General Editor's Note: Antitrust and Regulatory Update

Lawrence J. White¹

Accepted: 10 October 2020 / Published online: 7 November 2020
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2020

This issue marks the 19th year of a special feature of the *Review of Industrial Organization*: “Antitrust and Regulatory Update”. As was true in recent years, I asked the Chief Economists of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Antitrust Division (DOJ), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the DG Competition of the European Union (DGComp), and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) of the UK to write essays about the interesting aspects of the important antitrust and regulatory issues that confronted their agencies during this past year. I am pleased to report that all five individuals responded affirmatively.

The essays in this issue of the *Review*—all of them co-authored with career economists at their respective agencies—are thus the products of all five of their affirmative responses.

As has been reflected in previous years’ essays from the competition agencies, mergers (which, of course, include acquisitions) and merger policy continue to be important, and four of the five essays discuss the analyses of specific mergers that came before their respective agencies. Especially noteworthy are: the CMA’s analysis of Google’s acquisition of Looker, which involved the cloud computing market; the DOJ’s discussion of its analysis of CVS’s acquisition of Aetna; the FTC’s challenge to the merger of two companies that produce “private label” ready-to-eat breakfast cereal; and DGComp’s discussion of two vertical mergers in broadcasting and in copper production.

Four of the five essays also address non-merger antitrust and regulatory issues: The FTC discusses its analysis of fraud complaints (in relation to the FTC’s consumer protection mandate), so as to understand better how frauds affect different demographic groups. The CMA addresses price gouging during the pandemic and how price gouging may be related to market power, as well as discussing the CMA’s study of online platforms and digital advertising in the UK. DGComp discusses its recent predation case against Qualcomm and its analysis of the State aid measures that have grown in the wake of the pandemic. And the FCC discusses its policies to

✉ Lawrence J. White
Lwhite@stern.nyu.edu

¹ Department of Economics, Stern School of Business, New York University, 44 West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012, USA

expand the supply of flexible-use spectrum for wireless services, to expand broadband services in rural areas, to address the high prices of outbound telephone calls in prisons, and to address telecommunications during the pandemic.

This brief summary cannot, of course, do adequate justice to the interesting analyses and discussions that are to be found in all five essays in this issue; but I hope that I have sufficiently stimulated the curiosity and interest of readers so as to encourage them to read the complete essays. As has been true in past years, *RIO* readers will find that reading these essays at greater length will be well worth their time.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.