Bike Sharing has become part of policies implemented across the globe — in high and low-cycling countries — to increase the use of bicycles. These novelties have also arrived in emerging countries with promises for new mobility for their inhabitants. Some people celebrated the systems as an institutionalized inclusion of the bicycle in the mobility system.

São Paulo, Brazil, implemented the first bike-sharing scheme in 2008. Since then, it has come a long way. Different models were — and continue to be — experienced. However, it has become increasingly concentrated spatially, rather than broadened, while funded by private banks. The analysis presented will address three issues. What are the interests of the financial institutions in funding these systems? How do the systems serve mobility — as a last-mile system or as a complementary mobility system for areas saturated with traffic? Whose mobility do the systems serve: what are the technological, financial, and territorial barriers for universal access?

In order to address these questions, the paper will include information from semi-structured interviews, analysis of the spatial distribution of the systems based on georeferenced data and information about the access to each system. The paper will discuss that, over time, bike-sharing has shifted from public policy — although with several restrictions and problems — to a private policy. While the private sector has undertaken the operation of the system, the public interest and equity on access to bike-sharing have increasingly been set aside. Bike-sharing in São Paulo hasn’t evolved towards the improvement of mobility for the population in general — as alleged —, but rather oriented for a specific user and on a specific territory to serve the marketing interests of private financial institutions.