

COLUMBIA GLOBAL REPORTS

Dear Reader,

We take it for granted that government should manage the economy for the benefit of ordinary citizens. But this wasn't what government did for the country's first century; when it began to involve itself in the economy, the first place it went was regulating the size and scope of big corporations, or "trusts," as they were known then. Antitrust law was a dominant element in American political debate in the early twentieth century. Then, over time, it faded as a front-rank political issue.

Tim Wu, the law professor and political activist who is one of the country's leading public intellectuals, is here to argue that the time has come to restore the primacy of antitrust. We live in a time of increasing concentration of economic power, when a handful of private firms dominate industries like technology, pharmaceuticals, and finance, and when economic inequality has risen to Gilded Age levels. We need to understand "bigness" as a problem, Wu argues, and aggressive antitrust law as the solution.

In *The Curse of Bigness*, Wu crisply lays out the history of antitrust law, showing how crucial it has been in shaping the economic life of the nation. His narrative has a host of fascinating minor characters and two major ones: Louis Brandeis, the great champion of antitrust law, and Robert Bork, antitrust's great opponent. Wu argues passionately for a new embrace of the Brandeis tradition (Brandeis originated the phrase "the curse of bigness") and a rejection of the Bork tradition.

This is a just-ahead-of-the-curve book that will reframe the debate on the American economy.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Lemann