Geographies of friendships

T. Bunnell†, S. Yea*, L. Peake**, T. Skelton*** and M. Smith***

†: Asia Research Institute & Department of Geography, National University of Singapore (geotgb@nus.edu.sg – corresponding author)
*: Monash University, Australia
**: Department of Social Sciences and School of Women's Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada
***: Department of Geography, National University of Singapore

Geographies of friendships

I Introduction

Friendship is a means through which people across the world maintain intimate social relations both proximate and at a distance. Friendships, it seems to us, are an important part of what makes us, and our geographies of various kinds, human. Yet this importance is not reflected in published work in human geography. As in other social science disciplines, although decreasingly so in sociology and anthropology, 'friends' and 'friendship' are more likely to be consigned to the preface or acknowledgements of books and articles than to feature in conceptualization or substantive content. This article contributes to a small but growing body of social science work that considers friendship, through its entanglements with relations of power, to cast light on important expressions of being human, in terms of individual emotional and social and cultural well-being (Bell and Coleman, 1989; Dyson, 2010).

Our intended contribution is a specifically geographical one. Geography, we argue, is important in the making, maintenance and dissolution of friendships, as well as in the types of friends that are important within particular space-time settings. Technologies of communication such as digital spaces occupied by personal networking sites such as Facebook, or Cyworld in South Korea, may mean that it is increasingly possible to sustain, and even form, friendships at a distance (Ellison et al, 2007) but, in a Foucauldian sense, material spaces such as schools, universities, workplaces, pubs (Coakley, 2002) and even prisons (Dowler, 2001) continue to constitute the key technologies of friendship. Friendships are also productive of lived spatialities that can confer or deny particular freedoms, fears, and possibilities. Children, for example, may be permitted to go with friends to places that they would not be allowed to visit alone (Skelton, 2000); adults may only wish to enter "unknown" places if in the company of friends; while

whole worlds of spatial possibility may be imagined to open up through making friends in 'high places' or, conversely, to be closed off through having 'friends in low places' (Crow, 1994).

Friendship, an interpersonal relationship between two or more people that is voluntarily entered into and may be similarly dissolved (Bowlby, 2011), like many other social relations and phenomena, clearly has geographical dimensions. But how does conceptualization of friendship advance understanding of human geographies? We identify three ways. The first has to do with geographers' ongoing concern with the social and ontological constitution of its boundaries that has opened the analytical space for accounts of affect. It is through affect, and its manifestation through emotions (see Dewsbury, 2009), that friendship is brought into, and out of, being. While friendships may at first appear to be strongly correlated with social networks based on kin and location – class, nationality – or on embodied materialities – race, sexuality – they cannot be mapped off them; friendships are neither determined *a priori* nor reducible to such networks. Rather it is the tracing of friendships through the affective social worlds that people inhabit that reveals a new dimension to the social while simultaneously contributing to its theoretical understanding.

Second, while friendship networks form a meso-scale of analysis, between dyadic relations and broader structural categories (class, gender, sexuality etc), the latter can also be (re)produced and strengthened through the work of friendship. As such, friendship is not merely important in its own right but also plays a role in broader processes of social ordering and transformation. While the same may be said of 'household' or 'neighbourhood', friendship networks are comparatively more fluid and less spatially bounded. In addition, the sometimes ephemeral nature of friendship brings a new dimension to geographers' well-established analyses of social networks; friendships can be both extremely short lived or very long lasting. The

meanings attached to friendship moreover take on different connotations in different contexts and cannot simply be read off from a western centre or from adult centred accounts.

Third, friendship is a form of intimacy that appears increasingly important in our urbanizing, mobile and interconnected world. It is not necessary to buy into a wholesale shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* formations to suggest that the social glue that holds people together today is often very different from in the past. Nigel Thrift, for example, has sketched the role of friendship and conviviality in 'keeping cities resilient and caring' (Thrift, 2005: 146). Most significantly, according to Thrift, unlike loving couple relationships, friendship offers a 'light-touch' model of intimacy and compassion, which appears to be realistic and achievable today. In this sense friendship in the 21st century speaks significantly to what it means to be human. Friendship, if not a basic human need, suggests a desire for human contact.

The second section of the paper looks to cognate disciplines in the social sciences where there has been reflection on the marginality of friendship and where there are efforts to afford it greater conceptual prominence. This not only provides clues as to why the norms and practices of friendship have not featured prominently in human geography, but also helps us to identify ways in which geographers can contribute to the wider social science literature on friendship. In the third section, we look more specifically at geographical dimensions of certain types of human interactions which nonetheless tend to downplay or even obscure friendship as an important concept. In work on both locally-situated and spatially-extended human interactions, we argue, friendship dynamics have tended to be subsumed in broader categories, most notably 'community' and social/ethnic 'networks' respectively. Revealing this largely hidden presence forms a useful starting point for foregrounding 'friendship' as a concept in human geography research. In the fourth and main section of the paper we detail three sub-fields of human

geography each of which exemplify one of the three aspects of friendship's conceptual significance noted above.

II Friendship in social science: towards a geographical contribution

While thinking and writing on friendship may be traced back to the classical scholarship of Plato and Aristotle (Price, 1989), the concept has not featured prominently in the social sciences. In this section, we review works, mostly in the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, which reflect on friendship's marginality and suggest ways in which the concept may be extended. This forms the starting point for us to reflect critically on friendship's position in human geography and to identify ways in which geographers might also contribute to expanding the conceptual purchase of friendship. Work in the social sciences pulls friendship in two different directions: outwards, to social, economic and political effects beyond personalized, dyadic relations (e.g. Rawlins, 1992; Zelizer 2007); and inwards, to intimate social relations, associated emotions and inter-corporeal affects (e.g. Fine, 1981). These outward- and inward-oriented aspects of friendship each have their own geographies. Our concern is with how they may be integrated into geographical understandings of friendship that are grounded in sites and everyday spatial practices while also being attentive to the ways in which intimate relationships are embedded in wider social and political formations.

Outward and inward aspects of friendship are just one example of the various ways the concept has been discussed. Another broadly cited difference concerns 'positive' and 'negative' framings of friendship. On the one hand, there are longstanding conceptions of friendships as egalitarian relationships, entered into on the basis of free choice (de Montaigne, 1972; cited in Dyson, 2010). On the other hand, understandings of friendships as being bound up with

individual interests and power relations can be traced back to classical philosophy (Bell and Coleman, 1999). Both of these divergent framings continue to inform academic as well as popular understandings of friendship. Our aim is not to choose between them, but to draw upon insights from both. In this vein, Jane Dyson (2010) has shown in her research with girls who collect leaves in the Indian Himalayas that friendship can be a medium through which dominant socio-cultural ideas are at once contested *and* reproduced. Dyson provides an analysis that contextualizes friendship in everyday practices in a particular social and cultural milieu. Recognising the wider contextual variability of friendship may be an opportunity for human geography which prides itself on being attentive to spatialized patterns of diversity. Yet contextual variability presents its own further definitional challenges: even if it is possible to identify workable conceptualizations of friendship in one context, to what extent can these be said to apply in other times and other places?

It is important to note that similar concerns may be raised with many other terms that have a much wider currency in human geography and the social sciences more broadly. It is recognized, for example, that there are many patriarchies that are locally embedded rather than one overarching patriarchy; this has not weakened that term's analytical purchase, but rather enhanced it. The absence of a universal understanding of friendship is therefore not in itself problematic, especially given that friendships exist in different forms in all societies and are increasingly spatially extenuated. However, any geographically sensitive attempt to understand and define friendship must clearly consider the term in relation to kinship ties as well as to other forms of intimate non-kin relationships, such as civil union and marriage. With regard to the former, friendships and family relations are not mutually exclusive, but an important distinction concerns possibilities for ending friendships in ways that are not possible with kin. Unlike family

ties, in other words, friendships do not simply exist (although this is not to say that kinship relations are fixed and require no 'work' to maintain them). Rather, friendships require – and may even be defined in terms of – active, ongoing and necessarily reciprocal work (e.g. Vertovec, 2004). Similarly, friendship is a far less stable bond than that of marriage or civil unions which are formalised through a contract with agreed to principles entered into by both parties. For this reason, as Rawlins (1992, in Tillmann-Healy, 2003) notes, friendships 'have no clear normative status' since they are non-binding by virtue of the absence of blood ties or formalised contracts and are thus the weakest and most amorphous of social bonds. As regards other non-kin relations besides marriage, studies of intimacy in the social sciences to date have primarily focused on sexual relationships (Giddens, 1992). Much of this work centres around intimacy in the context of commodified sexual encounters, particularly in sex tourism (in anthropology see for example Brennan, 2004). While sexual relations may develop from or even lead to friendships, there is clearly a much wider set of intimate relations – friendships – that have received relatively little academic attention, including in geography.

So why has friendship occupied a marginal position in human geography and what might a geographical perspective on friendship mean? In what follows, we seek to answer these questions by taking clues from work in sociology and anthropology. Michael Eve (2002) attributes what he sees as the marginalization, even trivialization, of friendship in sociology to two main issues. The first concerns a tendency to associate friendship only with dyadic, informal relations. Friendship is considered largely to float free of 'external' conditions of social and economic life and is thus deemed to have little or no 'structural' significance (e.g. Werking, 1997). The second issue for Eve is broader, yet related, and concerns assumptions about the nature of the modern world. While in 'traditional' societies power and social structure was/is

7

based on instrumental, personal relations, these are considered by sociologists to be at best residual in 'modern' social contexts 'where one is not supposed to "use" friends, where the ideology of merit is strong, and "nepotism" is disapproved of' (Eve, 2002: 389). Unsurprisingly, the suggestions made by Eve for extending the significance of 'friendship' concern moving beyond personalized, dyadic relations. Rather than focusing on one-to-one relations, for example, Eve highlights the existence of chains of connections and groupings or clusterings of friend-like relations. Job 'contacts' are thus said to involve more than just dyadically conceived friendships and entail effects of a wider series of relationships. As we have already noted, this serves to extend the term outwards, prompting consideration of the 'backcloth' or 'ambiance' for friendship practices.

These sociological deliberations cast light on some geographical dimensions of friendship. Most clearly, extending the term outwards serves to bring into view spatial locations or sites – especially around educational spaces and workplaces – in, and through, which friendships are made and maintained. More broadly, attending to context, it is possible to examine social and cultural geographical variation in such issues as: what is deemed to constitute an appropriate friendship? Who is friends with whom, under what circumstances? And with what kind of expectations and consequences? While the importance of contextualization for sociologists concerns the possibility of scaling up friendship into more-than-dyadic groupings, geographers might be expected to proffer a more active or constitutive role for space and place. In addition, efforts by sociologists to demonstrate wider social, economic and political effects of friendship suggest other possible geographies. Ray Pahl's examination of the role of various intellectual elite friendship groupings in 'effecting or preventing change in Britain's cultural or economic life' (2002: 418) evokes network spatialities. Social capital and associated networks –

including friendship and neighbourly interactions – have featured prominently in sociology for well over a decade (Putnam, 1995). However, in taking social networks as their primary unit of analysis, such work has often overlooked the interpersonal spatial dynamics of friendships. Given sociology's more general 'relative indifference to analyzing informal ties like friendship at all' (Adams and Allan, 1998: 2), it might reasonably be expected that such everyday practices of friendship would have received more attention in other disciplines such as anthropology or social psychology.[i]

While sociologists conducting recent reviews of 'friendship' certainly imagine the concept to be much more central to anthropology than to their own discipline, some anthropologists do not see things that way. Fernando Santos-Granero has suggested recently that, 'there is a paucity of major studies on the subject of friendship in tribal societies, where kinship is made to encompass the entire field of sociality, and friendship appears as a subsidiary relation' (Santos-Granero, 2007: 10). Existing studies of Amerindian social life for example have tended to emphasize consanguinity i.e., relation through kinship, and affinity i.e., relationship through marriage, to the neglect of non-kin relationships. To Santos-Granero, this forms part of a more widespread tendency among anthropologists to presume that friendship has little chance of flourishing in societies where kinship structures remain strong (though see Dyson, 2010). A way in which to extend friendship in anthropologies of traditional societies, therefore, is simply to consider it as a form of interpersonal relationship that may be differentiated from kinship and affinity. As Santos-Granero puts it, people 'seek out each other's company, exhibit mutually helping behaviour, and are joined by links of mutual generosity and trust that go beyond those expected between kin or affines' (Santos-Granero, 2007: 2). The categories are not mutually exclusive but Santos-Granero shows that friend-like relations such as trading partnerships in

9

Amazonia can create bonds which are qualitatively different from, and even stronger than, those based on kin or affinity alone. More widely, as anthropologists have increasingly focused their 'ethnographic gaze on Western societies', they have been forced to 'confront contexts where unstable networks of intimacy, frequently unrelated to kinship ties, constitute key arenas of social interaction and identity formation' (p. 5).

Two ways in which work on friendship in anthropology contrasts with sociologists' concerns also help to build geographical perspectives. The first relates to the boundary-crossing potential of friendships. Some sociologists have cast friendships as being of minor significance because they largely fail to cross key sociological boundaries such as class (Garrett, 1989; Rawlins, 1992), but recent anthropological work points to possibilities for relations of friendship to 'transcend the divisions imposed by such collective mechanisms of inclusion and identity as kinship ties, settlement membership, or ethnic affiliation' (Santos-Granero, 2007: 13). While such possibilities vary from one historical and geographical context to another, the potential clearly exists precisely because of the personal nature of friend-like affinities. At the same time, given that friendship connotes a relation to others, it always involves racial, class, sexual and gender dynamics which (re)create what is acceptable and what is not. Geographers must attend to the ways in which friendships can enable boundary crossing socio-spatial relations and yet in other cases also reinforce geographies of exclusion and 'distinction' (Bourdieu, 1989). In geography, Phil Hubbard's (2001) work on the ways public space is (heteronormatively) "sexed" and transgressed by gay groups, for example, points to important possibilities for unpacking the role of gay friendships in the politics of public place (un)making. A second point of differentiation between sociological and anthropological perspectives follows on from this and concerns the value afforded to the personal and non-instrumental dimensions of friendship.

While these are viewed as a source of friendship's marginalization among many sociologists, some anthropologists consider affective, intimate and emotional aspects to be important in their own right. These too, clearly have geographical dimensions, not least in terms of spatial practices of friendship formation, maintenance and dissolution.

In sum, work in both sociology and anthropology allows us to identify ways in which issues of geography may be important to developing further social science research on friendship. Whether contained by, or cutting across, conventional categories of social identity, and whether social and more-than-dyadic or understood as highly intimate one-to-one relations, friendships are both produced through, and productive of, geographies of various kinds. Moments of friendship formation can be viewed through their constitutive geographies, whether specific sites such as neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces or broader contexts, 'ambiances' and 'habituses', including both public and private spheres. Meanwhile, the processual nature of friendship means that life courses often map complex network spatialities of friend-like relations. If this is true in tribal or traditional societies that have conventionally been the focus of anthropological research, then it is even more so in modern societies that are characterized by high levels of human spatial mobility and sophisticated technologies of long distance social relations (Allan, 1996). In the next section, we examine ways in which existing work on social relations that is framed geographically – both in situ and at a distance – has often overlooked or obscured friendship.

III Friendship's hidden geographies

The most straightforward geography of friendship is one that we have alluded to already and concerns variation in what friendship is or means in different socio-cultural contexts. Attending

to such contextual variation is about much more than differences between modern, western societies (conventionally studied by sociologists) and 'other', traditional societies (conventionally or stereotypically studied by anthropologists). In addition, it is important to resist 'ethnocentric evolutionism' (Smart, 1999: 130) in presuming that varieties of friendship find their most advanced expression in western societies or in the English speaking world. Studies of 'friendship' in other regions of the world – inverted commas here denote the fact that most people in most regions of the world would not use the English language term – are not merely important in their own right but potentially inform analyses in/of Anglophone contexts. While adjectival differentiations such as 'best friend' or 'true friend' have been noted in English (Pahl, 2002), for example, other languages may have specific terms for forms of human relations which are conventionally labelled generically as 'friendship' in English. This is not the occasion for elaboration of such empirical variety but we note Korean as a language in which a complex array of terms is used to express hierarchies of interpersonal relationships.[ii] Our concern in this section is with the fact that the (English) terms 'friendship' or 'friend' rarely appear even in Anglophone social science work that deals with geographies of social relations. We consider two differently spatialized conceptions of human interaction – localized community and social networks – which have largely overlooked or even served to obscure friendship dynamics.

1   Friendship in localized communities

The neglect of friendship as a specified area of research, we argue, can be explained in part by the way in which 'community' and 'neighbourhood' have been perceived in the social sciences. There has been a tendency to view these spatial entities through romantic, even nostalgic lenses. By virtue of the very fact that they are considered to exist in the first place, communities and

neighbourhoods have often been treated as harmoniously functioning units of human interaction. As a result, the inter-personal dynamics of relations within localized communities and neighbourhoods remain by and large unpacked (with important exceptions – see, for example, Atkinson et al, 2009). Community and neighbourhood studies tend to assume certain types of local inter-relations, cohesions and solidarities from the spatial unit of analysis, rather than making the nature of the relations the focus of empirical investigation.

Neighbourhoods are conventionally defined, at least in part, according to their social aspects. This is evident from Hallman's (1984, in Galster, 2001: 2111) definition of: 'a limited territory within a larger urban area where people inhabit dwellings and interact socially'; or as, 'Geographical units within which certain social relations exist' (Downs, 1981, in Galster, 2001: 2111). However, the precise nature of the social relationships that "gel" neighbourhoods together is rarely the subject of serious examination, despite the seeming consensus that sentimental attachments between people in a local place are central to the meaning and experience of a neighbourhood, or indeed a community. Much like the recent work on social networks in economic geography which is discussed in more detail below, those who do delve further into the relationships that operate within neighbourhoods tend to focus on various "neighbourhood effects" or extant outcomes of social cohesion and interpersonal relations in local areas – for example in voting patterns (Johnston et al, 2005) or in the formation of social capital (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Thus, whilst Kearns and Parkinson (2001: 2013) have made a case for the 'significance of neighbourhood' in a globalised world, a focus on friendships does not appear as a key part of this renewed attention to the local in urban or social geography. Among the few noted exceptions in geography are Bridge's (2002) work which seeks to distinguish between 'associations' and 'friendships' at the neighbourhood level, and Warren's (1975) important early

work on the social interactions, sentimental attachments and allegiances in 'black' neighbourhoods in the urban US, including friendship and kinship networks as well as interpersonal and voluntary associations. Methodologically, more recent research in the area seems to have largely departed from the ethnographic and participant observation style approaches that produced Warren's rich insights.

Outside Western contexts, critiques of the romanticization of community in development studies have led to various efforts to explore community dynamics, including intra-community conflict (as well as negotiations over its resolution), inequalities and competition, often expressed along gender, class or caste lines. Guijt and Shah, for example, have noted the reification and simplification of community as a concept in sustainable development, arguing that the idea of community can be misleading since it overlooks, '[I]nequalities, oppressive social hierarchies and discrimination... and instead enthusiasm is generated for the cooperative and harmonious ideal promised by the imagery of the "community"' (Guijt and Shah, 1998: 7-8). Whilst this work has not explicitly addressed friendship, in recognizing the 'myth of community', analytic ground is opened to begin engaging with the micro- and everyday relations within these locally-bounded units, including those possibly premised on conflict, resistance and friendships that extend beyond affective and kinship ties.

2   Friendship in networks

Social network studies have the potential to overcome some of the conceptual and methodological blind spots of neighbourhood/localized community analysis. Rather than assuming that friendship and/or other kinds of social interactions can simply be read off from *a priori* spatial units, social network studies take the relationships themselves as the starting point

14

for and focus of empirical analysis. Examples of this kind of approach stretch back at least as far as the 1960s (e.g. Mitchell, 1969). As Mitchell elaborated in introducing an influential edited volume on personal relationships in Central African towns, the primary spur for social network analyses was recognition of the inadequacy of structural anthropological approaches to understanding spatially unbounded social groups. Urban communities in India and Africa, for example, 'lacked single pervasive structural characteristics in terms of which their morphologies could be depicted' (p. 9) and so demanded methodological innovation. With the rise of the 'Manchester School' of urban anthropology in the 1960s (of which Mitchell formed part) came attention to friendship and acquaintances as part of social networks. Perhaps the key distinguishing feature of the Manchester School as compared to other forms of social network analysis is methodological. Today, strands of psychological and mathematical work on networks of connections or communication, tend to read or map 'friendship' from large quantitative data sets rather than through examining the meanings of associated linkages for the actors concerned (e.g. Liben-Nowell et al, 2005). This is in contrast with actor-centred approaches, as pioneered by the Manchester School, that avoid conflating high contact rates with levels of intimacy, and attempt to understand the depth and meaning of relations rather than merely observing them.

More recent work on social and ethnic networks in social science shows further evidence of some of the very problems to which social network analysis originally sought to respond. One such problem concerns the tendency to assume and/or to fix in advance the 'boundaries' of a networked social group to be studied. Early diagnosis of this tendency is evident in critiques of work on gangs that presumed measurable and definable numbers of people who formed part of the group concerned (Ho, 1984: 8). There are, of course, degrees of membership of gangs, the degree or level of membership of any individual may fluctuate over time, and membership may

not always mean friendship. The wider implication is that forms of human relations, including friendship, cannot simply be assumed from group membership but need to be investigated using actor-centred methods. As Mitchell (1969: 4) argues, the focus should not be, 'on the attributes of the people in the network but rather on the characteristics of the linkages in their relationship to one another'.

In work on transnational networks that has proliferated over the past two decades, social networks – whether in situ or cross-border – often appear to be delimited by ethnicity. A particular 'diaspora' group or 'transnational community' is identified *a priori* for study and 'their' interrelations are reduced to a matter of shared ethnicity (see Samers, 2003 on ethnic essentialism in diaspora studies). One of the effects of this is to obscure friendship ties, intra- as well as trans-ethnic. The point is not that all networked social interaction needs to be re-centred around friendship but that by reducing human interactions to a matter of 'ethnic networking', a range of more specific human interrelations (including consanguinity, affinity, home tie obligations or even enmity as well as friendships) are rendered invisible.[iii]

While there is no shortage of geographical and sociological research examining the economic potential of social and ethnic networks, this varies in the degree to which friendship and other forms of human relations are specified. In the context of understanding the global(izing) economy, economic geographers have engaged with networks in order to explore subjects such as job seeking behaviour (Bian and Ang, 1997), and the general supply of information or building of important relations in enhancing and promoting competitive advantage. As in diaspora studies, however, the social and ethnic networks within this literature are often taken as given rather than forming the subject of further investigation. Networks are usually reduced to the heuristic value of the relations that form them in the sphere of the

economy. Despite the fact that trust, rapport and allegiances are all identified as central to the success of these networks in economic development, none of these sentiments, all of which are integral aspects of friendships, are actively examined in this literature. It is important to note, however, that there is a strand of anthropological work on the spaces by/in which social networks are made, performed and strengthened, focusing on the karaoke bars, hostess clubs and restaurants where they are forged or on the symbolic interactions such as gift giving through which they are sustained (Yang, 1994; Smart, 1999). With its emphasis on ethnographic modes of observation and interaction, this work offers the potential to take friendship as the subject of analysis, spatialized in specific sites as well as through extended social networks.

To sum up this section, two key spatializations of human interaction – neighbourhood/community and network – often tend to overlook or obscure friendship. Actor-centred social network analysis associated with the Manchester School in urban anthropology and more recent ethnographic work on trust and gift relations are exceptions. Even here though, 'friendship' has rarely featured as a central concept. A similar story prevails over most areas of human geography research: friendship(s) are implied and sometimes even mentioned, but friendship itself is rarely conceptually or analytically central. In the third and final section of the paper, we identify three strands of human geography research published in the English language which hold the potential and may act as a starting point for friendship to feature more prominently in the discipline in the future.

IV   Friendship in human geography: Three strands of possibility

1   Geographies of emotion and affect

Although the 'emotional turn' has gained significant purchase in geography (Anderson and Smith, 2001), issues of human emotion and affect have hardly been examined in relation to friendship. Yet not only do the affective dimensions that can lead to the formation of friendships question the ontological nature of the social but relations of friendship may also be playing an enhanced role in determining the social realm. While emotions can be understood as ways of knowing, being and doing, as bodily experiences that can be expressed personally and inter-personally, affect is what forms the messy, pre-cognitive and inexpressible 'substratum' that circulates between and connects bodies (see Pile, 2010). Emotions then have been called 'tangible manifestations of affect' (Dewsbury, 2009: 23) and affect 'a transpersonal *capacity* which a body has to be affected (through an affection) and to affect (as the result of modifications)' (Anderson 2006: 735, emphasis in the original). Affect then defines what a body can do (Pile, 2010: 11) and is thus fundamentally social; as Woodward and Lea (2009: 157) state, affect is 'a materialist account of bodily association'. Friendship reminds us that affecting and being affected is indeed emotional labour, requiring the production and reproduction, for example, of mutual trust, reciprocal care, and fondness. As such, affect is the 'bedrock' of the emotional work of friendships.

Affect circulates between subjects resulting in an increase or decrease of their potential to act (Thrift, 2003: 104). It is this potentiality to act/to not act, to do/to not do, that 'greases the wheels' of subjects' ability to solidify habitual regimes of practice that are kept in place through deeply routinized performances, yet that also have the potential for alteration and the reinvention of the normative associations attached to them. Friendships, both within and beyond kinship, have yet to be seen, however, by geographers as significant performances that have the potential to produce (or not) sociality and sociability; it is partially through social geographies of

18

embodied encounters between friends, both human and non-human, that emotional states such as love, joy, happiness, trust, hope, but also despair, sadness, resentment, fear, envy, guilt, shame, disgust, embarrassment, and so on, are materialized.

Geographical research on these encounters has much to tell us about the social (and being human) yet categorical based accounts of human identity – of being racialized, classed, gendered, and sexualised – have largely failed to recognize these performative aspects of friendships and of the spaces through which they are played out. However, as we suggested earlier, shifts have occurred in everyday life blurring the role of both family members and friends and potentially enhancing the role of friendship in the construction of the social realm through 'the realms of intimacy and collective experience associated with modernisation (Oliker 1998; Pahl 2000)' (Bowlby 2011: 125). In this sense, friendship has been an absent presence in constructions of the social in human geography. Moreover, the relational ontologies of emotions (as interpersonal) and of affect (as transpersonal) support an ontology of the social understood not in fixed hierarchical and binary terms of structures but in terms of continuous fluidity, mobility and circulations of bodily encounters that understands relations in a context of always being and becoming (see Woodward and Lea, 2009), suggesting the theoretical importance of affect to the (re)production of everyday life.

Friendship is deeply situated within the social, and taking such dimensions of friendship, *and* their spatialities (such as holding hands, talking on Skype, or Cyworld) seriously, by not reducing their analytic to the personal or perceiving emotions as ephemera, but rather by pointing to their importance as a form of 'social glue' (Spencer and Pahl, 2006: 1), makes possible not only an analysis of friendship beyond the 'dyadic level' but also an identification of its broader social significance to analyses of difference and power (Adams and Allan, 1998).

Women's friendships, for example, so often considered of little relevance except to feminist scholars, often cross private-public spheres, revealing 'hidden solidarities' (p. 1) and 'personal communities' (p. 2), raising issues such as conceptualizations of citizenship. Recent research by Peake (2010) among queer communities in Guyana, highlights the importance, yet transience, of physical spaces and the tentative emergence of virtual spaces to the resilience of networks of friendship. Queer networks of friendship are not just about fun and pleasure; they are also essential to physical and mental well-being and long term survival. Other work on homosociality, particularly in the global south, has drawn on examples of same-sex connection, reciprocity and friendship to think through notions of solidarity and transnational engagement (Sangtin Writers and Nagar, 2006; Dave, 2010), exploring questions of desire, intimacy and the links between non-erotic and erotic same-sex relationships (Gunkel, 2009). That these relationships and networks are also largely invisible to those outside their orbit (Valentine, 1993), reveals potential heteronormative underlying assumptions about the non-importance of friendship to knowledge production.

Assessing intimate relations of friendships can also reveal the differing capacities that individuals have for 'affect and to be affective' and thus their ability to resist, or merely cope and survive (Tolia-Kelly, 2006: 213). In the case of Sri Lankan female migrants in Beirut, Smith (2010) demonstrates that the focus on the emotional dimensions of women's sexual 'transgressions' re-emphasize the idea that actions are not always forms of resistance but coping mechanisms or ways of re-working their situations in spaces which offer few other possibilities of response. Studies of intimacy beyond individual 'private' relationships also show that human relatedness, understood through flows of affect, and their manipulation, is a way to assess the associations between, for example, self and other, human and non-human, and nation and

national neighbour (see Povinelli 2006). Some further possibilities for elaborating the relevance of friendship are outlined below by exploring some of its emotive dimensions in children's and young people's geographies and its role in reproducing social and cultural life.

2   Children's and Young People's Geographies

Friendship is experienced, articulated and presumed to be an extremely important element in children's and young people's lives. Friendless children are assumed to be lonely, socially inadequate and even dysfunctional. Friendships can be empowering as children and young people learn from each other, reinforce senses of self-esteem and have opportunities to broaden their spatialities. However, child and youth friendships can have dark sides. Friendships can have a negative effect on young people's life chances, self-esteem and willingness to engage with those who are different from their main friendship group. There are worries about children making friends with the 'wrong sort' and being 'led astray' from the values and expectations of their families. Bullying and 'ganging up against' children is often carried out on a basis of friendship. This produces spaces and practices of fear for the targets but the reinforcement of loyalty and obedience for the bullies (Newman et al, 2006; Winton, 2005). Despite such significance, there is relatively little research that links young people's geographies with friendship, particularly its formation, significance and spatiality. What exists in geography is substantive work about the importance of play to children (Skelton, 2009; Woolley et al, 2006) but very little research on *whom* this play might be *with*. In this section we focus on children's and young people's friendships and their links with socialisation, identity formation and spatialities. These processes are central to young people's and children's friendship work. It is important to recognise that they, and their peers, are agents in their own development and spatial

experiences. Children and young people are not only socialised by adults and institutions but also forge their own identities and geographies that shape lives and opportunities into adulthood.

Researching the impact of socio-economic status on children's identities, Sutton (2009) shows that British children in low-income families are socially (and spatially) excluded at school and in their wider communities. They find it harder to make and sustain friendships and hence their poverty is about social and cultural disadvantage as much as material hardship. In a comparison between children at different ends of the poverty-wealth continuum, aged 8-13, friends were consistently listed as extremely important in their everyday lives. Consequently children were at pains to fit within the desirable norms and values of their peers. Friendships play an important role in children's socialization and social ordering. Sutton showed that the desire to belong to a friendship group was powerful enough to establish senses of intensely segregated, separate groups who felt they had nothing in common with each other's norms, values and customs. Hence cultural and spatial practices that may be detrimental to education, skill acquisition and ambition can be inculcated by friendship formation that enforces and reinforces social and spatial segregation which continues into adulthood.

Schools are important sites of socialization and social reproduction. Within such spaces, friendship formations and collapses are major features of identity production. Pressure to conform to social ordering of gendered and sexual identities is extremely strong within schools (Epstein and Johnson, 1998). However, children establish complex ways of resisting or re-working the normative practices of these social expectations; through friendships, they have the confidence to develop alternative identities and the possibility of transformation. Morris-Roberts (2004) examined British girls'[iv] aged 14 to 15 school-based friendships and the ways in which these were effective in the production and contestation of femininity and compulsory

heterosexuality. The girls narrated and enacted boundaries between different friendship groups through the use of a range of identity markers based on appearance and selected spaces to hang out. Different groups of girls practiced inclusionary and exclusionary tactics of friendship through particular spatialities to enable identities to be articulated and performed. Through their supportive friendships, the 'alternative' girls (who resisted heteronormative expectations) found spaces within or on the boundaries of the school to escape the daily marginalization of their resistive identities. For American teenage girls in a multi-racial high school in Los Angeles there is strikingly less flexibility in friendship formation and apparently no possible spaces for playing out racially resistive identities. Friendships were heavily marked by racial reductionism and socialization; the spatialities of their friendship groupings in the school campus were based on racial segregation (Thomas, 2009). Racially segregated friendships that are 'forced' into formation at school are not unravelled in public or home spaces. Hence the spatial and social formations and orderings of racialised subjectivities in the school are translated into wider spaces and reinforced as the girls grow up.

For young women the discovery of non-normative spaces within sites of strong socialization and control of identity formation is an important function of friendship; it allows individuality to thrive but can also reinforce social ordering. In the South Wales Rhondda Valleys, Skelton (2000) demonstrated that despite powerful discourses of a woman's place being 'in the home', teenage girls were able to resist such socio-cultural expectations through friendship. Resistive practices against normative gender roles were a basis for the formation of friendships *and* made possible because of the support the friendships gave. Through gathering together as friends the girls expanded their mobilities and experienced different spatialities. One such gathering space was a community project that was particularly valued because of the new

23

friendships formed there. These friendships crossed boundaries of neighbourhood, school and age and provided a sense of belonging to place but also chances to safely expand active geographies to other public spaces. Dyson's work on social reproduction and girls' friendships in the mountainous area of Uttarakhand, North India provides an insight into the importance of friendship and alliances young girls form while leaf collecting in the forest. Friends co-operated in reciprocal ways to work efficiently and meet adult expectations of leaf collection; friends were those who were good and fair co-workers. However, friendships were volatile, particularly if there were problems between the girls' kin groups. The girls articulated the need to be flexible about friends because of family, village and seasonal elements that could end some friendships. In North India, therefore, the girls' friendships were part of the work of social identity *conformity* rather than *resistance*.

In sum, it is clear that friendship is extremely important in children's and young people's lives. It plays a range of possible roles in different spatial, cultural and social contexts. It can reinforce difference between socio-economic groups but provide the context for resistance and differentiation within gender groupings. It can create new ways of doing identity and challenging social expectations but be subsumed within kin relations and normative gender and age roles. Not only does this demand further academic study in its own right but it also has resonances for examining geographies of friendships among adults; this remains a neglected area in geography.

3   Geographies of mobility and transnationalism

Friendship is arguably assuming greater social significance in the context of increasing human mobility and long distance connections that characterize lives in the 21st century. Existing practices of connection, community and intimacy that have been sustained primarily through

24

geographies of (mostly) stasis, are thrown into flux under contemporary conditions of globalization. While this has implications for a range of intimate social relations, it is specifically friendship that appears to be gaining prominence in recent research. Walsh's work on British expatriates in Dubai, for example, begins by examining transient heterosexual intimacy but concludes by noting the prevalence of platonic (friendship) ties; 'the fun associated with performances of transient heterosexuality is not only in sex itself, but also in the practices of drinking, dancing and socializing that occur among friends in this context' (Walsh, 2007: 527). These young men and women often found (mainly same-sex) friendships to be more meaningful and dependable forms of intimate attachment than those with their sexual partners (see also Thrift, 2005). Friendship may not be a substitute for romantic love, but can be seen as an 'additional' model of intimacy for highly mobile, urban ways of life (Walsh, 2007).

Practices of friendships through/in mobile social life offer further possibilities for those interested in the everyday and micro-geographies of transnationality. Practices of friendship are reconfigured through a range of transnational mobilities, producing particular (re)configurations of social geographies in destinations, places of transit and even in sites of origin. Yea's study of trafficked Filipinas and Russian women in South Korea found that these women forged new solidarities on returning 'home' (Yea, forthcoming). These solidarities crystallized into strong bonds of friendship as women felt they could only talk about their experiences to those who had 'been through it' themselves. In addition, the stigma of being 'sex trafficked' or 'failed heroines' in migration meant that friendships formed previously in the Philippines and Russia often dissolved as these returnees become socially and geographically inscribed as moral and economic outcasts. In contrast, Conradson and Latham's (2005) study of young New Zealanders residing in London showed the mobility of already existing friendship networks. Friendship

networks formed in New Zealand (in hometowns, at university and so on) were reproduced within the transnational destination of London. Friendship networks embedded young New Zealanders in London and New Zealand simultaneously as they lived and socialized primarily with their friends from New Zealand *in* London. Conradson and Latham note that their participants' movement was 'bound up with those of their friends' (p. 295). Such an emphasis is important in turning analytic attention to friendship, unsettling the prevailing emphasis on kin and neighbourhood in seeking to understand the geographies of transnational social life.

In a similar vein, Bunnell's (2010) work with Malay seafarers in Liverpool recognized the limitations of a perspective on transnationalism based solely on a consideration of mobile geographies of ethnic or kin-based networks, even where these axes of identity inform part of the potential "pool" from which friends in the city may be most readily drawn. Bunnell's work also addresses some important questions about transnational local places for geographers interested in friendships and mobility: how - and *where* - do places of friendship develop transnationally? How are friendships productive of new spaces in/through which to enact these intimate social relations? To date, work in migration geography has been more attuned to answering these questions in terms of ethnicity/nationality and neighbourhood rather than friendship. Yet the significance of the Malay seafarers' community club house was as a place where friends – not just members of ethnic networks – came together to chat, reminisce, share news and engage in the sorts of 'positive sociality' that are the precious stuff of close friendships (Bunnell, 2007).

Other important strands of work reveal much less positive imbrications of friendship in contemporary transnational mobility projects. Yea's work speaks particularly strongly to the ways (betrayals of) trust and trustworthiness by supposed friends figure in mobility aspirations of young women in the Philippines wishing to migrate abroad for work. She found the informal

labour recruitment industry that forms part of a broader well-established formal migration industry in the Philippines, rests in large part on an appropriation – and misuse – of trust in friendship. Interviewees who migrated to Singapore for work opportunities as waitresses or hostesses had often been deceived by trusted friends about the nature and conditions of their work, placing them in situations of debt bondage and inducing lack of choice in performing sexual labour. When asked about her relationship to the person who recruited her, one participant stated that her recruiter had been one of her best friends since elementary school.[v] Such findings dissemble the prevailing view that good intentions and shared aspirations always inform gendered migration networks, whilst "bad" outcomes reside in the explanatory domain of external actors within migrant routes and destinations and structural inequalities within the global economy.[vi]

V Conclusion

Friendships, like other forms of social relations, have important geographical dimensions. As we have shown, friendships are forged, sustained and dissolved in and through networks, while also variously opening and foreclosing human spatial possibilities. We have also sought to demonstrate that the concept of friendship, in turn, has much to contribute to progress in various strands of human geography. Rather than attempting to provide directions in a large range of subdisciplinary arenas where geographies of friendships may be significant, we have focused on three strands that push the boundaries of research in human geography: (1) work on geographies of affect and emotion where work on friendship speaks to geographers' ongoing concern with the ontological construction of the human and the social; (2) work on children's and young people's geographies in which friendship is not only important at the level of personal development but

also (re)produces wider processes of social ordering and transformation; and (3) work on geographies of mobility and transnationalism in which friendship appears to be important for understanding a world of increased human spatial movement and social relations at a distance. These three strands are by no means exhaustive. Other possibilities could include: spatial practices of friendship and trust in economic geography; inter-state relationships sustained through political meetings, town twinning and even geopolitical infrastructural investments such as 'friendship bridges' in political geography; and the more-than-human dimensions of friendships and other intimate relations in work on animal geographies. All of these areas, and more, have the potential to demonstrate not merely that friendships have geographical dimensions but also that friendship as a concept can help to nourish understanding of the complex geographies of human lives.

References:

Adams, R. G. and Allan, G. 1998: Contextualizing friendship. In Adams, R. G. and Allan, G., editors, *Placing friendship in context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-17.

Allan, G. 1996: *Kinship and friendship in modern Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, K. and Smith, S. J. 2002: Editorial: emotional geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, 7-10.

Atkinson, R., Dowling, R. and McGuirk, P. 2009: Guest editorial: Home/Neighbourhood/City/+. *Environment and Planning A* 41, 2816-2822.

Bell, S. and Coleman, S. 1999: The anthropology of friendship: Enduring themes and future possibilities. In Bell, S. And Coleman, S., editors, *The Anthropology of Friendship*, Oxford: Berg, 1-19.

Berlant, L., editor, 2000: *Intimacy.* University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.

Bian, Y. and Ang, S. 1997: Guanxi networks and job mobility in China and Singapore. *Social Forces* 75, 981-1005.

Bourdieu, P. 1989: *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.

Bowlby, S. 2011: Friendship, co-presence and care: neglected spaces. *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, 605-622.

Bridge, D. 2002: The Neighbourhood and Social Networks. *CNR Paper 4*, 1-32.

Brennan, D. 2004: *What's love got to do with it? Transnational desires and sex tourism in the Dominican Republic*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Bunnell, T. 2007: Post-maritime transnationalization: Malay seafarers in Liverpool. *Global Networks* 7, 412-429.

Bunnell, T. 2010: Routes of identity: Malay Liverpool and the limits of transnationalism. *Pacific Affairs* 83, 459-479.

Coakley, L. 2002: All over the place, in town, in the pub, everywhere – a social geography of women's friendship in Cork. *Irish Geography* 35, 40-50.

Conradson, D. and Latham, A. 2005: Friendship, networks and transnationality in a world city: antipodean transmigrants in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, 287-305.

Crow, D. 1994: My friends in low places: building identity for place and community. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12, 403-419.

Dave, N. 2010: To render real the imagined: An ethnographic history of lesbian community in India. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 35, 595-619.

Dewsbury, J. D. 2009: Affect. In Thrift, N. and Kitchin, R., editors, *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography,* London: Elsevier, 20-24.

Dowler, L. 2001: Till death do us part: masculinity, friendship, and nationalism in Belfast, Northern Ireland. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19, 53-71.

Dyson, J. 2010: Friendship in practice: girls' work in the Indian Himalayas. *American Ethnologist* 37, 482-498.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C. and Lampe, C. 2007: The benefits of Facebook "friends": Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12, article 1.[http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html]

Entrikin, N. 2003: Placing trust. *Ethics, Place and Environment* 6, 259-271.

Epstein, D. and Johnson R., editors, 1998: *Schooling sexualities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Ettlinger, N. 2003 Cultural economic geography and a relational and microspace approach to trust, rationalities, networks, and change in collaborative workplaces. *Journal of Economic Geography* 3, 145-171.

Eve, M. 2002: Is friendship a sociological topic? *European Journal of Sociology* 43, 386-409.

Fine, G. A. 1981: Friends, impression management, and preadolescent behavior. In Stone, G. P. and Farberman, H. A., editors, *Social psychology through symbolic interaction*. New York: John Wiley, 257-272.

Forrest, R. and Kearns, A. 2001: Social cohesion, social capital and the neighbourhood. *Urban Studies* 38, 2125-2143.

Galster, G. 2001: On the nature of neighbourhood. *Urban Studies* 38, 2111-2124.

Garrett, S. 1989: Friendship and the social order. In Porter, R. and Tomaselli, S., editors, *The dialectics of friendship*. London: Routledge.

Giddens, A. 1992: *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goodwin, M. H. 2006: *The hidden life of girls: Games of stance, status and exclusion*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Griffiths, V. 1995: *Adolescent girls and their friends: A feminist ethnography*. Brookfield: Ashgate.

Guijt, I. And Shah, M. K., editors, 1998: *The myth of community: Gender issues in participatory development*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Gunkel, H. 2009: "What's identity got to do with it?" Rethinking intimacy and homosociality in contemporary South Africa. *NORA: Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 17, 206-221.

Herzfeld, M. 1997: *Cultural intimacy: Social poetics in the nation-state*. New York: Routledge.

Hey, V. 1996: *The company she keeps: An ethnography of girls' friendships*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Ho, K. C. 1984: *Networks of interpersonal relations: a comparative study of friendship, kinship and neighbourhood relations*. Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Social Science, National University of Singapore.

Hubbard, P. 2001: Sex zones: intimacy, citizenship and public space. *Sexualities* 4, 51-71.

Jeffrey, C. and Dyson, J., editors, 2008: *Telling young lives: Portraits in global youth.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Johnston, R., Propper, C., Sarker, R., Jones, K., Bolster, A. and Burgess, S. 2005: Neighbourhood social capital and neighbourhood effects. *Environment and Planning A* 37, 1443-459.

Kearns, A. and Parkinson, M. 2001: The significance of neighbourhood. *Urban Studies* 38, 2103-2110.

Liben-Nowell, D., Novak, J., Kumar, R., Raghavan, P. and Tomkins, A. 2005: Geographic routing in social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 102, 11623-11628.

Morris-Roberts, K. 2004: Girls' friendships, 'distinctive individuality' and socio-spatial practices of (dis)identification. *Children's Geographies* 2, 237-255.

Newman, M., Woodcock, A. and Dunham, P. 2006: "Playtime in the borderlands": children's representations of school, gender and bullying through photographs and interviews. *Children's Geographies* 4, 289-302.

Nolan, J. L. 1998: *The therapeutic state: Justifying government at century's end.* Cambridge: University Press.

Oliker, S. J. 1998: The modernization of friendship: individualism, intimacy and gender in the nineteenth century. In Adams, R. G. and Allen, G., editors, *Placing friendship in context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pahl, R. 2002: Towards a more significant sociology of friendship. *European Journal of Sociology* 43, 410-23.

Peake, L. 2010: Negotiating sexualities among young adults in Guyana. Paper presented at 2010 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Washington D.C.

Pile, S. 2010: Emotions and affect in recent human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, 5-20.

Povinelli, E. 2006: *The empire of love: Toward a theory of intimacy, genealogy, and carnality.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Price, A. W. 1989: *Love and friendship in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Putnam, R. 1995: Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy* 6, 65-78.

Rawlins, W. K. 1992 *Friendship matters: Communication, dialectics, and the life course*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Samers, M. 2003: Diaspora unbound: Muslim identity and the erratic regulation of Islam in France. *International Journal of Population Geography* 9, 351-64.

Sangtin Writers and Nagar, R. 2006: *Playing with fire: Feminist thought and activism through seven lives in India.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Santos-Granero, F. 2007: Of fear and friendship: Amazonian sociality beyond kinship and affinity. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13, 1-18.

Skelton, T. 2009: Children's geographies/geographies of children: Play, work, mobilities and migration. *Geography Compass* 3, 1430-1448.

Skelton, T. 2000: "Nothing to do, nowhere to go?" teenage girls and public space in the Rhondda Valleys. In Holloway, S. H. and Valentine, G., editors, *Children's Geographies*, London: Routledge, 80-99.

Smart, A. 1999: Expressions of interest: Friendship and guanxi in Chinese societies. In Bell, S. and Coleman, S., editors, *The anthropology of friendship*. Oxford: Berg, 119-136.

Smith, M. 2010: Erasure of sexuality and desire: State morality and Sri Lankan migrants in Beirut, Lebanon *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 11, 378-393.

Spencer, L. and Pahl, R. 2006: *Rethinking friendship: Hidden solidarities today*. Princeton and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sutton, L. 2009: 'They'd only call you a scally if you are poor': the impact of socio-economic status on children's identities. *Children's Geographies* 7, 277-290.

Thomas, M. 2009: The identity politics of school life: territoriality and the racial subjectivity of teen girls in LA. *Children's Geographies* 7, 7-20.

Thrift, N. 2003: Space: the fundamental stuff of human geography. In Holloway, S., Rice, S. and Valentine, G., editors. *Key Concepts in Geography.* London: Sage, 95-108.

Thrift, N. 2004: Intensities of feeling: towards a spatial politics of affect. *Geografiska Annaler* 86B, 57 -78.

Thrift, N. 2005: But malice aforethought: cities and the natural history of hatred. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, 133-150.

Tillmann-Healy, L. 2003: Friendship as method. *Qualitative Inquiry* 9, 729-749.

Tolia-Kelly, D. 2006 Affect: An ethnocentric encounter? Exploring the "universalist" imperative of emotional/affective geographies. *Area* 38, 213–217.

Valentine, G. 1993: Desperately seeking Susan: a geography of lesbian friendships. *Area* 25,

109-116.

Valentine, G. 2008: The ties that bind: Towards geographies of intimacies. *Geography Compass* 2, 2097-2110.

Vertovec, S. 2004: Cheap calls: the social glue of migrant transnationalism. *Global Networks* 4, 219-224.

Walsh, K. 2007: "It got very debauched, very Dubai!" Heterosexual intimacy amongst single British expatriates. *Social and Cultural Geography* 8, 507-533.

Warren, D. 1975: *Black neighbourhoods: An assessment of community power*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Woodward, K. and Lea, J. 2009: Geographies of affect. In Smith, S., Pain, R., Marston, S., and Jones III, J. P., editors, *The Handbook of Social Geography***,** London: Sage, 154-175.

Woolley, H., Armitage, M., Bishop, J., Curtis, M. and Ginsborg, J. 2006: Going outside together: good practice with respect to the inclusion of disabled children in primary school playgrounds. *Children's Geographies* 4, 303-318.

Winton, A. 2005: Youth, gangs and violence: analyzing the social and spatial mobility of young people in Guatemala City. *Children's Geographies* 3, 167-184.

Yang M. M-h. 1994: *Gifts, favors and banquets*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Yea, S. forthcoming: Economies of Emotion: Money, Migration and Transnational Families Undone. *Development and Change*.

Yea, S. 2004: Labour of love: Trafficked Filipina "entertainers" narratives of romance, relationships and rights in South Korea. *Women's Studies International Forum*, September.

Zelizer, V. 2005: *The purchase of intimacy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

---

[i] Eve considers personalized, dyadic relations as 'social-psychological' rather than sociological. Work on friendship in social psychology and its implications for human geography are beyond the scope of the current paper but are clearly worthy of further investigation.

[ii] In Korean, different terms are used for friend-like personal relations according to the relative age of the people concerned. 친구 (*Chin-ku*) is used only for people who are of the same age. Another term, 벗 (*Butt*), is more inclusive, but still only tends to be applied among individuals whose age difference is five years or less. The key point here, of course, is that both *Chin-ku* and *Butt* would conventionally be translated into English simply as 'friend'.

[iii] Notably, it is only communities of colour that are deemed 'ethnic' so there is a racialized bias underlying these studies that excludes white people from having their networks defined by ethnicity.

[iv] It is worth noting that geographers working on friendships have largely focused on girls and hence the selection of this material for this paper. This echoes the trend of important sociological and anthropological work on girls' friendships by Goodwin (2006), Griffiths (1995) and Hey (1996). However, several essays in Jeffrey and Dyson's edited collection *Telling Young Lives* (2008), notably those by Meth, Hopkins, Crotty et al and Horschelman, demonstrate the significance of friendship in young men's lives.

[v] The United Nations Protocol on Human Trafficking (2000, Article 3, emphasis added) states that the recruitment of a trafficked person can be achieved, 'by means of … *deception*, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability'. Deception is thus recognized in international conventions as a key means to evoke the consent required to move a person into situations of exploitation. Misuses of intimate relations are thereby recognized within International Law.

[vi] Human (particularly economic) geographers clearly have an opportunity to extend understandings of the kinds of trust that are important in friendships. Trust has been largely the domain of economic geography where it is perceived as a 'critical tangible resource' (Ettlinger, 2003: 145); it has been understood as something worth studying because it can produce positive economic benefits and help explain the ways capitalisms differ between places. Thus, while there has been an increasing interest in work on the intersections between macro-level forms of trust and processes of globalization, the treatment of personal (or micro-level) trust in friendships has hardly yet engaged human geographers.