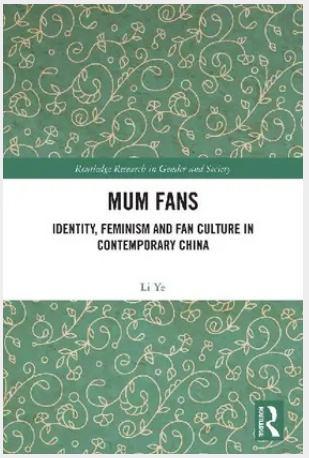
Li

Mum Fans

Identity, Feminism and Fan Culture in Contemporary China



This book explores the phenomenon of “mum fans”: fans who identify themselves as their idols’ mothers and participate in online, data-related fan activities termed “parenting.” With over 50% active fans identifying as mum fans in China, the vast majority of whom have no children and state no desire to have children in real life, it examines their creation of a unique identity against a backdrop of conflicting and ever-evolving cultural influences. Attending to the fact that in traditional Chinese culture, the term “mum” holds both sacred and taboo status, the author considers whether the mum fans’ appropriation of the term represents conformity or rebellion against existing gender norms, and explores the interplay in their practices of a range of influences, including Confucianism, socialism, the one-child policy, liberalism, feminism, pop culture, and fan culture. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, Mum Fans: Identity, Feminism, and Fan Culture in Contemporary China offers analyses of the interrelations that exist between fans, social media, data technology, and the idol industry, thus constituting original and unique study of the cultural foundations of mum fan identities and participants’ data parenting practices as a unique expression of Chinese feminism. It will therefore appeal to scholars of sociology and anthropology with interests in fan cultures, gender, data and algorithm culture, and contemporary Chinese society.

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