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Book review

Evolutionary Paths Towards the Mobility Patterns of the Future, M. Hülsmann, D. Fornahl, (Eds.). Springer, Heidelberg (2013), £117 (Hardback), £93.50 (e-book), ISBN 978-3-642-37558-3

The latest wave of interest in electric vehicles (EVs) has sparked a considerable quantity of research activity which has led to a decentralisation of research activity across different regions of the globe (Sangkapichai and Saphores, 2009; Lieven et al., 2011; Schuitema et al., 2013). Outputs of this activity in the English speaking world are easy to come by as they are broadly publicised. However, research in this field which is being conducted in regions where English is not the natural language tends to be less accessible due to the tendency of authors to publish in their native tongues. This propensity has a number of notable consequences, which stem from an absence of research integration, such as replication of investigation and a lack of appreciation of research developments in different regions.

Evolutionary Paths Towards the Mobility Patterns of the Future provides English speakers with access to research outputs which may otherwise be hidden behind the barrier of language. Split into three sections, this book offers a comprehensive overview of the extensive trial of EVs in Germany. The first of these sections investigates how EVs may contribute to the existing mobility needs of society whilst exploring how mobility concepts might change to improve the benefits derived from the diffusion of EVs. Insights are offered on the topics of prosumption, which allows for a greater integration of the consumer into the product development process, and extended product concepts, which demonstrate the possibility of EVs to transcend from the traditional model of ownership. The book progresses by evaluating the challenges which EVs offer for companies operating in the automotive market and policy makers attempting to steer market developments. Discussion points include the potential for lock-in effects and path dependencies in technological development, distribution of charging infrastructure, evaluations of EV carbon intensity and grid effects alongside a socio-technical analysis of sector transition. The concluding section of the book provides a critical assessment of the practical experiences relating to the EV trials in Germany, offering up valuable advice in terms of the operation of such initiatives. The knowledge embedded in this section would likely prove beneficial to any governmental body or large organisation considering the implementation of an EV trial, as the pitfalls identified through the experience in Germany could be acknowledged and avoided from the outset.

The breadth of the research presented in *Evolutionary Paths* makes it an obvious choice as an introductory text. The book provides discussion on almost all topics of current research in this field allowing for an integrated perspective to be presented. All of the papers are designed to be accessible to non-experts and avoid the use of complex terminology and advanced methodology. A mixture of different approaches is used throughout the book, demonstrating the applicability of qualitative and quantitative techniques surrounding the topic of electric mobility. In areas, the quality of the narrative is exceptional in terms of clarity of meaning and structure of presentation which leads to straightforward interpretation. Unfortunately, significant parts of the book are less precise and suffer from word confusion and inappropriate sentence structure which makes it challenging to understand the meaning which is being conveyed.

Simply put, *Evolutionary Paths* is a laudable attempt to bridge the gap between English and German language researchers who share a common interest in EVs. A lack of quality control in certain areas leads to some of the knowledge being lost in translation. Having said this, encouraging cross-language interaction of this variety should be a key objective as it is likely to lead to a greater degree of collaboration between researchers in different regions of the world. In this sense, *Evolutionary Paths* has the potential to provide the catalyst to promoting an integrated dialogue and research environment in this field.

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Craig Morton

Geography & Environment, School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen, Elphinstone Road, Aberdeen AB24 3UF, Scotland, UK

E-mail address: craig.morton@abdn.ac.uk

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