

## UCL Collaborative Social Science Domain

### Social Science Plus Pilot Project Outcomes Report

#### Project Title

Are e-scooters contributing to transport-related social exclusion?

#### Amount

£10,000

#### Academic Year

2021-22

#### Social Science Principal Investigator

Dr. [Daniel Oviedo](#), Lecturer, Development Planning Unit, Bartlett, BEAMS

#### Co-Investigator(s)

##### Non-Social Science Co-Investigator

Professor [Helena Titheridge](#), Professor of Mobility and Sustainable Transport, Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering, Engineering Sciences, BEAMS

##### Second Co-Investigator

Dr. [Joanna Hale](#), Lead Sustainability Consultant, UCL Centre for Behaviour Change, Brain Sciences, LMS

##### Early Career Researcher

[Azadeh Mashayekhi](#), Development Planning Unit, Bartlett, BEAMS

#### Additional Collaborators (include academic and non-academic partners both UK and international)

- FORUMM – Innovate UK's network for driving the conversation in Micro mobility in the UK
- Connected Places Catapult
- CENEX

#### Project outline

Building on a perspective of Transport- Related Social Exclusion (TRSE) the project set out to challenge current understandings of how the adoption of micro-mobility disrupts attitudes and practices of those involved in planning, developing, regulating, and providing transport. Furthermore, through the lenses of accessibility and transport inequalities, the project sought to analyse how e-scooters affect residents with different social identities. Reflecting on the findings, the project worked to identify opportunities and challenges, including incentives and disincentives for leveraging micro-mobility to address TRSE.

#### Main findings

- While not often applied to emerging modes of transport, adopting a TRSE perspective provided the researchers in this study with the necessary room for manoeuvre to navigate and analyse the diverse -and often unexpected- perceptions, interpretations, and attitudes of different stakeholders towards this, still-novel, mode of transport.
- It also enabled us to account for the added complexity of a rapidly changing regulatory and policy environment marked by uncertainty.

- Such uncertainty is perhaps best illustrated by the constantly shifting end date for many shared e-scooter trials or the announcement of regulatory decisions to the public months before actual laws could be enforced.
- The dimension-based analysis enabled us to sift through the influence of these changes in particular aspects of concern for interviewees and to reflect on the different social and organisational positions of participants that underpin their responses.
- Methodologically, the analysis in this paper speaks to the need for both scalable and in-depth evidence. First, to enable a reliable overview of characteristics, behaviours, and perceptions of users and non-users of transport modes. Second, to illustrate the diverse perspectives, contradictions, and understandings emerging from key stakeholders across the transport sector.
- The evidence about different users and non-users of e-scooters contributes to existing gaps in knowledge about who uses private and shared vehicles and services and what role they play in meeting their mobility needs.
- A multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary analysis of evidence addressing the eight proposed dimensions of TRSE allowed us to shed light on issues not often brought forward, such as discrimination, spatial politics, (mis)use of technology for enforcing power imbalances, and the need for more flexible design and operations.
- Further research into the local dynamics of both shared and private e-scooters in cities across the country is necessary to add nuance to the social consequences of different operational models and transport and urban environments in which these technologies are inserted.

**Please detail:**

- **the extent to which you achieved the aims of your pilot project as detailed in your original application**  
The project exceeded expectations as it was possible not only to engage with a broad and diverse group of stakeholders, but we managed to engage directly with citizens using and not using e-scooters using quantitative methods. The use of mixed methods enabled the team to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the links between e-scooters and TRSE in London and other cities in the UK. This was made possible by additional funding obtained through the lifecycle of the project by organisations such as Innovate UK.
- **describe any barriers that you encountered**  
Perhaps the main challenge was to access and engage actively with citizen groups both in favour and against e-scooters, particularly in the context of the two workshops. Private and public sector organisations and other academics were significantly more active in their participation which led to some imbalanced sessions that may induce bias. This was mitigated in workshop two, although it was a consistent challenge throughout the project.

**Key achievements and impacts (academic and non-academic), media coverage, etc**

- The funding was instrumental in setting up a new platform for researching inclusive mobility innovations in the UK and overseas: [IME - Home \(ime-ucl.io\)](http://ime-ucl.io)
- Our focus has expanded from London to the rest of the UK. We are now part of a project led by the Connected Places Catapult about inclusive micro-mobility futures in the UK for the Department for Transport.
- We are also running a user and non-user survey online, reaching 400 responses in three weeks, and we plan to run it until the end of August. You can find the questionnaire here: [IME Survey - London \(maptionnaire.com\)](http://maptionnaire.com)
- We have produced a policy brief about the workshop we conducted as part of the project, which I has been shared with relevant stakeholders nationwide.

- IME has involved four research assistants and five linked MSc dissertations connected to the project using SSCC and Innovate UK funding.
- The project was presented at the IGI-IGU conference of applied geography in Paris in summer 2022.

**Detail your plans for external funding application(s) (funder, scheme, date of application, amount, outcome (if known) etc)**

- The initial work enabled us to obtain additional funding of the order of £25,000 for related work from Innovate UK, the Connected Places Catapult, and for extending our project to Newcastle in collaboration with a colleague at Newcastle University, where ran a second version of the project's workshop.

**Next steps**

- The PI is currently preparing two applications for funding for policy engagement in partnership with the Department for Transport and Innovate UK. The first will be submitted to the Urgent Policy Engagement fund of UCL (£10,000) and the second will be an internal call for Innovate UK to support further the activities of FORUMM.
- An outline application has been submitted to the DRIVING URBAN TRANSITIONS PARTNERSHIP – DU of the Horizon Europe Programme under the topic of Personal Mobility Transformations for Sustainable 15-minute cities in Europe. The proposal draws on learnings from the project regarding micromobility. The outcome of the outline application will be known in March 2023 and a full proposal for value of roughly £1.5 million will be submitted if the proposed project was successful at the first stage.