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Commentary

# The Trajectory of REOs in Southern California Latino Neighborhoods: An Uneven Geography of Recovery

Deirdre Pfeiffer & Emily Tumpson Molina

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## Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the University of California, Santa Barbara's Chicano Studies Institute for providing funding for this research, as well as Dr. Paul Ong at the University of California Los Angeles for assisting with data purchase. They also would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful critical feedback.

## Notes

1. Rivera et al. (2008) estimate that Latinos will experience a net loss of at least \$75.8 billion for subprime loans made between 1998 and 2006. In a study of 25 Latino households that foreclosed, Bowdler, Quercia, and Smith (2010) found that they experienced an average loss of about \$89,000.

2. California foreclosure counts are provided primarily by two companies, DataQuick and RealtyTrac. DataQuick reports trustee's deeds (completed foreclosures) recorded, while RealtyTrac reports notices of trustee sale and REOs. DataQuick was a better source for

3. Conversion from the 2000 Census to the 2010 Census is based on the American Housing and Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) (Housing and Economic Recovery Act, 2011).

4. Our estimates are based on the 2000 Census Community Survey. In addition to the 2000 Census, the ACS aggregation of census tracts into census tracts may bias our estimates. In particular, communities with higher foreclosure rates may have



experienced faster housing filtering and minority population growth, among other shifts (Lauria & Baxter, 1999; Y. Li & Morrow-Jones, 2010). We address this issue further in the conclusion.

5. Census tracts in Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties were matched to nearest elementary schools by entering the address associated with their centroid into the California School Finder search engine. Tracts were only matched to regular schools; charter, alternative, special education, and continuation schools were not included. School data for the 2006–2007 school year was compiled from Ed-Data and the California Department of Education. About 4% of properties in the Inland Empire were missing nearest elementary school data due to new school construction.

6. There is unresolved debate about the best way to identify urban or inner-city, suburban, and exurban communities, let alone whether such designations are useful (Nelson & Sanchez, 1999). Our definition loosely corresponds with Marcelli (2004)'s housing age-based delineation of the Southern California exurbs (defined as “suburbs” in his article). On average, 37% of the housing stock in the sample exurban tracts was built after 1980 compared to only 15% in the suburban and urban tracts.

7. Paul Willen at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and Stefano Giglio at Harvard University contributed to the keyword compilation. Real estate owned keywords

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studied period suggests speculative intentions. One way to tease out occupancy status is by examining mortgage records. However, given the size of our sample, the possibility of buyers misrepresenting their status when applying for a mortgage, and the fact that one-third of the family trust investors and two-fifths of the LLC investors had no recorded loan information, we decided that pursuing this method would be unproductive.

11. See Appendix E Census List of Spanish Surnames in the “Downloads” section at <http://fcds.med.miami.edu>. The approximately 12,500 names on the list were culled from Spanish-surname lists developed by the U.S. Census and New Mexico's SEER's Guest Program, as well as underrepresented Caribbean and South American names present in the Miami phonebook.

12. This process involves converting the data from wide to long form, or from a file of foreclosures to a file of foreclosure months, with each row representing a foreclosure during a particular month that it was on the market. Properties that foreclosed in January 2007 may have up to 36 rows of data, while properties that foreclosed in June 2009 may have only one row of data. Properties that sold at auction, the omitted category, are counted as month 0. The dependent variable is dichotomous, accounting for whether or not a foreclosure sold in a given month, with sales receiving a 1. Once a property is sold, it is not included in subsequent months, as it is no longer at risk of being sold. This type of discrete-time event data is common in survival analysis.

13. We estimated a multinomial logit model fit to the data, with the dependent variable being the mortgage status (black, white, or at risk, with the omitted category being sold). The logit model is a nonlinear model, with the probability of a property being in a particular category increasing with the mortgage status. The model fit to the data shows that the probability of a property being in a particular category is increasing with the mortgage status. The model fit to the data shows that the probability of a property being in a particular category is increasing with the mortgage status. The model fit to the data shows that the probability of a property being in a particular category is increasing with the mortgage status.

14. These models that control for the mortgage status and the mortgage status coefficients changed over time.



15. The Academic Performance Index measures spring test performance; it ranges from 200 to 1,000.
16. There were no majority Latino census tracts in exurban northern Los Angeles County in our sample.
17. Properties located in fast-growing Riverside and San Bernardino counties had an average square footage of 1,547, compared to 1,232 among properties located in the Los Angeles suburbs or the cities of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ontario.
18. It is important to note that our measures of median home prices at the census tract level are almost certainly biased by their inclusion of both foreclosure auction and REO sales that tend to depress prices. However, our measures of median sales price in 2007 and foreclosure rate 2007-2009 are not as highly correlated as one might expect ( $r = -0.35$ ). Still, it is likely that changes in neighborhood foreclosure rates are driving price changes at this relatively small geography, making it difficult to tease out the relative effects of each of these factors.

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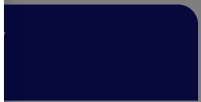
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