

What *do* the neighbors think? Assessing the community impact of Neighborhood Stabilization efforts



Motivation

- Foreclosure crisis
- Federal intervention
- Community impact

Background

- Foreclosures in Boston
- CDC mission

Research Question

- Does rehabilitating abandoned homes change neighborhood social indicators?

Design

- NSP foreclosures vs. REOs (treatment and control group) N=16
- Abutting parcels N=144
- Quantitative
 - Survey
 - Parcel condition
- Qualitative
 - Open ended interview questions

Method

- Instruments
 - Survey
 - Open ended
 - Parcel
- Administration
 - Pre and post treatment



Figure 1: Typical Study Neighborhood



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

Survey Demographics

	City-Owned Treatment (N = 69)	REO Control (N = 75)
Years at residence	12.8*	8.5
Homeowners	29%	21%
Married	19%	23%
Children in home	41%	47%
Not employed	41%	46%
Age	44.7	45.0
Male	29%+	42%

+ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$

Neighborhood Characteristics

	City-Owned Treatment (<i>N</i> = 69)	REO Control (<i>N</i> = 75)
Sense of Community	3.3	3.3
Walkable	2.9**	3.4
Safe	2.3**	2.8
Involved community group	55%*	36%
Parcel Condition	76.1 (<i>N</i> = 66)	77.3 (<i>N</i> = 73)

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Block Correlations ($N = 16$)

	Parcel Condition	Sense of Community	Walkable	Safe
Sense of Community	0.46+	-		
Walkable	0.43+	0.13	-	
Safe	0.24	0.13	0.76**	-
Involved community group	-0.19	0.25	-0.28	-0.15

+ $p < .10$; ** $p < .01$

Preliminary Qualitative Findings

- Not concerned with foreclosures
- Other neighborhood concerns
 - Institutional alienation
 - Crime
 - Soc

Resident views of target homes

- Disinterest
- Individual level problem
 - Not a community problem
 - Not a housing market problem
- Not a magnet for crime

The Role of City and Community Institutions in Neighborhood Stability

- Police – little legal cynicism
- Neighborhood and city government
- Banks

Stability and Sense of Community

- Ambivalent view of neighborhood
- Spatial boundaries
- Social boundaries

Policy implications

- Support linkages between social and economic factors
- Address other neighborhood stressors
- Promote connections