**Wednesday, October 26th (3:45 PM ET)**

Session 1 – Mapping private equity landlords across NNIP partners

Led by Matt Nowlin (Indianapolis)

Notes by Sonia Torres Rodríguez

Attendees: Jay Heermann (Kansas City), Joe Andre (Cleveland), Andrew Carr (New Haven), Ross Reilly (Pittsburgh), Cheryl Knott (Baltimore), Hayley Raetz (NYC), Jeff Matson (Minneapolis), Steve Saylor (Pittsburgh), James Neal (DC), Katie Zager (Charlotte), Lee Guekguezian (Minneapolis), Jiaqi Dong (NYC), Noah Urban (Detroit), Peter Tatian (DC), Dan Potter (Houston)

Intros:

* Jay Heerman - want to learn about Lytech and preventing displacement
* Joe Andre- one or two private equity had bought a bunch of new properties -
* Andrew Carr - Data Haven - financialization of or rising proportion of investor homes, making homeownership less accessible
* Ross Reilly - work in Pittsburgh - partners in this subject
* Cheryl Knott - interested in this topic - change in homeownership - working in some neighborhoods, private landlords, haven’t tackled this issue- but have 20 years of home sales data, already have data in house
* Hayley Raetz - specific focus on housing, question of ownership has really come up - at a juncture trying to think creatively how to understand ownership realistically, trying to think about lifting the veil on that, private equity
* Jeff Matson - ongoing research projects, who owns our cities, and LLCS and corporate absentee owners, interested in learning around these, and tracking which are under the right umbrella. Also interested in code compliance and limiting the influence they have on our neighborhoods
* Steve Saylor - who owns land in Pittsburgh
* James Neal - looking at luxury high rise apartments, noting prices of rent going up, lots of private equity landlords offering deals for 18 months. Very interested in development of navy yard
* Katie Zager - Combed tax ownership data, 11 LLCs, got more engagement on this article than in all other bigger funded projects. Patterns of concentration. Raleigh observer and papers, went a step further, expanded to 200 corporations that they knew about. Corporate ownership information.
* Lee Guekguezian - There’s a lot of ongoing research, qualitative research, most interested in front facing tools, anti eviction mapping project
* Jiaqi Dong - ownership a lot - research topic - how larger investors have been contributed to neighborhood change and small business
* Noah Urban - typology of landlords, real parcel level rental data set, city was not that good at tracking rental properties
* Peter Tatian - Research director of Urban-Greater DC - done a lot of work doing affordable housing in DC, last 10 to 15 years, what kinds of landlords
* Dan Potter - affordable housing, Houston was a cheap-ish

Discussion:

* Federal Reserve of Atlanta - classified Indy affordable until this last
* Matt: Connecting this topic to real people, Matt talk about Indy approach. Focused on evictions and how this related to private equity, started with word “top evictor,” difficult to tie to “LLC” - started tracing LLC, geocoded, joined to parcels, defendant on eviction case, owner name on parcel, these can be clues on who the corporate owner is. Used some algorithms to standardize LLC names, to find similar names, it was helpful, but didn’t get us there. Still had to go through each name, and google on registry in each state. Anyone who was a “frequent evictor,” let’s look at people with 10 or more evictions. Super manual process. Once it was done, it was extremely
  + By being a little manual, it was a little difficult to show accuracy
  + It can also be wrong, they have short ownership, they might sell while the analysis is going
  + Has anyone had success connecting LLCs to real owners
* Noah: Had a similar process, so many misspellings, had to use the owner address, had to link. Local project, Property Praxis, University of Michigan used data assistant to look at all filings for the LLCs, let’s get some students to do the grunt work.
* Core of students, replicating the
* Joe Andre - never intended to look at corporate ownership, were working on another data tool. Used some matching with state corporate data set, then hit LLC wall. In Ohio, don’t have to name of owner, can just have agent, we were tracking
  + We started to ask the Mayor’s office, they knew, writing it down, aggregated it together, but local person to guide through.
* Seema - LLC might be the same person, came up with a process, using graph theory, who is actually the same - Furman center, how do you find a person behind the LLC
* Private equity owners, syndicators of single family rentals, owners of mobile home parks. Put examples with report, put faces on who “owns”
* Joe - have to trace these people down
* Matt - What percent of rental properties are owned from outside? But there are so many that have a local address, but they are owned out of state
* Peter - tracking the owners, if interested in the management company, it’s the management company who is trying to evict? The manager decides, but owner can also decide to get a new manager.
* Joe A - Actual owner, was huge crisis, who do we go to with an out of country ownership makes them unaccountable. Middle neighborhood, don’t get support for being low income, but not high end enough to be nice. Houses are cheap enough, but you can still get more for money. Have seen local suburbs start enforcing fees. Local concentrated efforts, started using fees and inspections, to try to have leverage them or track them or cite them.
* Seema - connect to the licensing - Indy tried at the state house
* Matt- Local questions, bad actors, important to know the specific owner. What are the systemic problems, especially around something like evictions. 14% of people live in large complexes (20+ units), these have 60% of evictions, we could kind of assume that these 20+ units require a lot of money for evictions filings. This has certain policy implications.
* Andrew - in addition to parcel data, are there other data sources that are available nationally? Have seen the eviction lab at Princeton, exist at zipcode? What data sources are people using?
* Libby -We receive eviction filings from sheriff’s department - building a community informed data base, having folks research, go back to the owner of property, do think that it’s been helpful what trends in corporate ownership outside of Durham. Mom and pop landlords have also been bad actors, who are not accepting of eviction helps. Who has access to the who has Durham dataset is also an open question.
* Lee: Uses six data sources, most from bay area. In Minneapolis, eviction data, parcel data, and rental license data, triangulating between different data sources.
  + Open corporate - private data sources? Ohio, a lot of sites would sell you those
  + Parcel data can be obtained for every parcel
  + Some places charge a lot of money
* Andrew - eviction moratorium lifted, there’s been an explosion, not able to get property - court level approach
* Roadblock - used to use web scraping - now also banned - our scrapper is still running - they have a captcha, figured out a way to get around the captcha
* Hayley - state court system was very concerned about private names information being available, they locked data down, we communicated about the IRB process, reopened some of the data for research processes. Opening this up to other research organizations.
* Daniel - has anyone used tax records - this is how we track the parcel data.
* Matt - automated ways to collect data from websites might be cut off, important to have a relationship. This employee could stop emailing you or leaving for a new relationship.
* James - what about people who are not evicted, but “asked to leave” - how much data has been captured for people who were not able to pay rent, and which landlords refused
* A local reporter - FOIAed who received eviction paycheck assistance - effort has to be city/county, who was administering those moneys
* Matt - as it relates to evictions - one of those issues where you put the data together, but the result is not that surprising - what are you going to do about it is the key questions
* Katie - frame: corporate owners locking people out of single family homes. One in five sales under 400k is going to private entity. Felt difficult to say we can’t do anything about this. Trying to track down the disjointed policy response, nothing central about.
* Joe Andre - local land bank - go through a few properties, working a policy to create a window where local buyers can buy, they have 30 day window with extra credit, only they can buy
* Peter - some research in Nashville
* Lee - there has been regulation of NNIP in Minneapolis, limiting profit, corporations posing as people, there needs to be more connection between airbnb regulation
* Does Airbnb offer open data
* Hayley - we need to understand the landscape of ownership to inform policy as well - when we think of rent stabilization, who is going to be affected. We don’t have a good idea of what ownership looks like, it’s a very central conversation.
* Noah - similar problem conceptually, but very different problem in how it shows up. Some landlords don’t make enough money, but they do not generate policies to help those people do renovations.
* Matt - More complicated than just landlord = bad. For evictors, who own a lot of evictors, they evict a lot of people, but it’s just based on the sheer number of properties they have (perhaps should look at rates)
* Noah - large landlords - they had properties with certificates of compliance, but they were having the most blight violations, most evictions
* libby - dissagregation - wish could stop treating corporations - as if they deserved the same protections as individuals - three individuals who own for 15 properties and huge proportion of evictions that happen - googling them, been in talks with first amendment clinic, distribute this, who gets access to this data. We could get sued if we say a specific person is responsible for this (defamation?). The legal piece would like to see, is that privacy shouldn’t be protected in the same way.
* Peter: People know who the bad actors are - it’s a not a data decision, but a policy problem, how do we get them out of our market? In DC, it’s not the big corporate problems, it’s the individual who owns separate buildings (the middle size).
* Lee - non profits are also top evictors, because of property managers, can we make this affect funding decisions, should they still be allowed to get money for HFAs using justification for a serial evictors who happen to be non profit affordable developers, not as common a story.
* Peter - Like the DC Housing Authority. Lack of investment in investment. Housing voucher.
* Katie - Is there a better way? There could be some simple design - like LLC matching that saves big hours. Basic methodology, searching
  + Have python scripts that helped standardize
  + Open Refine - Clusters - make individual choices - city of Cleveland - go through 500k parcels
  + Cheryl - have been using Open Refine for natural landowners - deceased - having tools to really refine the data set, that we then use to match using death records at the parcel level. As we work on this project, we document this process, available on github, created a blog post, share to the NNIP network. Try to collect the repositories, do the scan, who has done what, and figure out what to do
  + Katie - Added attribute as to to whether something is an LLC corporation, and how ownership is transferred
* Matt - particular owners who have troubled - JPC affordable housing. Has this firm in Indy a national problem
  + Joe - how to define how people can be defined or identified as a “bad actor” - buying property up, some other potential indicator. What about people who only have two or three small problems?
* Joe - everyone has different county set ups, what are the different county situations that people have? How does it differs? Have good connections with county, does not extend to state level
  + Matt - Indianapolis have state-wide parcel data
  + Maryland - used to pay for it, then opened it up
  + Andrew - Would be curious to see what research is out there, to measure the outcomes we have discussed, and how it relates to the behavior of private equity, similar neighborhoods, only differ because of out of state private equity, is there a significant difference (difference from median rent, refusal to accept vouchers).
  + Andrew - we have been using some zillow rent data - do have some data on homeownership and rent - percentage, which homes sold for asking price. Rent data from zillow is powerful is because we are in the midst of housing affordability, ACS does not help (median rent six years ago is not helpful). Zillow or HPI or HFA.
    - Core Logic or Corestart - spotty in Detroit. Okay in Downtown Cleveland.
    - Lee - have to pay money