Antitrust Probe Against Google: Adam Smith Versus Karl Marx

In September of 2019, Attorney generals from the U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico opened an antitrust probe against Google. They are investigating deeper into Google's possible monopoly. Google is used every day by almost everyone because “more than 70 percent of worldwide online search requests are handled by Google”. It is almost impossible to avoid using Google considering they dominate so much of the internet. Everything from finding a recipe to watching a video, it's always Google. The Attorney Generals are convinced that Google is manipulating their searching to hurt their rivals and using their power to receive more money. They are taking companies that paid more money for advertising and recommending them to the public over the most reliable or helpful sources. In 2013, the Federal Trade Commission closed an investigation after they came to the conclusion that Google was not using its clout to manipulate the searches in order to hurt their competitors. Around the same time, the Federal Trade Commission claimed that Google promised to stop their monopolistic behavior. About six years later, the Google case is reopened due to more recent speculations. Adam Smith would side with Google due to his pro Capitalist ideas whereas Karl Marx would approve of Google's allegations because of his want for an egalitarian community.

Adam Smith would disagree with the government getting involved in Google's business because of his pro-Laissez-Faire Capitalist views and limited government involvement. Laissez-Faire Capitalism is an economic system that believes that “the government should intervene as little as possible in economic affairs and leave the market to its own devices.” Capitalists believe that people should be allowed to have control over their own private properties without the government being in charge and giving businesses certain regulations. Adam Smith would understand what Google is doing in terms of promoting the company that pays them the most. Capitalists understand that to make it, you must do everything in your power to make the most money. In a Capitalist community, “every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most adventurous employment for whatever capital he can command.”2 Google started out much smaller than it is now and was once just an online search firm. Google has grown tremendously and “it now offers more than 50 Internet services and products, from e-mail and online document creation to software for mobile phones and tablet computers.”1 In one minute, there are about 3.8 million searches on Google, therefore, it comes as no surprise that Google has profits of 117 billion dollars.3 Capitalist would find it shameful if Google wasn’t using it’s popularity to make money. In conclusion, Adam Smith would want Google to continue as normal due to their immense success.

Karl Marx would be opposed to Google and their monopolistic behavior due to his strong beliefs in the communal morals of Marxism. Marxism is an economic system where, to eventually establish an egalitarian society, the government must have full control of all resources and production. There has been “complaints of potentially anti-competitive behavior in how it runs the advertising side of its business.” Even President Trump has voiced his opinion and accused Google of not giving conservatives much of a say online through not promoting their visions. Texas officials agree with him and have raised concerns “that Google may be violating state consumer-protection laws if political bias at Google resulted in the censorship of conservative viewpoints.” Karl Marx would be appalled at this situation. He states that “the bourgeoisie has

torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation into a mere money relation". In this case, the bourgeoisie is Google and they are prioritizing their profits over the people who actually use their search engine. Although Karl Marx would believe that Google "has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication"4, he knows that this way of running the government would eventually crash. In Karl Marx's opinion, everyone must be able to have an equal opportunity to grow as a business. Google's alleged allegations are leading people to believe that they are not fair and value money over everything, including the well-being of society. Overall, Karl Marx would be happy to see this further investigation on Google in hopes it would help increase equality and fairness throughout society.