

Antitrust

Sherman Act (1890)

- Attempt to monopolize illegal
- Conspiracy to restraint trade illegal
- Standard Oil broken into 33 companies
- Fines and imprisonment for violations
- Rule of Reason
 - Do you have a pro-competitive reason?

Violation

- Two part test
- Did firm have monopoly power in a market?
- Did firm engage in illegal activity to extend or maintain that power?
- Legal to obtain monopoly through “a superior product, business acumen or historic accident”

Alcoa

- Violated law by
 - Contracts prohibiting utilities from selling power to rival smelters
 - Price-fixing with foreign producers
 - Increasing price of ingot to sheet fabricators
 - Expanding capacity to eliminate rivals
- US created competitors Reynolds, Kaiser using WWII assets

Clayton Act (1914)

- Adds detail to Sherman
- No criminal penalties
- Treble damages
- Section 2 (Robinson Patman) prohibits price discrimination which lessens competition
- Morton salt volume discounts illegal (1948)
- Section 7 bans mergers that lessen competition

Section 3

- Forbids exclusionary tactics that lessen competition, including:
 - Tying (must buy one good to get another)
 - Requirements Tying (buyer agrees to buy all its needs from the seller)
 - Exclusive Dealing (buyer agrees to deal only with seller)
 - Exclusive Territories (Buyer agrees to operate only in specified region)
 - Resale Price Maintenance (Buyer agrees to a minimum resale price)
 - Predatory Pricing (pricing below cost to eliminate a competitor)

FTC Act

- Permits FTC commissioners to prevent unfair and deceptive practices
- Commission is quasi-judicial
 - Issues restraining orders
- Pizza, oil treatments, and shakes

Vertical Restraints

- Refusal to deal
 - If access to an essential facility denied, firm cannot compete and competition harmed
- Predation
 - Price below MC, AVC
 - Ability to recoup lost profits

Vertical Restraints, Cont'd

- Once sold, good cannot be further constrained
 - Coors east of Mississippi
 - Mercedes car parts
 - Resale Price Maintenance
- Tying purchase of one good to use or non-use of another in order to lessen competition is illegal
 - Tying Kodak film to Kodak development
 - Carry 3M equipment, can't carry rivals

Mergers

■ Horizontal

- Product market
 - Would a hypothetical monopolist over set of products find it profitable to raise price by a SSNIP?
- Geographic market
 - Would a hypothetical monopolist over a geographic area find it profitable to raise price by a SSNIP?
- SSNIP = small but significant and nontransitory increase in price
 - 10% for 2 years

Assessing Concentration

- Hirschmann-Herfindahl Index (HHI)
 - Is the sum of the squared market shares
- <1000, unconcentrated, no concern
- 1000-1800, moderate, some concern
- >1800, concentrated, concern
- Varies with industry characteristics, history of collusion, profit margins

Vertical Mergers

- Raising rival's costs
- Foreclosure
- Microsoft's proposed merger of Intuit
 - Use OS to eliminate rivals to Quicken?
- Time Warner/TBS (owns CNN)
 - FTC required equal access
