

# Sociology

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



12-3-12 Toys and Gender Assignment 3 My paper titled toys and gender, is based on the toys of today and how they relate to gender socialization. I decided to go to the local Wal-Mart in Cookeville, Tn. I chose this store because it is a worldwide known large retail store. I concluded that it would be a good store to analyze because it is thought of as a family store where many families go to shop. Therefore, I knew that there would be a wide variety of toys to analyze and collect data. I went to Wal-Mart December the 3rd. I analyzed the toy sections of Wal-Mart and how the toys are associated with gender, color sound, types of play they encourage, types of interactions they cause, and what they prepare children for. With the exception of preschool toys that were sometimes offered in gender-neutral packaging, kids' toys were largely segregated into different aisles according to gender. And within those aisles, the markings of gender were clear. The " girls'" section resembled the aftermath of an explosion of Pepto-Bismol. In the " boys'" section, there seemed to be a profusion of aggressive, hyper-muscled, weapon-wielding action figures. And in both realms, the majority of toys seemed to be explicitly tied to movies and television As I walked in I followed the signs to the toy section when I got to it I observed about eight aisles of toys, with toys on both sides of the aisles. Two rows were specifically designed for boy's toys, one row of girl's toys, two rows of baby toys, and three rows of mixed toys for both boys and girls. I saw many different kinds of toys some of the toys I saw were trucks, action figures, sports items, baby dolls, Barbie's, puzzles, board games, and many more. After I observed all of these things I left. As I began to analyze this data I came to conclusion that the toy sections in retail stores are very thoughtfully designed and laid out. I

think that they are laid out in specific ways for one to keep things in order. It would be harder to look through and find what you want if the toys were just everywhere and in no certain order. I also think that they designate different aisles for different genders toys because when boys are little they don't want to be seen looking around at girls stuff. It is the same way with girls so I think that's one reason why the toys are in the order they are. Now to get into detail about the toys, sound is one thing that can be associated with what kind of audience the toys are meant for. If you have a toy that has a soft talking voice or noise you can come to conclusion that it may be meant for a baby. Say there is a toy with a big manly voice you know that it is meant for a boy because most girls aren't going to want a toy that sounds manly. Another thing that can be broken down into different aspects when talking about toys is color. Color is usually associated with a lot of things it is used to interpret things. I observed lots of colors in the toys. I could usually tell what gender the toy was meant for by just the color. Society has formed guidelines to which color is meant for different genders. Once you get older and realize most of your toys are the same color you start to realize this. In society blue, green, yellow and other colors are associated with boys, while pink purple and other colors are for girls. That's why when a baby is born if it's a girl people usually get it pink stuff and if it's a boy it's usually blue stuff. One example would be the cigars that say it's a boy or it's a girl. The it's a boy are blue and the it's a girl are pink. The chapter we are on in the book is titled gender stratification, which means a society's unequal distribution of wealth, power and privilege between the two sexes. I found a few reading in the book that associated with the observations I recorded at

the toy store. In the book it is talking about how parents react towards their kids. It says “ Parents respond differently to girls and boys right from the beginning. Girls are caressed more than boys, whereas boys are jostled and rough-housed more” (Tischler 256). This quote from the book just goes to show the difference in how people handle boys and girls. I think this has to do with the observations I conducted because the toys that are meant for boys are usually competitive and meant for active play. In society that is how boys are thought of to be rowdy, rough, and more competitive than girls. One of my most interesting finding from my research is how much gender roles are changing. Years ago kids played with all toys , they weren’t very gender specified. Now gender roles are traditional to whereas boy’s only play with toys specified for them and same with girls. While doing my research in Wal-Mart I started to notice people that were walking by me just staring wondering what in the world a young man was doing in the kids toy section. Then an employee came up to me and asked me if I needed help, I explained to her exactly what I was doing. This goes to show that society views a young adult in a toy section as an outcast or possibly even a pedophile. I found it very easy to tell when I entered the “ girls” or “ boys” section, mostly just by color and types of toys. The toys differed in many ways, such as the boys toys were a lot of times associated with sports and action figures. I think that most boys toys encourage competition while on the other hand a lot of girls toys encourage cooperation. Barbies and dolls for example prepare girls to take adult roles by helping them know what its like to become a mother. Baby dolls are another example, when little girls are playing with baby dolls this will prepare them to take care of them when they

get older the right way. It is straight forward what the toy selection says about gender in today's culture. Boy's are thought of as rowdy, sporty, and like competition. On the other hand, girls are usually more passive and like cooperation. Another thing I noticed in the toys were a large amount of the toys were based on movies and movie characters. This goes to show how important and big entertainment is to our society. Works Cited Tischler, Henry. Introduction to Sociology. Linda Schreiber, 2007. Print.