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**Shared Spaces : Social Innovation  
in Urban Health and Environment**

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KATARSIS Project  
CRISES : Denis Harrisson, Director

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« **Shared Spaces: Social Innovation in Urban Health and Environment** »

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Une innovation sociale est une intervention initiée par des acteurs sociaux pour répondre à une aspiration, subvenir à un besoin, apporter une solution ou profiter d'une opportunité d'action afin de modifier des relations sociales, de transformer un cadre d'action ou de proposer de nouvelles orientations culturelles.

En se combinant, les innovations peuvent avoir à long terme une efficacité sociale qui dépasse le cadre du projet initial (entreprises, associations, etc.) et représenter un enjeu qui questionne les grands équilibres sociétaux. Elles deviennent alors une source de transformations sociales et peuvent contribuer à l'émergence de nouveaux modèles de développement.

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*Denis Harrisson*  
Directeur

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine social innovation by grassroots and policy networks concerned with inclusive public space, well-being and sustainability in cities and urban neighbourhoods as socially creative strategies for urban policy change. Social innovation refers to the use of imagination or creativity for social change rather than, or as well as, technological change. This process of social innovation aims to give a voice to groups that have been traditionally absent from politics and institutions of governance (Moulaert *et al.*, 2005). These socially creative strategies fall at the intersection of environmental, health and urban policy domains. The paper is based on a state-of-the-art review of the health and environmental policy literatures conducted for the EU funded Katarsis project, using broadly a ‘realist synthesis’ methodological approach (Pawson, 2007). The literature is presented as applying to three levels. At the macro-level are theories of political economy – concerned with social, health and environmental injustice arising from the operation of global markets, global political structures and neo-liberalism. At the micro-level are theories of and claims for social and policy networks – concerned with oppositional or alternative networks through which citizens take control of these aspects of their lives and/or challenge power and policy. At the meso-level, the health and environmental policy agendas converge, where the emblematic policy issues of the moment are climate change and obesity. We identify a third issue of road accidents – a pandemic cause of death and serious injury across Europe particularly for young people. These policy issues related strongly to the cross-cutting policy domains of transport policy and food policy.

The focus of this paper is on the micro-level, where case studies of socially creative strategies with innovative good practice are identified in two areas : (1) networks protesting against urban transport policy and claiming new rights of access to public space ; (2) networks promoting the growing, trading and consumption of local food in cities and urban neighbourhoods. The socially creative strategies in this field combine their immediate aims to improve social, mental and physical well-being with longer term aims to promote global and local sustainability. The authors develop a typology of socially creative strategies as networks arising from : (a) social movements, with a strong protest orientation ; (b) NGOs or community-based development organizations ; (c) local governance institutions ; or (d) socially innovative individuals. Examination of these socially creative strategies re-problematizes settled definitions of the public sphere as an interaction of the global and the local and focuses on emerging forms of active citizenship identities previously excluded from influence in governance, including young people, cyclists / pedestrians / non-car users, and globally aware ‘localistas’. For these groups re-drawing the physical and political contours of public space, and the diverse groups and types of access to it, is intimately linked to the transformation of the public sphere, and their representation in it.





## 1. PERSPECTIVES

Two theoretical perspectives allow us to understand the influence that globalized forces have on well-being and sustainability : political economy which concentrates on the macro-structural underpinning of inequalities and injustice ; and a network / social movement approach, which concentrates on the ways in which socially creative strategies (SCS) have emerged at the micro-level in response to global change (Yearley, 1996 ; Irwin, 2001). The final part of the section turns to the meso-level policy literature in the combined field of health and well-being environmental sustainability, where three overlapping policy issues have emerged : climate change, obesity and injury, with transport policy and food policy as key areas of contention.

### 1.1. Macro-level : Political Economy

The political economy literature offers a number of critiques of the impact of economic and political structures and also the development on social and inter-generational justice. The political economy of health literature points to the negative impact capitalist economies have had on health inequalities along dimensions of class, race and gender and in relation to developing countries (Doyal and Pennell, 1979). Policy comparisons are often made between different welfare regimes – social democratic (e.g. Sweden), liberal (e.g. USA) and corporatist (e.g. Germany) (Esping-Andersen, 1990 ; 1999). A study of the impact of welfare regimes in OECD countries (1945-80) on health inequalities, showed that social democracies performed better than liberal or corporatist ‘ christian democrat ’ and ‘ ex-fascist ’ countries (Navarro and Shi, 2003). Neo-liberal governance is claimed to have increased income inequality and social fragmentation leading to ‘ lower health status ’ (Coburn, 2003) and global deregulation of international trade under the WTO has been found to be leading to ‘ inequalities of poverty and income and environmental sustainability ’ which are ‘ key determining pathways ’ causing global health inequalities (Labonte, 2003 : 470).

Europe continues to endure persistent and extensive health inequalities. Inequalities exists both within member states (MS) and also between MS (Mackenbach, 2006). Explanations for their continuation are numerous but medically focused explanations suggest that poor health can lead to downward social mobility with increasing severity of pathology often leading into a spiral of growing dependency (Asthana and Halliday, 2006 : 27). While this is helpful in understanding *individual* health inequalities, it comes from a research tradition dominated by a neo-positivist outlook and undertaken by social epidemiologists. We consider that a more nuanced approach is required to better understand the social embeddedness of inequalities of well-being.

In highlighting the nexus between the health and environment fields the complexity of interaction between the fields, and between various scales of interaction, becomes very apparent. Barton and Grant (2006) believe that people irrespective of their background or cultural traditions are surprisingly consistent in their aspirations to live in neighbourhoods that are attractive, safe, healthy and unpolluted with high quality local facilities, access to green spaces and excellent connections to other areas. However, well-being cannot be totally understood solely in the local or even the national scale. International processes are important too. We know that in addition to complex local and neighbourhood interactions there are general forces of globalisation at work which are common to all countries and which have to be included in our analytic assessment of health determinants if the issue of social polarisation in health are to be tracked and explained (Oliver *et al.*, 2001). Unfortunately, hitherto, there has been little research undertaken to disentangle the relationship between social disadvantage, global forces and health damaging behaviours. However the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) on behalf of WHO have established a Commission on Social Determinants of Health to examine and assess the causes of health inequalities. In their Interim Statement (IUHPE, 2007) they not only highlight the importance of non-medical antecedents to health inequalities but acknowledge the need to build an *eco-social approach* (Hancock, 2007) to understand the determinants of inequities today.

What does this require? The inextricable links between environmental and social factors entered discourses on health inequalities at the end of the last century (Canadian Public Health Association, 1992), but they have now come to the centre of the policy stage as a global scientific consensus has finally begun to emerge on key aspects of environmental degradation resulting from human activity in the global economy (IPCC, 2007) which contribute to the undermining of sustainable well-being.

In the field of environment and well-being, the political economy literature provides a critique of contemporary global markets, economic production and neo-liberal global institutions as contributing to environmental damage. Social inequality (e.g. income distribution and literacy) is clearly shown to be linked to environmental inequality (e.g. exposure to pollution) (Boyce, 2002). Hegemonic power within global institutions exacerbates both social and environmental inequity across a range of policy domains (Stevis and Assetto, 2001). This is perhaps most clearly illustrated in our case study field of food and agriculture, where natural environment, economic production and political regulation are so entwined. The emergence of a global food system destructive of biodiversity and local food economies, with input-intensive industrial agriculture is the subject of sustained analysis. The concentration of agro-food capital and the global hegemony of neo-liberal trade and investment regimes drive intensification and industrialisation of agriculture through inputs, such as chemicals, machinery, investment in large-scale food

processing, and latterly new biotechnologies (Goodman and Redclift, 1991 ; Ward, 1993). Global trading flows, differentiated and niche markets, the rolling back of subsidies into a more liberalised trading system (Atkins and Bowler, 2001) have combined with a shift in power in the food chain from producers and processors to retail supermarkets (Marsden *et al.*, 2000 ; Lang *et al.*, 2001) which have led to a form of private governance of food imposed on producers (Marsden *et al.*, 2000 ; Barling *et al.*, 2002) who experience it as a drive to reduce incomes and an insistence on standards of cosmetic perfection and longevity that can lead to an increasing reliance on technologies (mechanical, chemical, crop selection) to produce desired quality. An important exclusionary dynamic within this global food system is the concentration of key environmental resources in the form of Intellectual Property Rights over agricultural genetics in the hands of a small number of multi-nationals.

Within the EU, industrialisation and intensification of agriculture have led to monopolisation in farm holdings and acceleration in the loss of rural labour, as well as the increased use of long distance transport in integrated food chains. For example, milk from the Netherlands is processed into yoghurt in Greece and consumed in the UK and Germany leading to the idea of ‘ food miles ’ as a rough indicator of the ‘ carbon footprint ’ of food supplies. Moreover the health benefits of consuming global food are unevenly distributed. Thus diet too, is a field of social exclusion and injustice, with the diet of lower socio-economic groups in the UK providing cheap energy derived from foods such as meat products, full cream milk fats, sugars, preserves, potatoes and cereals, but with poor variety and little intake of vegetables, fruit and wholemeal bread (Lang *et al.*, 2001 : 548). The impact of this inequality in diet is registered in alarming statistics on childhood obesity across Europe. Both under nourishment and obesity are global health problems, with estimates of 800 million undernourished children (UNICEF, 1998, cited in Lang *et al.*, 2001) and 300 million people who are obese (WHO, 2006).

## **1.2. Micro-level : Movements and Networks as Social Innovation**

A second theoretical perspective in the literature is a bottom up approach to social innovation, which emphasises the efficacy of networks and social movements as SCS. While both health (Brown, 2003), and environment (Yearley, 1996), are fields heavily dominated by science, oppositional social movements have arisen across both fields. The literature on health social movements (SMs) is limited, but points to a significant history of oppositional re-framing of health and well-being issues and the mobilization of stigmatised social groups. One example is that from the late 1960s psychiatry became a contested discourse through the re-framing undertaken by the anti-psychiatry movement (Crossley, 2006). Another example is mobilization of men, sex workers and intravenous drug users, around the treatment of HIV/AIDS victims in the 1980s (Stoller,

1998). The existence of a wide range of self-help and support groups on a range of health issues, including breast cancer and Alzheimer's, are now seen as forming health SMs (Brown and Zavestoski, 2005). This also points to the fact that networks of solidarity (one aspect of SMs, as defined by della Porta and Diani (1999)) spread wider than protest oriented SMs, and include, for example, NGOs (in health as well as environmental fields) and the engagement of citizens in more or less formal governance structures, such as neighbourhood based partnerships (see case studies below).

Environmental movements are a staple of the SM classics (Touraine, 1981 ; Melucci, 1989) and have been extensively analysed at the national scale in Italy (Diani, 1995), as well as in terms of global events within Europe (Chesters and Welsh, 2004) and in relation to the EU (Ruzzo, 2007). Connected to the SM literature is work on civic inter-organizational networks, which may take the form either of SMs, coalitions or independent organizations (Diani and Bison, 2004 ; Purdue, et al, 2004). In the case of food, networks have been used to describe alternative supply chains, as well as SM and NGO activities (Mackridge, 2006). This network perspective is a useful complement to the structural political economy perspective and draws on Actor Network Theory (ANT) to highlight SCS that are described as alternative or oppositional to global capitalist monocultures. ANT, originally a branch of the sociology of science, is concerned with how diverse actors – individuals, NGOs, Governments, scientific journals, as well as non-human actors, such as organisms or genes are enrolled into networks which support particular knowledge claims (Latour, 1987 ; Callon, 1986).

The alternative agro-food networks act as SCS in three ways. First, they embrace new markets for food; second, they develop new methods of production; and third they weave together complex new meanings of food, (Whatmore and Thorne, 1997 ; Murdoch *et al.*, 2000). These innovations include a refusal to be integrated into exclusionary global agro-chemical and/or genetic regimes, or global distribution and profit regimes . The network approach emphasises human agency in food politics and highlights the way farmers and consumers make decisions and influence food supply chains (Tovey, 1997 ; van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2000 ; Goodman and Dupuis, 2002).

The study of alternative agro-food networks has now become a major strand in agro-food studies, partly because it is argued that sustainability can be achieved through grass-root action and social innovation. The varieties of alternative agro-food initiatives that make up these emerging networks are considerable throughout the EU with different histories and cultural variations in agricultural development and food provision. The social provision of food is also a very important feature, with food-co-operatives, for example, actively working to bring fresh and nutritious food into food deserts (e.g. see example of the Hartcliffe Health and Environmental Action Group case study below).

Therefore local food can be seen as, on the one hand, a radical alternative to conventional global food chains (van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2000 ; Atkins and Bowler, 2001 ; Lucas and Jones, 2006) ; and, on the other hand, as a means of delivering policy aspirations for better public nutrition and health (Dowling and Caraher, 2003). Whatever the ideological differences, there is a common understanding that the production, provision and consumption of food are interdependent activities, driven by collective enterprise, which has to engage with civil society. Attempts to reconfigure food supply chains into more socially and environmentally responsible entities, has led to new alliances and networks in civil society (Tovey, 1997 ; Goodman and Dupuis, 2002 ; Renting *et al.*, 2003).

SCS are not necessarily located purely in civil society, but can appear at the interface with governmental institutions, or even be taken up by such institutions. The emergence of new forms of local governance (and governmentality), reaching out beyond the statutory sector, aims to engage ‘ active citizens ’, strengthen community organizations in neighbourhoods and encourage partnership working between civil society and the state (Communities and Local Government, 2006). In the field of health, some governments have recognised that supporting and developing ABIs will serve to empower individuals and improve levels of self determination (Department of Health, 2003). This has led to increased and improved service delivery by public service professionals and an emerging complexity in governance arrangements involving partnerships between public, private and voluntary sector agencies coming together to agree, plan and deliver programmes across organizational boundaries (Stoker, 1998). Service providers and local professionals are being increasingly urged to be flexible in responding to people’s needs in deprived areas and to develop strategies that can promote community engagement that are more intensive, deliberative and engaging of local needs (ODPM, 2005). Thus ABIs offer much potential for addressing health and environmental inequalities as Health Action Zones in England have shown (Barnes, et al, 2005).

### **1.3. Meso-level : Policy Issues and Agendas**

“ Local action is more important than ever. Getting more communities involved in decision making will be the key to finding the solutions to some of the biggest challenges currently facing the country such as obesity and climate change. ” Hazel Blears, UK Minister for Communities and Local Government (CLG Press release, 18/10/2007).

The synergistic links between health and environment are increasingly recognised across the European Union (EU) and the WHO policy agendas. Key themes include the inter-related issues of: carbon emissions, climate change, energy futures, non-renewable resource usage,

waste/pollution, environmental quality and biodiversity etc. Indeed the recent UN *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report* (IPCC, 2007) has affirmed a broad scientific consensus that validates the view that human activity is responsible for global warming and this threatens people's well-being (Coote, 2006). In the UK, the Stern Review (HM Treasury, 2006) has placed climate change, and the need for sustained integrated policy action, at the centre of political and public discourses, thus recognising that unless human activities are carefully planned and managed, and more beneficial and sustained behaviours encouraged, it is likely that Europe's valuable ecosystems, biodiversity and natural assets will become increasingly degraded or even destroyed.

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1947) defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social *well-being* and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. Physical well-being is frequently considered in terms of physical health and fitness. Mental well-being is interpreted as positive outcomes represented by factors such as high self-esteem, good levels of self-reported well-being, life satisfaction and a sense of place. Social well-being is interpreted as meeting the needs of people in groups, and not just individuals. In the WHO definition of health, well-being is the result of a combination of these factors, and this is the sense in which the term is used in this report. It is vital to appreciate the influence and impact of socio-demographic factors on well-being and recognise that these factors account for less than 20 % of the variance of subjective (self-reported) well-being (Campbell *et al.*, 1976), a finding that has been confirmed in subsequent studies (Diener and Suh, 1997). Personality and cultural values play an important role and often exceed the explanatory power of living conditions ; thus, (within communities) individuals can develop processes of adaptations, making the direct linkage between objective living conditions and subjective well-being problematic. Therefore, a mixture of social, psychological, societal and cultural influences and their complex interrelationship should be the starting point for understanding and exploring the processes that lead to inequalities in health and well-being (Delhey, 2004).

While climate change dominates the environmental policy agenda, a major threat to health and well-being across Europe is obesity, which is contributing to broader health inequalities. Research to date highlights the differential prevalence of obesity by age, gender and socio-economic position but it has not explored in any detail the mechanisms by which the environment acts to create and maintain these inequalities, or how environmental or policy changes might ameliorate such inequalities (Rigby and James, 2003 : 4). The complexities around food and health are clearly an important consideration in tackling obesity and promoting well-being. The tension between food democracy (giving more power to people to decide their diets) and food control (constraining and directing food supplies) has permeated struggles over food and health in modernity (Lang, 2007 : 145). Consumers are exhorted to eat less but lower prices delivered

by market economies encourage the reverse (Lang, 2007 : 146). Opportunities for physical activity are also key to discussions around the aetiology of obesity. In Europe we now know that children are increasingly less likely to walk to school, with parents feeling their local roads are too dangerous and preferring to drive them to school instead ; increasing traffic volume and making roads dangerous (European Cyclists Federation, 1989). Fear of traffic is also a powerful deterrent to allowing children to cycle to school or play outdoors, especially in deprived neighbourhoods (Institute of Public Policy Research, 2002). It is also known that childhood rates of obesity range from 10 to 20 % in Northern Europe to 20 to 36 % in Southern Europe, where the scale of the problem has been compared to that of the USA (Rigby and James, 2003 : 7). Over-consumption of energy-dense fats and sugars is producing more obesity. Social gradients in diet quality and nutrient sources contribute to health inequalities. People on low incomes, e.g. young people, older people and the unemployed, are least able to eat well and are often tied to their locality (Wilkinson and Marmot, 1998). Dietary goals as expressed in emergent health policies developed to address chronic disease emphasize the importance of eating more locally sourced fresh food.

A second health problem of epidemic scale across Europe, though less in the public eye than obesity, is childhood injury, especially those killed and seriously injured in road accidents. Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among children aged 5–14 years but official figures are likely to be under estimate the extent of the problem (WHO, 2005). Children are particularly vulnerable until the age of 9–10 years, owing to their weak attention capacity (Vincenten, 2006). In Europe mortality rates from road traffic injuries among children are highest in Latvia, Moldova, Romania and the Russian Federation (WHO, 2005). Nearly one fifth of the people injured in road traffic crashes subsequently develop an acute stress reaction and one quarter display mental problems within the first year. Long-term mental disorders consist mainly of mood disorder (10 % of cases), phobic anxiety (20 %) and post-traumatic stress disorder (11 %), (WHO, 2005). The burden of injury varies as in high income countries the problem is more acute among young drivers, in most low and middle income countries, it is vulnerable road users like pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and public transport users who are most at risk (Jacobs *et al.*, 2000). The highest reported rates tend to be in Eastern Europe which has recently undergone rapid motorization but wide inequalities exist within countries. In high income countries a steep social class divide persists, with young people from socially disadvantaged groups at much higher risk than the better off. A recent UK study estimated that child pedestrians and cyclists from the most deprived neighbourhoods are over 20 times at greater risk of death from road traffic accidents than more privileged children (WHO Europe, 2007).

Both government and local neighbourhoods are increasingly seeking new ways to improve physical and social spaces to reduce inequalities, promote low-carbon lifestyles and sustain people's well-being (Sustainable Development Commission, 2004 ; Chartered Institute

of Environmental Health, 2003 ; Orme *et al.*, 2007 ; Exworthy *et al.*, 2003 ; Department of Health, 2004). The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) highlights the importance of bringing health and environment together by suggesting that crucial conditions are required for well-being to be experienced which include peace (embracing neighbourhood safety), food, a stable eco-system and sustainable resources.

Deterring car use and promoting human-powered movement is an important consideration for reasons of health (obesity and injury), environmental (climate change) and social (community safety). This has direct impacts on health in terms of air quality and traffic accidents, but it is also an important factor in terms of the design of urban areas, which can directly affect well-being. These environmental impact factors include : noise pollution, diffuse water pollution, reduced opportunities for exercise (which contribute to obesity and cardiovascular disease), increasing isolation and changed urban landscape all of which affect well-being. Holistic approaches need to be explored to ensure urban planning developments are managed to reduce the negative effects of car use and environmental damage.

The areas into which the case studies in the following section fall are : (1) networks protesting against urban transport policy and claiming new rights of access to public space ; (2) networks promoting the growing, trading and consumption of local food in cities and urban neighbourhoods. Both of these address the health issues of obesity and injury as well as the environmental issue of climate change.



## 2. SOCIAL INNOVATION AND SOCIALLY CREATIVE STRATEGIES

The aim of this section is to present examples of social innovation in the form of specific socially creative strategies (SCS). In a review of the literature, Moulaert et al, (2005) present five ways in which the term ‘ social innovation ’ has been used in different literatures to refer to different types of innovation. These include :

- the dynamics of organizational learning ;
- combining competing social, ecological and business interests in (mainstream) sustainable development ;
- innovation by individuals in the creative arts ;
- community led neighbourhood governance and policy networks ; and
- creation of utopian alternatives through social movement mobilizations.

It is the last three of these five types of social innovations that are the focus of this paper.

The case studies of SCS presented in this section span both health and well-being and environmental sustainability and illustrate responses from a range of actors seeking to address significant threats to their (and their children’s) well-being. We examine SCS of shared community space, neighbourhood well-being initiatives and local food networks, which present an opportunity to analyse governance issues. The discussion focuses on the success of the SCS in addressing social exclusion and inequality in health and environment and we suggest that these are important responses that are networked into broader social movements (SM) that like many in the post-Fordist world are concerned with reproduction and consumption and not just production (Moulaert *et al.*, 2005). They are also important responses because they not only address urgent issues of injury, obesity, physical activity, food security and distribution ; but also highlight the important issue of climate change by offering strategies for neighbourhoods to develop safer and more sustainable neighbourhoods.

The case studies concern SCS which address a combination of the social, mental and physical well-being of the participants. Appropriating shared space from car travel for community use is aimed at benefiting social well-being by increasing social interaction, as well as physical well-being by reducing harm from accidental injury and directly or indirectly providing physical exercise. Mental well-being is addressed by attempting to reduce the trauma of accidents and the stress of traffic. Local food networks emphasize the benefits of healthy eating and physical

exercise for physical well-being and local social interactions for social and mental well-being. Across both domains reducing the carbon footprint of daily life has an intended impact on the well-being of future generations in contributing to ideas for mitigating global environmental damage in terms of climate change and loss of biodiversity. We return to evidence of the environmental impact of some of the SCS and the implications for physical well-being.

The geographic scales of operation of the SCS vary from the local to the global. Generally, however, the aims to improve well-being are immediate and local in scope, whereas the environmental aims of the same SCS are more long term global sustainability.

Following the insight from ANT that networks can contain dissimilar elements, it is clear that SCS can emerge through networks built around the actions of a range of people, organizations, institutions and non-human actors (including nature), and may consist of collaborations across different scales of operation. Nevertheless, in this chapter SCS are presented according to their organizational form. The most obviously recognizable of these are protest oriented SMs, which use direct action methods to appropriate public space in order to try and change local, national and global policy. The second form of SCS are NGOs or community based organizations which act as the hub of a network which includes local communities, but are often funded through the state. Third are local governance institutions (usually local authorities) which institute socially creative policies in response to their perception of the EDs. We also highlight the role of socially innovative individuals (known elsewhere as social entrepreneurs (Dees, 1998)) in developing SCS taken up by collective actors, such as SMs, or local authorities.

## **2.1. Social Movements**

SMs have been conceptualised “as (1) informal networks, based on (2) shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilize about (3) conflictual issues, through (4) the frequent use of various forms of protest” (della Porta and Diani, 1999 : 17). Two inter-connected global SM, Reclaim the Streets (RTS) and Critical Mass (CM), organise protests across Europe with the aim of reducing the dominance of cars to increase access to public space for pedestrians and cyclists.

The RTS movement emerged from overlapping networks of radical activists with links to Earth First and other radical environmental ‘disorganizations’, who promote the interests of various groups experiencing ED including travellers and squatters (Goodchild and Dillon, 2001). The boundaries of RTS as a movement are fuzzy. For example, reclaiming of public space has been used as a tactic to support and promote dance music and to find spaces to party by youth oriented networks across Europe (e.g. Right to Rave). An RTS party held in September 2006

in Copenhagen, Denmark led to violence with police as the movement fought to save the Ungdomshuset (The Folk House). RTS inspired 'happenings' frequently lead to police clamp down as in Brighton, UK, in 2006. Although broad in its challenges to authority they have embraced the public space issue and inspired and developed SCS including DIY painted bicycle lanes to reclaim the roads for excluded cyclists and tree camps in resistance to airport expansion and road developments. RTS were also strongly networked into international mobilizations and profiled the issue of environmental degradation and climate change in its para-G8 summit in Heiligendamm, Germany in 2007.

RTS shares activists and networks with a global SCS known as Critical Mass (CM). CM events are fostered by several social movements who seek to address health and environmental issues. 'Massers', as they are colloquially self-defined, attend what they call 'unorganised coincidences' which are supported by a broad range of political, environmental and anarchist groups like RTS, Greens and Earth First. CM is 'badged' as an 'unorganised coincidence' because its participants stress that they have no leaders and what happens at a CM event is not predetermined by its participants and is purely coincidental. The first CM happening occurred in San Francisco in September 1992 and CM events have spread to cities across the world. Adopting CM techniques cyclists gather in city streets on the last Friday of every month to raise the profile of eco-friendly transport, pollution, safer routes and global environmental issues. CM events 'have different flavours city to city; have no leaders; no central organization and simply assert the right to ride' (Critical Mass, 2007). The biggest CM event in Europe saw 35,000 cyclists take to the streets in Budapest in the Autumn of 2005. A CM event in Hamburg during the G8 summit led to mass arrests and police suppression. CM happenings occur across our continent from Lisbon to Minsk, with regular monthly CM events in 101 different European cities, all of which have their own local websites.

Many CM events are encountering repressive police action and opposition from local government, who try to curtail CM activity to enable motorised traffic to have total access to roads. In London CM participants have been issued with police letters threatening arrest and a recent court case has declared it an illegal protest that in the future needs to notify police of planned routes. This is ironic because physical exercise is seen as important to addressing the European obesity epidemic and the promotion of cycling specifically has been seen as a key strategic area for local agencies to invest resources to facilitate the promotion of people's well-being (European Commission, 2007 : 7). Cycling also enables greater understanding of the natural environment and reduces environmentally damaging transport (Sustainable Development Commission, 2007 : 2). As a movement in the UK, CM opposed and successfully lobbied the government to halt their intended reform of Highway Code rules 61 and 63 that sought to confine bikes to cycle lanes and lessen the burden on motorists in the event of accidents if such lanes weren't used. Movements

like CM help to mobilize people across the globe and raise public consciousness contributing to the creation of a global political culture of rights (McGrew, 2004).

## 2.2. NGOs and Community Based Organizations

Local food networks, our second area of focus, tend to be structured around NGOs or community based organizations, who work in less contentious ways than the protest movements described in the previous section. Community organizations focus on the neighbourhood level or engage communities of interest, such as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups. NGOs work more at regional, national and international levels.

In the UK there are several neighbourhood scale food projects that are working co-operatives addressing themes of sustainability, quality food and employment. One innovative example is the community based organization *Hartcliffe Health and Environment Action Group* (HHEAG) based on a deprived outer city housing estate in South Bristol is addressing its neighbourhood's status as a 'food desert'. It uses a holistic approach, linking together local residents to work on food issues from the 'plot to plate' which enables them to target key groups like pregnant women and young mothers and those who have a diet-related illness or condition : e.g. diabetes, coronary heart disease and some cancers, as well as people who are obese with high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels. As well as the emphasis on physical well-being, HHEAG is also concerned with mental and social well-being, providing participants with extended social networks and leisure time out from the stress of living in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the region.

A second community based organization is *Sho Nirbhour* (translating as 'self-reliance'), based on three allotments sites, in Bradford, UK, bringing together Bangladeshi women, who as a social group, tend to have a high susceptibility to diabetes and heart disease, as well as lack of English language skills and consequential experience of social isolation. Like HHEAG, *Sho Nirbhour* focuses on growing food, healthy eating and physical activity, contributing to physical well-being. The produce grown is shared among participants. In addition there is a strong focus on mental and social well-being, by working together women are encouraged to come out of their immediate family circles and homes, share an enjoyable activity with their peers and challenge the isolationism that Asian women sometimes endure. The organization also offers English classes and is linked to Walking for Health, which provides a programme of short local walks and an annual residential visit to a National Park. Through its parent organization, Bradford Community Environment Project, the women have links to a City Farm and the *Women's Environmental Network* (WEN), a national organisation that works on gender issues and the environment, and which promotes local food production as a sustainable alternative nourishing

activity for neighbourhoods and families to enjoy. WEN emphasises the commensality of food, the diversity and vibrancy of food cultures, the value of food rituals and the connections these have with caring for the environment. Thus the highly localised experience that *Sho Nirbhour* appears to offer is linked to wider networks, offering broader opportunities to a marginalised group. There are many similar food projects across Europe that seek to reinstate local food production and traditional cooking techniques ; some of these are highlighted in the next section.

NGOs are not restricted to the neighbourhood or city scale, they also act as innovators at the national, European and global scales, presenting critical framings which challenge the hegemonic neo-liberal discourse on food and agriculture global governance fora. *GRAIN*, an international NGO based in Barcelona, is a key node in a network of NGOs campaigning at European and global scales to support local control of agricultural genetics (seeds) by farmers and gardeners to maintain agricultural biodiversity and the attendant local knowledge and opposes the concentration of ownership of this key resource by transnational companies. *GRAIN* has a growing network of partner groups and their approach is based on the conviction that the conservation and use of agricultural genetic resources is too important to be left solely to experts such as scientists, governments and industry. Farmers and community organisations are seen as having a central role in conserving and developing genetic diversity and sustainable agriculture.

### **2.3. Local Governance and Partnerships**

SCS can also consist of initiatives launched by local governance agencies, or through partnerships between local and national government, NGOs, local community organizations, and international organizations, such as WHO. Across Europe, local governance agencies are increasingly involved in addressing the issues of reclaiming public spaces at neighbourhood and city levels and addressing problems posed by global environmental degradation ; as well as forming partnerships to address local health needs and promote well-being.

Often inspired by Local Agenda 21, innovative responses have included the civic promotion of Car Free Days in several European cities. Many MS also encourage local governance agencies to develop policies to address national targets to reduce Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) rates. In Sweden the *Vision Zero* policy has an ambitious objective of zero KSI. Speed limits of 30km/h have been introduced in several cities including Graz and Munich. Town and city centres are becoming increasingly pedestrianised, sometimes offering Park and Ride solutions. NGOs like UK Sustrans, a sustainable transport charity, have been developing *Liveable Neighbourhoods* with local government agencies, combining urban design, community development and sustainable transport planning objectives. Working with local residents and other NGO partners they create

high quality urban environments through the promotion of sustainable travel behaviour. Their aim is to create neighbourhoods where local people feel safe in environments that are pleasant to live in and visit. Similarly, Home Zones (based on the Dutch word *woonerf* meaning ‘living yard’) have been inspired through combinations of low density traffic, shared surfaces, trees and planters (Hamilton-Baillie and Jones, 2005).

SCS which aim to improve physical well-being by reducing injury, and improving social well-being by encouraging people’s engagement with public spaces include developments stemming from innovative designers. For example, the Dutch engineer Hans Monderman believes engineers should address the health and environment issues posed by the separation of traffic and people through improved and more inclusive engineering design. Highlighting the contemporary dominance of road traffic in Europe’s urban centres and neighbourhoods, Monderman has worked with local governance structures to support communities when they desire to reverse the trend of excluding pedestrians from free movement. Believing that it is vital to rebuild the social life of the street as an effective means of taming traffic, reducing injury and promoting quality environments, he reverses current hegemonic engineering philosophies that have traditionally separated neighbourhoods from traffic (e.g. in the UK since the Buchanan Report, 1963). The unintended consequence of this separation is an ED that has shifted risk from drivers to pedestrians by enhancing motorists’ movement at the expense of public space ownership (Adams, 2005). Monderman’s ground-breaking designs have challenged traditional traffic calming measures that have dominated local authority planning and road safety departments across Europe for forty years (Glaskin, 2004).

In the past more articulate communities have had the resources, stamina and energy to agitate for car free environments but deprived neighbourhoods seldom have ; excluding them from an attractive public realm as a place to foster informal physical activity associated with walking, bicycling and interacting for pleasure (Hamilton-Baillie and Jones, 2005). The development of shared space has happened in several neighbourhoods across Denmark, Sweden, UK and The Netherlands. It reflects the French programme *Ville-plus* and adopts many of its key principles. They are all aimed at bringing people from neighbourhoods back into public spaces. There is now even a Shared Space European project that is part of the EU’s *Interreg IIIB-North Sea* programme. Here there are seven city partners, in Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, UK, and Belgium. In providing such opportunities the actual engagement of citizens in decision making holds potential for refashioning the citizen from the passive dependence of formal institutions to the active citizen in a vibrant civil society (Brown, *et al.*, 2000 : 55).

Some local authorities have gone further, and have started to ban cars altogether from parts of their cities. For example, in Groningen, the Netherlands' sixth largest city, ruinous traffic congestion led

city planners to dig up city-centre motorways and in 2005 they set about creating a car-free city centre. In the Vauban district in Freiburg, Germany a new self build development of 5 000 accommodation areas has emerged over 38 hectares of a former French Army barracks. Land usage was delegated to Forum Vauban, an NGO formed in 1993 to represent the community, which successfully convinced a sceptical city council to establish a car-free environment as part of their housing development project. Housing plots were sold to co-housing groups which has facilitated considerable architectural diversity while at the same time employing low energy technology as an integral condition of design. Regional planning legislation required car free environments to prove the lack of parking need and reserve land in case of future need. Thus cars were excluded from design. Instead car owners are asked to register and purchase a place in an out of town multi-storey car park where parking spaces cost €17,500 plus a monthly fee to cover the infrastructure and on going costs. Cars only enter for delivery at walking pace. Currently 57 % of people living without cars had given them up on moving to Vauban. A low cost tram system and the promotion of policies to extend the public transport network, promote cycling, traffic restraint and parking space management leading to a significant change in transport modal usage (Melia, 2006).

The involvement of a multiplicity of partners in ABI can be seen in a recent trend to develop Healthy Living Centres (HLC) in local communities. Complementing existing health services they usually evolve to meet health inequality targets by narrowing the gap between the poorest 20 % of the population in a given area and the rest of society (Blackman, 2006 : 13). Their aetiology is similar to the *Centres locaux de santé communautaire* in Canada which were the product of social and organisational innovations explored by community organisations and which are seen to have been institutionalised by government as a means to strengthen the state apparatus in the early 1960s (Klein et al 2007, Annex 1 : 3). Today Healthy Living Centres are an addition to existing state health services. In the UK national lottery funding has supported the development of 349 HLCs to run a diverse range of well-being projects within different settings to meet locally defined health needs. Our own work in evaluating the Weymouth and Portland Healthy Living Project in Dorset (UK) has witnessed a variety of very successful and innovative projects emerging from community groups including : Club 18-30 (i.e. UK clothing size 18 to 30) swimming club for single parent women who are overweight to tackle their isolation (social and mental well-being) living on an out-of-town housing estate and obesity (physical well-being) ; through to a Men in the Kitchen project supporting single and widowed men to learn culinary skills. These projects were delivered through multi agency partnerships including health centres, primary care trusts, community groups etc. (Jones and Kimberlee, 2007). Multi-agency partnerships have been shown to be a good source of local neighbourhood innovation in community health provision, while simultaneously engaging with multi-level governance. The Portuguese School Health Program and the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) project provides

settings to include young people as part of an initiative launched by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the WHO (Europe) in 1991. Beginning with pilots in Central and Eastern Europe, it now embraces a network of schools across 38 countries, including Portugal since 1994. In addition, Portugal has had its own national network of HPS since 1998. Each locally owned initiative is an effective partnership between schools, families, health professionals and local authorities who define their goals and strategy according to local need.

The HPS activities address many issues including : risk behaviours (e.g. smoking, alcohol, drugs and unsafe sex) the promotion of healthy habits, nutrition, physical activity, eco-friendly practices and nutrition. The latter is important as obesity and pre-obesity prevalence in 7-9 years old Portuguese children is about 32 % (*Portuguese National Program of Fight against Obesity*). Innovative examples include the São Brás de Alportel (Algarve, South Portugal) a setting with 10,000 inhabitants. In the last five years, the local education authority, the local Clinic Health Centre, the schools and the City Hall have developed a health education project based on the rediscovery and promotion of the traditional Mediterranean diet, now considered as a healthy way of eating. Young people and families from local schools were invited to compile traditional, local recipes. Teachers and caterers have been trained to rediscover and cook the Mediterranean recipes thus encouraging young people to move away from the excessive consumption of sweets, soft drinks and fried foods towards healthier meals which are rich in fibres, vegetable and fruits.

## **2.4. Socially Creative Individuals**

Actor Network Theory (ANT) emphasises the role of creative or innovative individuals in science (Latour, 1987). However, it is not enough to have an inspiration, enrolling other individuals, institutions (and, indeed non-human actors) into networks is crucial to having these ideas accepted (Callon, 1986). Across Europe and in North America there are various SCS in this EF that have been initiated by a variety of individual engineers and artists, but crucially these have then been taken up by NGOs, SMEs or policy actors such as local government planning departments.

The work of innovative and charismatic engineer Hans Monderman is discussed above. His designs for shared space in local neighbourhoods and urban centres could only be judged successful when not only pedestrians but also car drivers were enrolled into his network ; i.e. played a new role by changing their behaviour in response to the lack of road signs, making eye contact with pedestrians and taking greater responsibility for safety. The network built by Monderman was extended much further by local authorities in several European MS who have joined and now actively promote this network for fostering alternative traffic management designs.



Bicycle designer George Bliss first used the phrase ‘ Critical Mass ’ to describe a new type of protest action for the bike-culture art documentary *Return to the Scorcher* (1992). Bliss argued that in China bikes flow with cars on roads until intersections (crossroads) are reached. When a CM of cyclists builds up at the intersection it halts the flow of cars, permitting them to undertake turns and manoeuvres from which they were previously excluded. Cyclists thereby gain the freedom to use the road while cars and other motorised traffic are forced to wait. From Bliss’ creative innovation grew the global bike-based demonstrations.

Another example, the Australian artist, social inventor and street philosopher, David Engwicht, invented the *Walking School Bus* and the *Neighbourhood Pace Car*. The former has been adopted by thousands of schools across Europe as a means of promoting physical activity amongst young people, reducing traffic and protecting young people from injury on the roads. Engwicht co-founded the NGO, *Creative Communities International*, an incubator for social innovations, also advocates for the expansion in Shared Space provision to tackle ED. Some of the strategies he pioneered have been adopted by other collective social actors, such as the Reclaim the Streets (RTS) movement, who practice diversity in their SCS to address global inequities. It is clear that innovation can diffuse rapidly through SMs and governance structures alike.

At a global scale, Rheingold (1995) whose electronic community WELL (Whole Earth ’Lectronic Link) based in San Francisco, has articulated vociferously about the progressive possibilities of the Internet to exchange creative ecological ideas. Through the internet SCS from individuals and groups are quickly adaptable in new arenas. They emerge in various forms through networked social actions.

## **2.5. Social Innovation and Well-Being in the Case Studies**

Attempting to measure the impact of many of the SCS, such as CM, RTS or local food networks events in terms of quantitative data on well-being and environmental carbon footprint reduction is difficult. However, local government intervention in traffic reduction lends itself more easily to quantitative analysis. Initiatives that seek to reduce dependence on motorised transport (e.g. car free environments and shared space) can be shown to enhance well-being in a number of ways. Contributions are made to improving physical well-being and reducing long term environmental impact through reduction in air pollution. At the 2004 Carfree Day in Montreal, Canada, measurements taken by the city council showed a 90 % reduction in the level of nitrogen monoxide and a 100 % reduction in carbon monoxide within the area closed to cars, as compared to readings taken the same day at an intersection where motor vehicle traffic was normal (Agence métropolitaine de transport, 2006). Mental and social well-being benefits from a drop in the

ambient noise level (a 38 % drop was recorded within the Montreal Carfree zone) and an increase in people on the street, especially young children, playing or cycling, often unsupervised, in car-free streets like those in the Vauban district, Freiburg, Germany, and to a lesser extent in the ‘ Spielstrasse ’ (or ‘ home zones ’ found in several European countries) which deliberately mix parking, slow moving traffic and pedestrians (Melia, 2006 : 6).

Analysis of international data on collision rates suggests that the frequency of vehicle pedestrian/cyclists collisions declines with increases in the numbers of people walking and cycling at busy major intersections, which have been designed for shared space (Jacobsen, 2003). Where the approach has been tested in Seend (UK) a rural village where white lines were removed from the road, the local County Council report that accidents have dropped by a third and car speed has fallen by 5 %. Also evidence from developing a shared space approach at a busy intersection in Laweiplein in Drachten which endured 22,000 cars a day suggests that the number of injuries, accidents and damage to property is dramatically reduced. In 1999 there were 4 injury accidents and 13 injuries but following construction in 2003 the following year witnessed only one injury (Hamilton-Baillie, 2006). As a result, Drachten has now scrapped all traffic lights across the town. In the UK Transport Research Laboratory has found that many optical tricks developed in shared space approaches were similarly very successful in slowing speeds : in simulator tests all speeds fell when the measures were introduced, some by an average of more than 4mph ; and in one test average speeds fell by up to 8 mph, and the speeds of faster drivers by even more (Kennedy, 2005). An evaluation of a shared space initiative in Norrköping, Sweden suggests that when driver’s speed decreases, they are more likely to take evasive action to adjust to pedestrian movement. Thus, drivers take on a bigger share of the feelings of risk and concern for safety that pedestrians and cyclists, have had to bear. Pedestrians and drivers all agree that their shared space was more attractive to use than before (Hamilton-Baillie and Jones, 2005).

### 3. SOCIAL INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

The socially creative strategies (SCS) examined in this report share four common characteristics : (a) a more or less explicit critical view of global political economy ; (b) a network organizational form which facilitates agency ; (c) the aim to improve social, mental and physical well-being ; and (d) the aim to promote environmental sustainability.

A critical perspective on the global political economy can supply a set of overlapping ‘ injustice frames ’ (Gamson, 1995) for the SCS case studies, including an acknowledgement of social injustice of inequitable distribution of public as well as private goods, and an inter-generational injustice in terms of the erosion of environmental resources for future generations. Exclusionary power structures are seen to be embedded in the global market – including the dominance of industries such as the motor industry and commercial agriculture (e.g. powerful retailing supermarkets) which connect to and shape consumerist popular cultures – in diet and transport. Combating inequality and exclusion remains a theme across all the domains, but it is conceptualised here in global as well as local terms, inter-generational as well as contemporaneous social inequity.

The social innovation explored here breaks down the boundaries between consumers and producers. The local food networks reject a passive role as consumers on the global market, become producers not only of food, but also extending their control over their lifestyle and well-being. Shared Space, Reclaim the Streets (RTS) and Critical Mass (CM) are all concerned with challenging the inequitable distribution of risks in access to public space and take an active part in moving towards more sustainable transport systems.

The SCS take the organizational form of a variety of types of network, from flexible and constantly changing protest movements (RTS and CM), through more stable NGO and community based networks to networks embedded in area based initiatives and local governance either through innovation introduced into agencies such local authority planning departments or in partnerships between communities, NGOs and public agencies (Health Promoting Schools and Healthy Living Centres). These networks can link across different geographic scales and consequently different scales of governance from neighbourhood to global (GRAIN, CM).

The action repertoires (Tarrow, 1994) utilized by the SCS are varied and creative. Using the internet to communicate and mobilise, the CM movement has inspired thousands of people across Europe to become involved in global protest activity in their local towns and cities to address climate change, a problem that threatens everyone’s well-being. Local CM events with global

links mean that participants can learn creative protest tactics from other places. CM events are not ritualized and frequently take the form of amorphous *unorganised coincidence* happenings, evolving in unique ways. They also attract individuals wishing to express their resistance symbolically. ‘Music on the move’ is a feature of CM events and affiliated participants often include younger skateboarders and roller-bladers, who relish the opportunity to reclaim the streets. By contrast, local food is less of an area for protest, rather one in which symbolic resistance to global hegemony is inscribed in the practices of everyday life, pursuing what is both a healthy lifestyle and a low carbon lifestyle through a series of micro-sociological decisions. Like CM, the *localistas* dramatise their oppositional identity in a series of presentations of alternatives, from farmers’ markets to collective dig-ins.

The social innovation examined here is concerned with producing multiple benefits, promoting social, mental and physical well-being, directly in the local and the immediate, as well as indirectly through promoting sustainability to provide long-term well-being. The networks seek to address the externality costs of our consumer based culture. They work to meet immediate and local aims to promote the well-being of their participants, while simultaneously maintaining a focus on long-term global aims of promoting sustainable living systems (e.g. of agriculture, transport).

In the case of Shared Space the immediate aim is to produce safe and convivial spaces. The convivial social space created has several values, first leading to physical and mental well-being by reducing injuries, second reducing the distinction between drivers and pedestrians/cyclists creating more inclusive community space and generating social well-being ; leading to a third, longer term aim to get people out of their cars and shift to more sustainable forms of transport thus addressing two major health epidemics facing Europe (injury and obesity) today.

Community based SCS, such as HHEAG in Bristol and Sho Nirbhour in Bradford, build new relationships between highly urbanised communities and nature, showing that involving the communities in the whole process of food growing and healthy eating from *plot to plate* can ensure ownership and participation in tackling food deserts and promoting well-being. Local food networks as SCS are creative in using local resources in new and unexpected, sustainable ways. Land, which always faces a potential threat of development, and underemployment in the local population (often disguised by differential access to the labour market) are brought into socially and environmentally productive use. Local food networks are also socially creative in working against the separation of economic means and social ends as well as spanning the institutionally separated policy domains of health, environment, social justice and community building by developing cross-cutting (partial) solutions, providing healthy lifestyle through physical

exercise, fresh food and skills in food production and preparation. This also involves being entrepreneurial in accessing Government funding, and shaping it to fund bottom-up initiatives through creative expansion of possible ways of implementing health and environmental policies, especially in neighbourhoods facing multiple ED.

The SCS engage with governance in several different ways : using a contentious action repertoire, taking direct action to protest against current policy and power imbalances (CM and RTS) ; opposing power and current policy, but playing a more conventional counter-expert role, briefing and lobbying decision makers (GRAIN) ; engaging in partnership working with public agencies (HTP) ; transforming practice by becoming embedded in local governance agencies (Shared Space) ; pursuing active citizenship and building communities (HHEAG and Sho Nirbhour).

These differing relationships to governance can operate at all scales from the neighbourhood to the global ; and can involve combining different levels. Local food networks act on governance at all scales from the local neighbourhood, through regional and national to global governance. Local food networks in the UK have mobilized citizens to take responsibility for their own health and claim the right to grow their own food or access locally grown fresh food as well as utilise green space and physical exercise. They also constitute community organizations developing relations of solidarity across neighbourhoods (HHEAG, Bristol) and communities of interest (Sho Nirbhour, Asian women in Bradford). They can bring communities of interest out of isolation (Healthy Living Centres) while addressing social exclusion. Local food has also become a topic of local and regional partnership working (Devon Food Links) and funnelling state funding into community development projects and area based initiatives. Health Promoting Schools (HPS) and shared space links the European scale with local scale. They involve partnerships between European agencies : Council of Europe, the European Commission and the WHO (Europe) with local partners, which at the local level in São Brás de Alportel in South Portugal takes the form of a local partnership between the local education authority, the local Clinic Health Centre, schools and the local council to promote the traditional Mediterranean diet as a healthy way of eating for young people. NGOs representing local food growers and consumers at the national and global levels of governance (Sustain and GRAIN respectively) have also developed SCS to contest the hegemonic framing of food politics and have now become recognized as important innovators in food policy.

Two different creative ways of linking the local and the global are evident in our case studies. Critical Mass (CM) takes the form of globally co-ordinated events (in time) and an evolving globally diffused action repertoire, focused on local authorities that control traffic policy. By contrast, GRAIN is an NGO with links to a plethora of other NGOs and locally based partners throughout the world, supporting local growers and representing them by briefing and lobbying

national government engaged in negotiations in global governance fora, as well as connecting with a global network of critical scientists. So Critical Mass is a global movement with local governance effects, whereas GRAIN works with local groups to intervene in global governance (of Intellectual Property Rights over agricultural knowledge held by local food producers).

RTS and Shared Space both operate across a number of European countries, engaging with local governance of public space and traffic, but whereas RTS acts on local authorities from the outside in contentious encounters, seizing control of public space, Shared Space has become a socially innovative practice taken up by local authority planning departments. Thus interactions with multi-level governance vary according to three dimensions: scale of governance, internal or external relationship, and their focus of developing practice of changing policy.

## CONCLUSION

Socially creative strategies (SCS) in the distinct but interconnected fields of health and environment are extremely diverse. This work has shown that SCS can emerge through the actions of a range of people and institutions, notably through social movements, NGOs and community based organizations, local governance networks or socially creative individuals. Sometimes the SCS are initiated by innovative individuals, but they rely on networks to evolve and can rapidly develop into a dynamic response that in some cases become pan-European in coverage, while remaining local in impact, mediation and development. SCS are also characterised by social innovation in this field and typically involve bottom-up creativity giving voice to groups that have not only been traditionally absent from institutions and policy networks (e.g. Asian women, child pedestrians). Arguably their existence today is contributing to the service diversity that characterises post-welfarist regimes. Individuals and communities are now creating innovative responses from and within communal, territorial or neighbourhood spaces. These spaces not only exist in physical places in cities and towns but are also reproduced and evolve through networked communities across the globe, making the ‘ local ’ truly a ‘ global ’ experience.





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