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The Advent of Unmanned Electric Vehicles

The Choices between E-mobility and
Immobility

 Springer

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Preface

For probably the first time in history, human beings are confronted with the fact that physical mobility is regressing. During peak hours, residents of big cities can lose 4 h in traffic jams and things will only get worse. Due to massive urbanization, cities with 15–30 million inhabitants are popping up all over developing countries. These cities are imploding and under this densification process, transport problems are increasing exponentially. Not only are there more people to transport, but with greater wealth and easier access to financing, the number of cars is exploding and will reach 1.7 billion 20 years from now. To add to this bleak vision, under galloping demography and the surge of millions of new middle-class citizens, the past 2 % average worldwide energy consumption—mainly CO₂ driven—is unlikely to change. Everyone realizes that temperature will rise by 2 °C and with it drastic changes will happen affecting the environment and the economy, but no one wants to change his or her lifestyle. Transportation is one of the main drivers of this energy consumption, accounting for 27 %. This is why any transport improvement will help to stabilize temperature rise and limit pollution emission.

If people won't change their lifestyle, relief will need to come from new transportation technologies, changes in work patterns and from personal choices on transportation means that the e-mobility revolution can bring. This revolution is happening under the convergence of IT and wireless telecommunication, and in association with improvements to power electronics and battery performance improvements.

People can already see this revolution in action. Electric and hybrid cars are starting to hit the roads in greater numbers. New plug-in technologies should reduce charging times to 5 mins and battery improvements should increase autonomy and reduce costs, making electric cars more attractive to consumers. For Governments, supporting transport electrification by supplying the necessary infrastructure is mandatory if they are to meet their CO₂ emission commitments.

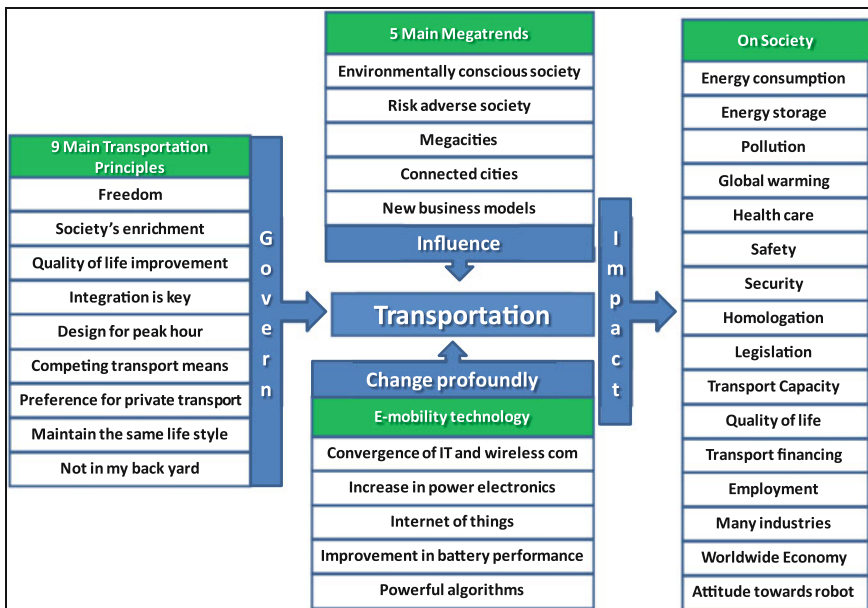
Each year nearly 1.3 million people die as a result of road traffic accidents, a number likely to double following the same worldwide car growth trend. Under constant government scrutiny, the railways have been able to improve their safety track records. This was achieved by applying three safety principles—block

interlocking, block signalling and system integrity—and by eliminating the human factor. By applying the same principles and with driverless technology leapfrogging from other industries, manufacturers and Governments cannot ignore the fact that going driverless will save millions of lives every year. Although most experts expect driverless cars to be sold around 2025, unmanned technology will not happen out of the blue. Instead, a continuous flow of new safer technologies will be presented to the market, ranging from driver based, semi-autonomous to unmanned classification.

This book is about explaining how the e-mobility revolution can help save millions of passengers from injuries, reduce millions of deaths from pollution-related diseases, bring better quality of life, reduce global warming and decrease transportation costs. It is also about showing with simple concepts how new business models, innovative financing solutions and technologies can increase infrastructure capacity while reducing transportation demand. By showing the challenges facing the transportation industries and demonstrating the solutions e-mobility can bring, it gives every reader insights into how to make the right choices to avoid immobility.

The first chapter will give an overview of the main principles and trends that affect transportation. It will provide the readers unfamiliar with transportation challenges, a vision on how e-mobility technologies are being developed to help society apprehend such fundamental changes. It will show which features of society will be impacted by these new technologies.

The following figure summarizes which element will be profoundly changed.



In the following chapters, we will explain in details how e-mobility technologies will directly address issues raised by the five megatrends and as a consequence affect the social features described above.

Contents

1	Principles and Megatrends Affecting Transportation	1
1.1	General Transportation Principles	4
1.1.1	Transportation Brings Freedom to Citizens	4
1.1.2	Transportation Enriches Society	5
1.1.3	Transportation Improves Quality of Life	6
1.1.4	Integration Is Key to Successful Transportation	6
1.1.5	Networks Must be Designed for Peak Hour Capacity	7
1.1.6	Transit Technologies are Competing with Each Other	8
1.1.7	People Prefer Private Over Public Transport	8
1.1.8	People Don't Want to Reduce Their Lifestyle	8
1.1.9	Not in My Backyard Syndrome	9
1.2	An Increasingly Environmentally Conscious Society	10
1.2.1	Greenhouse Gas Emission	10
1.2.2	Air Pollution	11
1.2.3	Investment in Clean Generation Technologies	12
1.2.4	Investment in Clean Combustion Technologies	12
1.2.5	Transport Modes Energy Comparison	13
1.2.6	Economic Impact of Going Electric for Transportation	14
1.3	Risk Adverse Society	15
1.3.1	Graying of Society	16
1.3.2	Litigation Society	16
1.3.3	Safety Systems	17
1.3.4	Mathematics and Algorithms	19
1.3.5	Security	21

1.4	Mega Cities	22
1.4.1	Massive Urbanization of Developing and Poor Countries	22
1.4.2	Mega Transportation Problems of Megacities	24
1.4.3	Increased Vehicle Capacity	25
1.4.4	Increased Network Capacity	25
1.4.5	Road Capacity	27
1.4.6	Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Capacity	28
1.4.7	Mass Transit Capacity	29
1.4.8	System Price Comparison	30
1.5	Connected Cities	30
1.5.1	Constant Network Connection	31
1.5.2	The “Internet of Things”	33
1.5.3	M2M Communication	34
1.5.4	M2M Applied to Cars	35
1.6	New Business Models	35
1.6.1	Privatization	36
1.6.2	Financing Transportation Projects	38
1.6.3	Financial Instruments and Incentives	39
1.6.4	Capturing Future Wealth Increase	40
1.6.5	Mobile Advertising	41
1.6.6	Geo-localization Advertising	41
1.6.7	Portal of Choice	42
1.7	Changing the Face of Transportation	42
1.7.1	Electrifying Transport	43
1.7.2	Encouraging New Business Models	43
1.7.3	Creating the Legal Framework for Unmanned Vehicles	45
1.7.4	Barriers to Adoption	45
	Companies and Brands Stated in the Chapter	46
2	Risk Adverse Society	49
2.1	Introduction	50
2.1.1	Graying of Society	51
2.1.2	Society of Litigation	53
2.1.3	Impact of These Trends on Transportation	53
2.1.4	Safety Facts and Figures	54
2.1.5	Security	60
2.1.6	Homologation	62
2.2	Safety Concepts	63
2.2.1	Railway Safety Concepts	64
2.2.2	Safety Procedures	66
2.2.3	Interoperability	67
2.2.4	WaySide Safety Technologies	67

2.2.5	Fixed, Semi-Fixed, and Moving Block Principles	69
2.2.6	WaySide Interoperability Technologies	73
2.2.7	Train Integrity Technologies.	76
2.2.8	Train Protection Technologies	77
2.2.9	Onboard Operational and Safety Procedures.	79
2.2.10	Positive Train Control (PTC)	80
2.2.11	System Interoperability Procedures	80
2.2.12	Grade Crossing.	81
2.2.13	Safety Integrity Level (SIL)	81
2.3	Communication-Based Train Control (CBTC)	82
2.3.1	CBTC and Moving Block	84
2.3.2	Metro Evolution Toward Unmanned Railway Systems.	85
2.4	Applying Railway Safety Principle to Cars	87
2.4.1	Automotive Block Interlocking Concept	88
2.4.2	Automotive Block Signaling Concept	89
2.4.3	Automotive Integrity Concept.	91
2.4.4	Automotive Protection Technologies	93
2.4.5	Automotive System Interoperability.	95
2.4.6	Other Relevant Automotive Safety Concept	95
2.5	Automation Level in the Automotive Environment	95
2.5.1	Reducing or Eliminating the Human Factor in Driving	96
2.5.2	Level of Car Automation	96
2.5.3	Similarities Between Level of Car and Train Automation	99
2.6	Personal Rapid Transit (PRT).	99
2.6.1	PRT References	100
2.6.2	Smart Infrastructure.	101
2.6.3	(Reasonably) Smart Cars	104
2.6.4	PRT Operational Characteristics	104
2.6.5	Cost Characteristics.	107
2.6.6	PRT Versus Unmanned Cab.	108
2.7	E-Mobility Technologies Reducing Fatalities	108
2.7.1	Black Box	108
2.7.2	Drink Driving: Alcohol Ignition Interlock	111
2.7.3	Seat Belt Wearing.	111
2.7.4	Real-Time Limitation on Over-Speeding	112
2.7.5	Real-Time Information on Over-Speeding	112
2.7.6	Automatic Car Parking	112
2.7.7	Fatigue	113
2.7.8	Wrong Perception or Judgment.	113

- 2.8 The Advent of Vehicle-to-Vehicle Communication
 - Technology 114
 - 2.8.1 VANET. 114
 - 2.8.2 Wave Technology. 115
 - 2.8.3 CALM Technology. 115
 - 2.8.4 LTE Technology in VANET 116
 - 2.8.5 Mesh Network Infrastructure 116
 - 2.8.6 Vehicular Application 118
 - 2.8.7 Anti-collision System 118
 - 2.8.8 Accurate Geo-Positioning. 119
 - 2.8.9 V2V Operational Mode 121
- 2.9 Intelligent Wayside Technologies 122
 - 2.9.1 Vehicle-to-Cloud (V2C). 122
 - 2.9.2 Intelligent Parking. 123
 - 2.9.3 Intelligent Traffic Systems 123
 - 2.9.4 Distributed Intelligence 124
- 2.10 Driverless Cars. 125
 - 2.10.1 Data Acquisition. 125
 - 2.10.2 Data Treatment. 126
 - 2.10.3 Financial Barrier to Adoption. 128
 - 2.10.4 Legal Barrier to Adoption 129
 - 2.10.5 Legal Responsibilities 130
 - 2.10.6 Vehicle Manufacturer Potential Liabilities 131
 - 2.10.7 Onboard Signaling System Provider Potential Liabilities. 131
 - 2.10.8 Telecom Provider Potential Liabilities 132
 - 2.10.9 V2C Hosting Centers 133
 - 2.10.10 Road Infrastructure Provider. 133
 - 2.10.11 Operator or Car Owner 133
 - 2.10.12 Suggestions to Minimize Legal Barrier to Adoption 134
 - 2.10.13 Technical Suggestions to Minimize Potential Litigation. 136
 - 2.10.14 When Will It Happened? 137
 - 2.10.15 Self-driving Market. 139
 - 2.10.16 Testing the Driverless Application. 141
- 2.11 Security. 141
 - 2.11.1 E-Mobility Security Solution 142
 - 2.11.2 End-to-End Security Solutions 143
 - 2.11.3 Technological Trends in Security 143
 - 2.11.4 Limitations of Analog Security Systems. 145
 - 2.11.5 IP Cameras 145
 - 2.11.6 Integrated Audio. 146
 - 2.11.7 Compression Technology. 146

2.11.8	Wayside IP CCTV Solutions	147
2.11.9	Integrated Security Event Management Systems	148
2.11.10	Total Integrated Public Transport System	149
2.11.11	Video Analytics	149
2.11.12	Distributed Intelligence	150
2.11.13	Video Analytics Limitations	151
2.11.14	Video Analytics Technologies	152
2.11.15	Security for Cars	154
	Company or Brand Names Stated in the Chapter	155
3	Environmentally Conscious Society	157
3.1	Governmental Environmentally Friendly Initiatives	159
3.1.1	Tax on Combustible	160
3.1.2	Carbon Tax	162
3.1.3	New Clean Air Regulation: California Clean Car Law	162
3.1.4	Internalization of External Costs	163
3.1.5	Incentive Measures: Tax Credit or Penalties	163
3.1.6	Congestion Charges	164
3.1.7	Public Transport Subsidies	164
3.2	Energy Consumption Comparison Between Car Technologies	165
3.2.1	Diesel, Gasoline, or Electric Cars	165
3.2.2	Comparable Measuring Units	165
3.2.3	Comparison at the Point of Energy Consumption	166
3.2.4	Electrical Car Consumption Study	167
3.2.5	Engine Efficiency	169
3.2.6	Braking Energy Recuperation	170
3.2.7	A Comparison Done at the Point of Energy Generation	174
3.2.8	Electric Power Generation and Distribution Efficiency	174
3.2.9	Petroleum-Equivalency Factor (PEF)	176
3.2.10	Well-to-Wheel Energy Comparison	176
3.2.11	Energy Efficiency According to the Energy Matrix	178
3.2.12	National Energy Savings Resulting from an All Electric Fleet	181
3.3	Evolution of the Electric Vehicle Market	181
3.3.1	Difference in Price at the Pump	182
3.3.2	Total Cost of Ownership	183
3.3.3	Battery Capacity	184
3.3.4	Battery Efficiency	185
3.3.5	Energy Charging Time	186
3.3.6	Charging Infrastructure	188

3.3.7	Trolleybus	189
3.3.8	Catenary-Free Buses	190
3.4	Energy Consumption Comparison Between Private and Public Transport Means.	191
3.4.1	Weight Comparison	193
3.4.2	Acceleration Force Comparison	194
3.4.3	Rolling Friction Force Comparison	194
3.4.4	Air Drag Force Comparison	196
3.4.5	Energy Consumption Comparison at Vehicle Level. . .	199
3.4.6	Power Comparison at Maximum Capacity	200
3.4.7	Energy Consumption Comparison with Real Occupancy Rate	201
3.4.8	Train Energy Losses and Recuperation	205
3.5	Greener Technology	205
3.5.1	Silicon Carbide Inverter	205
3.5.2	Permanent Magnet (PM) Motor	207
3.5.3	Direct Drive Mechanism	208
3.5.4	Direct Drive with PM Motors Controlled by SiC Inverters	208
3.5.5	Energy Recuperation and Wayside or Onboard Storage.	209
3.6	Final Energy Consumption Comparison.	213
3.7	Pollution Comparison Between Car Technology.	214
3.7.1	Air Pollution	216
3.7.2	Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂).	217
3.7.3	Nitrogen Oxide: NO _x	219
3.7.4	Nitrous Oxide: N ₂ O	219
3.7.5	Particulate Matter: PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5}	219
3.7.6	Volatile Organic Compound (VOC)	219
3.7.7	Health Impact of Pollution.	220
3.7.8	Greenhouse Gas Effect	221
3.7.9	Wheel-to-Wheel Pollution of Different Transport Modes.	222
3.7.10	Well-to-Wheel Pollution of Different Transport Modes.	222
3.7.11	Electric Generation Matrix	226
3.7.12	Emission of CO ₂ Per kWh.	227
3.7.13	Emission of CO ₂ Per Transportation Means	229
3.7.14	Conclusion About Pollutant Emission	229
3.8	Other Environmental Considerations	231
3.8.1	Battery Recycling	231
3.8.2	Enabling Renewable Energy Storage.	232
3.8.3	Reduced Land Intake.	233
3.8.4	City Integration	234

3.8.5	Noise Pollution	235
3.8.6	Vibration	236
	Companies and Brands Stated in the Chapter.	236
4	Avoiding Megacities’ Standstill	237
4.1	Private Transport Restriction Measures	238
4.1.1	Congestion Charges	238
4.1.2	Private Car Restriction.	239
4.1.3	Promoting Car Pooling and Financial Restrictions.	240
4.2	System Capacity.	240
4.2.1	Holistic Approach to System Capacity.	240
4.2.2	Increasing Capacity of Existing Infrastructure.	241
4.2.3	Vehicle Capacity	241
4.2.4	Maximum Number of Vehicles.	242
4.2.5	Average Speed	242
4.2.6	Headway	243
4.3	Road Capacity with Driven Cars	243
4.3.1	One-Lane Highway Intensity	244
4.3.2	Level of Service (LOS)	245
4.3.3	Highway Intensity.	247
4.3.4	Road Crossing and Intersection Lights Impact on Intensity	248
4.3.5	Intelligent Lighting Systems.	249
4.3.6	Maximum and Real Road Capacity.	250
4.4	Road Capacity with Unmanned Cars.	250
4.4.1	Highway Intensity with Uniform Spacing.	251
4.4.2	Highway Intensity with Nonuniform Spacing Design	252
4.4.3	Platooning Policy	252
4.5	Car Pooling	254
4.6	Bus Capacity	254
4.6.1	Loading Areas	255
4.6.2	Bus Stops	257
4.6.3	Bus Facilities	258
4.6.4	Traffic Signal Timing	258
4.6.5	Bus Capacity for One Loading Area	258
4.6.6	Bus Capacity for Several Loading Areas	259
4.6.7	Real Bus Capacity at Average Speed.	260
4.7	Unmanned Bus Operation	261
4.8	Mass Transit Capacity.	263
4.8.1	Increasing Capacity of Existing Infrastructure.	263
4.8.2	Vehicle Capacity	263
4.8.3	Mass Transit Network Capacity	266
4.8.4	Railway System Capacity.	266

- 4.9 Transport Mode Capacity Comparison. 267
 - 4.9.1 Highway and Road Capacity 267
 - 4.9.2 Bus and BRT Capacity 268
 - 4.9.3 Metro and Train Capacity 269
 - 4.9.4 Comparing Apples with Apples 270
 - 4.9.5 Considering Lost Capacity 271
- 4.10 System Price Comparison 272
 - 4.10.1 CAPEX Comparison 273
 - 4.10.2 OPEX Comparison 274
 - 4.10.3 Social and Environmental Costs 275
 - 4.10.4 Appropriation Costs 275
 - 4.10.5 Expropriation Costs 276
 - 4.10.6 Congestion Costs 276
 - 4.10.7 Environmental Costs 278
 - 4.10.8 Social Benefits 278
 - 4.10.9 Health Cost Linked to Air Pollution 279
- 4.11 Quality of Ride 279
 - 4.11.1 Average Speed 279
 - 4.11.2 Comfort. 280
 - 4.11.3 Quality of Service. 280
 - 4.11.4 Access to Information 280
 - 4.11.5 Transportation Modes’ Integration. 281
- Companies and Brands Stated in the Chapter. 282

- 5 Connected Cities 283**
 - 5.1 Introduction 283
 - 5.1.1 The Mobile Environment 285
 - 5.1.2 Acquisition of Intelligent Thermostat Manufacturer 285
 - 5.2 The “Internet of Things” Technologies 286
 - 5.2.1 Internet Protocol Definition 287
 - 5.2.2 TCP/IP Layers 287
 - 5.2.3 Network Topology Description 290
 - 5.2.4 Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA). 292
 - 5.2.5 Service Delivery Platform (SDP) and Access
Networking 294
 - 5.2.6 Next Generation Networks (NGN) 295
 - 5.2.7 Event-Driven Architecture (EDA) 296
 - 5.2.8 EDA and SOA Together 297
 - 5.2.9 Plug and Play Technology (PnP) 298
 - 5.3 M2M Communication 298
 - 5.3.1 Sensing Devices 299
 - 5.3.2 RFID 299
 - 5.3.3 Algorithms. 299

- 5.3.4 Communication Links and Networks 300
- 5.3.5 Transportation Within the M2M Market 300
- 5.4 M2M Applied to Public Transport 301
 - 5.4.1 Railway Onboard Networks 301
 - 5.4.2 New IT Technologies that Affect Transportation. 302
 - 5.4.3 Benefits of IP Networks Onboard Trains 303
 - 5.4.4 SOA Applied to the Railway Environment. 304
 - 5.4.5 InteGRail. 305
- 5.5 Predictive Maintenance 305
 - 5.5.1 Constant Monitoring 306
 - 5.5.2 Data Crunching 309
 - 5.5.3 Event-Driven Information 309
 - 5.5.4 Useful Algorithms. 310
 - 5.5.5 Failure Criticality 310
 - 5.5.6 M2M Public Transport Market Estimation 310
- 5.6 M2M Applied to Cars. 311
 - 5.6.1 Re-programmable SIM Cards 311
 - 5.6.2 Existing Onboard Car Networks 312
 - 5.6.3 Onboard Car IP Networks 312
 - 5.6.4 New M2M Added Value Services. 313
 - 5.6.5 M2M Versus V2V or V2I 316
 - 5.6.6 M2M Private Transport Market Estimation. 316
- 5.7 E-Mobility Technology Limitations. 317
- Companies and Brands Stated in the Chapter. 318

- 6 New Transportation Business Models 319**
 - 6.1 Project Finance 320
 - 6.1.1 Corporate Versus Project Finance 321
 - 6.1.2 Private Financial Players 322
 - 6.1.3 Private Participation in Transport Infrastructure. 325
 - 6.2 Transport Infrastructure Privatizations 326
 - 6.2.1 Concession Agreement of Existing Transport Facilities 326
 - 6.2.2 New Project Concession 326
 - 6.2.3 Management Contract 327
 - 6.2.4 Private Public Partnerships (PPP) 328
 - 6.3 New Potential Financial Instruments and Incentives 328
 - 6.3.1 Green Bonds 328
 - 6.3.2 Carbon Credits 329
 - 6.3.3 Voluntary Carbon Market 330
 - 6.3.4 Corporate Donation and Tax Exemption 331
 - 6.3.5 Certificate of Potential Increase in Construction (CEPAC). 332