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Economic Security Project Invests $750,000 in Antimonopoly Research to Diagnose and Address Harms Caused by Concentrated Private Power

Funding 41 Researchers at 33 Institutions, Grantee Cohort Defines Contours of Antimonopoly Field and Scholarship in Ripe Moment for Policy Change

New York — Today the Economic Security Project’s Antimonopoly Fund announced the 26 projects it will fund in its inaugural academic research cohort to support new insights around the harms arising from concentrated private power and creative regulatory solutions to rein it in. Spanning 41 researchers at 33 institutions and a wide range of academic disciplines, the research projects are united in their focus on potential policy and movement organizing impact.

This academic cohort marks the latest investment by the $10 million Antimonopoly Fund. Since launching the fund, the Economic Security Project has supported policy research, advocacy, campaigns, and organizing in the field through strategic grantmaking.

“We’re supporting these novel, rigorous lines of inquiry across a variety of disciplines because the moment demands it. We must lean into critical systemic research that investigates how concentrated private power harms our economy, democracy, and society,” said Economic Security Project’s Antimonopoly Director Becky Chao. “Our goal is to nurture a growing community of scholars to seed new insights and expand how concentrated private power is understood in the evolving economy to inform our policy choices. We’re working with academics so that the antimonopoly field can get sharper and more creative about the solutions needed to tackle concentrated private power today.”

Citing current FTC Chair Lina Khan’s previous academic research that encouraged scrutinizing the consumer welfare standard and economist John Kwoka’s retrospective on consummated mergers that raised serious questions about the antitrust enforcement, these investments reflect the importance of academic scholarship in informing paradigm and policy shifts in the antimonopoly field.

“Lack of understanding and deep misunderstandings about monopolies and the harm they cause has contributed to a woeful lack of enforcement action in the last several decades,” said Michelle Meagher, one of eight advisors on the Antimonopoly Fund academic open call. “Not only are there many unanswered questions, but there are also many questions that haven’t been even asked during a period in which government failed to acknowledge that monopolies existed. This batch of research by a brilliant cohort of researchers is a great start toward remedying this.”

These projects ask critical questions about how concentrated private power affects our society by focusing on key constituencies like workers, renters, rural communities, communities of color, people in the Global South, and more. These lines of inquiry — straddling a variety of sectors from technology, private equity, housing, pharmaceuticals, and food & ag — respond to the unique antimonopoly moment we’re in. Collectively, five research themes emerge from this body of work, examining the relationship between concentrated private power and:

1. Legal and regulatory regimes, including antitrust and other regulatory tools;
2. Workers and collective worker power;
3. Innovation;
4. Environmental sustainability; and
5. Racial disparities.

At a time when powerful corporations are driving and even censoring research outcomes, the Economic Security Project’s academic open call received an overwhelming number of submissions — underscoring the need for more independent research support to investigate concentrated private power.

Read more about the academic research grant process and funded research projects.

Read more about how these investments fit into Economic Security Project's larger antimonopoly work.

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The Economic Security Project mobilizes resources and people behind ideas that build economic power for all Americans. As an ideas advocacy organization, we legitimize our issues by supporting cutting edge research and elevating champions, win concrete policy victories for the communities that need to see change now, and provoke the conventional wisdom to shift what’s considered possible. Our team of academics, organizers, practitioners and culture makers disburse grants, run issue campaigns, develop creative interventions and research products to support the field, and coordinate events to encourage investment and action from others. We pick our fights based on our analysis of where a little push could turn an idea from a trend into an intervention that meaningfully improves the lives of Americans. Our current efforts include putting cash into people’s pockets with a guaranteed income and keeping corporations out of them by checking the unprecedented concentration of economic power with antimonopoly action.