

NEIGHBORHOODS IN TRANSITION: LUBBOCK, TEXAS, Sagrario Mejia and Dr. Gary Elbow. Dept. of Geography and Economics, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409.

Abstract

This research seeks to investigate the transition in housing and overall neighborhood quality of older neighborhoods in Lubbock, Texas. The neighborhoods under investigation are South Overton, Arnett-Benson, Tech Terrace, Guadalupe, Parkway-Cherry Point, and Heart of Lubbock (Highland Heights, O'Neall Terrace, McCrummen, Deerwood, and Hillcrest). The main purpose of this research is to determine the current status of housing quality in these neighborhoods and resident satisfaction with city services in order to identify factors that cause neighborhoods to change in quality. The principal question is: Why do some old neighborhoods remain stable or improve while others decline? The physical and social deterioration of neighborhoods has a negative impact on the city, causing physical and social problems such as a decrease in property values, an increase in low-cost, deteriorating housing, high crime rates, and poverty pockets among other problems. By knowing the causes of the situation we can then help prevent it or even solve it with proper means.

Introduction

In this investigation I identify the variables that have contributed to the transition of South Overton, Arnett-Benson, Tech Terrace, Guadalupe, Parkway-Cherry Point, and Heart of Lubbock (Highland Heights, O'Neall Terrace, Deerwood, McCrummen, and Hillcrest) neighborhoods in Lubbock. I picked these neighborhoods is because they are older neighborhoods that I believe show the characteristics related to change. They also reflect different mixes of social, economic, and ethnic status.

A few years ago the Avalanche Journal began a series of investigative reports on North Overton, a neighborhood displaying the same characteristics as some of the

neighborhoods in my study. The reports documented North Overton's history from its development in the 1920s through its rise as a middle class neighborhood, and its eventual decline both physically and socially in recent decades. North Overton is currently in the final stages of demolition to make way for a new, middle-class-oriented development. Many factors have contributed to the changes in North Overton and other center-city Lubbock neighborhoods.

Cherry Point has already gone through the process that North Overton went through. Currently, Hillcrest is in the process of becoming one of these neighborhoods. However, Guadalupe and Arnett-Benson are stable but stagnant, neither declining nor improving. Parts of Tech Terrace, South Overton, and Heart of Lubbock have become attractive areas of historically important middle and upper-middle class housing.

Just like North Overton, most of these neighborhoods are also rich in history, although they have not received the publicity that North Overton has. Because these neighborhoods are integral components of this city, I believe that we need to give them extra attention so that they can thrive and succeed just as other neighborhoods have.

Their success and growth will be the city's success and growth.

Hypotheses

1. Neighborhoods with the highest percentage of low quality housing also have the highest proportion of residents unsatisfied with city services.
2. Resident satisfaction with city services varies directly with the quality of housing; that is, residents of poor neighborhoods are less satisfied with city services than are residents of neighborhoods with better quality housing.

Methodology

The methodology for this research consisted of four steps: identifying, interviewing, evaluating, and analyzing.

Identify:

I identified the neighborhoods with characteristics that I wanted to test. These neighborhoods are older neighborhoods in the inner city of Lubbock which might be undergoing mild or dramatic physical and/or social changes.

After the neighborhoods were identified I proceeded to collect history about their development. Some of the places where I went to obtain information include the city planning office, Lubbock Central Appraisal District, Lubbock Community Development, and the office of the Lubbock United Neighborhood Association. After I collected such information, I began the field work.

Interview:

To learn more about the residents' and city officials' opinions about the neighborhoods, I needed to do several interviews. First, I developed two different interview forms, one for city leaders and the other one for the residents of the neighborhoods. For the residents, the questions asked the interviewees to give their opinion on the status of their neighborhood and their satisfaction with city services. On the other hand, for the city leaders, the questions asked the interviewees to rate the status and quality of each of the neighborhoods in the study. Some of these questions were also aimed to determine their opinion of what role of the city should play in the neighborhoods and if the city is fulfilling its duty.

I interviewed city council members, such as T.J. Patterson and Victor Hernandez, , people from Lubbock City Planning, such as David Buckberry and Sally Abbe, and Neighborhood Association presidents, such as Dr. Robert Brodtkin, president of the South

Overton Neighborhood Association, and city historians, such as Clyde James. In addition, I also interviewed several residents from each of the neighborhoods.

Evaluate:

After the interviews, I proceeded to do the neighborhood evaluations. For this I developed a quality evaluation check list. In this sheet, I listed the qualities I wanted to evaluate in the neighborhood, such as quality of building material, condition of paint, and landscaping.

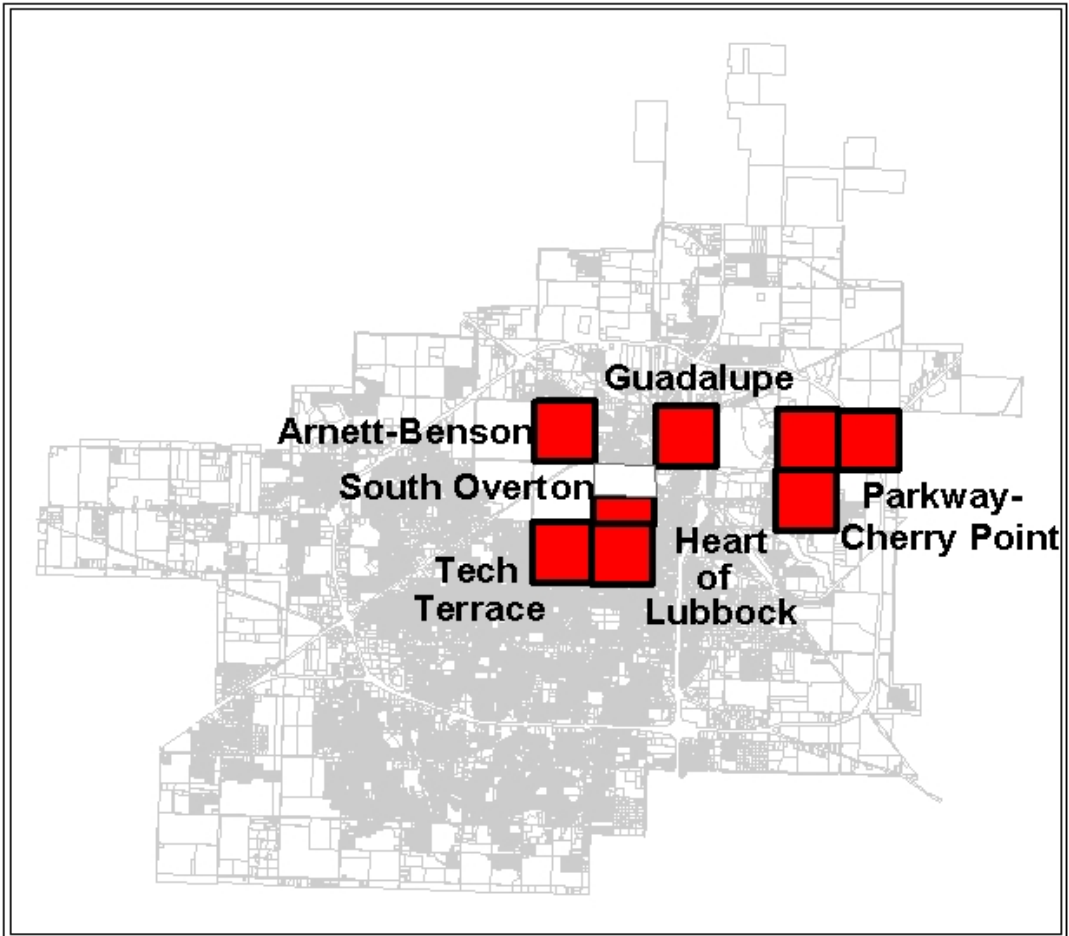
To do the neighborhood evaluations I obtained neighborhood maps from the city planning office. I then divided the neighborhoods up and randomly selected fourteen to eighteen blocks, depending on the size of the neighborhood. I evaluated the corner houses on each block and then proceeded to do every fourth house.

I ended up having an average of 35 houses for each of the neighborhoods in the study.



Analyze:

Once I had all of the houses evaluated I developed a 'points' system to come up with a 'grade' for each of the houses. After this I added this information to a spreadsheet of data I had obtained from the Lubbock Central Appraisal District, which was a site's address, market value, and square footage. Once the spreadsheet was finished I developed the graphs showing market value and the number of points I gave the houses.

City of Lubbock and Study Area



Legend

-  Study Area
-  City of Lubbock



Neighborhood Comparison

Neighborhood	Average Market Value	Average Points
South Overton	\$39,923	31
Parkway – Cherry Point	\$25,402	34.5
Heart of Lubbock	\$42,639	33.8
Guadalupe	\$34,131	33.3
Tech Terrace	\$93,157	39.3
Arnett-Benson	\$33,929	29.3

Points:

Points	Housing Quality
0-15	Deteriorated
16-25	Neglected
26-60	Maintained

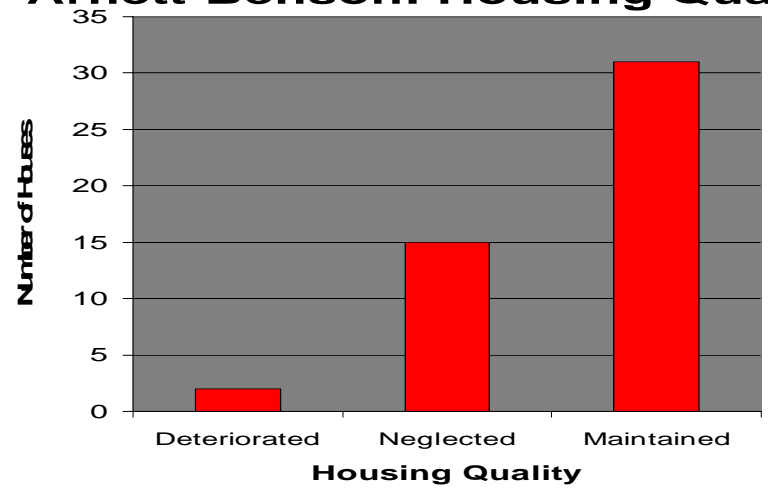
Results

Results show that, unlike some people's conceptions, neighborhoods, such as Arnett-Benson, Parkway-Cherry Point, Guadalupe, and South Overton, do have some high quality housing. This is mostly because that these neighborhoods are 'mixed' for example one will find a **Well-Maintained** house next to a **Deteriorated** house.

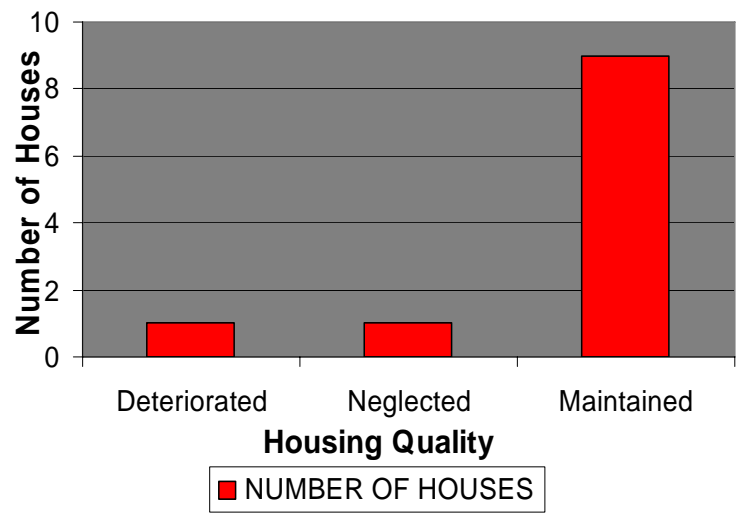
From the interview data, I conclude that most of the residents interviewed have an optimistic view of their neighborhood. However, a majority of these residents are unsatisfied with the quality of city services in their neighborhoods. The residents feel that the city should be more proactive in their neighborhoods. Some city leaders stated that they feel that the city provides all of the required services to its citizens and that it is

up to them to take advantage of such services in order to help their neighborhood improve.

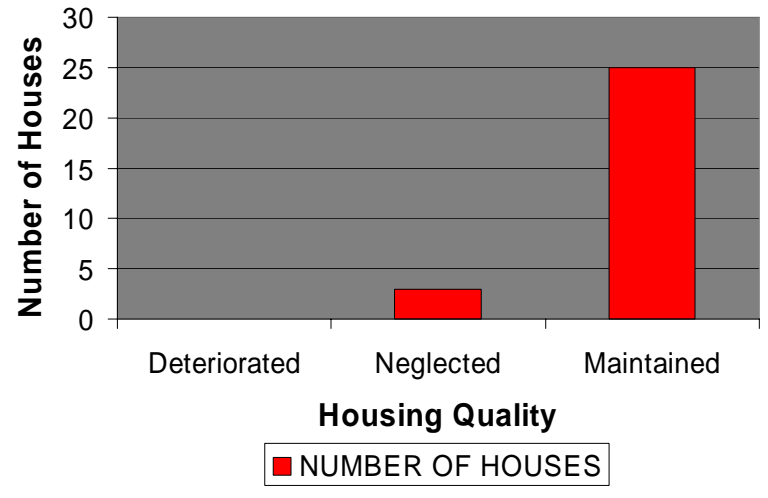
Arnett-Benson: Housing Quality



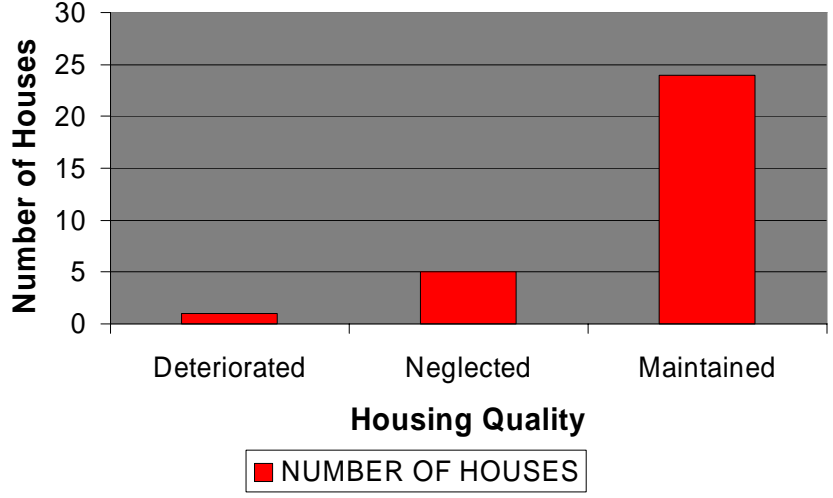
Guadalupe: Housing Quality



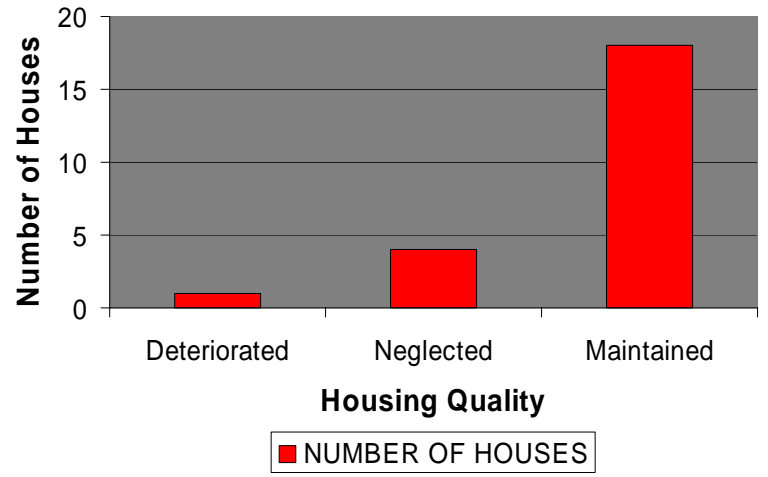
Heart of Lubbock: Housing Quality

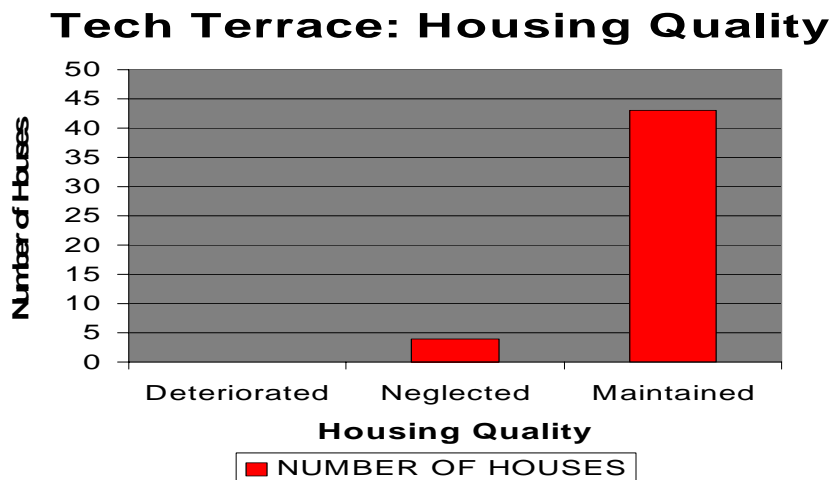


Parkway-Cherry Point: Housing Quality



South Overton: Housing Quality





Conclusions

The development and growth of Lubbock, Texas is extremely interesting. This research has allowed me to learn more about the city's history and the history of the forgotten older neighborhoods.

Some of these neighborhoods are historic; such is the case in South Overton. It is also true that this neighborhood is undergoing a dramatic change in its physical and social structure. Some of the residents in South Overton are in constant battle with the city government seeking zone protection and demanding better code enforcement. In my opinion, South Overton is an eclectic community, with great potential for improvement, and hopefully it will retain its originality.

The Arnett-Benson neighborhood is over 90% Hispanic and almost an isolated community in more ways than physical. The housing in this neighborhood is extremely mixed, although there is a great feeling of community and citizenship in this neighborhood. The residents are optimistic and hope for improvement. However, the future of Arnett-Benson is uncertain, due to the fact that higher education is allowing

more and more people to earn a better living and move away, leaving their homes as rental properties.

The tornado of 1970 was probably the best and worst thing to hit the Guadalupe neighborhood. Even though it demolished most of the neighborhood, it also inspired a local businessman to help it build it up again. Guadalupe's current status is stable and will probably remain as this for a while.

Tech Terrace has the most active neighborhood associations. The residents work toward keeping their neighborhood a safe and pleasant place to live. It will, with no doubt, continue to prosper.

The Heart of Lubbock neighborhood is extremely transitional. Its future is greatly dependent on the dedication of its residents and the actions of their neighborhood association.

The residents from the Parkway-Cherry Point neighborhood are proud of their neighborhood and would like to work with the city to bring better business opportunities and to clear up the misrepresented image the media often portrays.

In conclusion, the factors that might contribute to the decline of a neighborhood might include lack of code enforcement, lack of leadership, and a sense of apathy in the neighborhood, . An active neighborhood association and concerned and active residents are some factors that can definitely help a neighborhood improve.

The city has the duty of providing equal services and opportunities to all neighborhoods. It also has the duty of keeping the citizens informed on information, such as changes in zoning ordinances. It is also the responsibility of the residents to take advantage of the opportunities and services the city offers to keep their neighborhood from declining or improving.

Acknowledgments

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