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Public transport is the life blood of a country's economy and mobility. The chapters in this book raise concerns about the sustainability of road transport in small island development states and the issues of alternative modes of transport and sources of energy for the future. The utilisation of fossil fuels to power public transport has for long been questioned with regards to pollution and its corollary on climate change worldwide. In most countries priority is now given to hybrid and electric vehicles which seems to be the way forward for the future.

Julia R. Kotzebue opens this new edited volume with a general introduction that presents relevant observations on sustainable transport in small island states (SISs). She outlines a broad overview of all chapters, whilst also offering a fair deal to all authors through her commentary. Unfortunately, none of the chapters shows the high reliance on electricity supply in the countries under study, given that power supply can often be erratic. Some projections need to be made for future consumption, in accordance with the growing demography of these countries, and a probabilistic model is also indicated for such an exercise. The view, according to Addison et al. in this very work, that "SISs endeavouring to reduce their carbon footprints would need to extensively analyse the effects of EV (electric vehicle) charging as these grids are inherently small, and small disturbances can wreak havoc on the electricity supply quality" (p. 48) is therefore timely.

A thought-provoking chapter is offered by King and Maharaj, who show a mastery of the technicalities of e-transport, including the mechanical aspects of transport systems. Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs), whose electric charging grids are operated by fossil fuels, have thus far been shown to be less prone to producing carbon particles and emissions. In several instances, the authors – supported by the International Energy Agency – suggest that BEVs are more carbon effective. However, there seems to be a bias towards China in this study, when a clearer focus should have been on SISs. King and Maharaj have used examples of various developed countries to support their arguments for the accelerated deployment of e-mobility in SISs, but have been unable to provide relevant comparisons among SISs to illustrate the realities of these developing countries.

The reliance of the SISs on the importation of fuels is also a valid point conspicuous in King and Maharaj's chapter. Dependence on such sources of energy adds to the costs for these countries, triggering a general increase in prices. In the SISs, there is still some scepticism towards the use of BEVs, although it is expected that these will eventually be cheaper than internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. The chapter addresses some important issues concerning BEVs and ICE vehicles; however the true efficiency of these vehicles will only be known in the future, as consumers remain resistant to change. Indeed, potential car owners are still waiting before making significant investments in this emerging area.

At the same time, the necessity to shift from carbon energy to alternative sources has been well-established. Some views that small islands, with limited road networks and high fuel costs, are a prime market for EVs are valid. Plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) have been identified as the main future alternative to conventional automobiles powered by internal combustion engines, but more research is needed, and over a longer period, to assert that PEVs are, in fact, the solution for the future.

Concurrently, Warren et al.'s study suggests auditing and classifying walking areas, to improve 'walkability' and promote more sustainable transport options, while also including pedestrians' experiences to highlight the issues that may affect walkability in certain areas. The fact that transport in Havana is essentially multimodal makes it a good setting to investigate ways to improve walkability and justifies the validity of such research. Although Cuba could be a model for sustainable transport for other SISs, more research is needed to ascertain how studies using similar tools may differ in other SISs, particularly highlighting their diverse walking-related issues.

Still, increasing walkability requires a cultural shift that is not present in all contexts. For instance, Bajada and Attard's chapter describes a car-oriented culture prevalent in Malta, where 80% of travel is done by car. In their study evaluating population attitudes towards bus service quality, they found that attitudes towards transport services can be influenced by psychological, demographic, and socio-economic factors, and mode use. Furthermore, the authors put forward interesting observations regarding the influence of gender, age, and socio-economic characteristics on bus use; namely, the elderly and retired members of the population, as well as women, travel more by bus. And yet, findings from this study suggest that although a thorough reform of the bus service was needed and carried out, the results were not up to expectations.The challenge for the Maltese to choose active (walking and cycling) modes as alternative and complementary means of transport will be enormous since car ownership has been linked to economic growth and remains more of a socio-economic status issue to date.

Meanwhile, in Trinidad and Tobago, like many SISs and other developing countries, public transportation has become far less attractive to middle- and upper-class riders, as a result of increases in economic activity and disposable incomes. Trinidad and Tobago accounts for less than 1% of global GHG emissions, yet ranks in the top 5 for world emitters per capita. Fortunately, Furlonge and Cudjoe's chapter describes the introduction of a park-and-ride initiative as a positive development, seeking to decrease traffic congestion and increase other, more environment-friendly forms of transport, with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It is a truism that reducing vehicle traffic densities, while maximising human densities on the roadways, is beneficial in the reduction of carbon emissions; however, Kotzebue's edited volume makes an important contribution by demonstrating how the major challenge that needs to be addressed in SIS is how to change attitudes regarding sustainable modes of travel, particularly among car owners who were once bus travellers. There is substantial evidence supporting the use of alternative modes of transport, from basic walking to cycling, in order to reduce carbon fuels and tackle the climate crisis. This is an area that so far remains untapped, and needs further investigation, particularly from a multi-disciplinary perspective involving experts in health and sports medicine. In this way, it will be possible to generate new ideas and provide novel ways of incentivising future generations to opt for more sustainable and environmentally friendly modes of transport over the coming years.

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