Tracing networks and practices:
electric vehicles in discourse and use

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for the humanities and social sciences

DEMAND
DYNAMICS OF ENERGY, MOBILITY AND DEMAND

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For a Low Carbon Future

Importance of electric vehicles (EVs)

Relationship between:

Discourses (Saying) + Practices (Doing)

THE IDEAL ELECTRIC

THE IDEAL ELECTRIC is the only Electric Brougham that will seat four persons with ease and comfort. Both front and rear seats are deep and wide and front windows give greater range of vision than in any other Electric. Luxuriously upholstered in either leather or cloth. No punctures with the ideal—We use Motz Electric Cushion Tires as regular equipment. Nothing can be finer than the material used in this car. Exide Batteries, 40-cells. Special Westinghouse Motor and Controller. Drop pressed steel frame: I-beam drop forged axles. Finest imported Annular type ball bearings. Easiest riding electric car ever built. Three quarter eliptic scroll end springs in rear. 92 inch wheel base. Longer than any other electric car. Low, wide step only 12" from the ground. The only car using a Hill-Climbing Motor. Yale Safety Locking

PRICE $2,000 F. O. B. CHICAGO

The Ideal Electric Company
PACIFIC COAST AGENTS
FREDERICK L. GERKE, Manager

1665 VAN NESS AVE.   SAN FRANCISCO

Agents Wanted —— Car Guaranteed

Ambiguous objects

Slater, D. (2014) in *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 13(2)

Objects become ambiguous when "there are two (or more) distinct, legitimate and practical answers to the question, 'what is this thing in front of me?'" (2014: 100).

Both a danger and resource in social life

Ambiguous objects

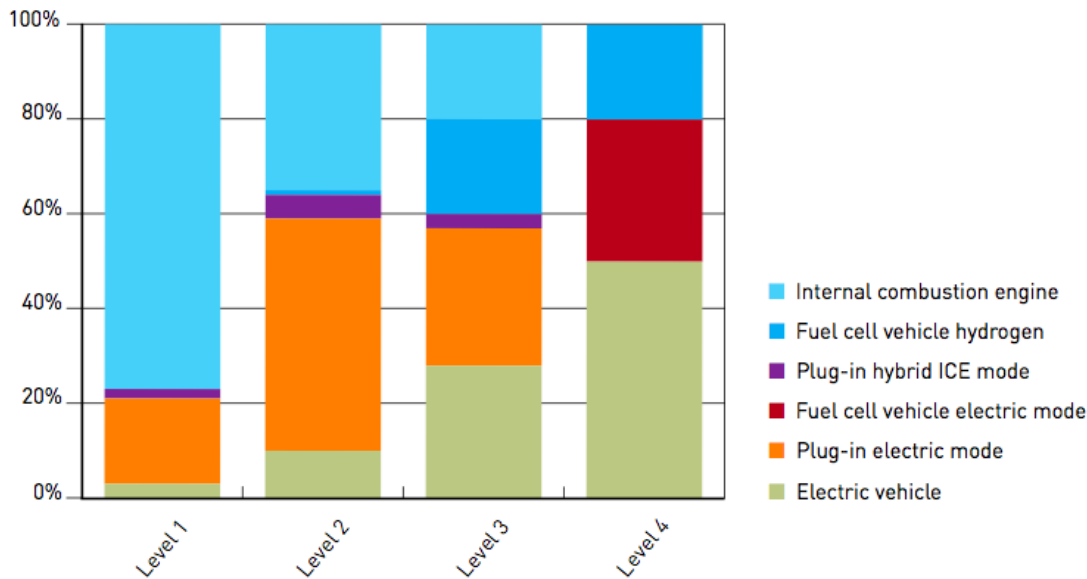Slater, D. (2014) in *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 13(2)

Uncertain meanings (discourses)
Uncertain connections to other objects (networks)
Uncertain actions (practices/uses)

Electric vehicles in UK policy planning

Uncertain meanings, uncertain networks

Figure B2: Proportion of car and van distance travelled by different power sources in 2050, under four levels of change[68]

UK Government 'Pathways to 2050 Analysis' (2010)

- Commitment to lower greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (in comparison to 1990 levels) by 2050

RESERVED FOR SOMEONE WITH FOUR HOURS TO KILL

NO CHARGING MEANS MORE DRIVING.
LEXUS
Learn More

LEXUS HYBRID DRIVE. THE PROVEN WAY FORWARD.
LEXUS
Learn More

CONCEPT CHEVY VOLT
NOW CHARGING

i-MiEV. Australia's first volume produced electric car is on sale now.
love that car
MITSUBISHI MOTORS

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Ambiguities or uncertainties about practice

Less commonly addressed

- Future transport scenarios (e.g. Timms et al. 2014 in Environment & Planning A)

- Limited nuance (e.g. equality but not dynamics)

- Energy Technologies Institute report on future transport – variability of vehicle use

A report by the Energy Technologies Institute

Transport
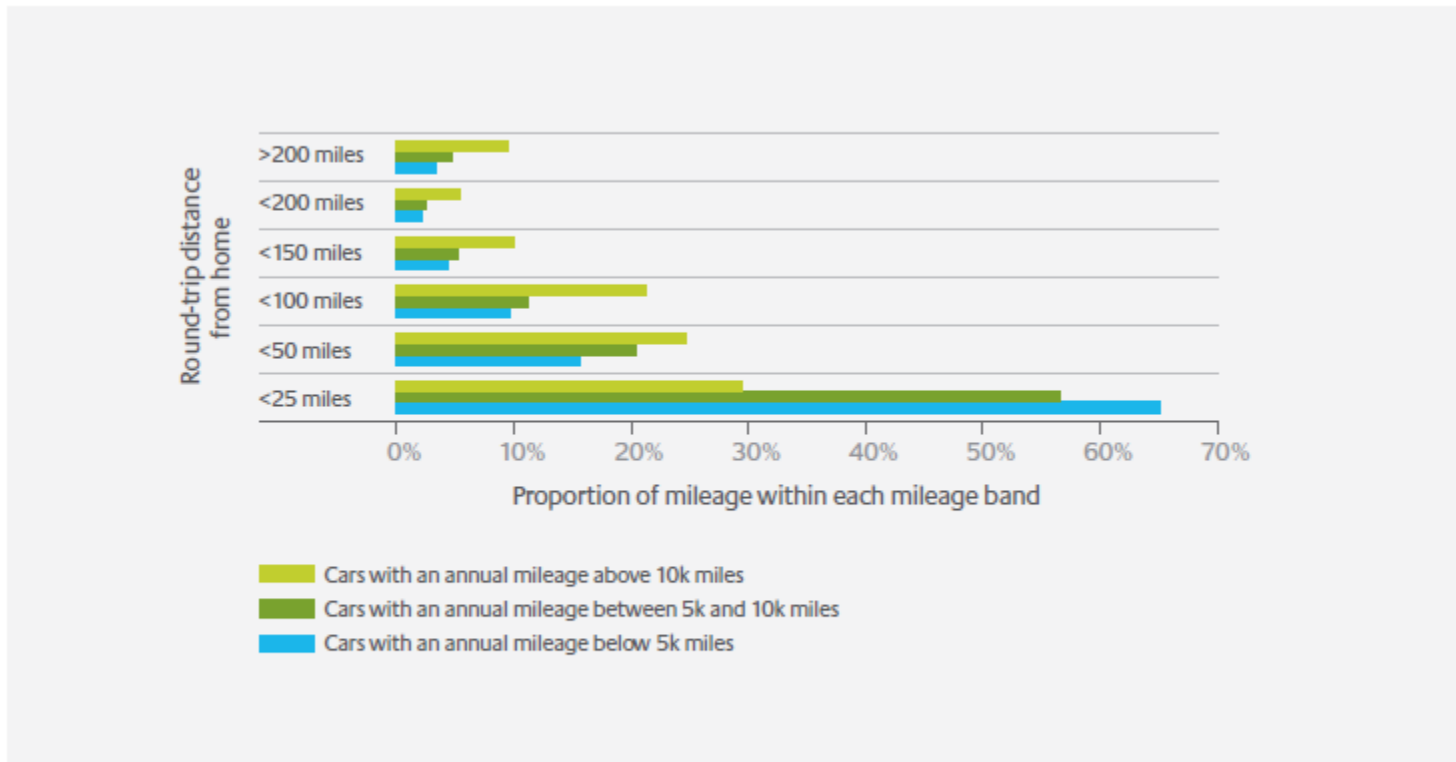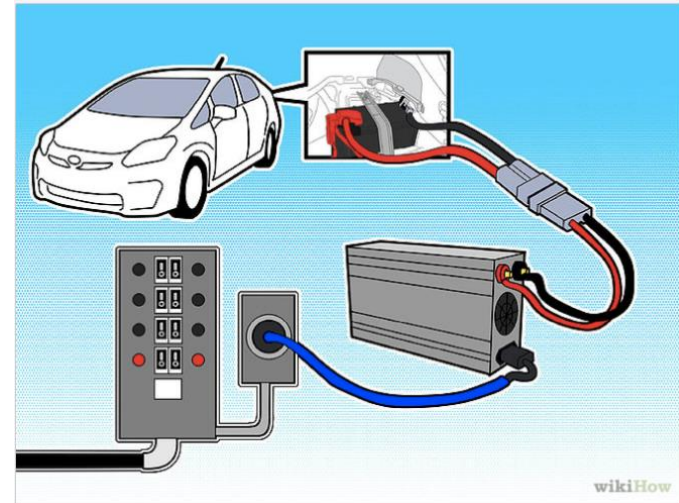An affordable transition to sustainable and secure energy for light vehicles in the UK

Figure 19: Round-trip Distances (Multi-leg) for Low, Medium and High Annual Mileage Cars[18]

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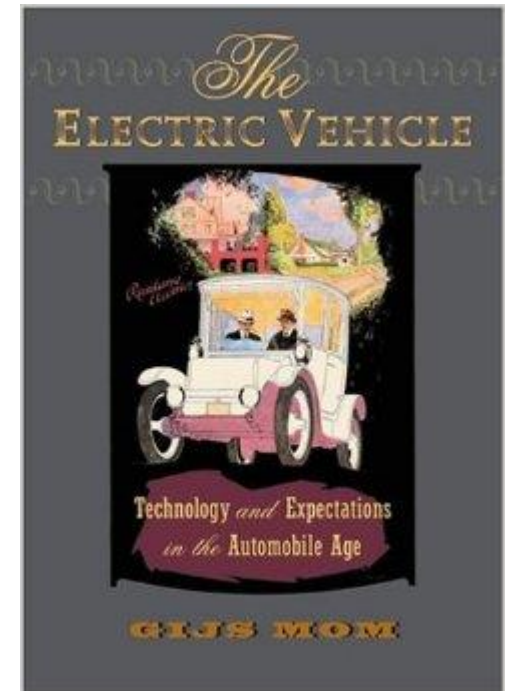
Tracing other networks

What kind of technologies might EVs be connected to?

Tracing other practices

Electric vehicles and Internal Combustion Engine vehicles

- Should EVs do the same things as ICEs?

- ETI: "at least two hours of high speed motorway driving (on a very cold and wet winter night" (p36)

- Mom (2004) *The Electric Vehicle*

      - multifunctional won

      - class and multiple vehicles

Key Points

-   Concern for adoption of EVs in relation to sustainability targets

-   Meanings shouldn't be addressed without attention to use
    Using ambiguities and uncertainties about networks and
    practices to inform better policies

-   How EVs relate to other appliances and technologies

-   In particular: would patterns of adoption and use be any
    different if EVs were less similar to ICEs?

Thank you!
Xiè xiè!

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