Workshop D

Features of Adolescent Idol Worship in Hong Kong and China: Empirical Studies and Cultural Analyses

Speaker: Dr. Xiao-dong Yue

Abstract:
Idol worship generally refers to excessive admiration of and attachment to an idol figure whose talents, achievements, status, or physical appearances are specially recognized and appreciated by his or her fans. Studies show that idols in the modern world could broadly be classified into four categories: pure idols, model-like idols, idol-like models, and pure models. More specifically, pure idols mainly include recreational celebrities in entertainment and sports industries. Model-like idols mainly consist of ideological celebrities in political, academic, literary, business and entertainment arenas. Model-like idols and pure models mainly consist non-celebrities close to adolescents. Selection of these different people reflect not only the different social and psychological needs in adolescents but also the differential idol promotion culture in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Besides, idol worship culture in Hong Kong is featured by valuation of materialistic, romantic and sexual characteristics of those people whom young people idolize, such as being young, wealthy, beautiful/handsome, care-free, and hedonic. This may largely be attributed to commercial promotion of youth and adolescent idols in Hong Kong where idols are heavily marketed for social and financial profit-taking. In contrast, idol worship culture in Mainland Chinese is featured by valuation of ideological and personality characteristics of those people whom young people idolize, such as being goal-oriented, self-determined, multi-talented and sociable. This may largely be attributed to ideological identification of youth and adolescent idols in China where idols are selected through a variety of channels, including self-selection,
parental/teacher recommendation and commercial promotion for enhancing one’s self-being.