

MEdiaology

Sociology is the study of human society and how we interact with each other. What we believe in, our hobbies, our passions, and what we assume that makes us look like to others. The subcultures we associate ourselves with make us both unique and a part of a bigger society. We are divided up through these main categories; school, family, friends, sports, social media, and religion. Our individuality depends on our opinions which are made up of the categories we insert ourselves into. When we are born into this world, we automatically have categories that come with us. These parameters either make you an agent or target. These stereotypes have been the standard for thousands of years. If you are a female at birth you are a target and if male then an agent. This goes along with race, wealth, and religion, over time they have become less prominent, and in today's world, it is thanks to the growing population that has ventured onto social media. Sociology has changed as social media has been introduced into our society, this is most obvious regarding how it shapes people and changes the way I look at the world around me.

Social media is a rather large part of what socializes me and others like me. Almost everyone in the US has at least one social media platform, and most likely one of the top four, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. Personally, I utilize Instagram and Snapchat but the one overarching issue with them all, in general, is that the things that you post never go away. In the Cycle of Socialization by Bobbie Harro states "An excellent first learning activity is to make a personal inventory of our various social identities relating to the categories listed above - gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, economic class, and ability/disability status. The result of this inventory makes up the mosaic of social identities (our social identity profile) that shape (s) our socialization." I analyzed the part around the words "mosaic of social identities" to mean to me that we are all different from the next but all part of a greater identity. We all have things that make us feel at home. For me, that is the art of dance and the way that it inspires me to work hard for what I want. Whenever I see someone who has trained and worked hard to be where they are today, whether that is online or in-person, it makes me want to do the same. Then some people feel the same or similar feelings but all of our feelings differ from one another and it gets more and more diverse until we are all part of a beautiful art piece.

I have heard my mom say quite a few times to not post anything that I will regret later in life. One of the main differences between my generation and previous ones is that our identities can be mapped out for everyone to see from a young age. It is human nature to feel the need to be a part of a group to identify ourselves with. Media wise, that entails what platforms we use, if we post or not, who we follow, and what shows up on our feed. When finding a job, the people that are considering hiring me will look at my social media. My point is, the older generations didn't have to worry about that. They just had their resumes to show their history. A couple of weeks ago I found my friend's old Instagram account from when she was about eleven. It was a ton of

selfies of her and friends, I started laughing about it and showing everyone. Then I realized that it would be there forever or at least until she tried to get her account taken down (I assume that she had forgotten the password by now). It got me thinking about any old accounts that I could have had, so I searched my name and sure enough, there was my old account. We need to teach young kids to be responsible for the content that they are posting. Tell them that it's not just a fun thing to have. I don't care that much at the moment but one day there will come a time where I will not want that account to be one of the first things to come up when you search my name. My dad has had no social media in his entire life. His current job recommends that he get at least one platform as it is a big part of marketing, yet another way that social media is used to influence.

As a teen it's unusual to not have a social media account, it's easy to find out who people are just by typing in their name. What I wanted to know is how many people are really on there for me to look at. I looked into social media on a bigger scale. I subtracted all the people over 90 because they most likely don't have social media and also every kid 10 and under for the same reason from the total population. There are 327.2 million people in the United States. When I did the math the concluding percentage was only 10.5%. This means that in the United States between the ages of 10 and 90 10.5% don't have social media. In the TV show *Liza on Demand* there is an episode where Liza finds her dream guy, she goes to her roommates and tells them the story of what happened. When Liza is done she mentions that the guy she met has no social media platforms, her friends respond with comments along the lines of, "Well that either means he's a serial killer or he has a wife he doesn't want you to know about." To say something like this would imply that in the late 2010's it is a standard to have some sort of social media platform. This is not an unreasonable assumption to make because of what the statistics say. Why is that so? Why is it a standard to have social media?

In today's world, if you don't have social media, it's like you don't exist. That is a bit of an exaggeration but most teens communicate on it. If you want to know more people than just the students that you take classes with, then you must have an account. You could be fine as an adult, without social media because adults tend to go places where they see flyers or read print communication, and receive invites via email or texts. Being part of Gen Z is a lot different because the main way we communicate is through social media, mainly Snapchat. When my teacher said that we were going to watch *Mean Girls* in class, I got very excited, but only after watching the movie I understood the reason we watched it. It symbolizes the norm of socialization in a high school setting. This movie took on a whole new meaning for me. It was the best thing that I had to relate to my experience of being a teen too. In the movie, there is a famous line, "You can't join the Mathletes, its social suicide." Not being on social media is just a modified line. Why? A teen needs to have a means of communication in common with their peers.

Addiction is a quandary that can transpire with virtually anything. Since social media is our form of communication it adds to the time we spend on it. My parents tell me all the time that I am on the screen too much. At this very moment, my mom is taking away my brother's phone because he was playing *Minecraft* instead of doing his homework. As I grow up, I become more responsible, I start to see where I have gone wrong with my device usage. I have wound up

thinking that it is the sole thing that can offer my entertainment. When I get home the first thing I think of doing is sitting down and watching YouTube or Netflix. When I say that media has influenced me I don't just mean social media, other forms have done the same. Movies and music have had a great impact on my socialization as well. When I am feeling sad or stressed I like to listen to some upbeat music and clean my room or work on something to give my mind a break. Other times when I am procrastinating about a random thing, my go-to is watching Netflix. I have a habit of waiting until the last second to work on projects. This is a habit that I would like to break because it doesn't help me in any way.

Social media as we know it has set the standards for what a person should or should not look like. Of course, before media there were trends, but not everyone knew what they were, especially young girls. The rise of social media has changed this. Platforms such as Instagram are a place for young people much like me to view role models but it has gotten out of hand. Whenever I am on Instagram scrolling through my memes and I come across someone's post, I know 90% of the time they are posting a picture with a cute outfit, ideal lighting, and attempting "good angles". Just one example of what or how media socializes us. I want to ask these people why they post the things they post. Do they do it for recognition? To make themselves feel good? And are there answers going to be "I don't know, it's what everyone else does." Then why is that so?

How I have been socialized through media could be thoroughly different from how it has affected others, all I can do is share my personal experience. From the first time that I ventured onto social media to right now it has made my life a much more stationary experience. It has transformed my lifestyle and the ones of my peers greatly, from how we communicate to how we view our world. We use it to communicate, learn, and check out. It has affected how we get jobs and opened up new experiences for us. We can share what our hobbies are through it and basically anything else. If it wasn't here the world would be a different place.