

International Eco-Cities Initiative

August 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of the International Eco-Cities Initiative newsletter. The bulletin (published three times per year) provides information about our research, events and publications, and seeks to contribute to debate about 'eco-cities' and sustainable urbanism of various kinds across the world.

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Leverhulme International Network event: 'eco-cities in the making'

Join us for this one-day international conference to be held on 20 August 2014 in Songdo (South Korea), where the ongoing global diffusion and diversification of 'eco-city' frameworks and practices will be up for discussion. The symposium explores and reflects on the implications of eco-city making for policy and practice, focusing in particular on the situation in Asia and on the two interrelated processes of local production and cross-scale mediation of eco-city frameworks. The conference is co-hosted by Yonsei University, the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), and Seoul National University, and is part of our international research project Tomorrow's City Today.

- [Eco-cities in the Making: conference programme and registration](#)

Publication: public participation in urban sustainability

In this paper, Simon Joss argues that enhancing the much-valued (but ever problematic) role of public participation in urban sustainability may require a differentiated approach. Ideally, participation would be generated across multiple deliberative arenas, each with different requirements, and made more responsive to different types of publics. Crucially, more formal consultation oriented toward policy decision-making should not be conflated with more open-ended exploratory engagement. The discussion includes an outline of the history of public participation, and is illustrated with three brief case studies. The essay forms part of an edited volume, *Eco-Cities: Sharing European and Asian Best Practices and Experiences*, published by EU-Asia Dialogue.

- [Simon Joss on public participation in urban sustainability](#)

Doctoral research project: urban sustainability through a cultural lens

Policy-makers and scholars are increasingly taking an interest in the role of culture in transitions to urban sustainability. That is, there is interest in exploring how social meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes and perceptions influence individual and social behaviour. As part of his doctoral research project, Njogu Morgan is engaged in developing an innovative theoretical perspective on how to relate culture to sustainable urban development. With the example of bicycle usage and attitudes to cycling, his empirical research analyses the various dimensions of 'cycling culture' and how and why this may change over time in a particular place. The research compares the contrasting experience of cycling cultures in Chicago (USA) and Johannesburg (South Africa), among other cities. Njogu's doctoral thesis is supervised by Professor Phillip Harrison (School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg), and Professor Simon Joss (University of Westminster, London).

- [Njogu Morgan's essay on urban sustainability as culture](#) (PDF format)

Partner profile: Buhm Soon Park—KAIST

Professor Buhm Soon Park is Director of the Graduate School of Science and Technology Policy at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in Daejeon, South Korea. A historian of science by training, Buhm Soon specializes in the study of bureaucratic entrepreneurship, science policy, and the formation of scientific disciplines. His recent publications include the co-edited volume *Bridging the Technology Gap: Historical Perspectives on Modern Asia* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2013); and his forthcoming monograph analyses the rise of the National Institutes of Health as the major patron of American biomedicine. He serves as the editor of the *Korean Journal for the History of Science* and as an editorial member of *Asian Research Policy*. Buhm Soon is interested in cities as cultural space where concerns about environment, health, and technology intersect. In addition to his specialism in science and technology policy, he brings to the Leverhulme International Network an Asian perspective.

- [Buhm Soon Park's web profile](#)

Essay: learning from utopia? The case of Sejong City

Having recently returned from a research visit to South Korea, Robert Cowley in this essay reflects on the emerging new city of Sejong, dubbed 'Asia's green metropolis of the future'. Surprisingly this ambitious project has attracted little academic attention internationally. Given its scale, as a brand new city aiming to accommodate up to half a million residents by 2030, and the tremendous development costs borne by the state, such an endeavour seems unrepeatable in South Korea, and perhaps unimaginable in most other countries. Meticulously planned 'top-down' attempts to build entire cities may also strike many contemporary observers as problematically utopian. As well as describing some of the key features of the new city, this short essay discusses the nature of the lessons that we might learn from initiatives of this type more generally.

- [Robert Cowley's reflections on Sejong City](#)

Forthcoming: Sustainable Innovation 2014

Sustainable Innovation 2014, taking place 3-4 November in Copenhagen (Denmark), is the 19th event in this international conference series hosted by the Centre for Sustainable Design. Bringing together researchers, policy-makers, technologists and practitioners, this year's theme is 'Cities and Regions as Catalysts for Smart & Sustainable Innovation', with a special focus on the growing role of emerging grass roots and 'DIY' approaches and technologies in the Green Economy. Simon Joss, who serves on the conference advisory board, will be presenting the findings of the case study on the 'One Planet Living' framework undertaken as part of the Leverhulme International Network.

- [Sustainable Innovation 2014 programme and registration](#)

LinkedIn Discussion Forum

The 'International Eco-Cities Forum', our online discussion board, now has over 325 members, including researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. It invites contributions from around the world, aimed at discussing and sharing information, reflections and practical learning on sustainable urbanism in its various forms.

- [Join the International Eco-Cities Forum](#)

Further Information

Please see the [International Eco-Cities Initiative website](#) for further information and to sign up for news and events.

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