**Can revealing evictions reduce evictors?**

NNIP Camp 2021

5/19/21

Facilitator: L'Tanya Durante - DataWorks –

Notetaker: Jorge Morales-Burnett

Participants: Laura Lyons (Detroit), Geoff Smith (Chicago), Leah Hendey (Urban/DC), Amy Rohan (Milwaukee), John Cruz (St. Louis), Logan Shertz (Baltimore), Yiwen Jiao (Chicago).

* Laura Lyons in the past haven't had relationship with sheriff's office, working on a scraper that is trying to grab data from district court, closest we've come to the data
* Geoff Smith - haven't landed on a good use for landlord data yet, trying to figure out where to add value. Trying to connect the eviction to the parcel, which isn't easy. Hopeful about this.
* Leah: are you able to identify owners?
* Geoff: ownership question is tricky. Theoretically with tax data you could do something. Records can also be sealed with relation to foreclosure, covid evictions too can be sealed to protect tenants.
* Amy Rohan -Work is collaborative, there's coalitions called Reclaiming our Neighborhoods where they do biannual housing surveys to call out the bad acting landlords in their neighborhoods. It has evolved over the years. Making it easier for landlords to hide behind LLCs. Working on scraping and discovering who is behind the LLCs. Real concern in Milwaukee, poster child in Desmond's Evicted.
* John Cruz - St. Louis - vast majority of evictions are informal, so data can be hard to use. mayor's office and county office are split, so still struggling to identify what is out there and is helpful.
* Logan Shertz - Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance - don't have relationship with sheriff or courts system, definitely something would like to have.
* Yiwen Jiao - De Paul University. Did eviction data analysis, worked hard cleaning the data, especially on the geocoding.

Discussion

* L'Tanya: what are your goals with the data?
* Laura: hoping to use eviction data for the housing information portal. A lot of CDOs don't have the resources to be gathering the data. Goal of portal is to have one place for data. But on point about making things actionable, we still haven't gotten there yet. People don't have access to legal aid, looking probably to be if an eviction is happening, here are the resources. just having legal aid show up, a lot of the cases happening aren't even legal eviction, tenant has no idea of what is legal or illegal. I think that that is what we are trying to get to, but very far from it now.
* Amy: In Milwaukee, Legal Action for Wisconsin has been really helpful for tenants. the city also has a landlord program, certificate to have access to programs like forgivable loans programs. Conversation now about how to connect landlords that have gone through this and tenants that have gone through this to build network of relationships. Legal Action is small but they also have office hours at the court house where they talk to people being evicted.
* Leah: In DC don't have access to eviction data. We can categorize owners broadly, but haven't been able to link corporate landlords across LLCs. Interested in people thinking about policy ideas, any ways to make corporate actors behave in this space?
* John: a lot of investors, buy things and let them sit, buildings hold up well without maintenance due to weather, not a lot of incentive to do anything with it.
* Geoff: thinking about policy and data, John raised idea about what is actually an eviction, what is tracked in the courts. how do we know scale of what is captured in the evictions data. Eviction process costs money. Can't know whether we expect waves of evictions in certain areas, information gap.
* Leah: payment information is also not usually readily transparent. Not scrapable
* Geoff: group of lawyers here who have done good stuff with data they have, they've gone into some of the legal records for this information. their portal is pretty detailed.
* Leah: Urban has access to Infotur, data aggregators with address histories for people from all kinds of records, up to 10 addresses for a household, so you can track how they move from place to place. have though about questions related to mobility in a neighborhood, but could also tie to evictions maybe? some of the more informal things that you can't see in the court data. colleagues at Urban using it to track climate migrants.
* L'Tanya: any work in that kind of research? what tools are you using?
* Geoff: data we get has an evictor, we do see that the housing authority is biggest evictor is the big landlord, how to normalize it is one question - big landlords have more properties and more evictions.
* Laura: there was a professor Josh Acres, Property Practice is his website, we've been using his data.
* Leah: do you have open registries of LLCs in their states?
* Laura: I don't know the details of that.
* L'Tanya: any trends you have found?
* Laura: same ones as Jeff, more commercial ones are kind of the bad guys. fair percentage of people from out of state.
* L'Tanya: one of our staff members has been working on any trends, interesting to start seeing the trends. A while ago, we noticed that some of the owners will buy properties and then within a certain period of time rents go up and evictions go up.
* Leah: what rent data?
* L'Tanya: Our rent scraping is based on code that was created by the Boston Metro Area Planning Council (MAPC). It scrapes padmapper and craigslist.
* Amy: I was tracking property sales and started to see an increase in portfolio properties sold, unclear if it was changing hands to different part of LLC or if part of a sale. Houses were in poor conditions, no permits pulled, another theme in particular neighborhood where landlord would buy property, make the money and not make improvements and then sell
* John: interesting, wondering if they did exchange within the same LLC, because the real estate field is so complicated.
* Amy: there has been some talk too about whether there could be a rent limit too, if a property is assessed at X, there's a cap that you can charge for rent.
* John: did you know what the market rents were or did you use other sources?
* Amy: I don't know
* John: something we will be recommending to City of St. Louis to do is to include the data on rents in the occupancy process.
* Leah: DC does collect data for rent control, but database still is not public.
* L'Tanya: Leah, you mentioned possibility of cross partner project?
* Leah: i want to see what are things we do together, we each have one off cases in different cities, is there something more powerful when saying across a number of different communities? are there better practices that we could be pushing more toward. could work closely with legal aid or advocates in community to push for change locally, could do some analysis on neighborhood change with larger datasets.  Would want feedback on what would be most useful?
* John: have thought about anecdotally, a lot of landlords are behaving badly because of eviction moratoriums, not renting to anybody unless it's 6 mo lease and willing to pay it up front. interested in extent of abuse nationwide. maybe use this as opportunity for when there are concerns/economic downturns, these are landlords that are more likely to act badly?
* Leah: definitely, how to separate bad people from the good.
* L'Tanya: we look to tenant organizers to tell us what they need. goal is for tenants to look for this and use it for their organizing. saying problems here are happening in other cities would be helpful
* Geoff: we work with organizations that are community based and do tenant outreach. Address data seems interesting, but also how to apply it is what i am thinking about now. What would be new? local policy that would be useful to raise up.
* Leah: people haven't used the infotur data very much. hard right now.
* Geoff: how far back does it go?
* Leah: i am told it is 10 address per person, that could be 2 years for some or forever for others.
* Geoff: informal side of eviction would be interesting. how do you capture that? in Chicago there is issue of open-ended lease (going month to month), potential policy implication there around leases
* Leah: i think you would have to establish the norm for the community and see spikes or deviations. look for trend over time period.
* Leah: the cost of evictions differ across places
* Geoff: evictions take a long time

From chat:

* From Leah Hendey to Everyone: (2:16 PM) Good piece from MAPC - <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/landlords-eviction-covid19/>
* From Amy Rohan- Milwaukee to Everyone: (2:23 PM)<https://mke-evict.com/>
* From Leah Hendey to Everyone: (2:30 PM) Recent work from Dallas! <https://urbanpolicyresearch.org/download/a-review-of-eviction-protections-in-dallas-texas/?mc_cid=c8b5610cdc&mc_eid=35412399e5>
* From John Cruz to Everyone: (2:35 PM)

Fun bedtime reading: A local hit piece on a particularly terrible landlord here in STL <https://www.riverfronttimes.com/stlouis/nathan-cooper-section-8-gravois-park/Content?oid=20676900>

Our local legal helpers on this stuff <https://lsem.org/housing-law/>

* From Geoff Smith to Everyone: (2:42 PM)

Chicago evictions portal by Lawyers Committee for Better Housing: <https://eviction.lcbh.org/geography/type/ca>

* From Geoff Smith to Everyone: (2:48 PM)

Another landlord hit piece. Reporter was able to look at large evictors: <https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/chicago-evictions-pangea/Content?oid=70318054>

From Amy Rohan- Milwaukee to Everyone: (2:52 PM)

MKE landlord hit piece: <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2020/09/01/tenants-union-protests-berrada-properties/>

* From Leah Hendey to Everyone: (2:56 PM)

<https://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=up_policybriefs>