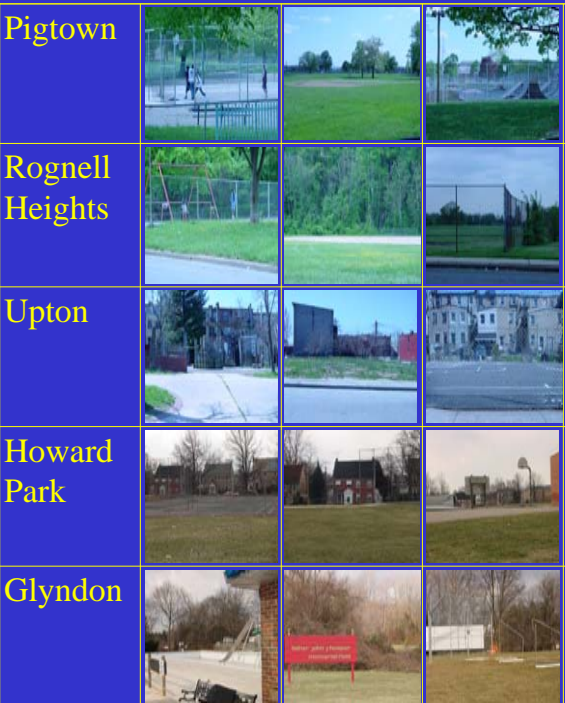


The Use of Photo-Narratives to Characterize Urban Neighborhood Patches in the Baltimore Ecosystem Study

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Recreation (Leisure)



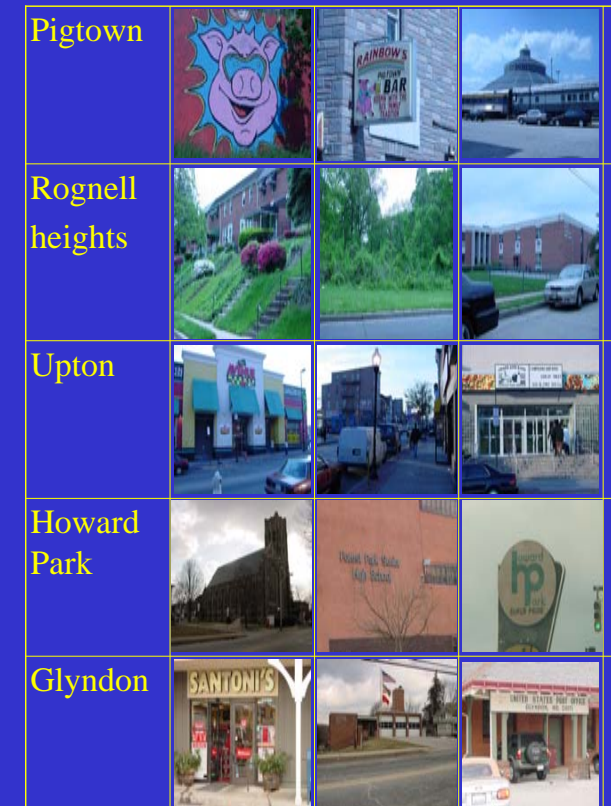
Background

The Baltimore Ecosystem Study (BES) has developed several tools for the characterization of urban neighborhood patches, including a household telephone survey and field observation survey. In both cases, issues of recreation, neighborhood identity, neighborliness, and neighborhood environment are of interest. The Photo-Narratives project is an open-ended survey to 1) collect information corroborating and enhancing the telephone and field surveys; 2) facilitate more detailed, follow-up questions; 3) be accessible and meaningful to community residents; and 4) provide a foundation for a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The Photo-Narrative survey was completed by interviewing residents in selected neighborhoods and documenting their responses with photographs. The photographic data presented in this poster identifies differences and similarities in lower to upper income neighborhoods.

Methods

Neighborhoods participating in the photographic narrative were selected based on their location in relation to the Baltimore Ecosystem Study's environmental and biological permanent plots. The survey was started in the Fall of 2001 and completed in the Winter of 2003. The survey was completed by interviewing residents in selected neighborhoods and photographing their responses. Data was collected and stored as images and field notes.

Neighborhood Identity



Findings

Using this form of data collection provided interesting findings especially in the environmental category. Questions for the environment category focused on air and water quality, trees, trash, and clean streets. Comparing all five neighborhoods in the environment category shows that only the Upton neighborhood is suffering major environmental problems. Pigtown and Rognell Heights had major environmental issues but have made improvements. Glyndon and Howard had minor environmental concerns but recently improved conditions. For neighborhood identity, each neighborhood had areas or objects with which community residents identified. This component of identification is special and helps define a neighborhood. The results from the neighborliness question were all positive. Participants did not provide examples of negative neighborliness. For recreation, participants identified similar outdoor areas mostly playgrounds or parks. Indoor activities were not considered recreation.

Neighborliness (Social Cohesion)

Pigtown			
Rognell Heights			
Upton			
Howard Park			
Glyndon			

Neighborhood Environment

Pigtown				
Rognell Heights				
Upton				
Howard Park				
Glyndon				

Conclusion

The next phase for the Photo-Narrative survey is to include historical information and photos, and oral documentation. Results from the Photo-Narrative survey can be used to 1) help BES researchers understand detailed processes within urban neighborhoods based upon local residents' knowledge; 2) build awareness and interest among neighborhood residents in the more general BES efforts; 3) assist public agencies and non-governmental organizations in natural resource based planning and management activities; and 4) provide linkages to youth education.

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