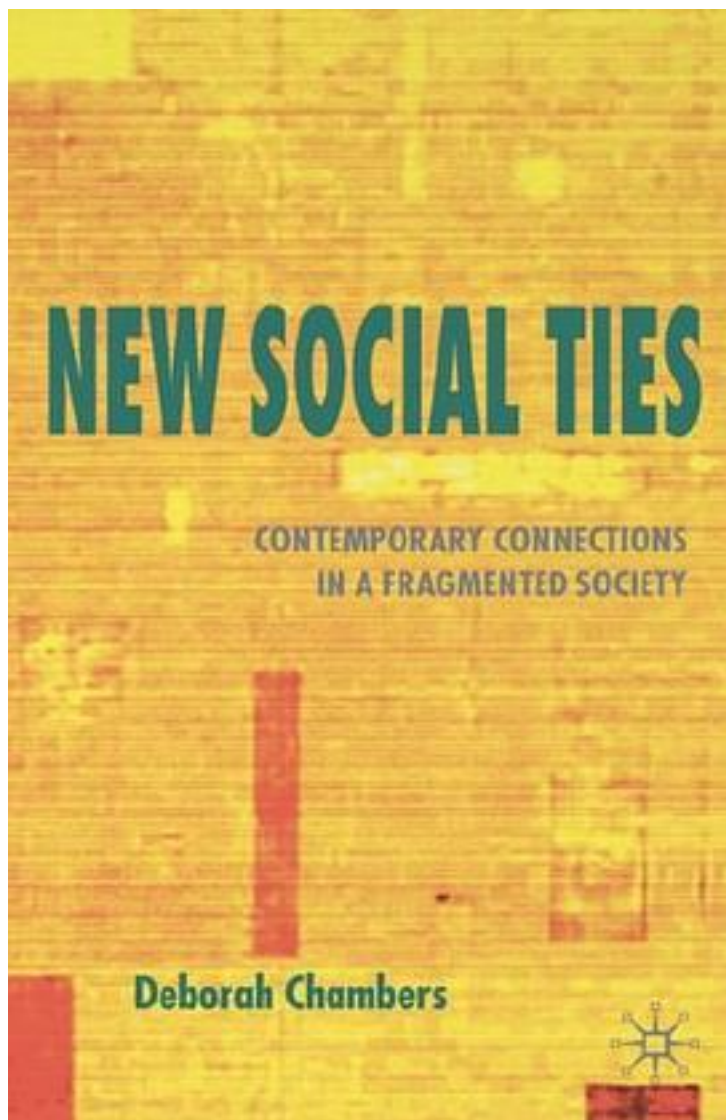


New Social Ties



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Written for a student and researcher audience in sociology, cultural studies and communication, *New Social Ties* draws on the metaphor of friendship as a strategy to explore contemporary changes in informal social ties in western societies. Deborah Chambers traces the shift from stable, fixed, and permanent ties of family, neighbourhood and community to fluid, voluntary and transient ties typified by computer mediated communication. The author argues that a friendship discourse offers a way of managing rapid changes in social ties. With a focus on relations of gender, she examines the way friendship is used as a resource to maintain relations of power and reshape identities through patterns of association ranging from gendered work and leisure networks, virtual communities, Internet dating and mobile phone use. Characterized by informality, speed and interactions over distance, new social ties coincide with new ideas about the 'self', intimacy, and belonging, thereby generating government and academic anxieties about the collapse of community. The author argues that a friendship discourse has become a potent signifier of the aspiration for future relationships to be defined by equality and mutual respect. 'Friendship' has become a powerful symbol of the postmodern condition, raising critical moral questions about trust, care and responsibility for the Other.

作者介绍:

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