

**Project Group (Number and Name): 81 – (How) Does Activist Research Make Sense?**

## **Comment**

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In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Karl Marx was one of the first to utilize new ways to conduct research. He was tasked to investigate the working class of the French proletariat, and he proceeded by producing a survey with more than a hundred questions and distributing them amongst the factories of the country. With this example you can see the research subject is meant to be a community or group that, is not necessarily the minority but rather a structurally oppressed group. Also its goal is to break down the barrier between the researcher and researched therefore a collaboration is crucial. This type of research is not intended to be neutral or objective, but instead pushes the researcher to be open about their values and political ideologies. Although our main question throughout this week was about the benefits of using activist research, we were also able to identify challenges that could surge while working in this style of research. Making the information attained available and easily accessible to the researched community, guaranteeing that the quality of the project is not affected by the biases and opinions of the research team, and facing the same political or academic oppression that the mentioned groups usually face, were some of the main issues that we managed to identify, the last one being the most prominent, and the one that we would like to focus on.

While working within our team, we had multiple discussions, first trying to understand the concept of activist research, and trying to differentiate it from the methods that we already knew. We identified the main qualities that activist research should pose, and formulated several doubts and questions that we had about the theme. During the week we also had the opportunity to discuss the question with our representative teacher, who raised some points of concern that one may face while conducting a project of this nature. We once again discussed amongst ourselves and tried to identify which challenges were the most pressing in the real world, and which ones were more superficial. We concluded that the most important challenge is the fact that while doing activist research on a certain type of group, one might stumble upon oppression from powerful parties. In some cases, people in power want to avoid critical information being available to the masses, and many times “sweep” important issues under the rug that might be damaging to a specific image that they might want to uphold. Sometimes, the

shifts in societal structures that communities achieve through activist research, are not beneficial to certain figures in power. On the contrasting side, some might argue that this is not a challenge. Many activities and research initiatives are indeed founded and supported by the government or people in power.

In conclusion, this applies mainly to Europe and other western countries. Government and Academia do not support such communities all over the world. Without activist research, the uprising from the workers that Marx took part in, the feminist movement, and many other moments in history would not have been able to happen as we learn them today. Research that is biased and has conviction is needed to start a movement and encourage change. Only this way can we get to turning points, that will transform things for the better.

## **Video Information**

**Title of the Video:** *81\_ActivistResearch.mp4*

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