

EconLab Opportunity for 2024-25: RA for Avner Kreps

Title: Research Assistant

Openings: One

Project: Antitrust Spillovers: Assessing the Effects of the 1920 Meatpacking Consent Decree on Labor Markets

Project Description:

This project aims to quantify the effects of the 1920 consent decree in the meatpacking industry, which prevented collusion among the large "big five" meatpackers in the livestock and product markets, on the labor market for meatpacking employees. Using novel occupation-level wage and employment data, the project will characterize how the change in product and input market conduct affected wages of meatpacking employees, and how the effect differed across different types of workers. In particular, the study will focus on both the overall effect of antitrust enforcement on labor markets, as well as the distributional impact that antitrust enforcement can have among different types of laborers, depending on both the labor market power of the industry as well as the industry's production function.

Position Description:

The project is in the preliminary data gathering and analysis phase. The RA will be primarily responsible for digitizing data contained in Bureau of Labor Statistics reports on wages and employment in the meatpacking industry. This digitization may be done by hand, or (more preferably) using [Amazon Textract](#) or similar AI-powered tools. Therefore, the position may be a good fit for students with experience (or who are interested in learning) how to use AI-powered data extraction and text recognition tools. Finally, depending on both pace of work and interest, the RA may also assist with performing preliminary analyses of these data, including generating summary statistics, descriptive plots, and/or econometric analyses.

Application Requirements:

Interested applicants should email avner@u.northwestern.edu a copy of their (unofficial) transcript, resume, and a paragraph describing their interest in this project and position. The position is expected to start at the beginning of the Fall quarter and will last at least for the duration of the quarter.