



FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY

5-6 September 2013

National University of Singapore

organised by

**Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany, and
FASS Cities Research Cluster at the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences and
Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore**



FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

The study of diverse and multicultural cities has gained considerable interest in recent years, reflecting a growing concern with migrant populations and the implications of 'strangers' in crowded urban societies. In this literature, one of the key considerations centers around understanding how ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse peoples "rub along" and live together in tight and dense metropolises. One strand of this research is interested in the quotidian encounter – ranging from the fleeting non-verbal to more sustained engagements over longer periods of time. In this research however, friendship as a form of social relation and interaction has been largely unexamined.

While research on friendship as a social phenomenon has been limited, our intention in this workshop is not to urge a general resurgence in the literature. Instead, we posit that friendship ties interrogated in conjunction with understandings of the diverse city, offer innovative ways to understand the urban politics of co-existence. Following Amin's (2012) recent work in *Land of Strangers*, we conceive of friendship networks as social ties that make possible a functioning, yet convivial, society of strangers. Friendships, in this sense, are seen as tangible ways in which the larger "urban unconscious" can be felt, linking the intimate sphere of private lives and relationships with a public urban commons.

We seek in this workshop to bring the geographical literature around the politics and spatiality of quotidian encounter together with more sociological understandings of relationships, networks and ties built on trust, respect and reciprocity. We do so in order to initiate a research agenda around the social and spatial configurations of friendship, which have implications for urban dwellers' experiences of city life, and in opening up potentialities for new ways of living together with diversity. We intend for the papers from this workshop to make contributions to contemporary understandings of everyday encounters in the diverse city, as well as further debates on the potential convivialities of dense urban spaces.

Questions this workshop is interested in (but not restricted to):

- How do ties of friendship and convivial relations characterize rapidly changing urban zones, especially in the 'Global South'?
- How do different migration and governmental regimes shape the formation and functioning of friendship networks?
- How does friendship across lines of ethnicity, class, religion and language populate the city and leave a mark on the 'urban unconscious'?
- How is 'convivial habituation' learned and communicated through friendship networks?
- When does friendship break down and how is the work of 'repair' carried out, and by whom?
- When and how do convivial relations generated through friendship networks provide possibilities to challenge dominant values and structures of power, and transcend differences in a city?
- Which types of spaces/ 'third places' in the city facilitate the formation and ongoing sustenance of convivial friendship relations?
- What are the various technologies and everyday geographies that enable and encourage the formation and maintenance of friendships and convivial relations between strangers?
- What are the affective registers, emotions and 'atmospheres' of place that characterize the spaces of conviviality and friendship?

Workshop Convenors:

Dr Laavanya KATHIRAVELU

Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany; and
Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
Email: kathiravelu@mmg.mpg.de

Assoc Prof Tim BUNNELL

Asia Research Institute and Department of Geography, National University of Singapore
Email: geotgb@nus.edu.sg

FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

5 SEPTEMBER 2013 (THURSDAY)		
09:00 – 09:15	REGISTRATION	
09:15 – 09:30	OPENING REMARKS & WELCOME	
	Tim BUNNELL Department of Geography & Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore Laavanya KATHIRAVELU Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity	
09:30 – 11:00	PANEL 1 – IS FRIENDSHIP A USEFUL CONCEPT?	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TBA	
<i>09:30</i>	Maree PARDY University of Melbourne, Australia	Urbanity, Hospitality and Hostility
<i>09:50</i>	Loren LANDAU African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand	Fleeting Friendship and Communities of Convenience in Africa’s Urban Estuaries
<i>10:10</i>	RESPONSES	
<i>10:30</i>	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
11:00 – 11:30	TEA BREAK	
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 2 – FRIEND NETWORKS AS SUPPORT SYSTEMS	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TBA	
<i>11:30</i>	Laavanya KATHIRAVELU Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany	Not Just Workers: Friendship and Intimacy amongst Low Wage Migrants In Singapore And Dubai
<i>11: 50</i>	Monica SMITH Department of Geography, National University of Singapore	Stepping Out of Bounds in a Globalizing City: Friendship and Trans People in Colombo, Sri Lanka
<i>12:10</i>	RESPONSES	
<i>12:30</i>	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
13:00 – 14:30	LUNCH	
14:30 – 16:00	PANEL 3 – FRIENDSHIP AND PRECARIITY	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TBA	
<i>14:30</i>	Megha AMRITH Centre for Metropolitan Studies, Brazil	Tentative Friendships among Migrants in São Paulo’s Commercial Districts
<i>14:50</i>	Sallie YEA Humanities & Social Studies Education, National Institute of Education, Singapore	Places of Friendship in Times of Hardship: Vulnerable Migrant Workmen’s Homo-social Bonds in Little India, Singapore
<i>15:10</i>	RESPONSES	
<i>15:30</i>	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
16:00 – 16:30	TEA BREAK	

FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

16:30 – 18:00	PANEL 4 – FRIENDS AS A COMMUNITY OF CITIZENS	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TBA	
16:30	FANG I-Chieh Academic Sinica, Taiwan	Intimacy, Mistrust and Friendship: The Changing Strangership to Young Migrant Workers in Shenzhen, China
16:50	Kamalini RAMDAS Department of Geography, National University of Singapore	Single in the City: Friendship, Family and Community amongst Singaporean-Indian Women
17:10	RESPONSES	
17:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
18:00	END OF DAY 1	
18:30 – 20:00	WORKSHOP DINNER (For speakers, chairpersons and invited guests)	

FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

6 SEPTEMBER 2012 (FRIDAY)		
09:15 – 09:30	REGISTRATION	
09:30 – 10:30	PANEL 5 – SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE IN FRIENDSHIPS	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TBA	
09:30	Tracey SKELTON & Harvey NEO Department of Geography, National University of Singapore	“Distant Relatives are Lesser than Close Neighbours”: Multi-Scalar Senses of Place and Friendship Ties between Urban Residents in Kunming City, China
09:50	Jozon LORENZANA University of Western Australia & Ateneo de Manila, Philippines	The Role of Place in the Formation of Friendship: Filipino Transnational Peer Groups in Indian Cities
10:10	RESPONSES	
10:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
11:00 – 11:30	TEA BREAK	
11:30 – 13:00	PANEL 6 – SPACES OF GENDERED FRIENDSHIP	
	Chairperson: TBA	
11:30	Kathleen AZALI University of Airlangga, Surabaya	<i>Tempat Ngèbèr</i> and the Construction of Belonging
11:50	Romit CHOWDHURY Centre for Studies on the Social Sciences, Calcutta	Friendships of Everyman: Masculinities and the Contemporary South Asian City
12:10	RESPONSES	
12:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:00	PANEL 7 – FRIENDSHIP AND EVERYDAY BANALITY	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TBA	
14:00	Lisa RICHAUD Université Libre de Bruxelles (Free University of Brussels) & FNRS, Laboratoire d’Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains	Between Face and Faceless Relationships: Friendships and the Modes of Social Relations in Beijing Public Parks
14:20	Kim KULLMAN University of Helsinki	Cultivating Urban Friendships with Mobile Children in Helsinki
14:40	RESPONSES	
15:00	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK	
16:00 – 17:30	SUMMARY & CLOSING REMARKS	
<i>Chairperson</i>	TBA	
16:00	Tim BUNNELL Department of Geography & Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore & Yasser ELSHESHTAWY UAE University	

FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

<i>16:30</i>	QUESTIONS & GENERAL DISCUSSION
17:30	END OF DAY 2

Fleeting Friendship and Communities of Convenience in Africa's Urban Estuaries

Loren LANDAU

University of the Witwatersrand/African Centre for Migration & Society

loren@migration.org.za

Across the developing world, new immigrants and the recently urbanised increasingly co-occupy estuarial zones loosely structured by state social policy and hegemonic cultural norms. In these hyper-diverse, often highly fluid sites, novel modes of sociality and friendship are emerging in ways that challenge expectations and the ethics of accommodation. Using examples drawn from rapidly transforming African cities—with special emphasis on Nairobi and Johannesburg—this paper levies two challenges to conventional wisdom: migrants' desire for close knit, space-bound relationships and the incompatibility of fluidity and community. Instead it suggests that we consider emerging, pragmatically shaped forms of 'communities of convenience' and the practical and philosophical issues they surface.

An examination of these communities of convenience not only draws attention to the nature of social relations among migrants and between migrants and hosts, but sheds light on the mechanisms that promote sociality among diverse and mobile communities. In this regard, the paper surfaces a range of contemporary and historically oriented discursive practices employed to allocate and restrict rights and determine codes of propriety including links to property, religiosity and gender appropriate behaviours. Such an approach also inherently draws our eye to the enforcement mechanisms—formal and informal, explicit and implicit—which promote and preserve particular social forms.

Urbanity, Hospitality and Hostility

Maree PARDY

University of Melbourne, Australia

mpardy@unimelb.edu.au

If I suggest that 'friendship as conviviality' is not the political/analytical path I prefer to travel; and if I said that friendship as a political concept insinuates judgement, restriction, command, even a particular type of sociality that risks a retreat from politics, would this be conceived as a failed or perhaps even a hostile gesture against aspirations for a revived urban commons? Why conviviality? Why friendship? Does friendship as a means to building or making a better world, offer too little and too much? I mean to ask whether ethnographic observations of (the empirical reality of) friendship, care, and even gracious indifference in urban locales of diversity ought be the ground for a normative political project of an urban commons. Or, I am also suggesting, that this is already the case where governments and investors endorse 'safety' and 'friendliness' as part of the urban character of the locales they promote.

'Throwntogetherness' (Massey) of course provides opportunities for friendship but 'up-againstness' (Butler) is more vexed, making friendship harder, perhaps impractical; possibly not even viable. What then? I draw on research in two urban locales of 'superdiversity' (Vertovec) in Australian suburbs, showing how ordinary spaces of daily exchange (hairdressers, shops, public squares, clubs, libraries, church) are indeed spaces of ordinary friendships. Yet, some of these friendships are judged to be undesirable modalities of conviviality. These exchanges of care and alliance occur in the midst of, and up-against an increasingly hostile ambience of policing, fear and profit-driven urbanisation. The paper describes hospitality at hairdressers, friendship at libraries, togetherness at swimming pools and contact at markets, as it also reports on strategies of governance, urban planning and property investment that endeavour to contrive more marketable, one might say more 'urbane' atmospheres of friendship. Friendships derived from 'throwntogetherness' are 'up-against' enormous political forces that would perhaps disappear them in favour of other forms of friendship and safety.

Not Just Workers: Friendship and Intimacy amongst Low Wage Migrants in Singapore and Dubai

Laavanya KATHIRAVELU

Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany
kathiravelu@mmg.mpg.de

Despite being in geographically different parts of Asia, the cities of Singapore and Dubai share many similarities. They are both small, paternalistic states that play host to large foreign populations – of middle class migrants from across Asia, as well as an army of low wage transients. The former are desired for the capital, knowledge and networks they bring with them to invest in their host country. The latter group compose an underclass whose presence and contributions often go unacknowledged. Both these non-local populations make up significant proportions of inhabitants of private residential developments in the two cities, as they are typically ineligible for the subsidised forms of housing available to citizens or are engaged as workers within these compounds. These securitized spaces in many ways reflect but also condense the levels of control that characterize these highly regulated states.

Much of the literature to date has focused on how privatised gated developments reify and augment socio-economic cleavages in the larger societies in which they exist (Atkinson 2006, Caldeira 2000; 2005, Low 2003; 2006, Wu 2006). This research also focuses on the lack of community in such housing developments, and effectively depicts the atomised and isolated lives of urban residents. This paper, however, complicates that picture in showing how networks of friendship and care thrive amongst low wage migrants in gated housing developments, despite constant surveillance and restrictions by employers who often fail to acknowledge the social and emotional needs of this marginalised transient class. Often enacted furtively over walls or when employers are away, they provide important access to support and knowledge networks. These affective and intimate networks are also performed in public spaces of parks, plazas and shopping malls on Sundays, when many get their only day off, but where their presence is constantly monitored. In examining this often overlooked phenomena, this research complicates and thickens older analyses by understanding how certain forms of urban architecture and the increasing privatisation of public space in cities across Asia has led to alternative and often-surreptitious modes of seeking sociality for low wage and marginalised migrant populations. This paper also seeks to bring elements of affect and care into readings of these cities that have often been conceptualised in one-dimensional ways.

In examining understudied networks of care and friendship amongst low wage migrants in Singapore and Dubai, this research augments and extends our understanding of the social lives of residents who live in highly stratified and regulated city-spaces. This paper thus makes contributions to understandings of marginalised migrant populations, and underscores the importance of social networks such as friendship in the affective lives of contemporary cities.

Stepping Out of Bounds in a Globalizing City: Friendship and Trans People in Colombo, Sri Lanka

Monica SMITH

Department of Geography, National University of Singapore
monica.annsmith@gmail.com

This paper considers the intimate histories and quotidian experiences of low income, transgendered Sri Lankans in Colombo. These individuals transgress spatial and normative boundaries of proper gender, family, social, and sexuality roles. Widespread transphobia experienced daily in the city makes life difficult and sometimes dangerous. Acquiring identification that matches one's gender presentation, finding employment, being able to move safely through police checkpoints, managing hair growth and fashion, and obtaining hormones and medical assistance are just some of the pressures these people face. Globalization has brought far-reaching social change in Sri Lanka. Among the changes have been inflows of capital, technology and consumer goods, and the introduction of western-inspired ideologies of women's and human rights, sexual freedom, and self-fulfillment. At the same time, Sri Lanka has witnessed a resurgence of nationalism, which, inter alia, has put forward images of ideal gender roles, such as a femininity that emphasize modesty, chastity, obedience, and self-sacrifice. The stage is thus set for collisions between ideologies and practice. One way that trans people manage in the city is through affiliation with LGBT NGOs and more informal friendship networks. However, these support systems are also rife with conflict and instabilities. Competition for scarce resources, and a lack of enforceable laws to ensure the just treatment of others affect degrees of trust and intimate relationships within organizations and among friends.

Tentative Friendships among Migrants in São Paulo's Commercial Districts

Megha AMRITH

Centre for Metropolitan Studies, Brazil
megha.amrith@cmetropole.org.br

The city of São Paulo, historically important as a destination for migrants from across the world, has experienced newer waves of immigration in the past few decades. As Brazilian national legislation and municipal policies have been ill prepared to handle these recent flows, migrants find themselves without much institutional support and rely instead on other networks to find their way in the city. This paper is based on ethnographic research among low-income migrants in São Paulo, many of whom are employed as tailors and garment vendors in the city's thriving central commercial neighbourhoods. Migrants from Bolivia, Peru, China, Pakistan and Nepal co-exist alongside working-class Brazilians. This paper traces the everyday forms of conviviality among these migrants who find themselves in precarious conditions in São Paulo. It will consider the lines along which friendships and networks of support and sociability are built and the depth of such relationships. It also considers the points of tension which divide people and strain potential friendships, for instance, when migrants compete to sell their goods and when migrants are exploited by 'fellow migrants' to survive in the city. What we see is an ambivalent field of interaction that is convivial yet competitive and distrustful.

Places of Friendship in Times of Hardship: Vulnerable Migrant Workmen's Homo-social Bonds in Little India, Singapore

Sallie YEA

Humanities & Social Studies Education, National Institute of Education
sallie.yea@nie.edu.sg

Migrant Bangladeshi and Indian workmen often find themselves in vulnerable circumstances in Singapore if they become seriously injured at work or experience labour exploitation and consequently pursue compensation claims. These vulnerabilities stem from the restrictive visa regime men in these situations are placed on, which renders them unable to work legally but without being afforded basic social security to enable them to survive in the interim between filing and concluding a compensation claim. For many men these situations can extend for months and, in some cases for years. This leads to a routine and mundane existence in Singapore forged in the context of the epistemic violence of regulatory migration regimes that manage these workers 'in-between'.

In this paper I wish to consider the experiences of these men in relation to the literature on migrant networks in global cities. As it stands, this literature is heavily focused on examinations of one of three subjects: the ways ethnic and social ties of migrants serve to structure their adaptation to, and assimilation into the city (the point of arrival); the implications of pronounced intra-ethnic bonds for inter-ethnic relations (anxieties around difference and assimilation), or; the forging of spaces of migrant/ ethnic affinity (geographies of migrant identity and belonging). The empirical insights offered by this study raise alternative suggestions about the relationship between migrant networks, ethnicity and the city. In particular I suggest that in the context of vulnerability (in which material and emotional needs are heightened) friendship is a means of understanding and framing the geographies of support that emerge amongst these men. Although often posed as in contrast to exploitation and rupture, a conceptual frame that emphasizes the everyday and mundane practices and spaces in which bonds develop between vulnerable workers helps understand how Singapore's Little India becomes a convivial urban space for vulnerable migrant workmen.

Intimacy, Mistrust and Friendship: The Changing Strangership to Young Migrant Workers in Shenzhen, China

FANG I-Chieh

Academic Sinica, Taiwan
icfang@gate.sinica.edu.tw

One of the striking things about life in the factory was the physical intimacy imposed by dormitory conditions, and at the same time all this physical closeness did not per se equate to friendship. Migrant workers typically maintained a fine, but firm, boundary between themselves and others due to workers feel mistrustful of their new surroundings and their fellow workers. However, friendship meanwhile plays an important role in the rite of passage through which young migrants are going. While separating from their rural past and parents, one way that young migrant workers deal with their liminal situation and seek to establish their own independent identity is through making friends.

To contextualise the process of turning strangers into friends, I will attempt to describe the dynamics by which trustworthiness is constituted and problematised, looking first at the social networks through which friendship is carried out, and then at the fictive kinship in related to changing strangership. By this analysis I hope to produce a clearer picture of how social grouping is constituted and challenged by migrants, and how kinship relationships have become problematic enough to bring about the emerging concept of 'co-citizen' in contemporary China through 'friendships with Chinese characteristics'.

Single in the City: Friendship, Family and Community amongst Singaporean-Indian Women

Kamalini RAMDAS

Department of Geography, National University of Singapore
geokr@nus.edu.sg

Race has become a crucial strategy for unifying and governing the disparately located populations that make up a nation in a globalising world. It is implicated in the 'myth of blood' that is integral to understanding how kinship and biological connectivity between individual bodies are naturalised. Race as a discursivity becomes internalised and transmitted across scales informing not only how national identities are produced, but also shaping individual subjectivities and community identities. This paper offers a critique of the racialised biopolitics of family in Singapore. It analyses how Singaporean-Indian women in three cities, London, Melbourne and Singapore make use of friendship as a strategy for encountering singlehood in the city. Drawing from in-depth interviews with 39 graduate women in Singapore, Melbourne and London, the paper analyses how state and community discourses of familyhood are contested and negotiated through these women's friendships with other women. It considers how race and class are implicated in narratives of friendship, and the extent to which friendship allows for an experience singlehood as more than 'waiting to marry'. The paper thus aims to destabilise the existing biopolitics of family and consider how becoming community is complicated by proximate relationships between single women and non-familial others.

**“Distant Relatives are Lesser than Close Neighbours”:
Multi-scalar Senses of Place and Friendship ties between Urban Residents in Kunming
City, China**

Harvey NEO

Department of Geography, National University of Singapore
geoneoh@nus.edu.sg

Tracey SKELTON

Department of Geography, National University of Singapore
geost@nus.edu.sg

This paper explores the connections between senses of place (understood at two different scales of analysis: the city and the community) and neighbourliness amongst urban residents of Kunming city, the provincial capital of Yunnan in China. The research is part of a Global Asia Institute funded project, *Asian Cities: Liveability, Sustainability, Diversity and Spaces of Encounter* with fieldwork sites in Busan (Korea), Hyderabad (India), Singapore and Kunming. Here, we interrogate possible correlations between a strong/weak sense of place and neighbourliness. For example, does a weak sense of neighbourhood identity impact on the level and perceptions of neighbourliness amongst urban residents? Relatedly, how do residents conceive the ‘ideal’ neighbour and to what extent can a ‘good’ neighbour moderate the vagaries of a rapidly transforming city? What are the intersections and spatialities of neighbourliness, friendship and conviviality in this city of 6.4 million people? This paper is based on primary fieldwork conducted in Kunming between June 2012 and Jan 2013, comprising a survey questionnaire administered to 400 residents and subsequent in-depth interviews with 30 of these survey respondents and 10 with city and neighbourhood officials.

**The Role of Place in the Formation of Friendship:
Filipino Transnational Peer Groups in Indian Cities**

Jozon LORENZANA

University of Western Australia & Ateneo de Manila, Philippines
20666351@student.uwa.edu.au

In this paper, I examine the formation of peer groups composed of Filipino transnationals from different social class backgrounds. They come to Indian cities as skilled workers, accompanying spouses or dependents of other transnational workers, diplomats or non-government organisations. In Philippine migration literature (Aguilar 1996; Espiritu 2008; Parreñas 2001), Filipino transnationals tend to create boundaries along the lines of class and status. However this ethnographic study reveals conscious attempts by social actors to transcend such boundaries and create hospitable spaces for *kababayans* (fellow Filipinos). How do we make sense of this peculiar pattern? Based on interviews and everyday participation with these groups, I argue that shared experiences of the place constitute and provide the context of these friendships. The material constraints and social conditions of Indian cities predispose the formation of social support networks that demonstrate cooperation and sharing of resources. This process of boundary transcendence highlights the moral negotiations of Filipino transnationals who grapple with the social inequalities in the host society and in the homeland. This study of Filipino friendships in India contributes to understanding the role of place, particularly Global South cities, in the formation of friendships between temporary migrants.

***Tempat ngèbèr* and the Construction of Belonging**

Kathleen AZALI

University of Airlangga, Indonesia
k.azali@c2o-library.ne

Tempat ngèbèr, or hanging-out places where gay men in Indonesia meet, is embedded, rather covertly in the periphery, inside various public places across Indonesia, like parks, parks, bridges, town squares, railways, or bus terminals. Slightly different from cruising ground (which is commonly stereotyped in the West as saturated with sex), gay men do not just use *tempat ngèbèr* to find a sexual encounter, but more often as a place to socialize, unwind from work, express many things that they cannot express in their home or work place, and gain acceptance from one's peers. Many *tempat ngèbèr* are frequented by regulars that know and even have deep affinities for each other, without necessarily having to know each other's names, jobs, or marital status. Additionally, they may or may not identify themselves as gay. Using case studies of *tempat ngèbèr* in Surabaya, carried out through site visits, observations, casual interviews, and analysis of gay zines and media, the research attempts to describe how certain types of spaces facilitate the formation of *tempat ngèbèr*, and how convivial relations and friendships between strangers are formed and influenced by technologies and spatial environment.

Friendships of Everyman: Masculinities and the Contemporary South Asian City

Romit CHOWDHURY

Centre for Studies on the Social Sciences, Calcutta
chowdhury.romit@gmail.com

A large share of the literature on gender and cities in South Asia has focused on the crucial question of women's access to public space. An interesting ethnographic detail that has emerged from this literature is that in navigating the city, middle-class women avoid spaces such as bars, roadside tea-stalls, certain street corners and parks – areas frequented particularly by working-class men as sites of leisure – as potential sites of violation. The association of particular urban spaces with sexual harassment/violence has, no doubt, been significant in showing that women's perception of danger manifests itself as a fear of space. However, the neglect of these spaces as sites of male sociality and friendship has meant that they have been understood solely in terms of sexual violence; inadvertently, interactions between genders on city streets have been framed in a language of hostility alone. Other kinds of exchanges between and within genders in public spaces of the city which may be supportive of one another have remained unexplored.

Using interpretive techniques in cultural sociology which emphasize a 'textual understanding of social life', this paper visits some prominent cinematic texts which portray men's friendships in public spaces of South Asian cities to frame preliminary, speculative responses to the following questions:

1. What are the interactional dynamics of men's friendships in public spaces of contemporary South Asian cities? What categories of thought do men use to understand these interactions?
2. How do we envisage 'geographies of responsibility' which require from men an ethical orientation towards strangers in the city?
3. What role can such an ethic play in expanding women's participation in public life?

Social theorists writing on the emancipatory potential of cities have remarked that their promise in expanding civic values and citizenship is no longer to be located in 'politics with a conventional capital P', but in new forms of micropolitics in everyday sociality and friendship-based associations (Amin and Thrift, 2004). This paper examines the intricate micropolitics of men's friendships in particular urban sites in an attempt to unveil possibilities of egalitarian interactions between genders in public spaces of the city.

Between Face and Faceless Relationships: Friendships and the Modes of Social Relations in Beijing Public Parks

Lisa RICHAUD

Université Libre de Bruxelles (Free University of Brussels) and
FNRS, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains
lrichaud@ulb.ac.be

The urban experience has often been depicted as characterized by a “culture of anonymity” or “faceless relationships”, both in Western and non-Western contexts, such as China (Hertz, 2001). This particularity renders relevant the question of the modes of formation of friendships in the city. This paper focuses on a particular type of public spaces in urban China: public parks in Beijing. Since the 1990's, these places have been appropriated by actors – mainly retired – who come here to take part into various leisure activities, namely, “Singing Red”, dancing, sports, traditional and revolutionary opera and the like. These gatherings and daily occupation of public parks engender repeated and sometimes relatively established copresences, interactions and social relations. Based on recent ethnographic data collected during several fieldworks in Beijing parks, I intend to discuss the question of anonymity as a major hallmark of urban culture in light of the modes of friendship observable in these public places. I will particularly lay emphasis on the localised character of these friendships, which often do not imply sustained relations and interactions outside of the park. From a broader perspective, the paper will contribute to the discussion of the forms of community in the Chinese urban context.

Cultivating Urban Friendships with Mobile Children in Helsinki

Kim KULLMAN

University of Helsinki, Finland
Kim.Kullman@helsinki.fi

Seeking to bring out the considerable repositories of hope, care and resilience that hold cities together, recent geographical research has traced the affective involvement of persons with the diverse spaces mediating urban life and association. This paper explores in empirical detail how such a widened notion of urban togetherness is expressed in the friendship practices unfolding during the daily school journeys of 7-12-year-old children in Helsinki, Finland. Employing visual footage produced by moving children, the paper demonstrates that children often gather with their friends and siblings into mobile collectives of varying forms and sizes, offering this relatively marginalised group of urban citizens plenty of opportunities to experiment with relationships to their everyday urban environments, from adult strangers to found objects and dogs in the park. Exploring the broader implications of such shared experimentation for the conviviality of cities, the paper argues that the children lend productive insight into a series of ethical sensibilities that enhance the caring and enchanting potential of daily urban encounters. To draw out these sensibilities, the paper elaborates a more open-ended notion of urban friendship that directs attention to the creative ways in which a range of seemingly banal doings performed by friends, such as patting dogs and looking after smaller children, contribute to the essential affective work that is required to repair and sustain daily urban spaces.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

FANG, I-Chieh is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica. She is a social anthropologist by training, with an empirical focus on individualization, moral and affective economy, migration, alternative adulthood and life course and post-socialist society. She holds a PhD in social anthropology and MSc in learning and cognitive anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her doctoral research focused on young migrant workers in China and 'the rite of passage' they go through in moving to the cities for work. By uncovering their process of 'becoming independent', especially in relation to their decisions about employment and marriage, she argues that the social discourses toward the new generation reflect less on the real behaviour patterns of Chinese youth, or rather who they are, than it reveals about the attitudes and dilemmas of the society toward on-going change in the post-Mao era. Apart from factories in Special Economic Zone, she also conducts fieldwork in migrant hometowns near borderland and NGOs in Beijing.

Harvey NEO is an Assistant Professor of Geography at the National University of Singapore. Broadly trained as a socio-economic geographer, his two main research interests are the political economy of the livestock industry and nature/society issues. For the latter, he is particularly interested in the discourse and development of eco-cities in Asian contexts. He has also published on the topics of environmental politics and sustainable development in Singapore, focusing on the roles of non-governmental organisations and individuals in making positive environmental change. He is a co-editor of *Geoforum*.

Jozon A. LORENZANA is a PhD Candidate in social anthropology at the University of Western Australia and instructor in the Department of Communication, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University. His research interests include new ICTs and social media, media cultures, gender, class, migration and intimate relations. He has conducted fieldwork in Delhi examining the boundary work and social relations between Filipino transnational migrants and the locals. Previously, he studied identity formations of young people of Indian origin in Metro Manila.

Kamalini RAMDAS is Instructor at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore. Her research interests include gender, sexuality and race in geography. She is particularly interested in how spatial concepts like distance and proximity influence care, responsibility, love and friendship, and how these in turn impact the framing of familyhood and intimacy. As a feminist geographer, she is also interested in civil society and community activism that relate to gender and sexuality politics, and the spaces of possibility they represent. Kamalini completed her PhD thesis on singlehood as a critique of the biopolitics of family and community in Singapore. Prior to joining the Department of Geography, she worked with the Asia Research Institute and The Economist Intelligence Unit. She has published in *Environment and Planning A* as well as co-edited a book titled *Untying the Knot: Marriage and Reality in Asian Marriage* (with Gavin Jones; NUS Press, 2004).

Kathleen AZALI was born in Indonesia, in 1981. Currently she is finishing her Master's degree in Literary & Cultural Studies at the University of Airlangga, Surabaya. Since 2008 she founded C2O, an independent library and collaborative space that aims to advance critical learning, inter-disciplinary collaboration and research between designers, artists, students, researchers and individuals of all types. Her research interests include cultural studies, media, design, literacies, space and place, gender and sexuality, civic engagement, and open access.

FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

Kim KULLMAN

Laavanya KATHIRAVELU is a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. She is currently working on a multi-sited project that looks at everyday diversity across three cities with large migrant populations. Her previous research explored labour migration and the urban condition in Dubai.

Lisa RICHAUD is a doctoral candidate of the F.R.S – FNRS at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Free University of Brussels), Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains. Her research project examines the social construction of a particular type of public space in urban China, namely public parks in the city of Beijing. It sheds lights on the multiple meanings of parks, be these meanings dominant, legitimate, imposed, shared or contested. One of the questions central to this research is that of the political significance of the socio-cultural practices converging on public parks. Attempting to articulate microsociological ethnographic observations with, to some extent, more macro socio-historical analysis, she discusses the modes of engagement or involvement in public activities in their most bodily dimensions in light of the question of the political habitus inherited from the totalitarian period.

Loren B. LANDAU is a Professor and Director of the African Centre for Migration & Society at Wits University. With a Masters in Development Studies (LSE) and a PhD in Political Science (Berkeley), his work explores human mobility, political authority and social transformation. Author of *The Humanitarian Hangover: Displacement, Aid, and Transformation in Western Tanzania*, he is editor of *Exorcising the Demons Within: Xenophobia, Violence and Statecraft in Contemporary South Africa* and co-editor of *Contemporary Migration to South Africa: A Regional Development Issue*. He has published widely in the academic and popular press and is widely cited as an expert in the domestic and international media. He also serves on the editorial board *International Migration Review* and the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, the executive committee of the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA), on the South African Immigration Advisory Board, and on the management committee for the UK-based Migrating Out of Poverty research consortium.

Maree PARDY

Megha AMRITH completed her doctorate in Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, UK, in 2012. Her dissertation was about the migration of Filipino medical workers to Singapore for which she conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Singapore and in the Philippines. She is currently doing a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Centre for Metropolitan Studies, an interdisciplinary research institute in São Paulo, Brazil, focussed on addressing poverty and social inequalities in urban areas. She is developing a comparative project about rights and citizenship among low-income urban migrants. Her research interests include contemporary international migration, cities, care, diversity and sociability.

FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

Monica SMITH just completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore. She has longstanding research relationships with the Middle East and Asia where she has worked as an academic and as a researcher for international agencies on gender and comparative sexualities. For the past six years, in addition to completing her doctorate, she has conducted research and writing for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the fields of domestic labor migration, youth, gender, HIV and heteronormativity. She is currently working on publishing articles from her dissertation, *The State of Sexuality: Sri Lankan Women Migrants in the Middle East*. This work involved four years of research on sexuality in Sri Lanka and Lebanon.

Romit CHOWDHURY recently completed an interdisciplinary M.Phil in Social Sciences at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. He works in the field of feminist cultural studies, particularly masculinities. In the previous four years, he has been researching these concerns in the contexts of men's collective action, care work, and city cultures.

Sallie YEA is Assistant Professor, Humanities and Social Science Education, Nanyang Institute of Education, Singapore. She has published extensively on the subject of human trafficking and vulnerable migrations in Southeast and East Asia, including a recent edited volume on *Human Trafficking in Asia* and monograph titled *Untrafficked: Marginal Mobilities of Filipina Migrant Entertainers in Korea*, both with Routledge. She is currently conducting research with migrant workmen in Singapore and migrant fishermen on long haul fishing vessels through Singapore, considering the experiences of these men as expressions of precarious work.

Tim BUNNELL is Associate Professor at the Asia Research Institute and in the Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore. He is an urban geographer with research interests in Malaysia and Indonesia as well in interurban connections between Southeast Asia and other regions. He is the author of *Malaysia, Modernity and the Multimedia Super Corridor* (Routledge 2004) and more than 30 refereed papers in human geography and urban studies journals. As a member of the Asian Urbanisms cluster at ARI, his recent work has considered the position of Asia in EuroAmerican-dominated urban theory, including in a special issue of *Urban Studies* (co-edited with Daniel Goh, C.K. Lai and C.P. Pow) on *Global Urban Frontiers: Asian Cities in Theory, Practice and Imagination*. His current research concerns aspirational cities in Asia, as principal investigator for a comparative research project on grassroots urban aspirations and their relational geographies.

Tracey SKELTON is Associate Professor of Geography at NUS and a Visiting Professor at Loughborough University in the UK. She has published more than 70 journal articles, chapters and books focused on critical geographies of the Caribbean, methodologies, disability, gender, sexuality and age. Her current research foci are young people's geographies and Asian cities. Her work on young people is located in an Asia-Pacific urban context and explores young urbanites' experiences, perspectives and narratives of cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, mobilities, friendship and belonging. She is the principal investigator of a Global Asia Institute funded project, *Asian Cities: Liveability, Sustainability and Diversity* with fieldwork in Busan, Hyderabad, Kunming and Singapore. Tracey is a partner investigator for an Australian Research Council funded project, *Cosmopolitan Development: International Development Volunteering* headed by A/P Susanne Schech at Flinders University. She is the Commissioning Editor for Asia and Editor of *Viewpoints for the International Journal Children's Geographies*.

FRIENDSHIP AND THE CONVIVIAL CITY (5-6 SEPTEMBER 2013)

organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore,
the FASS Cities Research Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity,
at the Research Division Seminar Room - Block AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, #06-42, 5 Arts Link

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NO.	NAME	AFFILIATION / ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
1.	FANG I-Chieh	Academic Sinica, Taiwan	icfang@gate.sinica.edu.tw
2.	Yasser ELSHESHTAWY	UAE University	sheshtawi@uaeu.ac.ae
3.	Harvey NEO	Department of Geography, National University of Singapore	geoneoh@nus.edu.sg
4.	Jozon LORENZANA	University of Western Australia & Ateneo de Manila, Philippines	20666351@student.uwa.edu.au
5.	Kamalini RAMDAS	Department of Geography, National University of Singapore	geokr@nus.edu.sg
6.	Kathleen AZALI	University of Airlangga, Indonesia	k.azali@c2o-library.ne
7.	Kim KULLMAN	University of Helsinki, Finland	Kim.Kullman@helsinki.fi
8.	Laavanya KATHIRAVELU	Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Germany	kathiravelu@mmg.mpg.de
9.	Lisa RICHAUD	Université Libre de Bruxelles (Free University of Brussels) & FNRS, Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains	lrichaud@ulb.ac.be
10.	Loren LANDAU	African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa	loren@migration.org.za
11.	Maree PARDY	University of Melbourne, Australia	mpardy@unimelb.edu.au
12.	Megha AMRITH	Centre for Metropolitan Studies, Brazil	megha.amrith@cmetropole.org.br
13.	Monica SMITH	Department of Geography, National University of Singapore	monica.annsmith@gmail.com
14.	Romit CHOWDHURY	Centre for Studies on the Social Sciences, Calcutta, India	chowdhury.romit@gmail.com
15.	Sallie YEA	Humanities & Social Studies Education, National Institute of Education, Singapore	sallie.yea@nie.edu.sg
16.	Tim BUNNELL	Department of Geography & Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore	geotgb@nus.edu.sg
17.	Tracey SKELTON	Department of Geography, National University of Singapore	geost@nus.edu.sg

Secretariat:

Ms Valerie YEO

Asia Research Institute

National University of Singapore

469A Tower Block, Level 10

Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259770

Tel: (65) 6516 5279

Email: Valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg