

## 4340 Fall 2020 Group Research and Presentations

1. The *Economist* (July 27, 2109) “American Utilities: Windfall” finds that the way public utilities are regulated by bi-partisan regulatory commissions in the USA in terms of guaranteed returns for fixed investment means that lower fixed costs for solar means equates to greater profits in the longer-term. Do you agree with this finding? Why do utilities have guaranteed returns on equity from 10 – 16%, many times that of economic growth? What are the regulatory capture / public choice dynamics in this sector? Is there a ‘last mile’ problem in the electrical sector? What prevents innovation away from hard-wire provision of electricity (like innovations in ICT?) Why do local, state and federal green subsidies depend on local generators of electricity to sell their electricity to the distribution monopolies? Why don’t entrepreneurial-induced independent generators and distributors of green energy get the same subsidies? What policy reforms can you recommend to create competitive dynamics in the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity?

Group One: Ofoegbu, Daisley, Randall November 13, 2020

2. NYT July 15, 2020 “2<sup>nd</sup> State Sues to Force Uber and Lyft to Treat Drivers as Employees”. Who is behind these lawsuits, independent contractors or special interests, who else, why? Who gains and who loses through this litigation? What is the status of these lawsuits at the time of the group presentation? Give the regulatory state-of-play in Massachusetts, California, and New York and New York City. What do you think will be the outcome? What are the next regulatory hurdles faced by these firms? Also what is the legal and regulatory state of play for AirBnB in New York City?

Group Two: Williams, Yin November 13

3. In July 2018, the EU levied a \$5b fine against Google for anti-competitive behaviour for tying its search engine to its operating system. What exactly is Google accused of doing and what is the status of payment of this fine, is Google appealing? Who are the biggest “winners” for any required changes to Google’s business practices in the EU? How did the EU regulators define Google’s market and industry? Which competitors were / are the ‘market’ as defined by the regulators? After research do you believe that the European Commission is over-regulating American tech firms in the EU? Why or why not? Have US anti-trust regulators taken any counter-vailing measures against EU-based tech firms? Is there any barriers-to-entry in Google’s market in your view, has Google ‘abused its power’, why or why not? What is the status of the US Justice Department’s anti-trust investigation into Google? (eg, NYT July 13, 2020 “Is filing by Google a tip-off?”)

Group Three: Birdsall, Caceres, Hernandez, Maraj, Mirkovic, Mowla  
November 17

4. The Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/mome/index.page>) provides subsidies to produce screen media productions in NYC. Who receives these subsidies? Who decides who receives this corporate welfare? What form do these subsidies take (tax reductions, grants, in-kind services)? Are these subsidies ‘redistribution upward’ (eg, is there distribution from median taxpayers to those with higher average incomes)? Why or why not? Choose a sample of MOME projects and determine if there is any economic benefit to these projects. Is there any data not available to help you answer these questions? What data is missing specifically? Do you believe these subsidies are worth it? Why or why not?

Group Four: Ramnarine, Rega, Routzahn, Signorile, Treibit, Yakubov  
November 17