Eviction is [much more common](https://www.oecd.org/els/family/HC3-3-Evictions.pdf) in the United States than in other developed countries. The sociology literature, spearheaded by [Matthew Desmond](https://evictionlab.org/about/), has studied eviction for years using methods such as the case study, longitudinal observation, and propensity score matching. But quasi-experimental evidence of the effects of eviction is still rare. In one of very few papers in the economics literature that study eviction, [Humphries et al. (2022)](https://www.nber.org/papers/w30382) exploit random assignment of eviction cases to judges of varying leniency to estimate the effects of eviction on outcomes such as consumption of durables and homelessness.

I at first hoped to apply this approach, which is an example of a type of quasi-experimental research design known as the [examiner design](https://www.google.com/search?q=examiner+design+economics&oq=examiner+design+economics&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i22i30l9.2885j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8), to evaluate the effect of eviction on children’s test scores. After a summer of back and forth with officials from school districts across Massachusetts, I found myself with several lengthy email chains but zero rows of student-level assessment data. Student-level data, it turns out, is incredibly difficult to get. Still hoping to understand something about the way that eviction affects kids, I pivoted: my thesis now hopes to answer the question of whether eviction affects property values, which directly determine the amount of funding schools receive. I think there are several plausible mechanisms here and am looking forward to hearing what you all think. Perhaps high residential turnover reduces peoples’ incentives to take care of their homes. Or maybe the perception that eviction is common in a neighborhood reduces the prices that buyers are willing to pay for homes there. Regardless, if eviction reduces property values, then policies limiting eviction might improve neighborhood and school quality.

To answer my thesis question, I have obtained data from two sources. The first source is MassLandlords, a trade association of landlords in Massachusetts. MassLandlords has saved every eviction case docket in Massachusetts since early 2019. The organization scrapes these dockets and produces a case level dataset. The dataset is still messy, and I intend to iterate on it with MassLandlords over the next few weeks. The second source of data is the Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic information, which provided me with a property-year level panel dataset of assessed values for nearly every property in Massachusetts. The panel is not balanced, and I still need to figure out exactly which cities have data available for each year. MassLandlords does not release property addresses publicly, so the organization is going to hire me as an unpaid intern. This way, I can perform a merge of my eviction data with my property values data on year and property address without comprising security requirements. This will likely be extremely time consuming given how messy the eviction dataset is, so I’m planning to start as soon as my internship is approved.

Broadly, I intend to use properties where an eviction court case was filed and the tenant won as the counterfactual for properties where an eviction was filed and the landlord won. This comparison is likely to provide a useful baseline, but any estimated treatment effect would almost certainly be biased by unobserved differences between treated properties and counterfactual properties. Therefore, I intend to regress the value of property in year on an indicator for landlord victory in the eviction court case at property in year , instrumenting that indicator with the leniency of the judge assigned to the court case. I hope to extend this approach in two ways. First, I want to run an instrumented difference-in-difference analysis to compare changes in the values of treated properties over time to changes in the values of counterfactual properties. Second, to understand the effect of eviction in *surrounding properties* on a property’s own value, I want to regress the value of property in year on the eviction rate in property ’s neighborhood in year , instrumented by judge leniency. Figuring out the best way to aggregate judge leniency across neighborhoods is my next step.

Mean change / enrollment

Schooling mode regressed on mean change/enrollment

Take the residuals and regress on demographics