

Applying the sociological imagination



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“ Sociology can seep into any aspect of life” is the idea I remember about when viewing a video about sociological concepts. For instance, the tools of sociology such as the sociological imagination, which is the ability to see the connections between our personal experience and the larger forces of history, can be applied in diverse fields. Even most of the time we perceive the world in our personal experience, the idea of the sociological imagination can show that maybe our personal experience isn't so personal or different after all. In that sense, sociology has a diverse range of application and the sociological imagination enable us to understand that many factors from the history of society contribute the societal behaviors today. This paper would explore the social control and deviance behind the people behind KickAssTorrents, the social stratification of the disparity of African-American in Maryland school systems, the authorities involved in the encryption dilemma, and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The first, we will explore the article *KickassTorrents Owner Faces 20-Plus Years* in *Stir* and how authorities deal with organizations involved with criminal copyright infringement as Polish authorities arrest the owner of pirate website KickassTorrents (KAT) Artem Vault. Based on Conley, a crime basically “ a violation of laws enacted by society” (Conley). Copyright infringement, commonly known as piracy, violates the laws with the basic idea that violators are taking or stealing creative content without the creator's consent. From there, copyright infringement is severe enough to be a crime for authorities to take into consideration since based on the article, “ U. S. entertainment industry lost more than a billion dollars in profits due to KAT operations (Mello).” Because crimes can range from type and degree,

therefore, Vault's role in copyright infringement is a large scale, white-collared crime since Vault's actions related to being an owner of the site providing an environment of pirating, meanwhile, affecting the entertainment business with a loss of one billion dollars (Conley).

The American law enforcers ordered seizures of seven domain names associated with the pirate site, which relied on servers around the globe. The law enforcers wanted to send a message to pirates will go great lengths to lengths to support creative people what rely on intellectual property to sustain their business (Mello). The attempt of the law enforcers trying to regulate the people's behaviors characterizes the concept of social control, mechanisms that create normative compliance in individuals. From there, the involvement of the government would further characterize this type of social control being a formal social sanction: mechanisms of social control by which rules or laws prohibit deviant criminal behavior. Unfortunately, in order to reduce deviant behavior, formal social sanctions can go into great lengths to reduce the deviant behaviors of pirates, but without the help of informal social sanctions who make the people of the community, the enforcers are relatively helpless (Conley). For instance, you can still easily find torrent sites and even proxy sites of KAT still in service. This shows that the people that support torrents still have power the service that they want.

Ultimately, this environment makes it difficult for law enforcers to greatly reduce the amount of piracy activity. When thinking about the broader sense in terms of the wider culture of history, we can see this is mostly about the relationship between businesses on the dilemma of trying to satisfied customers while still trying to make a profit. The social institutions that are

involved in include businesses with intellectual property, customers, pirate server sites, and the government. At root and any part of a society built on a capitalist economy, the main supporters of any form of creative content that is being distributive are from the actions of the customers whether they value supporting their artists, or taking advantage of pirating services to help themselves.

The second article, *Here's what UMD needs to do to help more black students attend and succeed*, is an editorial article from an editorial accompany by an interview from UMD president about the disparity between the percentage of black students graduate high school in Maryland and the percentage that end up incoming students at the University of Maryland. The social institution involved is college admissions, high school faculty, and students. The type of equality that Maryland school system tries to strive for equality of condition, which is characterized by having affirmative action where there's a preferential selection to increase the representation minority group such as African-Americans (Conley). Examples of an affirmative action mentioned by the author, Amari Harris, include scholarship programs such as the Incentive Awards program. In addition, the accompanying video featured the president of the University of Maryland and state mentioned that African-American preferable can go to Black-Historic schools (Harris).

Another observation can be comparing Montgomery County to Baltimore County. From my experience, I observe black students having role models like college counselors, teachers, and assistant principals being black while leading programs like CollegeTracks, ACES, the College and Career Center, and the National Society of Black Engineers. From there, black students in

my high school receive lots of affirmative actions as it then evident in the scholarship ceremony I attend awarding lots of black students. On the other hand, it is implied that there fewer opportunities in Baltimore for black students since the author wished that more kids took advantage of scholarship programs like her that would help them in there are careers (Harris). In a much broader sense regarding the history of African-Americans, these students are still impacted by institutional racism as mentioned by the president of the University of Maryland, which is evident by the amount of public assistance from school they need.

The third article *How Secure is WhatsApp? WhatsApp Security Explained* is from a popular source that introduces the argument of national security and personal privacy. The social institution involved include the users, service providers, and the government. The messaging app platform called WhatsApp utilizes a protocol called end-to-end encryption in order to provide the best protection for its users. However, the UK's Home Secretary Amber Rudd calls for an encryption ban in order prevent more terrorist attacks (Burrell). The type of authority the government is a legal-rational authority, which is based on legal, impersonal laws. From there, government organizations would have characteristics of a bureaucracy that governs my formal rules and meritocracy. On the other hand, the company of WhatsApp has similar characteristics of a charismatic authority where WhatsApp holds a philosophy of protecting the user's information to the point where WhatsApp themselves cannot even read the message, which would appeal to an audience that values privacy likewise. Similar to any institution being stable in general, the general people would be the main support either

supporting the argument of government's call for national security or keeping WhatsApp in service with end-to-end encryption (Conley).

Taking history in regard, there was a period called the Crypto Wars where Intelligence agencies would try to control who is able to use strong encryption protocols for the sake of national security (Koops). From there, it can be concluded that businesses are corporation mainly to make money, the government value protecting their nation, and lastly, the users want a service that able to satisfy them.

Lastly, this article, Returning to school after escaping child marriage, how the impoverished environment of Sub-Saharan African impacts girls in their opportunity in succeeding in having healthy lives. The social institution involved in providing aid to the impoverished countries of Sub-Saharan Africa includes the Water Project and ActionAid. Poverty can be defined as the condition of the deprivation of necessities due to the economic situations (Conley). For instance, the deprivation of necessities for the girls in Sub-Saharan Africa includes having healthy water supplies. When focusing on early marriage alone, this can have detrimental effects on the culture and its individuals, for instance, the society adopt the idea that girls should be married off at early ages since it's the best option to do in an impoverished country. Furthermore, the impact on the individual girl is detrimental in a way where girls experience abusive relationships as not being empowered with knowledge of being independent makes them dependent on their abusive relationships. Additionally, early marriage can highly result in early pregnant which would furthermore put stress on the young, unstable and possibly not being able to successfully care for the child. Likewise, the child

may end up in a similar situation (Djitrinou). From there, is a characteristic of the cycle of poverty, where the culture is lacking in a future-orientated mind because of the difficulties of maintaining stable families. This instant gratification of the easiest way out keeps lower class families from moving up in the world (Conley).

When taking history in regards again, the African has a history of being colonized and having harsh climate makes make difficult for agriculture and also susceptible to disease like malaria. These factors can contribute to Africa not being able to not as economically successful than Europeans or Asians. Meanwhile, Europeans lived in colder climates and Asians have lots of rivers for agriculture (Conley).

In the end, we have observed that sociology can apply in a wide number of fields such the environment of Internet and torrents, education in Maryland, cybersecurity, and WhatsApp, and gender inequality in impoverished countries. The sociological imagination can also help us understand that the even the chooses of analyzing these topics are based on the history of my personal experience, along with the larger external forces of history. Ultimately, the social imagination enables us to critically think in an open-minded, systematic to understand the phenomenon of society.

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