

## **Research methods (2) Mental Mapping – Summary for download**

Mental maps are representations of an individual or group's internal cognitive map, hand-drawn or computer-assisted, of a given space. Mental maps combine factual information with judgments or subjective interpretations and include knowledge of landmarks, route connections, distance and direction relations, as well as non-spatial attributes and emotional associations.

Mental maps incorporate narratives of place, personalised engagements with space, built environment elements, and physical elements.

Mental maps provide a way of understanding:

- the way people produce and experience space;
- the everyday life of neighbourhoods;
- forms of spatial intelligence;
- dynamics of human-environment relations;
- the ways different social groups have different spatialities;
- how social space may be diminishing (though rising property values, disintegration of community networks, reduction in services, feelings of insecurity);
- correlations between how people feel about certain parts of a city and the way the city is structured by territory, crime rates, ethnic populations, environment, and more.

They can provide insights into the way minority and marginalised groups experience and perceive the city.

Mental maps can be used in capturing the everyday experiences of cities, particularly for marginalised and oppressed groups, and contributing to policy and planning at all scales.