

BEST STUDENT PAPER AWARD

The committee consisted of John Skrentny, Chris Bonastia, Caroline Lee, and Catherine Lee. The committee gave the best student paper award to two equally worthy papers.

The first was **Djordje (George) Stefanovic's** contribution, "**The Path to Weimar Serbia? Explaining the Resurgence of the Serbian Far Right after the Fall of Milosevic,**" which was published in **October 2008** in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. This article is a powerful and provocative analysis of ethnic politics in Serbia. Stefanovic probes the sources of the resurgence of support for the ultra-nationalist far right. Using multivariate analysis of city election data, Stefanovic examines theories developed for Western European and North American cases. Specifically, he assesses whether economic vulnerability and ethnic threat explain the rise of the right in Serbia. In a very careful and clearly articulated examination, he finds that theories of the Western European far right and North American inter-racial relations explain some, but not all, of the election patterns in Serbia. Most importantly, welfare resentments in Serbia are not directed toward new immigrants but toward allegedly disloyal minorities who have lived in Serbia for centuries. The stakes are high indeed in understanding this phenomenon; as Stefanovic notes, economic dislocations created from neo-liberal economic transitions may lead to more support for the right, which in Serbia has been linked to war. Stefanovic's work contributes both to scholarly debates and universal struggles for peace.

Sharing the award this year was **Liza Weinstein's** elegantly written paper, "**Mumbai's Development Mafias: Globalization, Organized Crime and Land Development.**" This paper was published in **March 2008** in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. It perceptively explores the understudied role of organized crime in contemporary real estate development through a qualitative case study of Mumbai. Rather than simply linking informal governance and mafia activity in local property markets to the global scale, Weinstein deftly demonstrates how these processes are in fact multi-scalar and interlinked. Organized crime groups (OCGs) are simultaneously embedded in local communities and in global processes, making them ideally positioned to take advantage of regional political and economic opportunities afforded by liberalization and globalization. Weinstein argues convincingly both that studies of informal governance should pay renewed attention to urban restructuring and place-based politics, and that OCGs deserve a place in urban political theory alongside institutional actors and local elites. Her conceptual work--for example, on when the state chooses to "supportively neglect" illegal activity out of self-interest--is likely to be transportable. It is a unique contribution to the study of urban politics and organized crime.