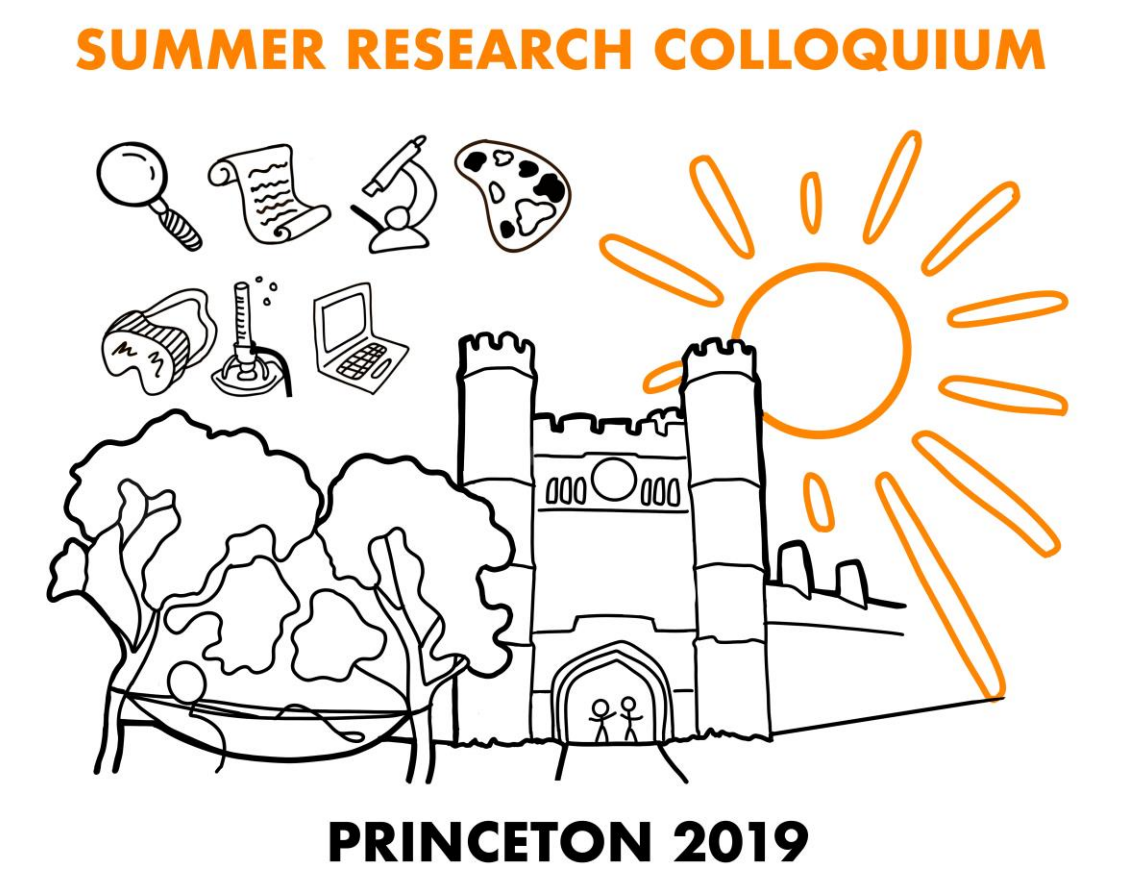


Princeton Eviction Lab: Estimating the effect of Municipal Zoning on displacement

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Background

City zoning laws determine the physical makeup of cities by issuing permits for single and multi family apartment complexes, minimum lot sizes requirements, and affordable housing set-asides. Combined with a dataset created by Wharton in 2008, we are attempting to create a longitudinal dataset of several thousand municipalities' zoning ordinances which we will then use to determine how zoning laws impact eviction rates across the US.

Research Questions

We approach this research with three questions in mind:

- What zoning laws do municipalities have?
- How have these zoning laws changed over time?
- How do certain zoning laws impact eviction rates?

Methods

Due to the inherently decentralized nature of gathering municipal codes from all around the country, we have used a variety of methods. Primarily, we have been using web-scraping code to automate downloading of zoning codes from online databases. For municipalities with their codes not in the database, we are manually downloading from individual websites, or in rare cases, procuring physical copies from the municipalities directly.

Municipality	Restrict Single-Family building permits	Restrict Multi-Family building permits	Restrict Single-Family units	Restrict Multi-Family units	Restrict Multi-Family dwellings	Restrict units in Multi-Family dwellings	Min lot sizes	Open space required	Zoning Index
A	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
B	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
C	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

TABLE 1: The output of our data collection efforts will be a .csv file of municipalities and a series of binary indicators measuring the elements specified in the Data Collection and Variables of Interest section. See the table above for the sample layout of the output dataset.

Progress

So far, we have downloaded ~94% of our desired dataset and have been developing code to create our data set, a sample of which is featured above in Table 1. This data set is still being tested for quality control, utilizing a subset (~10%) of the municipalities to determine that our data is correctly formatted.

Discussion

Once our data set is completely outputted and formatted, we will be able to combine it with the Wharton Residential Land Use Regulatory Index to create our longitudinal data set of nationwide zoning ordinances. We can then combine this data with the Eviction Labs 80+ million eviction records from the past 30 years to identify and quantify trends of how zoning laws impact eviction rates.

Acknowledgments

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References

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