

INTERNATIONAL ECO-CITIES INITIATIVE

International Eco-Cities Initiative August 2017

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 contributes to analysis and discourse on 'eco-cities' and sustainable urbanism of various kinds across the world.

- Research article: Smart cities – towards a new citizenship regime?
- Essay: The culture behind infrastructure – reflections on nearly a decade of research into cycling culture and policy in the UK
- Essay: Smart city-regional governance for sustainability?
- Commentary: Two Westminster academics reflect on the Grenfell Tower fire
- Conferences: Smart-Eco research presented internationally
- Conference report: Eco City World Summit 2017 Melbourne
- Book: Sustainable cities in Asia

Research article: Smart cities – towards a new citizenship regime?

Since 2014, a suite of eight smart city standards has been published by the British Standards Institution, providing policy and practice guidance on smart city development. Previously, much of the emergent smart city discourse had been criticised for being too technology-oriented, with not enough focus on citizenship. What role is envisioned for the citizen in the new BSI smart city standards – have they adequately responded to these concerns? A new research article, co-authored by Simon Joss, Matthew Cook and Youri Dayot and published in the Journal of Urban Technology, provides a conceptual framework for citizenship and undertakes a detailed textual analysis of the standards, showing that there is indeed a strong emphasis on citizens as actors in smart city initiatives. However, the way their role is envisioned carries some shortcomings and contradictions. The article concludes with recommendations for both further theory and practice development.

- [Download the paper \(open access\)](#)

Essay: The culture behind infrastructure – reflections on nearly a decade of research into cycling culture and policy in the UK

and policy in the UK. It explores cultural and ethical considerations behind cycling infrastructure and policy, exploring issues such as local identity, driving culture, 'near misses', equity and cycling potential. Dr Aldred, Associate Professor in the Department of Planning and Transport, Westminster University, was awarded the 2016 ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize for Outstanding Impact in Public Policy. Her research has had a wide-ranging influence on transport planning policy, such as shaping the creation of London's cycle superhighways.

- [Download the essay](#)

Essay: Smart city-regional governance for sustainability?

The terminology of 'smartness' is pervasive. This includes the concepts of 'smart growth', which attempts to reconcile competing social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability, and that of 'smart cities', which has connotations not only of ICT, but of learning, institutional innovation and governance. A new essay by Yonn Dierwechter, Tassilo Herrschel and Gerd Lintz introduces the concept of 'smart city-regional governance', dealing explicitly with governance issues arising across the regional scale at which cities operate. The ideas in the piece are based on the forthcoming Routledge book 'Smart city-regionalism in transition,' co-authored by Tassilo Herrschel and Yonn Dierwechter, and shaped by a recent conference organised by the Regional Studies Research Network on 'Smart City-Regional Governance for Sustainability'.

- [Download the essay](#)
- [View the conference site](#)

Commentary: Two Westminster academics reflect on the Grenfell Tower fire

A large tower block in London was recently hit by a tragic fire that shocked the capital and the nation. It was found that the cladding on the building was highly combustible and had contributed to the severity of the fire. Since then, a large number of buildings across the country have failed fire safety checks, including housing, schools, and hospitals. How could such a situation have arisen? Two Westminster academics, Dr Tony Manzi and Duncan Bowie, have written separate pieces offering critical commentary on issues such as the degree of regulation, outsourcing, unresponsiveness to local concerns or expert warnings, cost-cutting and austerity.

- [Read Tony Manzi's piece for the Housing Studies Association website](#)
- [Read Duncan Bowie's piece for The Conversation](#)

Conferences: Smart-Eco research presented internationally

Colleagues involved in the Smart-Eco project have been busy presenting emerging research at international conferences in cities across the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Spain, Singapore, China, Norway and the UK. Presentations have been given by Ali Cheshmehzangi, Matt Cook, Martin de Jong, Simon Joss, Rob Raven, Philipp Spaeth, Frans Sengers, May Tan-Mullins, Li Yu and Linjun Xie. Highlights included the 12th Conference on Urban Development and Planning, held in Haikou City, China, with about 2,000 delegates, and the 12th biennial Ecocity World Summit, held in Melbourne, Australia, with around 1,000 delegates from over 30 countries. A special report for the Ecocity World Summit is provided below.

- [View a presentation about a comparative study of smart city experimentation from an institutional perspective, given by Frans Sengers and Linjun Xie at the Ecocity World Summit in Melbourne](#)
- [View a presentation about the role of citizenship in smart city standards, given by Matt Cook at the 'Shaping data standards for future cities' event in Glasgow](#)
- [Read about conferences and papers on the Smart-Eco project site](#)

We are pleased to publish a report by Richard Smith on behalf of Ecocity Builders, the patron organisation of the Eco City World Summit series, covering the recent summit held in Melbourne, Australia. The report reflects on the outcomes of the proceedings, which were held under the overarching topic of 'Changing Cities: Resilience and Transformations'. It highlights four themes from the conference: 1) the central role of indigenous wisdom, 2) paying attention to health and well-being in face of gentrification and disasters; 3) interrogating contradictions of capital and community, and 4) using big data for small neighbourhoods. The biennial Ecocity World Summit series has been running since 1990 and is the longest conference of its kind. It is hosted by Ecocity Builders, which was founded by Richard Register in 1992 following years of pioneering work on the ecological city. Simon Joss is a member of the Board of Directors of Ecocity Builders.

- [Download the conference report](#)
- [View the conference site](#)
- [View the site for Ecocity Builders](#)

Book: Sustainable cities in Asia

Asia is one of the most active regions in terms of the development of sustainable city strategies, and its cities are growing at an unprecedented rate. This topic is extensively discussed in a new book, 'Sustainable cities in Asia', edited by Federico Caprotti and Li Yu, partners in the Smart-Eco project. It examines the challenges facing cities across the continent, including some of the projects, approaches and solutions that are currently being tested. The book contains contributions from an international team of scholars, taking a multi-disciplinary approach that draws on examples from a range of countries including China, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates. The preface is written by Simon Joss and Robert Cowley.

- [View the publisher's website](#)
- [Read the preface](#)

LinkedIn discussion forum

The 'International Eco-Cities Forum', our online discussion board, now has over 640 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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