



And then my heart went zoom...

written by Pierre McDonagh
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In June of this year, we hosted the [Myth and the Market meeting](#) in Carlingford, County Louth, a place which is reinventing the old railway track as a cycle and walk way in this part of Ulster. For three days the myth of the Mercedes Benz was collectively ours as the family friendly sponsor Colm Lindsay Cars lent us a Mercedes Benz 350 CLS CDI to transport VIP speakers from and to Dublin Airport. All passengers felt special beyond belief and relaxed into the comfort of the vehicle and this made me chuckle; desire overwhelmed the ambiguities of [Hewer](#) and Brownlie's (2007) debadging car aficionados. Previously [Prothero](#) and [Fitchett](#) (2000) have emphasised the need to green the commodity form into a greener way of being and this Merc presented the best illustration of the challenge that lies ahead one that [Martin](#) and [Schouten](#) (2012) want to become the norm of Sustainable Marketing.

A current band of like-minded professors (McDonagh, Martin, Murray, Prothero, Schouten and Vaisto) are all immersed in the Electric Vehicle project. This team



of EV scholar-aficionados have embarked on a project that has taken them across California, Arizona, Finland, Switzerland and soon into Africa working with [Professor Herman Musahara](#) of the [Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa \(OSSREA\)](#) to unpack the conditions needed for more people to experience what one respondent describes of the Zero motorbike to be 'like flying a magic carpet!'.



As Carl from the Zero dealership in LA explains this is great for people new to bikes, "I think one of the biggest appeals has been first time motorcycle riders. Now they get the chance to join the club, because it's a new transmission in these bikes. That's one of the first appeals—it comes with the 'fun' aspect of these bikes. And then, also, the efficiency of the bikes, the fact that it's not something



you have to worry about when you buy a motorcycle that it requires a little bit of tinkering sometimes. It requires knowledge of the vehicle. All this is eliminated when you buy a Zero. You just need to buy it and ride it”.

The EV work is inspired by an integrative and multidisciplinary ethos and the research team are talking to manufacturers, dealers and end users of a range of electric vehicles to learn from their experiences. We want to connect with engineers and vehicle designers as well as policy makers and city planners who are interested in accelerating the adoption and mainstreaming of electric vehicles. We especially feel meaningful change can be created in areas where there is high density of population across the globe to help better respond to the provisioning for sustainable mobility both from industry and those providing the infrastructure required for electric vehicles.

A key challenge then is making the end user desire the electric vehicle as part of their daily consumption and identity forming practices. We are seeking to partner with other social scientists, interested non-government organizations, industry partners and those actively seeking greener forms of mobility as an exciting form of living for people everywhere; we are looking at electric vehicles in daily use, in the luxury car market, auto racing, electric motorcycles, use of electric leisure vehicles for pleasure such as snow mobiles or for non-intended uses (for example the golf-cart-as-electric-car in retirement communities); this is all with the purpose of trying to better understand people and their relationships with the electric vehicle.



For now our hearts are going zoom, once the work is done we hope a lot more



across the globe will go zoom as well.

References:

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