by analyzing the discourses from such educated elite social group with study-abroad experiences in the transition period of China. This study analyzes the 14 months long data (postings) from the BBS, and reveals a panorama of the emotions and opinions towards not only the application process itself but also the national identity and nationalism from these study abroad BBS participants.

The writer applies Tanner's (2001) 4 characteristics of the space with regard to the public sphere theories: access to the public space, freedom of communication, structure of deliberation, and the public use of reason, trying to argue that the discourses from the online forum participants represent a kind of transnational imaginary of both home and abroad within this new public space.