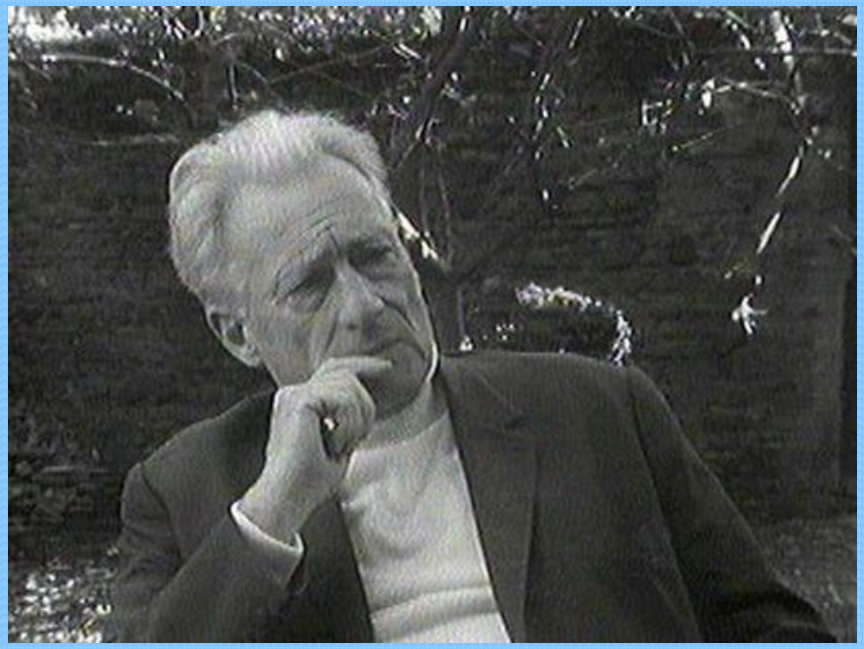
Planning for the Post-Modern City:

Cognitive Mapping as a Participatory Design Methodology

“Right to the City” – Henri Lefebvre



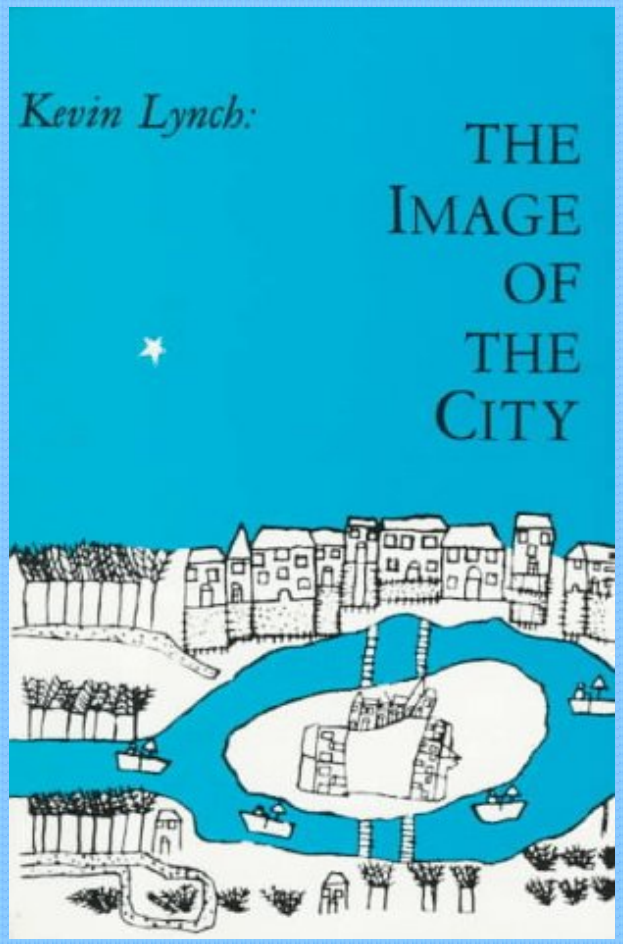
- The enfranchisement of citizens to *participate* in the use and production of urban space
- To *appropriate* the city – a right to full involvement in urban life

Lefebvre, H. (1996) Right to the City, English translation of 1968 text in Kofman, E. and Lebas, E. (eds and translators) Writings on Cities, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing

The Post-Modern City

- How to achieve a “Right to the City” for all?
- Modernist planning paradigms decontextualize and oversimplify complex human realities
- → Post-Modern City: diverse, multiplicit, contextual, subjective
- Cognitive mapping a method for engaging the Post-Modern city in urban planning

Cognitive Mapping – Kevin Lynch



- Paths, Districts, Edges, Landmarks, Nodes
- Synthesizing connection between public image and visual form to guide future planning

Cognitive Mapping Applied

- Kinesthetic/visual participatory methods could uncover greater discrepancies between the human experiences of built form
- Applying mental mapping to a diverse citizenry can highlight the needs of citizens to urban resources and policies
- → It can build capacity toward a "Right to the City"

Florence Ladd - Mission Hill

- Social Psychologist
- Cognitive mapping with black youth
- Uncovers how their mental images reflect subjective aspects of their lives
- Dave and Ralph

Dave's Map

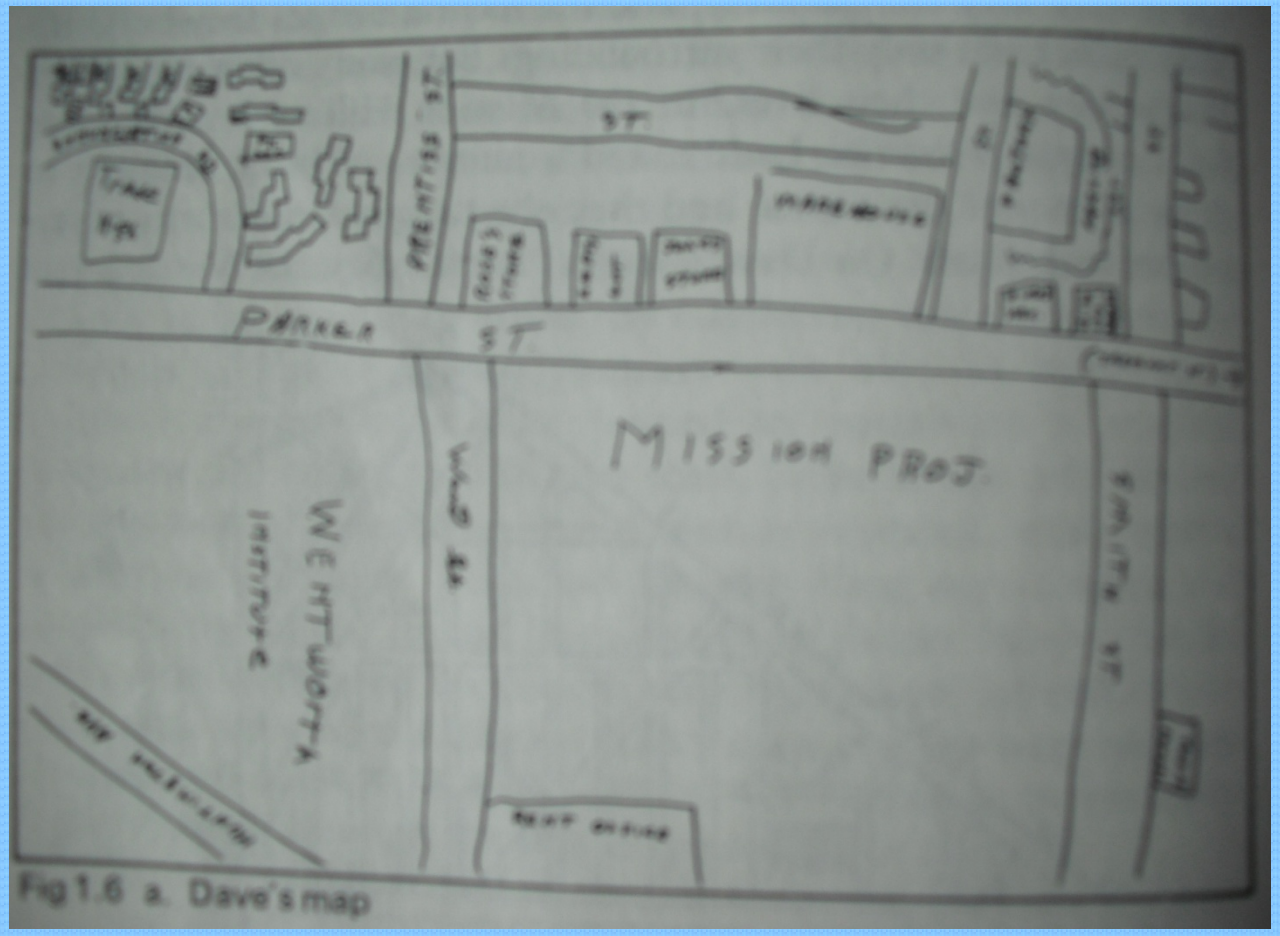
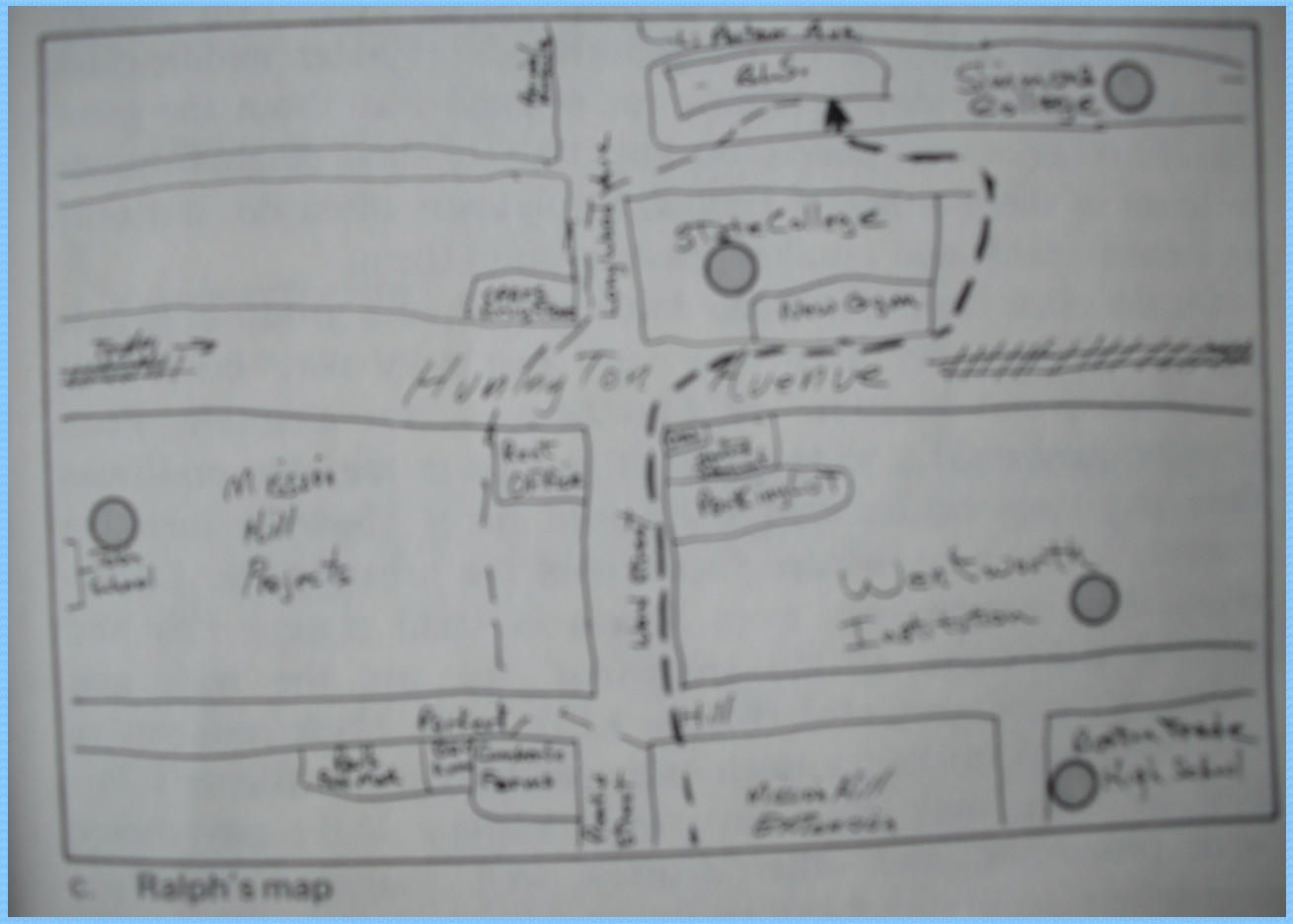


Fig 1.6 a. Dave's map

Ralph's Map



c. Ralph's map

Implication – Youth, Race and Eduction

- Ralph has a much wider view, and allocates his information evenly across the map, whereas Dave feels at home only in restricted area
- → These maps show how the **distribution and access to educational resources** can influence youth racial silos within the urban environment

Women and fear in the City

- Michael Pacione, Urban Geographer
- Conducted cognitive mapping research to assess gender and fear in the peripheral Easterhouse estate in Glasgow, Scotland

Percent of Respondents (Urban Geography, pg. 413)

Locations	Male	Female
Parks	7.6	19.7
Stigmatized neighbourhoods	34	14.9
Bridges/overpasses	0.0	11.9
Playing Fields	6.8	9.5
Schools	8.2	7.1
Peripheral Roads	0.0	20.8
Town Centre	43.4	16.1

Implication – Fear and Gender

- The fear maps of females tended to be more spatially discriminating
- Information on the gendered characteristics of dangerous spaces is important as it can inform **locally sensitive fear reduction policies**
- → Such policies are a crucial prerequisite for the enhancement of **urban liveability** for both genders

Los Angeles

Upper Class white residents

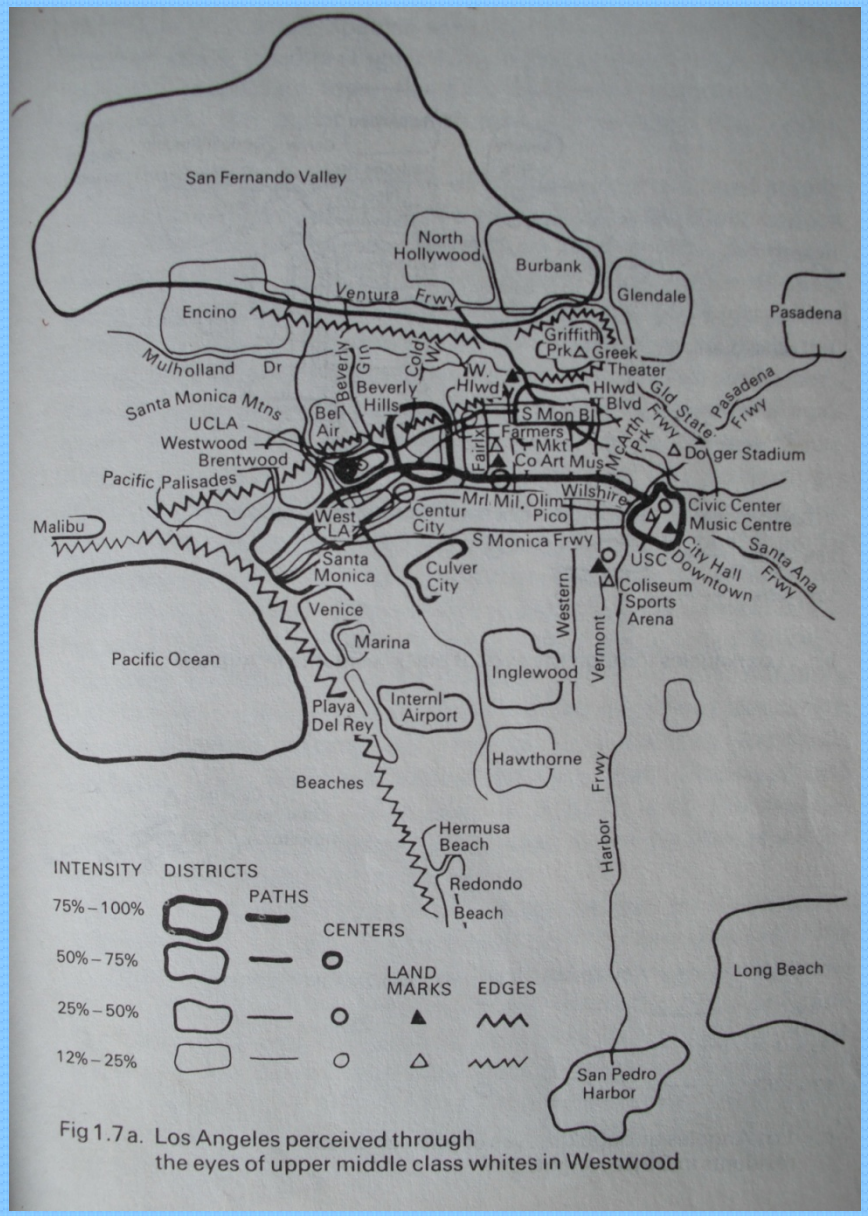
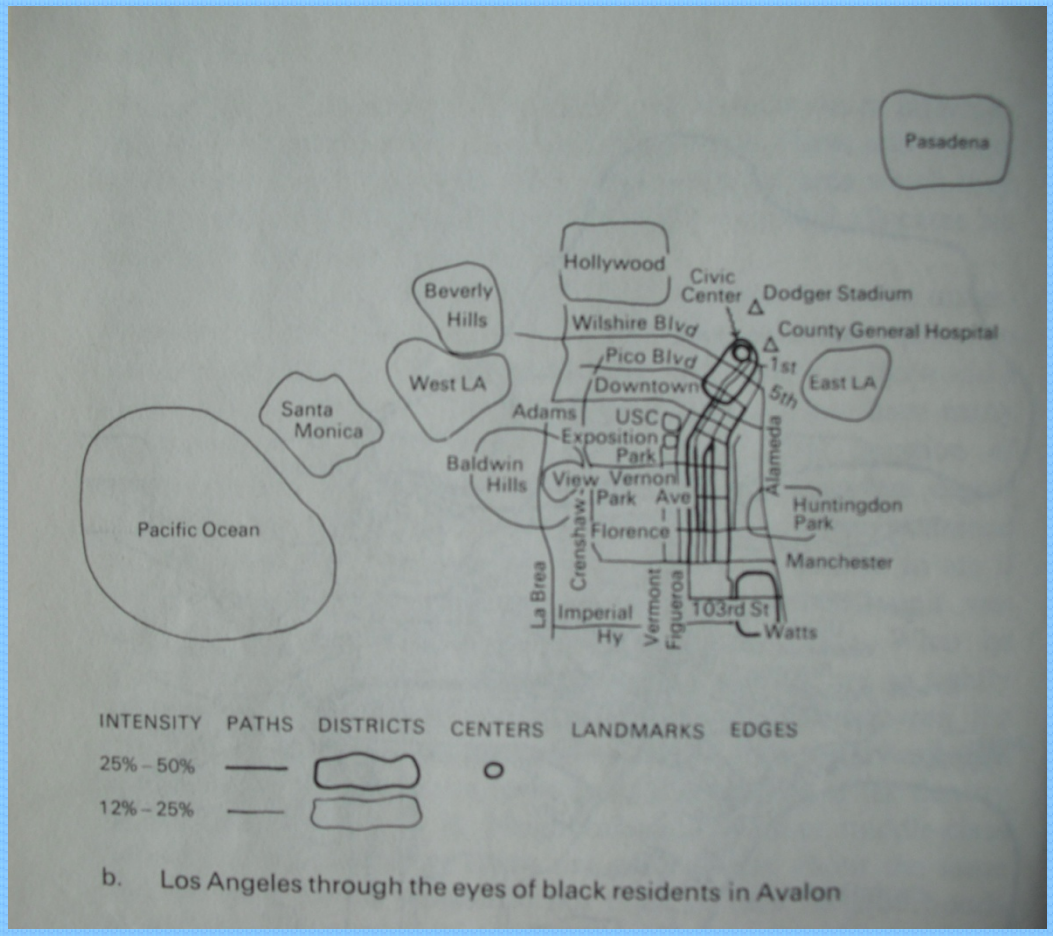


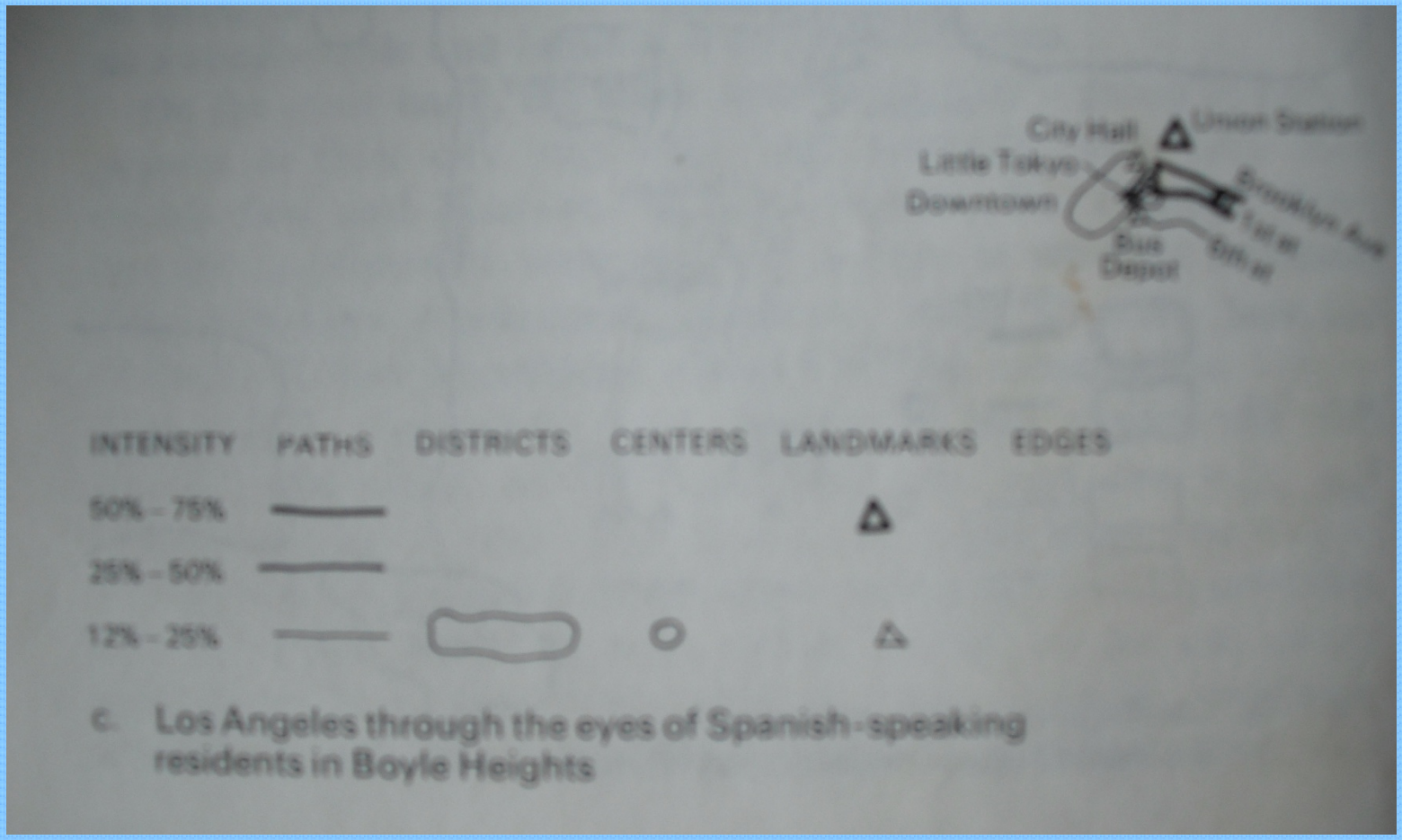
Fig 1.7a. Los Angeles perceived through the eyes of upper middle class whites in Westwood

Los Angeles – Black residents of Avalon



b. Los Angeles through the eyes of black residents in Avalon

Los Angeles – Spanish speaking minority in Boyle Heights



c. Los Angeles through the eyes of Spanish-speaking residents in Boyle Heights

Implication – Mobility and Accessibility

- Differentiated access of citizens to urban resources along class, race/ethnic and linguistic lines
- Unequal access of mobility means unequal access to urban resources, thus reinforcing spatial inequities
- →Equitable distribution of **alternative public transport** could yield greater mobility and access between unequal groups

Livability and "Right to the City"

- "A key issue for a liveable environment is the extent to which activity patterns are a result of individual preference or are imposed by constraints such as lack of access to a car, absence of public transport or fear of crime", Pacione (Urban Geography, 414)
- "Right to City" - equitable access to the use of urban space
- → Cognitive mapping the participatory method needed?

Planning for Liveability and the "Right to the City"

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

CM Participatory Design Stages

- 1) engage the community with cognitive mapping to elicit the different views/experiences of its members
- 2) aggregate these cognitive maps into a thematic composite map to model place legibility for different users
- 3) use the composite map in workshops to explore possible policy and design options
- Do you view this as a feasible method in current planning practice, given the context of municipal resources and current approaches? How might technical innovations (i.e., open source mapping) or project collaboration (i.e., civil society, consultants) contribute to this process?