

The Meaning and Usefulness of the “Feeling Map” as a Tool in Planning and Urban Design

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J. Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, Department of Man in the Desert
המכונים ע"ש י. בלאושטיין לחקר המדבר, המחלקה לאדם במדבר



Structure of the Presentation

- Why is feeling important?
- How do we map feeling?
- Variation and agreement about feeling in a neighborhood
- What are the sources of feeling?
- Using the map as a basis for urban design
- The potential of the feeling map



Why is feeling important?

- In Alexander's Theory and practice feeling is a criterion for the wholeness of place. It is a response to complex order in the environment
- It is claimed that feeling is to a large degree shared
- This is echoed in Damasio's notion of "background feeling" as a guide to human rational behavior
- It finds a parallel in Csikszentmihalyi's conception of "flow" experiences as producing well-being in ordinary life. These are characterized by increasing ordered complexity in the self



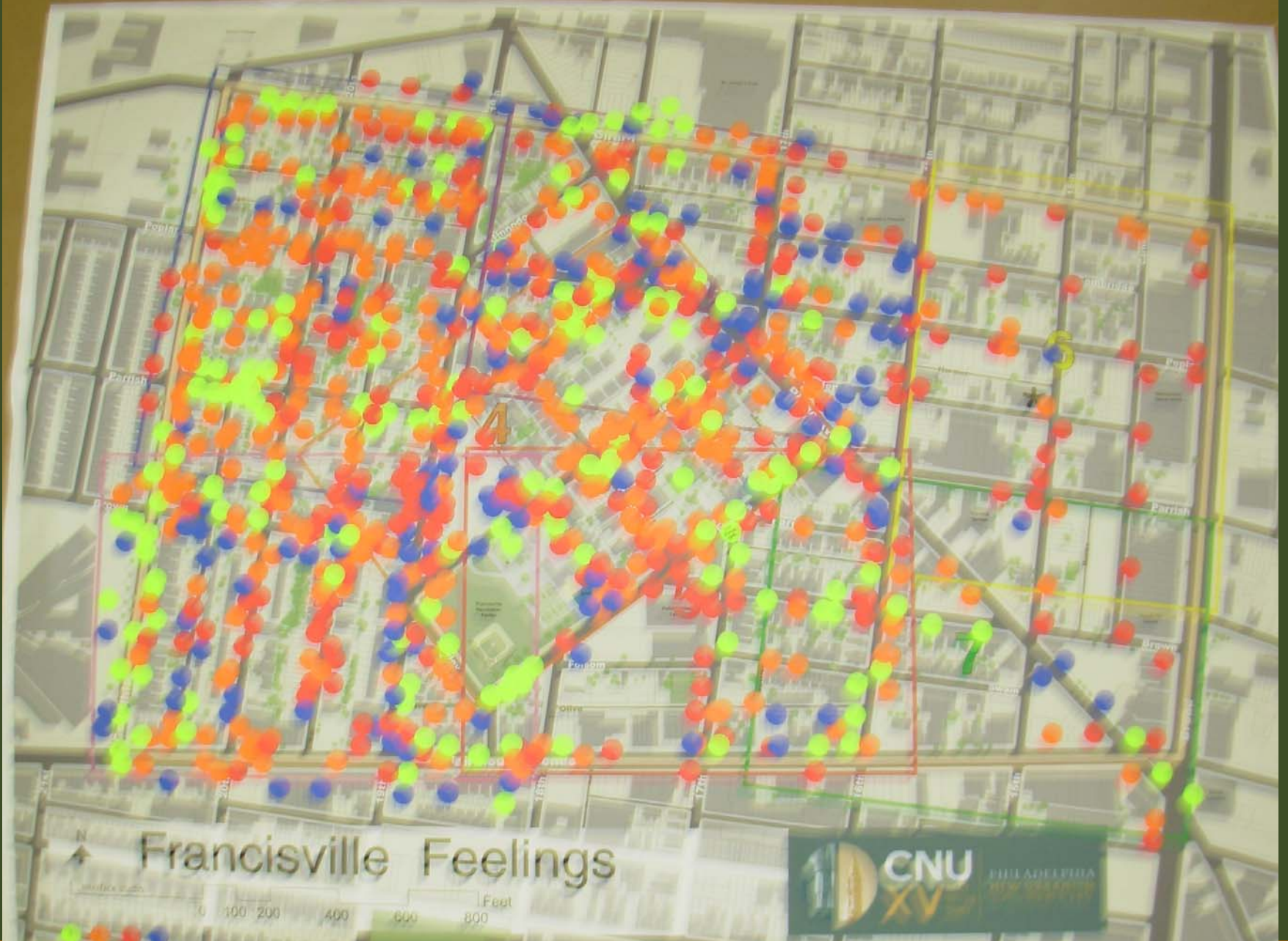
Precursors to the Feeling Map

- Kevin Lynch's image map – the possibility to create an aggregated map of cognitive experience
- Jack Nasar's Evaluative Image Map – our cognition is never neutral
- Environmental and Visual Assessment studies
- Experience sampling rather than overall assessments of quality of life
- Studies of urban affect



How do we map feeling





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The Aggregated Feeling Map

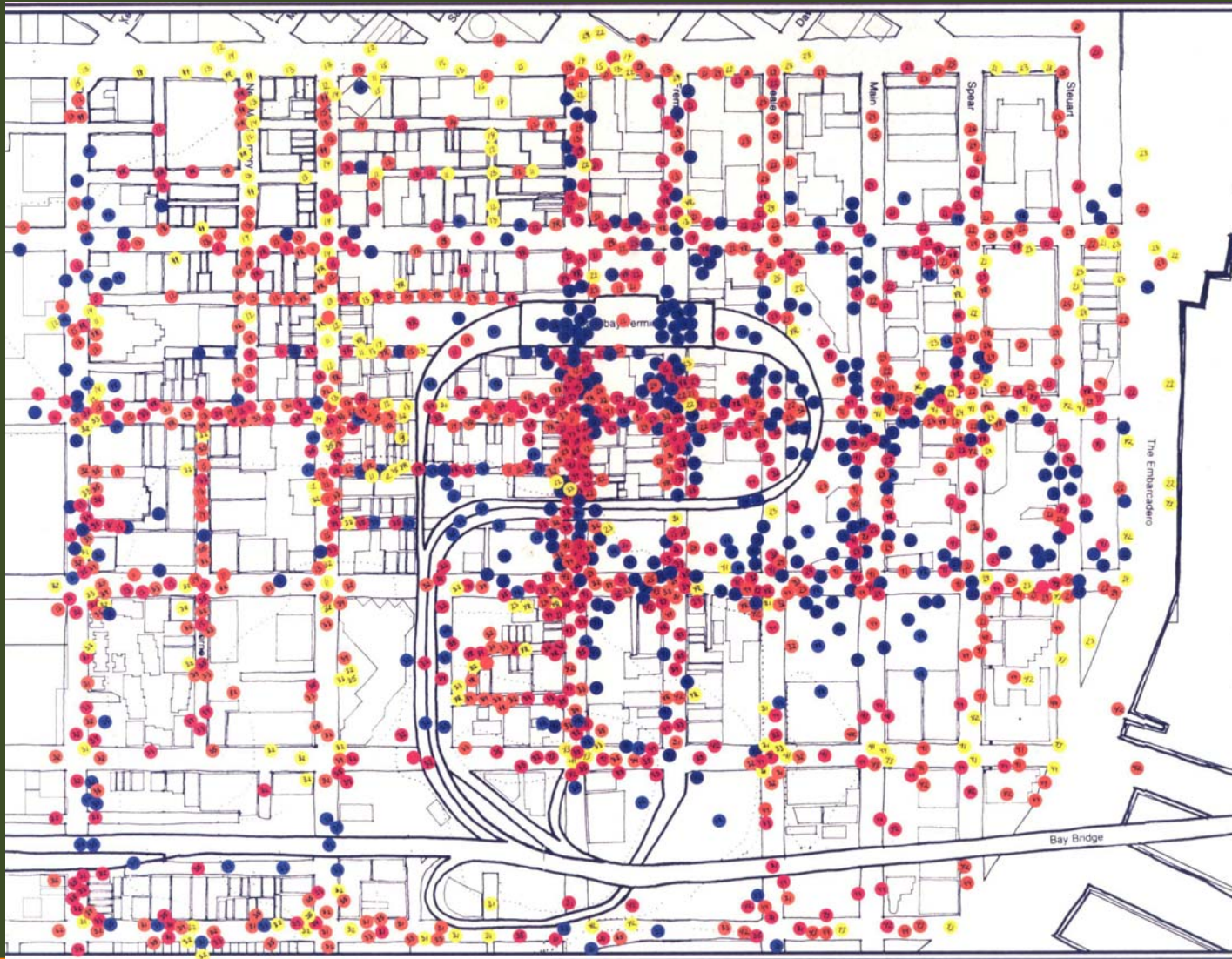


Southside – Berkeley

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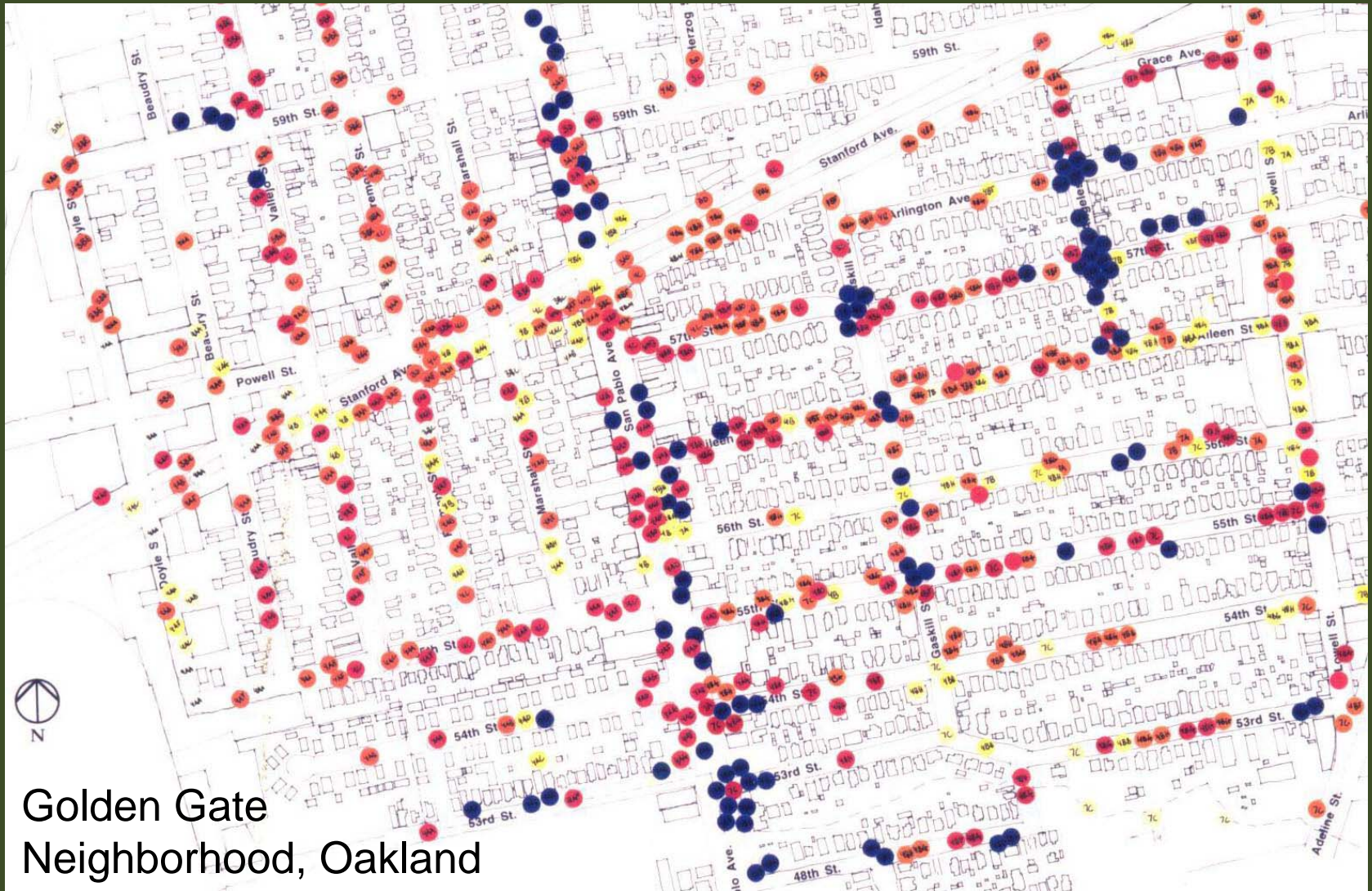


Transbay
Terminal
Area, SFO

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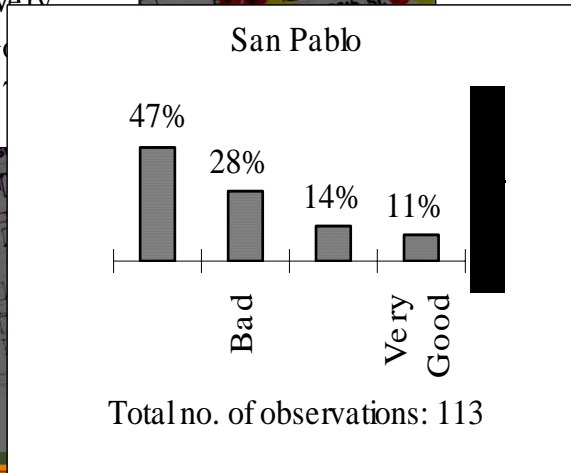
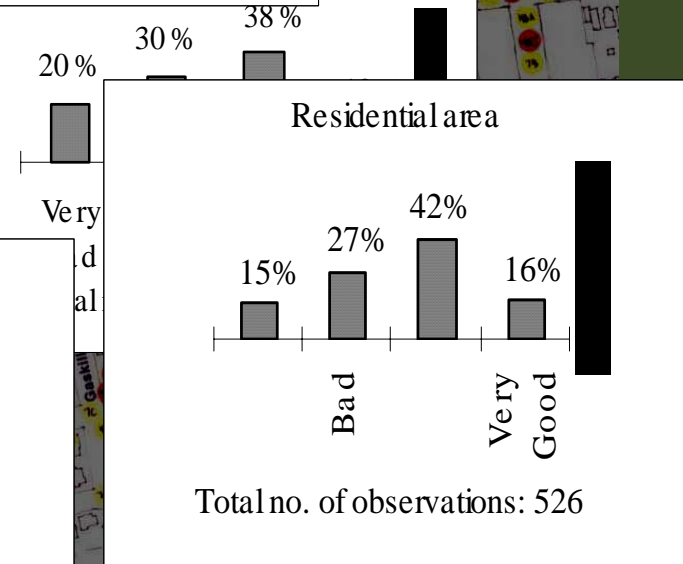
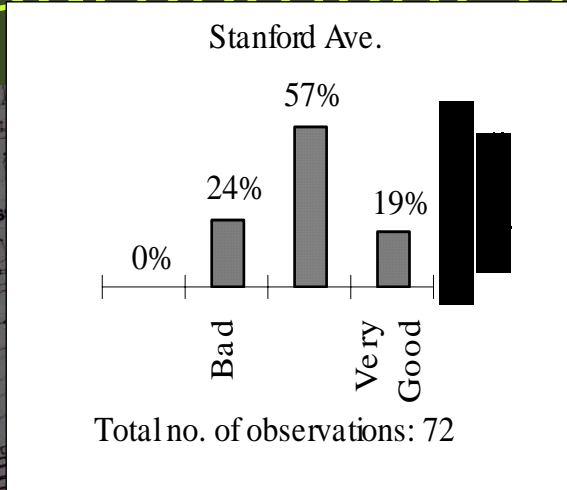
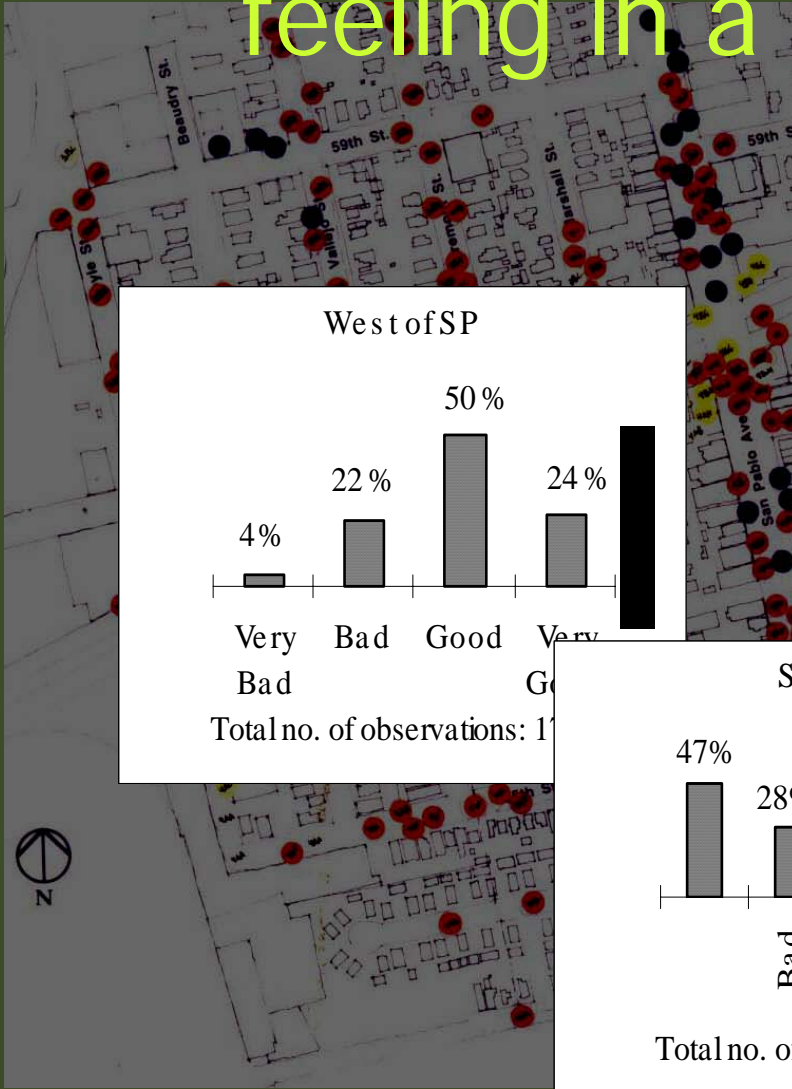


The Aggregated Feeling Map



Golden Gate
Neighborhood, Oakland

Variation and agreement about feeling in a neighborhood



Variation and agreement about feeling in a neighborhood

- Tenure, Age, Years of residence and gender proved to affect feelings
- However the effect of place was more significant
- Social variables alone predicted 50% of responses in a logit model
- Location alone predicted 69%
- Combining both location and social variables added only 5% accuracy to the model
- While individual tendency and social profile tend to “color” the feeling response their effect is global it changes the weight of feeling not its direction



Sources of Variation in feeling



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What are the sources of feeling?

- People were asked to record three positive and negative influences on their feelings
- The majority of positive responses were about neighbors and the maintenance of homes and gardens
- The predominant negative aspect mentioned by people was fear of street crime
- The causes of positive and negative feelings do not relate to the same issues: thus lack of crime does not insure good feelings, nor is good maintenance likely to prevail over problems of street crime



What are the sources of feeling?

Residents		Professionals	
5 best correlates	Coefficient	5 best correlates	Coefficient
Home maintenance	.30	Home maintenance	.36
Block size	-.18	Residential	-.28
Industrial	-.17	Enclosure	-.27
Steet maintenance	.17	Street maintenance	.24
Enclosure	-.16	Entrances	-.23



What are the sources of feeling?

- The importance of neighbors, maintenance and fear of crime for feeling was reiterated
- Correlation with physical and functional variables showed that the feeling map adds another layer of information not captured by any one variable
- Feeling seems to be related more to the way different variables interact than to any one in particular
- Feelings relate to context, and thus to expectations; a certain variable can have different meanings in different contexts



Using the map as a basis for urban design

- Areas of bad feelings are understood as signs of unresolved conflicts
 - Between different groups within the neighborhood
 - Between people's expectations and the reality
 - Between what the dynamics of the city cause and what the neighborhood used to be
- Areas of good feelings are places that meet expectations and where people's lives are enhanced – they serve as positive examples of what works in the local context
- The planner's task is to expose the conflicts and resolve them starting from those aspects that work well



Conflicts and Resolution in GGN

- To revitalize San Pablo a need to increase density along it but people oppose this
- Aging of population leads to change in ethnic character. Conflict between tenants and owners, old timers and new-coming
- Non local institutions take up valuable space and contribute little to the community
- Several sub-neighborhoods that lack a working center
- Need for more intensive development, but new development is not in right scale or grain
- Small town – city center neighborhood
 - Major streets urban in character that form the center
 - Turning the corner into a small-town community
 - Light industrial boundaries for living and working
 - A variety of housing solutions based on what exists and works
 - Work places at the edge of the community
 - Network of community projects



The role of the feeling map

- The feeling map guides the analysis
 - It is the data that the analysis tries to explain
 - Places of conflict in feelings expose differences between groups
 - It serves as a test bed for ideas
- The feeling map is a source of solutions
- The passage from feeling map to application is never mechanical
- The feeling map is not necessarily conservative



Conclusions: the potential of the feeling map

- It is possible to combine individual mapping of feelings to create an aggregated “feeling map”
- There is much agreement between people’s feelings towards places, and this relationship is robust
- Agreement about feelings is associated more with place than with social characteristics
- The feeling map adds another dimension to neighborhood analysis not captured by any of the customary variables
- A powerful tool for participation
- A step towards a democratic planning process

