



University of the  
West of England

## Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

A Short Film about Happiness

- **Format:**

Film (15-20 minutes)

- **Author(s) Name:**

John Bird; David Green; Distinxt Ltd (the film maker)

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

University of the West of England; Distinxt Ltd

- **Abstract (300 words):**

This film focuses on the work of the Vienna School social scientist Otto Neurath, particularly his urban design work for the Stowlawn estate in Bilston in the 1940's which was based on his design work in Red Vienna. In addition to what may be a surprising juxtaposition – Vienna + Bilston – Neurath's views are close to the interests of the conference. His idea is that by involving people in the design of their urban spaces and not making these spaces like all other urban spaces, human happiness will be maximised and, by implication, human health. The democratic design of spaces aims to produce 'a pleasure maximum'. It is important to see that Neurath's conceptualization of happiness is more focused on thriving and well-being rather than some later, more statistical, measures and happiness indices.

The film is in three short parts – an introduction to the project; a short section on 'everything about Neurath', including how to democratize planning process through

visual education (isotypes, an original form of infographics); and a final section based on interviews with people living in Stowlawn estate now.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

John Bird, reader in Sociology – particular interest in using visual, both moving and still, in both research and teaching. Other research interests include pedagogies to enhance diversity in university education. Main teaching – sociologies of belief and culture.

David Green, Senior Lecturer in Sociology – main interests in the development of visual sociologies, especially as these apply to teaching, learning and assessment. Main teaching – sociologies of transgression; introduction sociology; visual sociology.

Distinx Ltd – a new, Bristol-based, video, film and Gfx company set up by an ex-UWE graduate. Main areas – music videos; teaching materials for university modules.