

# THE WORD

A FREE Newsletter from  
The BSA Urban Theory and Research Study Group

# UT&R



Urban Theory & Research

## WELCOME COLLEAGUES, MEMBERS & FRIENDS...

Welcome back again for the latest updates and news from the BSA Urban Theory and Research Study Group. This edition of THE WORD will be reporting back on our activities at the annual BSA conference - where the study group had our first panel session and a round table discussion with those interested parties and fellow members that trundled along to the conference this year down at the Warwick University campus in Coventry.

A brief thanks yto David Byrne, Chris Allen and Paul Watt for their presentations in the morning session and for staying on to participate in a general and broad ranging discussion – a summary of which is included below – and also thanks to all of those who came along and helped the discussion move about in both sessions.

We have come up with some interesting ideas for future directions for the study group and hope to be able to report back on widening membership as well as forthcoming publications from our broadening base, as well as more profiles on up-and-coming PhD researchers and other funded research projects and collaborations from within the group and with our partners as we develop.

The group thrives on its members and as our ranks grow we can accomplish so much more, so please do get involved and inform the convenor and BSA office of your activities. We can only promote people and work that we know about so be active in your participation and interaction with the group and you will see a return on your investment, guaranteed \*grins\*

Enough schilling for now and lets move onto the things we're currently doing and have done. Stay in touch and remember the WORD is here for you and so are the rest of us.

### THANKS FOR THE CONTINUED SUPPORT...

Dr Peter Rogers  
Group Convenor

## WE NEED YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Please remember to send information and updates to us so we can keep firing out these regular updates for members of the group.

### WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!

Not in a creepy way but in regards to your work, publications interests, activities or even just thoughts a feelings to discuss with our resident investigator *Kojak*.

Please do get in touch and support the UTR

## Forthcoming BSA events

15-16 May 2008

**Leverhulme Programme on Migration and Citizenship**

University College, London

15-17 May 2008

**The International Conference on Analogous Space interrogates the analogy between spaces in which knowledge is preserved, organized, transferred or activated. How do these spaces co-exist and interrelate?**

Ghent University, Belgium

For all enquires please

contact: [analogousspaces@architectuur.ugent.be](mailto:analogousspaces@architectuur.ugent.be)

20-22 May 2008

**"To remember is to resist:" 40 Years of Sport and Social Change, 1968-2008**

University of Toronto, Canada

6 June 2008

**The Physique of the Public**

Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

For details of other events please [click here](#)

If you have an idea for a UTR newsletter, want to run and produce the newsletter, are a member and want to be profiled, or just want to get more involved in the UTR & contribute some news or even – god forbid – a scholarly article or polemic to the cause then contact Peter Rogers: [Peter.Rogers@scmp.mq.edu.au](mailto:Peter.Rogers@scmp.mq.edu.au)

...& **DON'T FORGET** to sign up and register for the UTR online. You can find our registration forms and information about the group online at <http://www.britisoc.co.uk/specialisms/URBAN+THEORY+AND+RESEARCH+STUDY+GROUP.htm>

# THE WORD

A FREE Newsletter from  
The BSA Urban Theory and Research Study Group

A study group of the British Sociological Association

# UT&R



Urban Theory & Research



## KOJAK INVESTIGATES

The BSA Annual Conference

Every year as academics we have to make some critical decisions about our networks and the outlets through which we will focus our research. The main outlets are of course publications and feedback reports to the funding bodies and agencies that were generous or savvy enough to give us the cash for the work in the first place, but possibly the most rewarding of these outlets in the conference paper. In no other aspect of our academy will you find an audience so direct, honest and occasionally brutal as the Q&A sessions that occur around papers. Though this has often in recent years been much more laid-back and friendly as the conference has become a testing ground for ideas and a proving ground for young academics rather than the intellectual melee of competing and conflicting discourses.

This shift in the purpose of conferences has led to some criticism from across the board, first amongst these criticisms are the absence of the great and the good who generally will only turn up if invited to give a plenary, flattering the ego of the public intellectual. Secondly is the spiralling cost of conferences to organisations such as the BSA and the need to balance attendance with value for money for the delegates. Thirdly is the wealth of PD students earning their spurs, which combined with the first point often makes the delivery of a conference paper secondary to the potential networking and schmoozing that occurs behind the scenes.

So why do we do it? Because in my opinion this academic life can be a lonely one and we need to be social, if we can't interest each other in our work then the work is probably not up to the task. But more importantly we need to support each other and make sure that the pressures of the academy in the contract research driven research environment does not limit and curtail both the focus and the type of scholarship we engage with. Critical research and critical thinking bursts forth from every huddled discussion over coffee or drinking session after hours in the evenings at such ensembles, and any conflagration of the critical is to be commended and recommended to all. Let's hope the conference keeps running for year to come!

KOJAK

## UTR PANEL SESSION FEEDBACK 2008

DISCUSSION THEME

'Radical Urban Studies: The State We're in'

Confirmed panel members

*Prof. David Byrne*

*Prof. Chris Allen*

*Dr. Paul Watt*

*Dr. Peter Rogers*

The 3 papers in the morning session of the conference set some broad themes for discussion that were addressed amongst the 4 confirmed speakers and a number of other participants including lecturers, researchers and postgrads allowing for a lively discussion from different perspectives on the state of urban studies.

Of particular interest was the balance between theory and research in unpacking the state of urban studies. Balancing a theoretically critical perspective in the context of a contract research environment we key concerns for researchers at all stages of their academic careers – as also noted by Kojak in this issue.

There was also much discussion on the need for a more politicised agenda in urban studies and we are keen to hear more from members on their thoughts surrounding this issue. Can urban sociology reclaim more of an active legitimacy in research and policy influence by being more 'activist' in its orientation, or should it serve as a more passive form of policy review and critique. It was felt in the discussion during this session that a political emphasis can at times place the researcher at risk: in terms of career progression, publishing opportunities and even state sanctions – however if urban sociological enquiry wishes to reinvigorate the wider subject of study then perhaps gentrification and revanchism debates offer an avenue for critical scholarship to intervene in abuses of state power in more active and creative 'hands on' sociology.

Please do get in touch with your thoughts on this or any examples you might have of how urban sociology might intersect, interact or even intervene in the political. **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Other participants if you could let me know who you were and pass on your contact details I'll be happy to circulate more information and feedback.

WANT TO ADVERTISE YOURSELF TO THE UTR AND BSA MEMBERSHIP? WE PROVIDE SPACE FOR ADVERTISEMENT

CONTACT GROUP CONVENOR TO DISCUSS