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Gender Socialization in Toys by Parents

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Introduction

Children have always played. Play is an abstract concept that can be defined by several behavioral and motivational factors, including free choice, intrinsic motivation, positive affect, nonliterality, and process orientation (Johnson, Christie & Wardle, 2005). Studies of children's play have focused largely on linguistic, cognitive, and social developmental advantages afforded by play and have not focused on sex or gender differences (Bergen, 1988). Gender is both a social marker and an important individual difference that arguably accounts for much of the difference in how people think and act, including how children play (Johnson et al., 2005).

Sex differences in play styles appear between 10 to 14 months and they are well established by 36 months (Fagot, 1988). By the time children begin school, they have established their gender identities, have developed stereotypes of how the sexes are different, and prefer both same-sex playmates and activities consist with their gender group. This becomes even more gender-typed in middle childhood, especially for boys (Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995 as cited in Honig, 1998).

Our hypothesis was that, while children do have an opportunity to select some of their own environments, such as playmates and activities, children will perceive that parents structure their play environments through parents' provision of gender-typed toys and their disapproval of gender inconsistent play behaviors. These factors, as a result, should exert a strong influence on children's toy preferences.

Child Preferences

After almost four decades of study, researchers note that differences in play styles, as a function of gender, have remained largely consistent. Girls tend to play with dolls, enact domestic scripts, engage in more art activities, and play dress-up. Boys tend to play more frequently with transportation toys, blocks, and carpentry toys (Fagot, 1988). Research has shown that by 14 to 22 months, boys prefer trucks and cars, while girls prefer dolls and softer toys (Huston, 1985; Smith & Daglish, 1977). Themes of play also differ by gender; boys list cowboys and soldiers as their preferences, while girls list playing house and school as their preferred activities (Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, & Morgan, 1963).

In terms of peer interactions, boys engage in more aggressive behaviors and play in larger groups, while girls spend more time in smaller groups and prefer passive activities, especially talking amongst themselves (Fagot, 1988). In addition, boys demonstrate a higher activity level and their play is more physically vigorous (Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1979 as cited in Honig, 1998). They often engage in more of what is termed rough-and-tumble play. This has been found in six cultures in males 3 to 11 eleven-years-old (Whiting & Edwards, 1973).

Physical Play

Physical or motor play is defined as, “gross and fine muscle activity or the use of body parts in play” (Johnson et al., 2005, p. 88). While objects are not the focus of this type of play, children often incorporate natural features of their

environment into play, as well as balls in high-activity ball games. Gender differences become apparent in physical activity around four to five years of age, with boys showing more active and boisterous behavior (Fagot & O'Brien, 1994). In a study conducted in New Zealand, Smith and Inder (1993) observed 3 to 5-year-olds in childcare and kindergarten and found boys' groups and mixed-gender groups to be more active and more frequently engaged in physical contact. They found girls' groups to be quieter and their behavior more passive. In addition, this study measured the amount of indoor versus outdoor play. Among kindergarten boys, outdoor play was more prevalent while girls spent more time playing indoors. In another study conducted in Australia, this same pattern was observed in regards to child preference: boys preferred to play outdoors and girls preferred indoors (Cunningham, Jones, & Taylor, 1994). This preference for outdoor spaces may be explained by boys' need for high-activity-level games, such as playing ball, running, and chasing one another (Frost, Shin, & Jacobs, 1998). Harper and Sanders (1975) found that boys between three and five years of age use 1.2 to 1.6 times as much space as do girls and spend time in more play areas, moving between settings more rapidly.

Physical activity level may also explain why girls are more likely to engage in art activities during free play. Girls are more likely to draw or color in a quiet manner for a sustained period of time, while boys' responses to drawing are short-lived and include more action and physical movement. '"They animate their volcanoes and space wars with exploding noises, as if they have jumped inside the pictures'" (Paley, 1984, p.5 quoted in Johnson et al., 2005).

Children's play often incorporates toys and objects from the surrounding environment. When playing outdoors, boys' activities often include playing in sand, on climbing structures, on tractors, and around equipment sheds, while girls commonly play indoors at craft tables and kitchen sets (Harper & Sanders, 1975)

Rough-and-tumble play is a type of physical play that emerges in early childhood. It consists of play fighting through behaviors such as tackling, chasing, pushing, shadowboxing, faking, and kicking (Johnson et al., 2005). Numerous studies have found that rough-and-tumble play is two to three times more prevalent in boys than in girls (Smith, 1997 as cited in Johnson et al., 2005). Johnson et al. (2005) claims that this gender difference is found across all cultures.

As children move into the grade school years, physical and motor play transition from functional play into sports, athletics, and organized physical activities. Boys continue to be more aggressive and adventurous than girls and their rough-and-tumble play increases in roughness. Boys' play is usually in larger groups, and is more competitive, role-oriented, and rule-governed team-play than girls' play (Johnson et al., 2005).

With age, boys in the United States become increasingly interested in the cultural ideas of power and speed of performance. Girls, on the other hand, continue to be more cooperative and calm in their play. In the US, they become interested in the ideals of grace and aesthetics in their physical play. This is seen in boys being more apt to join ice hockey teams, while girls begin to dance and learn gymnastics. These activities are not gender exclusive, as many children do

engage in cross-gender activities, but it is much more common that girls participate in boy-like activities than that boys participate in girl-like activities (Johnson et al., 2005).

Social Play

Studies have found no significant difference in sociability in girls' and boys' play. They do, however, note that children have a tendency to choose same-gender groups, indicating preferred and favorite playmates to be of the same gender. Parten (1933) reported that, of the children she observed, two-thirds of the play groups chosen were same-gendered. Martin and Fabes (2001) found that 50% of the preschool children they observed chose a same-sex partner or partners and 15% selected a play partner of the opposite sex. That left 35% who chose to interact in mixed-gender play groups. Interesting to note was that while many children were interacting with members of the opposite sex, this was usually with a member of their same sex accompanying them. Maccoby and Jacklin (1987) attributed the source of this difference to the fact that preschool children play with same-sex peers three times more frequently than with opposite-sex peers and that by six years of age this difference has increased to eleven times more frequent play with same-sex peers.

Children show a stronger against the opposite sex in self-reports than is reflected in actual behavior (Ramsey, 1995). This may be because, in reality, the attraction of an object or activity supersedes the desire to play with only same-gendered peers. One must take into account the social desirability factor in

conducting interviews with children. Children may overstate gender bias in an effort to conform to the socialized gender norm that they have internalized, for example, knowing that it is important to not express desire to play with opposite-sex toys or playmates (Johnson et al., 2005).

Girls show preference for same-sex playmates at an earlier age; however during the preschool years it has been found that boys and girls are about equal in their preference for same-sex companions. Once this gender bias is firmly established, it remains more rigid in boys than in girls (Moller & Serbin, 1996).

Fishbein and Imai (1993) note that this bias against playing with members of the opposite sex exists across European-American, Asian-American, and African-American children. This bias holds true for all forms of play except constructive play (Hartle, 1996, Urberg & Kaplan, 1989). Constructive play is more often structured and adult monitored, thus we might expect more integration of the sexes. Research has found that peer groups of mixed-sex play within close proximity of an adult, most often a female teacher, much more frequently than do same-sex or opposite-sex groups. In these mixed groups, boys accommodate to the norms of more sedentary activity (Fabes, Martin, & Hannish, 2003).

Gilligan (1982) (as cited in Johnson, Christie & Wardle, 2005) claims that girls are socialized to embrace nurturing roles while boys take on dominating roles. Gilligan claims that parents and teachers contribute to this socialization by helping girls solve social conflicts while leaving boys to solve them unaided.

There is a recent trend that girls increasingly engage in competitive team sports, such as soccer, and display behavior that is just as intense and competitive as boys' activities (Johnson et al., 2005).

Object Play

Research has shown that boys prefer playing on the floor, with objects such pushing and pulling toys, building blocks, and toys with wheels, while girls prefer playing at tables doing art projects, completing puzzles, or playing with dolls (Wardle, 1991 as cited in Johnson et. al., 2005).

It is a known fact that toys in American society, and in other societies around the world, are gender-typed. Gender-stereotyping starts as early as the first year, and by three years of age many children have internalized toy preferences (Sutton-Smith, 1979).

Johnson et al. (2005) discuss the concept of gender asymmetry in boys' and girls' toy selections. Girls are far more likely to play with boy toys than are boys to play with girl toys. It is more socially acceptable for girls to play with girl toys, boy toys, and neutral toys; whereas boys tend to play with only boy toys and neutral toys.

Pretend Play

Boys and girls equally engage in pretend play and do not differ in their ability to make-believe (Connolly, Doyle, & Reznick, 1988) although the styles of their interactions, themes of pretend play, and objects used differ as a function of

gender. Replica toys are often used in pretend play, including dolls, farm animals, soldiers, and superheroes, as well as miscellaneous objects, such as cardboard boxes. At the preschool level, girls appear to be more advanced than boys in their skills at object transformations, possibly due to their more advanced linguistic and cognitive development. By kindergarten, girls are no more advanced than boys in this transformational ability (Johnson et al., 2005).

In terms of the toys that boys and girls employ in their pretend play, girls have been found to prefer domestic items, dolls, and dress-up clothes while boys prefer vehicles, guns, and superheroes. While girls typically enact family roles and everyday situations, boys act out adventures and rescues. Evident in their pretend play, is again, the greater physical activity of boys (Sutton-Smith, 1979).

Between six to eight years of age, pretend play becomes more complex and varies with gender socialization. Girls continue to act out nurturing roles, while boys play reflects a sense of independence and quest for power. The themes in videogames, movies, television programs, and books have a strong influence on what activities boys and girls will chose and what roles they will act out (Johnson et al., 2005).

Theoretical Explanation of Differences

The tendency of children ages three and up to play in same-sex groups may be due to gender differences in fearfulness. Girls frequently have fears and phobias which may lead them to avoid more active, rambunctious roles and stick

with other girls who have a similar style of play. Males have been found to be biologically more active and aggressive (Honig, 1998).

Another explanation is cognitive development leading children to categorize themselves as “girl” and “boy” in order to form their own self-definitions. Just as adults are big and children small, some children are boys and some are girls according to a child’s social reasoning (Cook-Gumperz, 1991). However, even in infancy, before establishing a clear identity as male or female, the types of toys with which boys and girls play differ, indicating that there is more than solely a cognitive explanation (Fagot & Leinbach, 1989).

Cognitive consonance theory may explain the reasoning behind children’s preference for same-sex playmates. Theories relying on concepts of cognitive consonance assert that people seek experiences that fit their mental concepts. Children develop an identity as male or female and then seek play partners that they think are like themselves (Johnson et al., 2005).

Another explanation for gender segregation is the gender-typed toy preference theory. Children are drawn to the toys with which they like to play, which children as young as two years of age can recognize as gender-typed. When children choose these toys, they come into contact with peers who like the same toys and who, coincidentally, are of the same gender, thus perpetuating the gender role rigidity (Hartup, 1983).

A third theory to explain gender segregation in play is the phenomenon of behavioral compatibility. Behavioral compatibility predicts that children are more likely to be drawn toward peers who have similar styles of playing and interacting

because they feel more comfortable. For example, a girl might avoid a boy whose play is aggressive and join a girl who has a pattern of passive behavior that is more familiar (Moller & Serbin, 1996).

Social Cognitive Theory

Social-cognitive theory (SCT) incorporates a cognitive orientation to explain gender-typed behavior, adding to the learning theory approach. This theory capitalizes on Bandura's (1986) notion of triadic reciprocal causation (as cited in Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002) which explains gender-typed behavior as produced by the interaction of environmental events, personal factors, and behavior patterns. Rather than merely focusing on external influences, this theory considers internal variables, such as biological preparedness to learn gender-typed behaviors, emotional state, modeling experiences, self-standards, anticipated outcomes, and past success or failure at producing gender-typed behaviors in other settings.

SCT stresses both the selected and imposed environment. The imposed environment exerts a strong influence on children, such as when parents provide gender-typed toys for toddlers or respond with disapproval to gender-role-inconsistent behaviors. Children do create their own environments and contribute to their gender role socialization as they select their own playmates and activities. When a child is electing to associate with same-sex peers who are highly gender-typed and to engage in highly gender-typed activities, the child is "constructing" an environment that facilitates adherence to rigid gender norms. On the contrary,

when a child plays with peers who are more egalitarian and who engage in activities of both sexes, the child is constructing more flexible adherence to gender norms (Martin, et. al., 2002).

The social learning perspective emphasizes learning through imitation of others' behaviors (Bandura, 1986 as cited in Martin et. al., 2002). Observational learning is important to the acquisition of gender roles; however, it does not account for the cognitive processes involved. The SCT incorporates cognitive approaches that mediate the acquisition of gender-typed behaviors, such as attention to same sex-models, retention and mental rehearsal of observed gender-typed behaviors, internal standards of conduct, self-observation, and self-reaction (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Children are able to absorb a plethora of information on gender roles by observing those around them without directly displaying gender-typed behaviors (Martin et. al., 2002).

Modeling takes into account adapting to new situations and creating unique behaviors from observations. For example, a boy may observe older boys on the playground enjoying competitive physical sports while girls are content with cooperative or sedentary activities. He may not immediately imitate the boy who successfully participates in the sport, but may continue to observe and then combine observations of several boys to devise a unique approach to the game. He may also generalize the behavior by displaying the competitive and rough-and-tumble style of the boys on the playground in other activities besides this particular sport. Thus, a modeling explanation allows for the incorporation of cognitive processes (Bandura, 1986 as cited in Martin et. al., 2002).

SCT also incorporates Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy (as cited in Martin et. al., 2002). This concept attributes the primary motivation for gender-typed behaviors to self-efficacy, or children's beliefs in their ability to produce desired outcomes by engaging in gender-typed or gender-neutral behaviors. Early in life, children's gender-typed behaviors and attitudes shift from being externally regulated, to being internally regulated. Once children have acquired this internal basis for evaluating themselves, self-efficacy beliefs determine whether they will engage in gender-typed behaviors (Martin et. al., 2002).

This ability to internally regulate comes from the development of a cognitive self-conception. This includes understanding the processes of observation, monitoring, judgment, praise, and the ability to produce desired effects (Martin et. al., 2002).

This model falls short in explaining clearly how children are able to differentiate the sexes before they develop a concept of gender. A child can't choose activities that are consistent with gender-stereotypes until they are able to identify their own sex. They must first come to the realization that people can be classified as male and female. These gender schemas arise from the tendency of humans to classify and organize information. Then, they must place themselves in one of these sex groups. Finally, they must have the capability of encoding behaviors as male- or female-appropriate. Only when they can judge which of the sexes is more like themselves can they attend to and imitate same-sex models (Martin et. al., 2002).

Cognitive-Developmental Theory

According to the cognitive-developmental theory, gender identity is a cognitive milestone that emerges over the normal course of development. It should be clarified that in explaining their theory, Bussey and Bandura most likely meant *identity* to mean simply recognizing and identifying oneself as being a boy or girl (Martin et. al., 2002). Bussey and Bandura (1992) conducted a study asking children to indicate the reaction they would anticipate feeling after playing with a variety of gender-typed and gender-neutral toys, on a scale ranging from feeling "real great" to feeling "real awful." The results indicated that reactions differed as a function of the toy's gender appropriateness only with older children. Reasoning for this might be that a 3-year-old may not have the capability of anticipating a response to playing with a toy, and would be unable to accurately self-evaluate. Also, results indicate that the youngest children do not yet have gender stereotypic knowledge of toys (Martin et. al., 2002).

Gender role socialization impacts children's behaviors before they have fully acquired gender cognitions. Thus, children will show sex-typed behaviors earlier than the age at which gender schemes are present (Huston, 1983 as cited in Martin et. al., 2002; Martin & Halverson, 1981)

The idea of gender constancy occurs in three stages a) *gender identity*: children's realization that they are a boy or girl; b) *gender stability:* the recognition that this identity does not change; and c) *gender consistency*: the recognition that this identity is not affected by changes in appearance or activities (Slaby & Frey, 1975). Once children reach this self-understanding, information

about the gender categories guides their behaviors. The theory argues that construction of the meaning of gender categories is internally initiated by children, rather than externally initiated by socializing agents. A final component is that competence motivation drives children to keep their behaviors in line with their developing knowledge about gender categories (Martin et. al., 2002).

While the final stage, gender consistency, may not be reached until children are 5 – 6-years-old, the crucial cognitive achievement is to recognize the categories of gender. This recognition occurs in the lower levels of gender constancy, such as in gender stability or even gender identity, occurring as early as three to five years of age (Ruble & Martin, 1998 as cited in Martin et. al., 2002).

Caution must be taken in that many children will answer forced-choice gender constancy measures correctly, but will give irrelevant answers or show uncertainty in constancy when responding to an open-ended question (Martin et. al., 2002). A correct response to a question with answer choices should not automatically be interpreted as a measure of gender constancy.

To avoid an attractive toy belonging to the opposite sex and to accept an unattractive toy of the same sex, one must really understand gender constancy (Frey & Ruble, 1992). Constancy doesn't really come into play when there is no conflict involved, such as when toys are gender neutral or the gender inconsistent toy is equally as attractive as the gender consistent toy (Bussey & Bandura, 1992). It takes little motivation to select a toy or activity that is gender-consistent over one that is gender-inconsistent when they are equally attractive. Children will

usually “play it safe” and select the consistent toy even if they only have a minimal understanding of gender, such as “I am a girl and this is a boy’s toy.” When there is a dilemma presented to sacrifice the attractive toy, motivation is needed to act in accordance with gender norms. This is where gender constancy comes into play. Children with high levels of understanding of gender constancy have an additional motivation to avoid the attractive toys that belong to the opposite sex (Frey & Ruble, 1992).

Lower levels of gender identity and gender stability may lead children to explore the importance of gender in their information seeking and choice of friends, whereas at higher levels on the spectrum, children may respond more rigidly to gender norms. Once children have mastered a full understanding of gender constancy, they may become more flexible in applying gender norms rather than becoming more rigid (Martin et. al., 2002). Until children fully achieve this constancy, they may be concerned that violating gender norms could threaten their gender identity (Marcus & Overton, 1978).

Gender Schema Theory

Gender schemas are mental representations of information about oneself and the sexes that influence how information is processed and how one acts. Schemas develop as one ages, as a function of interactions with the environment. This theory attributes an active role to the child in gender development. Schemas are seen as active constructions; once children identify themselves as a boy or girl, they are motivated to seek information about their gender. They then develop

scripts for activities consistent with their gender group. They become increasingly attentive to the differences between males and females (Martin et. al., 2002).

One process that children undergo is schema-directed memory. Young children are more likely to attend to and remember information about same-sex scripts and activities directly relevant to themselves. Consequently, they will acquire more knowledge about performing behaviors consistent with gender norms (Ruble & Stangor, 1986).

Children may also develop idiosyncratic schemas that match with the opposite sex, which could influence their behavior. For example, girls who fit the description of "tomboys" may have developed a tomboy schema that allows for more flexibility in thought and action than a more typical girl. Interest in particular activities or jobs associated with the other sex could also lead to more flexibility in schemas. Clearly, the influence of gender schemas on thoughts and behaviors is determined by many internal and external factors (Martin et. al., 2002).

The process of gender development is one that is active and constructive, whereby children take the information from their environment and develop and elaborate their concepts of boys and girls. These concepts vary with time and place (Martin et. al., 2002).

Cognitive theorists explain this process by several principles. The first is that humans have a tendency to classify and organize information in their environments by using functionally significant and salient categories (Bem, 1981; Martin & Halverson, 1981). The second principle is that people make the

assumption that members of a category share similarities and a group identity (Dasgupta, Banaji, & Abelson, 1999). The third principle is that categorization leads to inductive reasoning, whereby individuals make inferences beyond the information that is presented to them (Gelman, 1989). Here is where children and toys come into play. As early as preschool, children make assumptions of the shared interests of members of their group and do not generalize this to the non-group members even when they don't have information on which to base such assumptions (Martin et al, 1995). The fourth principle is that, cognitively categorizing leads to exaggeration of between-group differences and enhancement of within-group similarities (Tajfel, 1981 as cited in Honig, 1998).

In conclusion, Gender Schema Theory is the model that this study will adopt. Gender schema theory looks at how children acquire information from their social environment and apply that information to both social groups and to themselves. It considers how the way children organize information affects their attention, motivation, impressions, and behavior (Honig, 1998).

Weaknesses of the theory are that gender constructs are hard to define and measure. Also, the theory focuses heavily on internal cognitive processing over biological or social influences on gender development. In addition, critics claim that this theory is more useful in predicting cognitions rather than behaviors. Regardless of criticisms, gender schema theory has led to growth in gender research (Honig, 1998).

Parental Influence

Parents are an important agent of socialization to their children, as they serve as the foundation of gender-stereotypical play behaviors and preferences that are influenced by the home environment. Across cultures, parents treat boys and girls differently by encouraging stereotypical activities, assigning different chores, and presenting different attitudes. As children develop, they learn that there are distinct genders and they have a particular gender role.

According to Fisher-Thompson, Sausa, & Wright (1995), "When adults visit toy stores and purchase trucks or footballs, in all likelihood, these toys are intended for boys and not girls" (p. 239). Adults buy non-gendered items, like puzzles and books, but it is rare that they purchase cross-gendered toys (Bradbard, 1985; Fisher-Thompson, 1993; Robinson & Morris, 1986).

Parents present their attitudes by simply discouraging their children from one type of play; for example discouraging their sons from playing with dolls, while encouraging nurturing behavior with their daughters. This occurs nonconsciously even before a child's birth, as parents buy gender-stereotypical toys and clothes for their infant and paint the bedroom either pink or blue (Johnson et al., 2005). They immediately have gendered expectations for their child; describing infant boys as "large and active" and girls as "soft, small, and delicate" (Rubin, Provenzano, & Luria, 1974 as cited in Johnson et al, 2005).

As children develop, parents purchase toys that promote this gender socialization. A study conducted in which children's bedrooms were examined, revealed that girls have more dolls and domestic toys in their rooms and boys

have more vehicles, educational materials, sports equipment, machines, and military toys. Boys also have more toys in quantity and in categories of toys (Rheingold and Cook, 1975).

Parents' interactions with their children play an important role in gender socialization. Observation of parents does not reveal that they openly make statements encouraging play with one type of toy and discouraging play with another type. However, parents' nonverbal responses to same-gendered toys are more positive than to cross-gendered toys and neutral toys (including puzzles and shape toys) and parents are more likely to involve themselves in gender stereotypical play with their child (Johnson et al., 2005).

Studies with American populations reveal that mothers and fathers interact differently with their children; fathers spending more time with sons and encouraging more physical play and mothers being more likely to play neutral games with either sex. With the same child, mothers are more likely to engage in pretend play and fathers in physical play (Johnson et al., 2005).

Parents have the principal opportunity to interact with their children and serve as the first introduction to gender roles. Although parents may not be making a deliberate effort to socialize gender stereotypes, their conscious choices and unconscious actions are providing children with the opportunity to acquire gendered beliefs and behaviors (Johnson et al., 2005).

STUDY I

Subjects

The participants were 58 students in first and second grade, ages 6 – 7 (5;11 – 7;2). Research took place at Colegio Chamborí- Hermanas Maristas in Madrid, Spain. Colegio Chamberí is a Catholic school, with grades preschool through bachelorette (equivalent to an Amemrican associates degree specialization) with no private IRB. Although American children's experiences in this realm have been subjected to significant study, this study sought to increase our understanding of how parents introduce gender through their toy selections, attitudes, and responses to play behaviors within a Spanish population. Because the study was targeting a Spanish population, native Spaniards were recuired in order to have a valid subject pool. Of the 58 children studied, three were excluded from the study because they were determined to not be Spanish nationals, born in America, Argentia, and Russia.

Of the 55 children participating, 30 were boys, 25 girls. All were born in Spain, predominately in Madrid, and lived with both parents. Participants were assumed to be in good health to be attending school.

As determined by the school administration, the median household income of the students is €35,493. Assuming a current conversion rate of 1 USD = 0.787870 EUR, then 35,493.00 EUR = 45,049.29 USD. This indicates that this is a middle-class population.

Questionnaire and Procedures

Participants were informed that the purpose of this study was to gather information about children's favorite toys, what people think about toys, and about parents selecting toys for children. Written consent was obtained from the school principal, as equivalent to parental consent per Spanish regulation, and oral assent was given by each child before the interview took place. All participants were under the age of 18 and it was determined that they would not have an adequate reading level to understand a written consent form.

Participants were interviewed in a private room to maintain confidentiality and to create a comfortable environment for the participatant. All participants were familiar with the researcher, within the classroom context, for several weeks prior the interview.

Questions asked included demographic information about the child's age, place of birth, household, and siblings. Questions about toy preference were included, such as the child's favorite toy, first toy recalled, toys played with at school, and toy most desired. Several questions targeted gender stereotypes in toys, including what toys boys and girls play with at school, toys with which society thinks boys and girls play, and who plays with similar toys. Finally, questions aimed at understanding parental socialization included what toys parents like to buy, who the favorite toy and first toy were from, toys within the house, characters in books read, and direct parental discussion of gendered toys (See Appendix A for complete questionniare). Interview questions were back-translated and edited by Dieter Roberto Kühl of Syracuse University Madrid.

Interview questions were open-ended and gave children the opportunity to elaborate on answers and explain reasoning for their responses.

Interviews lasted an average of 8:15 minutes and were audio recorded with a Sony IC Recorder device. Interviews were later transcribed and translated from Spanish to English. Back translation was completed by Aleksandr Sklyar, fluent in Spanish language as indicated by a score of a 5 on a fluency examination. Sklyar spent substantial time in Spain and is familiar with Spain's cultural practices. Discrepancies in language were adjusted and toys mentioned that are native to Spain were clarified.

Qualitative data was coded to a quantitative format using a scale devised by the interviewer in line with previous conventions of masculine, feminine, and neutral toys. The category of Boy Toys includes subcategories of transportation toys, action figures, sports equipment, action equipment (e.g., weapons, riding toys), and building materials. Girl Toys includes the subcategories of dolls, crafts, domestic items (e.g., kitchen sets, tea sets), and physical training equipment (e.g., jump ropes). The category of Gender Neutral Toys includes books, electronics (e.g., play station, computers), games (e.g., board games, Four- Square), stuffed animals, and puzzles. A fourth category of Other was created to include both non-conclusive responses (e.g., "I don't know") as well as responses that did not fit into any other category, including descriptions of toys (e.g., small, normal, plastic), and miscellaneous objects mentioned as toys (e.g., beach, umbrella, star). (See Appendix B for toy coding categories).

Categories were created to code masculine, feminine, and neutral sources of who a toy was from. The category of Male Sources includes the subcategories of father, male relative, male sibling; Feminine Sources includes mother, female relative, female sibling;, and Neutral Sources includes parents mentioned as one entity, the "The Three Kings" (equivalent to the American concept of Santa Claus), grandparents, and aunts/uncles mentioned as one entity. Again, a fourth category of Other was created to include non-conclusive responses (e.g., "I don't know") and other responses not fitting into any other category (e.g., store, house, found it). (See Appendix C for coding categories of toy sources).

For the interview responses regarding the types of characters in the books that parents read, different categories were created to encompass all responses. The Male Category includes the subgroups of male royalty, superheroes, dragons, beasts, and descriptions equivalent to handsome; the Female Category includes female royalty, domestic figures, dolls, and descriptions equivalent to pretty; the Neutral Category includes animals, stuffed animals, cartoon characters, and educational subjects. The category of Other includes non-conclusive responses (e.g., "I don't know") and those responses not fitting into any other category (e.g., large, small, and newspapers). (See Appendix D for coding categories of book characters).

Gender significance in toy preferences was computed from these categories using the SPSS chi squared analysis function. Percentages of Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral toys were determined from the number of toys mentioned in each category and t-tests were computed as a function of gender.

Results

Toy Preferences

A 2 (sex of child) x 2 (gender of favorite toy) chi square analysis of child reports indicated that sex was significant for favorite toy selection for boy toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 12.52, p < .001 and girl toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 24.75, p < .001 but not for gender neutral toys; χ^2 (1, N= 55) = 1.39, p > .05. Of the 55 children in this sample, 16 children (15 boys, 1 girl) reported that their favorite toy was a boy toy and 15 children (0 boys, 15 girls) reported that their favorite toy was a girl toy. In the neutral category, 20 children (13 boys, 7 girls) reported that their favorite toy was gender neutral (see Appendix E for breakdown of children's favorite toy responses into categories).

An analysis of the toy each child most desired revealed that sex was significant for boy toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 6.97, p < .01 and girl toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 16.50, p < .001, but not for gender neutral toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = .092, p > .05. Of the 55 children, 19 children (15 boys, 4 girls) wanted a boy toy, 11 children (0 boys, 11 girls) wanted a girl toy, and 21 children (12 boys, 9 girls) wanted a neutral toy (see Appendix F for breakdown of children's responses of toy most desired into categories).

For the toys children played with at school, only the first toy mentioned was coded as this was assumed to be the toy most salient. Child reports indicated that sex was significant for playing with a boy toy at school; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 7.67, p < .01 and for playing with a girl toy at school; χ^2 (2, N = 55) = 30.80, p < .001, but was not significant for playing with a gender neutral toy at school; χ^2 (1, N =

55) = .00, p > .05. Of the 55 children, 17 (14 boys, 3 girls) reported playing with a boy toy at school, 14 (0 boys, 14 girls) reported playing with a girl toy at school, and 11 (6 boys, 5 girls) reported playing with a gender neutral toy at school (see Appendix G for breakdown of children's responses of toy played with at school into categories).

Gender Stereotypes in Toys

When asked who normally plays with the same toys as the child's favorite, 20 children (20 boys, 0 girls) reported that boys play with the same as their favorites; 21 children (1 boy, 20 girls) reported that girls play with the same as their favorite, and 10 (8 boys, 2 girls) reported that both play with the same as their favorites (see Appendix H for child responses of who plays with same toys as their favorite). Twenty of the 30 boys (66.7%) reported that boys play with the same toys as their favorites and 20 of the 25 girls reported that girls play with the same types of toys as their favorites (80%). Child sex was significant for who plays with the same toys as the child's favorite for boys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 26.19, p < .001 and for girls; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 33.96, p < .001, but not for both playing with the same toy; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 2.06, p > .05.

When asked about the toys that boys play with, boys reported a mean of 65.3% of responses being boy toys and girls reported a mean of 80% of toys reported being boy toys (see Appendix I for breakdown of children's responses of toys boys play with into categories). This was not statistically significant by child sex; F (1, 53) = 5.095, p > .05; t (53) = -1.27, p > .05. When asked about girl toys,

58.3% of the toys that boys identified were girl toys and 84.7% of the toys that girls identified were girl toys (see Appendix J for breakdown of children's responses of toys girls play with). This was statistically significant by child sex; $F(1, 53) = 22.58$, $p < .05$; $t(53) = -2.39$.

The participants were also asked what they thought people in general believed to be boy toys and girl toys. A mean of 52.7% of the toys boys indicated that people thought were boy toys were in fact coded as boy toys and a mean of 38.7% of the toys girls mentioned were coded as boy toys (see Appendix K for breakdown of children's responses of what society thinks are boy toys into categories). There was not a statistically significant difference by child sex; unequal variances $t(49.91) = 1.01$, $p > .05$. For toys the children believed people to think girls played with, the boys reported a mean of 58.3% of toys mentioned being girls' toys and a mean of 50.0% of the toys girls reported were girl toys (see Appendix L for breakdown of children's responses of what society thinks are girl toys into categories). This was also not statistically significant by child sex; unequal variances $t(50.15) -= .655$, $p > .05$.

The children reported on the toys that they think both boys and girls play with. Of the responses, 52.6% were in fact coded as neutral toys, 37.1% were coded as male toys, and 12.3% were coded as female toys (see Appendix M for breakdown of toys children think both can play with into categories).

The participants reported no significant difference in sex on the question of whether children play with the same or different toys. Only 13 children (9 boys, 4 girls) reported that children play with the same toys, while 41 children (20

boys, 21 girls) reported that children play with different toys (see Appendix N for child responses).

Children were also questioned on whether a member of the opposite sex can play with their favorite toy. Thirty-four children (23 boys, 11 girls) reported that a member of the opposite sex can play with the same toys as their favorite; however, of these 34 children, 17 (10 boys, 7 girls) of the favorite toys were neutral (see Appendix O for breakdown of child responses by type of favorite toy).

Parental Influence

Seventy-eight percent of the participants (43 children; 20 boys; 23 girls) reported that their parents like to buy toys for them. This included responses of both a definitive yes and responses of sometimes (see Appendix P for breakdown of responses). The type of toys that children reported that their parents like to buy was significant by sex for selecting boy toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 14.19, $p < .001$ and girl toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 4.40, $p < .05$, but was not significant for selecting gender neutral toys; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 1.061, $p > .05$. The children reported that 13 parents prefer to buy boy toys (13 parents of boys; 0 parents of girls), 5 parents prefer to buy girl toys (0 parents of boys; 5 parents of girls), and 16 parents prefer to buy neutral toys (7 parents of boys; 9 parents of girls) (see Appendix Q for breakdown of types of toys parents like to buy into categories).

Child sex was not significant for who favorite toy was from. Nine children (7 boys, 2 girls) reported that their favorite toy was from a male, 15 children (7

boys, 8 girls) reported that their favorite toy was from a female, and 19 children (10 boys, 9 girls) reported that their favorite toy was from a neutral source (see Appendix R for breakdown of who favorite toy was from into categories).

For the first toy a child recalled, sex was significant for recalling a boy toy; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 8.583, p < .005 and a girl toy; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = 12.10, p < .005, but was not significant for the first toy recalled being gender neutral; χ^2 (1, N = 55) = .246, p > .05. Fifteen children (13 boys, 2 girls) reported that their first toy was a boy toy, 10 children (0 boys, 10 girls) reported that their first toy was a girl toy, and 24 children (14 boys, 10 girls) reported that their first toy was gender neutral (see Appendix S for breakdown of first toy recalled into categories).

Child sex was also not significant for who the first toy was from. Eleven children (7 boys, 4 girls) reported that the first toy they recalled was from a male, 17 children (8 boys, 9 girls) reported that it was from a female, and 13 (8 boys, 5 girls) reported that it was from a neutral source (see Appendix T for breakdown of who first toy was from into categories).

Table 1.1 shows children's responses to questions regarding parents' direct discussions of gender in toys. Twenty-four children (12 boys, 12 girls) reported that parents have said that some toys are for boys and some toys are for girls, which was not significant by child sex (see Appendix U for responses). Twenty-five children reported that their parents have talked about children playing with different types of toys which is 45.5% of the sample, but none of these children mentioned a gendered statement when asked what their parents said. Nineteen reported a non-gendered statement and six reported that they can't

remember what their parents said (See Appendix V for breakdown of responses of parental statements). Table 1.2 presents results for a crosstabulation of children's reports of parents talking about playing with different toys and parents making non-gendered statements. Table 1.3 presents a crosstabulation between children's reports of parents saying that some toys are for boys or girls and parents talking about playing with different toys.

Table 1.1

Parents' Statements of Whether Toys are for Boys or Girls

		Parents Said That Some Toys For Boys Or Girls		Total
		.00	1.00	
Child Sex	.00	18	12	30
	1.00	13	12	25
Total		31	24	55

Note. 0 in the Child Sex columns represents Boys and 1 represents Girls; 0 on the Parents Response column represents a response of No and 1 represents a response of Yes.

Table 1.2

Non-Gendered Statements in Children Who Report Parents Discussing Gender

		What Parents Talk About Is Non-Gendered		Total
		.00	1.00	
Parents Talk About Playing With Different Toys	.00	28	2	30
	1.00	6	19	25
Total		34	21	55

Note. 0 represents a response of No and 1 represents a response of Yes.

Table 1.3

Parents Talk about Gender and Playing with Different Toys

		Parents Talk About Playing With Different Toys		Total
		.00	1.00	
Parents Have Said That Some Toys for Boys or Girls	.00	18	13	31
	1.00	12	12	24
Total		30	25	55

Note. 0 represents a response of No and 1 represents a response of Yes.

Table 1.4 presents the percent of gender appropriate responses out of the toys that children report that boys and girls play with. Thirty-nine children (19 boys, 20 girls) reported with over 50% of toys mentioned that boys play with being boy toys; with a mean of 65.4% of the toys boys mentioned being boy toys and a mean of 80% of toys girls believed were boys toys being boy toys. Thirty-eight children (16 boys, 22 girls) reported with over 50% of toys mentioned that

girls play with being girl toys; with a mean of 58.3% of the toys boys mentioned and 84.7% of toys girls believed were girls toys.

Table 1.4

Child Reports of Toys Boys and Girls Play With

		Percent of Toys Boys Play With That Are Boy Toys						Total
		.00	.33	.50	.67	.75	1.00	
Child Sex	.00	9	1	1	0	1	18	30
	1.00	4	1	0	1	0	19	25
Total		13	2	1	1	1	37	55
		Percent of Toys Girls Play With That Are Girl Toys						Total
		.00	.33	.50	.67	.75	1.00	
Child Sex	.00	11	0	3	0	0	16	30
	1.00	2	1	0	2	2	18	25
Total		13	1	3	2	2	34	55

Note. 0 in the Child Sex columns represents Boys and 1 represents Girls

Forty-nine children (26 boys, 23 girls) reported that parents read to them (see Appendix W for responses). Table 1.5 presents the percent of male story characters that children reported, Table 1.6 presents the percent of female story characters that children reported, and Table 1.7 presents the percent of neutral story characters that children reported. Of these children, 47 (25 males, 22 females) did not mention a male character with only three children reporting a percent of male characters over 50% of the total characters mentioned. Forty-four children (30 males, 14 females) did not mention a female character with four

children reporting a percent of female characters over 50% of the total characters mentioned. This was a statistically significant difference between boys and girls. Twenty-five children (13 males, 12 females) reported 50% or more of the characters to be neutral (see Appendix X for breakdown of story characters mentioned). Table 1.8 presents the significance of gendered characters mentioned by child sex.

Table 1.5

Male Story Characters Reported

		Percent Characters Male				Total
		.00	.25	.50	1.00	
Child Sex	.00	25	0	2	3	30
	1.00	22	1	2	0	25
Total		47	1	4	3	55

Note. 0 in the Child Sex columns represents Boys and 1 represents Girls

Table 1.6

Female Story Characters Reported

		Percent Characters Female			Total
		.00	.50	1.00	
Child Sex	.00	30	0	0	30
	1.00	14	7	4	25
Total		4	7	4	55
		4			

Note. 0 in the Child Sex columns represents Boys and 1 represents Girls

Table 1.7

Neutral Story Characters Reported

		Percent Characters Neutral				Total
		.00	.50	.75	1.00	
Child Sex	.00	17	2	0	11	30
	1.00	13	5	1	6	25
Total		30	7	1	17	55

Note. 0 in the Child Sex columns represents Boys and 1 represents Girls

Table 1.8

Significance of Gendered Characters Mentioned by Child Sex

Independent Samples T- Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Percent Characters Male	Equal variances assumed	7.268	.009	1.203	53	.234	.08333	.06926	-.05558	.22225
	Equal variances not assumed			1.279	41.88	.208	.08333	.06514	-.04814	.21480
Percent Characters Female	Equal variances assumed	120.42	.000	-4.31	53	.000	-.30000	.06959	-.43958	-.16042
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.93	24.00	.001	-.30000	.07638	-.45763	-.14237
Percent Characters Neutral	Equal variances assumed	2.776	.102	.242	53	.810	.03000	.12387	-.21846	.27846
	Equal variances not assumed			.245	52.75	.808	.03000	.12255	-.21583	.27583

Table 1.9 presents the toys children mentioned having in the house as percentages of boy toys, girl toys, and neutral toys. Boys reported a mean of 51.5% of toys in the house being boy toys; Girls reported a mean of 14.3% of toys in the house being boy toys. There was a significant difference between child sex and percent of boys toys reported; unequal variances $t(52.61) = 4.93$, $p < .001$.

Boy reported a mean of 1.9% of the toys in the house being girl toys, while a mean of 41.6% of the toys girls reported in the house were girl toys. There was a significant difference between child sex and percent of girl toys reported; $F(1, 53) = 39.369$, $p < .001$; $t(53) = -6.05$, $p < .001$.

For gender neutral toys in the house, 32.4% of the toys mentioned in the house were gender neutral for boys and 40.1% were gender neutral for the girls' reports. This was not statistically significant by child sex; unequal variances, $t(-.93) = 44.713$, $p > .05$. (See Appendix Y for breakdown of the types of toys in the house into categories).

Table 1.9

Significance of Gendered Toys in House and Societal Gender Stereotypes

	Child Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Percent Boy Toys In House	.00	30	.5150	.31748	.05796
	1.00	25	.1427	.24162	.04832
Percent Girl Toys In House	.00	30	.0194	.07480	.01366
	1.00	25	.4160	.35028	.07006
Percent Neutral Toys In House	.00	30	.3239	.26256	.04794
	1.00	25	.4013	.33932	.06786
Percent Boys Play With Boy Toy	.00	30	.6528	.46014	.08401
	1.00	25	.8000	.38490	.07698
Percent Girls Play With Girl Toy	.00	30	.5833	.47495	.08671
	1.00	25	.8467	.30303	.06061
Percent Toys People Think Boys Play With Are Boy Toys	.00	30	.5167	.45769	.08356
	1.00	25	.3867	.48762	.09752
Percent Toys People Think Girls Play With Are Girl Toys	.00	30	.5833	.45644	.08333
	1.00	25	.5000	.48113	.09623

Note. 0 in the Child Sex columns represents Boys and 1 represents Girls

Independent Samples T Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Percent Boy Toys In House	Equal variances assumed	.382	.539	4.814	53	.000	.37233	.07735	.21719	.52748
	Equal variances not assumed			4.934	52.61	.000	.37233	.07547	.22094	.52372
Percent Girl Toys In House	Equal variances assumed	39.37	.000	-6.048	53	.000	-.3966	.06557	-.52807	-.26505
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.556	25.83	.000	-.3966	.07137	-.54332	-.24979
Percent Neutral Toys In House	Equal variances assumed	1.518	.223	-.954	53	.344	-.0774	.08118	-.24026	.08538
	Equal variances not assumed			-.932	44.713	.356	-.0774	.08309	-.24482	.08993
Percent Boys Play With Boy Toy	Equal variances assumed	5.095	.028	-1.271	53	.209	-.1472	.11582	-.37954	.08509
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.292	53.00	.202	-.1472	.11394	-.37577	.08132

Percent Girls Play With Girl Toy	Equal variances assumed	22.58	.000	-2.394	53	.020	-.2633	.11000	-.48397	-.04269
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.489	49.873	.016	-.2633	.10579	-.47584	-.05083
Percent Toys People Think Boys Play With Are Boy Toys	Equal variances assumed	1.360	.249	1.018	53	.313	.13000	.12768	-.12609	.38609
	Equal variances not assumed			1.012	49.91	.316	.13000	.12843	-.12797	.38797
Percent Toys People Think Girls Play With Are Girl Toys	Equal variances assumed	.777	.382	.658	53	.513	.08333	.12667	-.17074	.33741
	Equal variances not assumed			.655	50.15	.516	.08333	.12729	-.17232	.33899

Table 1.10 presents a crosstabulation of parents preferring to buy boy toys and a high percentage of boy toys in the house. High percentage was determined to be more than 50%. Of the 27 children indicating a high percentage of boy toys in the house, only 11 had reported that their parents prefer to buy boy toys.

Table 1.10

Parents Buying Boy Toys and High Percent of Boys Toys in House

		% Boy Toys in House High		Total
		Hi	Lo	
Parents Buy Boy Toys	.00	16	26	42
	1.00	11	2	13
Total		27	28	55

Note. 0 represents No and 1 represents Yes; Hi Percent of Boys Toys indicates > 50% and Lo indicates < 50%.

Discussion

The results of greatest interest are the relations between both children's gender conceptions and toy preferences and parental socialization of gender. The first results to note are children's toy preferences. Consistent with predictions, boys and girls were more likely to indicate toy preferences, including favorite toy, toy most desired, and toy played with at school, in their same gender category; i.e., boys preferring boy toys and girls preferring girl toys. Significance was stronger for girls reporting a preference for girl toys, as fewer boys indicate playing with girl toys than do girls playing with boy toys. The data shows no significance in difference by child sex in neutral toy preference, meaning that boys and girls were equally likely to select gender neutral toys as their preference in these three areas.

Children were more likely than expected to indicate a preference for gender neutral toys. Results show that 36.4% of children indicated a gender neutral favorite toy and 38.2% of children most wanted a neutral toy, while 55%

of children indicate a same-gendered favorite toy and 45% indicate wanting a same-gendered toy. Thus, about half of the children indicated a preference for same-gendered toys.

In terms of the toys children are playing with at school, here, only 20% reported playing with a gender neutral toy, while the number of children playing with same-gender toys remained consistently at half. This discrepancy left 13 children who responded in the Other category, mostly those giving a non-conclusive response or indicating that they don't play at school. Observations of children's play during the recess recreational period showed clearly defined boundaries between boys' and girls' play. The setup of the participants' school, within a metropolitan city, included a blacktop area within the surrounding walls of the school building. To one side of the blacktop area were picnic tables under an overhang. The boys predominately engaged in games of soccer and basketball on the large blacktop space or played boisterously with action figures, consistent with the toys with which boys indicated playing. The girls; however, remained confined to the small area at the side of the play space, playing with sticker albums, dolls, and jumping rope under the overhang, also consistent with child reports of the toys with which they played. It appeared that the school environment was a socializing agent that prescribed children to particular same-sex roles, which would explain why children indicated less play with gender-neutral toys and significant differences by sex in play with boy and girl toys. A possible explanation for why 13 children responded in the Other category might be a discrepancy in children's identification of their activities as toys with the

researcher's categories. Soccer balls and basketballs were coded by the researcher as sports equipment and included as boy toys, whereas boys may not have seen the physical action of playing soccer or basketball as playing with a toy. Similarly, girls might not have identified a jump rope or sticker album as a toy.

Consistent with researcher observations, three-quarters of the children reported that children play with different toys at school, indicating a clear majority. Results also showed consistency in that 71% of the toys children indicated that boys play at school were boy toys and 70% of the toys indicated that girls play at school were girl toys.

It is interesting to note that considerably more girls than boys accurately indicated boys playing with boy toys and girls playing with girl toys according to the researcher's gender categorization. This was a statistically significant difference for girl toys. While results seem to indicate that boys and girls have a clear sense of the differences in boys' and girls' play preferences, girls may have a more clear conception of this difference. This could perhaps be explained by girls spending more time paying attention to differences in the play behaviors of boys and girls. The researcher observed boys to spend more time actively engaged in play, while girls intermittently played directly with toys, talked, and quietly observed their surroundings. At times during the recess period, girls would sit on the sidelines of the blacktop space and watch the boys' games of sports.

Results for favorite toy were also consistent with about three-quarters of the children reporting that the same sex predominately plays with the same toys as their favorites. However, only 18% indicated that both play with the same toys as

their favorites, while 36.4% of the favorite toys mentioned were gender neutral. This discrepancy might be in researcher coding of toys as gender neutral and children perceiving these toys as gendered; for example, considerably more boys than girls indicated their favorite toy to fall into the subcategory of electronics, which was coded as gender neutral.

The responses reported were less accurate for children's conceptions of society's beliefs about gendered toys. About half of the toys boys indicated that society thinks are boy toys were actually boy toys according to the researcher's categories and only about a third of the toys that girls indicated that society thinks are boy toys were in fact coded as boy toys. This seems to be the opposite effect of the girls having a more accurate sense of what toys boys play with. For toys that society thinks girls play with, about half of the toys that boys and girls mentioned were girl toys, with boys reporting only slightly higher accuracy. This seems to indicate that boys have a consistent idea of societal perceptions of gendered toys, and seem to have a more clear understanding than do girls. However, percentages falling at half and below indicate that societal conventions are not fully ingrained in the children's heads. This may be due to the fact that they are young and have not yet formed this concept. Theory of Mind, or being able to understand the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of those around them, normally develops around the age of 4 so this should not be a concern with this population. Another explanation might be that the questions were phrased in a way that the children did not fully understand what was being asked. There is no conclusive explanation as to why girls are more accurate in identifying society's

gendered conceptions for girl toys than they are for boy toys, but a possible reason might be that they are able to understand another's perspective more easily when they see themselves as a part of that group.

The data presented supports the idea that children prefer gender-consistent toys and predominately choose gendered toys within the school context. They also seem to understand the differences in boy and girl toys; however, they are less able to identify societal conceptions of gendered toys.

Once we have identified that the children have gender stereotypical conceptions, we are interested in how they acquire these stereotypes. Our principal question is whether parents are socializing their children to these gender conventions through toy purchases, attitudes towards toys, and behaviors in response to children's play with certain toys. This study was limited in that it only accounted for data from the children's perspective and relied on the accuracy of children's reports. The results show that children are inconsistent in their responses. When asked the question in one way, 24 children reported that parents have said that some toys are for boys and some toys are for girls; however, when asked again, 12 of the children that had previously reported yes said no and 13 of the children that had reported no said yes. Only 12 children were consistent in their responses. Even more noteworthy is that of the 25 children who reported that their parents have talked about children playing with different types of toys, none could produce a gendered statement when asked what their parents had said. The majority of responses were non-gendered statements about having too many toys, having to share toys with siblings, and about toys being for all children. With the

first question, only one child actually referenced what their parents had said. Child 26: Male stated, “They said that ‘Toys are for both. They’re for both boys and girls.’” Several children made gender stereotypical statements, without referencing their parents, such as, Child 29: Male, “Cars are for boys and dolls are for girls;” Child 32: Female. “Spiderman is for boys;” Child 43: Female, “Dolls are for girls;” and Child 41: Male. “There are some toys for boys and others for girls.” Further evidence of inconclusive responses in regards to parental behavior was that when asked what types of toys parents like to buy, the largest percentage of responses fell into the Other category with over a third of the children reporting an inconclusive response. Because children were inconsistent in their responses, we must be wary of their accuracy in reports and cannot assume conclusive evidence.

Discussion of results can still be made. Seventy-eight percent of the participants reported that their parents like to buy toys for them, indicating that parents have a great influence over the toys that their children receive. Data showed that boys were more likely to report that parents purchased boy toys and girls were more likely to report that parents purchased girl toys. Both were equally likely to report that parents prefer to buy gender neutral toys. The majority of the toys that children indicated that their parents like to buy were gender neutral toys. In terms of whom children are recalling that their toys are from, boys and girls were no more likely to report getting their favorite toy and their first toy from a male, female, or gender neutral source. The majority of children reported that their favorite toy came from a neutral source. It’s important

to note that the “Three Kings,” which is the Spanish equivalent of Santa Claus, was coded as a neutral figure and is included in this data, but that it is representative of whoever is purchasing the toys, whether it be both parents or the mother or father separately. Thus, children seemed to perceive their parents as preferring to buy gender neutral toys and did not indicate that their parents make gender-typed statements regarding playing with certain toys. They recalled their first toys to be gender neutral, and indicated that these primary toys came from their mother, father, or parents together.

Another measure of parental socialization is the characters in the books selected to read to children. Eighty-nine percent of the children indicated that their parents read to them; thus, parents would have amble opportunity to influence their children through the messages they present in books. The majority of the children indicated that the characters in the books their parents like to read were gender neutral, mostly citing examples of animal characters. According to gender schema theory, boys and girls would be more likely to attend to and remember characters of the same sex; thus, if a parent reads the same story to a son and daughter, the boy would be more likely to recall the story being about the male character and the girl would be more likely to recall the story being about the female character. This potential response bias of children should be considered in this sample. According to the child reports, parents did not seem to expose their children to gender stereotypes through their book selections.

According to this data, children reported that parents prefer to buy gender neutral toys and read about gender neutral characters and that they do not openly

prescribe to gender biases in the statements they make regarding toys. Children, however, had gendered preferences in toys, stuck to playing with same gender toys at school, and had an understanding that boys and girls play with different types of toys. Based on this data alone, one might conclude that children do not perceive their primary socializing agent to be their parents, but rather attain their gender stereotypes in toys from their peers and their societal exposure. Because the amount of neutral toys reported decreases, from the first toy purchased to current toys that parents buy, child preferences may influence parents to purchase toys consistent with their desires.

Limitations in this study should be discussed. First, the sample population consisted of a relatively small number of children, in only one demographic region of Madrid. Also, the study relied solely on the validity of child reports of parental preferences and behaviors, reports which we have seen to be inconsistent. The study could be extended to include parental reports of their preferences and behaviors to complement child interviews. Another weakness to note is that Spanish was not the primary language of the researcher. The interview questions were written in English and translated to Spanish with an educational level Spanish background and might have omitted cultural nuances or conversational language. Data were collected using a small portable Sony IC Recorder. Due to the background noise and soft-spoken voices of the participants, the quality of the recording device made transcription particularly difficult and some responses impossible to decode. Also, data were coded into categories from an adult

American's perception of gender appropriateness, two potential confounding variables.

Part of the data collected included information regarding siblings, and the study could be extended to look into the influence of siblings on gender preferences and to determine if parents are more likely to buy gender neutral toys or cross-gendered toys when they have children of opposite sexes. Data was also collected on why children held certain beliefs about gendered toys and how they knew certain things that they reported. Analysis could be conducted on these variables as well. More questions could have also been included to clarify the responses regarding what gendered statements parents made. Finally, direct formal observations could be conducted on children within the school environment to determine consistency between children's reports and actual behaviors.

STUDY II

The second part of this study compares findings of toy preferences and parental socialization from the body of research that has been conducted on an American sample, to the results from the Spanish sample indicated in Study I.

By the time American children begin school, results indicate that they have established their gender identities, have developed stereotypes of how the sexes are different, prefer activities that are consist with their gender, and choose same-sex playmates. Findings from the Spanish sample of 6 – 7-year-olds were consistent with this data; children were able to identify that the sexes were

different in their toy preferences, indicate the types of toys they preferred, and identify the types of toys with which boys and girls typically play. Spanish children also consistently preferred gender appropriate toys over cross-gender toys and indicated that they commonly chose same-sex playmates.

American children become even more gender-typed in their preferences as they reach middle childhood, especially for boys (Sigelman & Shaffer, 1995 as cited in Honig, 1998). The Spanish children in this sample fell into the early childhood range; however, they did indicate more gender-typed current favorite toys in comparison to more gender neutral first toys recalled. Spanish boys also indicated stronger rigidity to gender-typed conventions, indicating more same sex toy preferences and playmates, and a lower rate of acceptance of girls playing with stereotypical boy toys, consistent with the concept of gender asymmetry in American children (Johnson et al., 2005).

In the area of peer interactions, American boys engage in more aggressive behaviors and play in larger groups, while girls spend more time in smaller groups and prefer passive activities (Fagot, 1988). Boys demonstrate a higher activity level and their play is more physically vigorous. With the Spanish sample, this was evident through researcher observations of these children at play during their recess period. Boys dominated more physical space, played in larger groups, and were louder and more aggressive than the girls, who preferred passive play in smaller groups off to the side.b

In the United States, gender classification of sports is largely dependent on the sport in question. Certain sports, such as American football, are almost

universally classified as a male activity and it is rare for a female to participate. Soccer, in the United States, is a gender neutral sport, widely played by both boys and girls. Spanish children, however, will identify soccer, (which in Spanish is interestingly the same word as American "football") as a boy activity and a soccer ball as a boy toy. Children in this study readily identified soccer as the most popular activity for boys to engage in during recess time and explained that girls were not involved in their games. In their verbal descriptions and physical gestures, both boys and girls indicated a physical separation in play spaces with boys engaging in games of soccer and basketball spanning the majority of the blacktop, leaving girls to congregate off to the side.

When playing outdoors in the United States, boys' activities often include playing in sand, on climbing structures, on tractors, and around equipment sheds, while girls commonly play indoors at craft tables and kitchen sets (Johnson et al., 2005). Results in Madrid were not consistent with these preferences. While many boys mentioned sports as a preferred form of play, there was no mention made to climbing structures or other outdoor play equipment. This could be explained by the fact that Madrid is a metropolitan location, largely without space for jungle-gyms and climbing equipment. While many American schools provide these spaces, Colegio Chamberí did not have any outdoor climbing equipment or sand areas and only provided a blacktop for soccer and basketball.

Girls in Madrid repeatedly made mention of jumping rope as their preferred activity and did not mention dramatic play kitchens. Aside from sticker collecting albums, no mention was made to art either. Even within the context of

the Spanish first and second-grade curriculum, art projects were not an integrated practice. Art, as a child play preference, may be a cultural practice. In addition, in Madrid, dramatic play did not seem to be an activity in which either sex engaged, while it was consistently reported in American children.

American girls tend to enact domestic scripts, and both sexes engage in dramatic play. Boys often report playing cowboys and soldiers, and girls list playing house and school (Sutton-Smith et al., 1963). The play activities of the Spanish sample of 6 – 7-year-olds were not indicative of pretend play. Few children directly mentioned dramatic play and girls did not report having domestic toys as do girls in the US. The few girls that did mention dramatic play were consistent with American thematic findings, indicating playing house and school. Several Spanish boys mentioned possessing toy weapons and frequently referenced playing with action figures; thus, they may be engaging in forms of dramatic play that they are not reporting as such.

Results from the study presented in Study I lacked consistency in child reports of parental behavior to draw decisive conclusions. In the US, it is rare that parents purchase cross-gendered toys (Bradbard, 1985) and this appeared to be consistent in the Spanish population. Also, Spanish children reported that parents prefer to buy neutral toys more frequently than did American children. Research shows that American parents present their attitudes by simply discouraging one type of play by their child, for example deterring their sons from playing with dolls. The Spanish children in this sample did not indicate any instances of

parents saying that they could not play with a certain toy, and the majority did not report the statements their parents were making about toys to be gender-typed.

Studies with American children revealed that mothers and fathers interacted differently with their children, fathers spending more time with sons and encouraging more physical play and mothers being more likely to play neutral games with either sex (Johnson et al., 2005). The results from the Spanish population did not indicate any different between the behaviors of mothers and fathers. Spanish children reported that they were equally likely to have received favorite toys and first toys from either sex and did not make any mention of parental differences. It should be noted that in the Spanish sample, all children lived in a household with both of their parents, while in the US, single parent and mixed families are more common and may have an influence on parental practices.

Interesting to note, many Spanish words are expressly gender-typed and toys are no exception. The word for a doll and an action figure share the same root and only differ in their masculine and feminine endings (i.e. muñeca meaning doll and muñeco meaning action figure). Thus, in mentioning either a doll or an action figure, the gender intent is clear and these word choices are probably a socializing agent in and of themselves.

Another cultural difference that bears mentioning is the actual practice of play in the school context. American classrooms in the primary grades contain many toys, and play is often incorporated into the curriculum. Art activities are often used within the classroom as teaching tools and children are giving free time

to collaborate and play together. In the Spanish sample, Colegio Chamberí did not directly provide toys in the first and second-grade classrooms and the curriculum was academic work-based. Children were reprimanded and their toys confiscated if they presented them during academic instruction. During recess time, there were no toys or play materials provided and children brought their own toys from home. Many Spanish children did not initially indicate playing at school, associating school with work. The school environment may be important in the socialization of children because it does not present toys with which they may choose to play. Thus, the only toys available are those that children bring from home, which may be gender-typed due to parental socialization or due to children wanting to conform to peer pressure. Gender neutral toys, that might have been provided in the American classroom, were absent from the Spanish setting.

A final cultural difference to note is the locations to purchase toys themselves. While in the United States toy stores are a popular commodity, in Spain, children largely discussed purchasing their toys from the Corte Inglés. The Corte Inglés is a mega-department store housing a supermarket and boasting selling any product one might desire. Here, there are large selections of toys and smaller toy stores are far less common. Simply observing the toy section at the Corte Inglés, it greatly resembles an American toy store; boy and girl toys are separated into different displays, the boys' displays swept in blue and the girls' dominated by pink.

The American classics are all present in the Spanish toy department, and were largely mentioned in the Spanish children's preferences, including

Spiderman, Batman, Pokemon, and Action Man for boys; Barbie, Bratz, and PollyPocket for girls, and an assortment of Legos, PlayMobiles, and games for the PlayStation. The Spanish children frequently mentioned two particular lines of toys native to Spain: Gormities for boys and Nancy dolls for girls. Also consistent with children in the US, Spanish boys reported many more categories of toys with which they played as compared to girls. Boys in Spain played frequently with transportation toys, action figures, sports equipment, and occasionally with action equipment and building materials, while girls largely mentioned the category of dolls across the board. There are many different types of dolls; however, there are fewer types of toys for girls than for boys.

Overall, children in Spain and in the US are presented largely with the same toy selections and come to internalize similar gender stereotypes of toys and of play behaviors. There are some subtle differences in preferences, which may likely be attributed to cultural variations. The question arises in how children acquire these stereotypes. American children have been found to be socialized to these gender conventions principally by parents and also influenced by their peers, media, school environment, and societal cues. Spanish children in this sample did not largely indicate that they view parents as having an influence on their preferences and behaviors; however, more research needs to be conducted in order to draw decisive conclusions on the role of parents in gender socialization.

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Appendix A

Interview Questionnaire

- How old are you?
- Where were you born? Do you know the same of the city?
- Do you have any brothers or sisters? How old are they?
- Who lives in your house with you? Who are they?
- Do your parents like to buy toys for you to play with?
- Parents like to buy many kinds of toys for their children. Some parents like to buy some toys but not other toys for their children. What types of toys do your parents like to buy for you?
- What is your favorite toy?
    - Why is that your favorite toy?
    - Where did you get this toy?
- Some people play with some kinds of toys and other people play with other kinds of toys. Can you tell who usually plays with toys like your favorite toy?
    - How do you know who play s with this kind of toy?
    - Could a boy play with this toy? Could a girl play with this toy? Why?
- What's the first toy you remember playing with?
    - Where did you get it?
- (If have brothers and sisters) What kinds of toys does your brother/sister play with?
    - Would you play with those toys too? Why/why not?
- What other toys do you have at home?
- If you went to the store and could buy any toy, what would you pick? Why?
- What kinds of toys do you play with at school?
- Do boys and girls play with different toys at school or do they play with the same toys?
- Let's talk about different toys that boys and girls play with. Can you name some of the toys that boys like to play with? Can you name some of the toys that girls like to play with? How do you know boys/girls like to play with these toys?
- Some people think that some toys are for boys, some toys are for girls and some toys are for both boys and girls. Can you tell me about some toys that people think are for boys?
- Can you tell about some toys that people think are for girls?
- Can you tell me about some toys that people think are for both boys and girls?
- Did your parents ever tell you that toys were only for boys or only for girls or for both boys and girls?
- Do your parents read to you? What kinds of books? What are the characters like?
- Did your parents ever speak to you about playing with different kinds of toys? What did they say?

Appendix B

Coding Categories of Toys

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys		
Action Figures		
Sports Equipment		
Action Equipment		
Building Materials		
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		
Crafts		
Domestic Items		
Physical Training Equipment		
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books		
Electronics		
Board Games/Games		
Stuffed Animals		
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (judge)		
Non conclusive Response		

Appendix C

Coding Categories of Source Toys are From

Relation (Male)	*Boy*	*Girl*
Father		
Male Relative		
Male Sibling		
Relation (Female)	*Boy*	*Girl*
Mother		
Female Relative		
Female Sibling		
Relation (Neutral)	*Boy*	*Girl*
Parents		
"Three Kings"*		
Other Neutral (grandparents)		
Relation (Other)	*Boy*	*Girl*
Other (store, house)		
Don't Know		

Note: "Three Kings" is the Spanish equivalent of Santa Claus

Appendix D

Coding Categories of Book Characters

Category of Characters (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Male Royalty		
Super Hero		
Dragon		
Beast		
Handsome		
Category of Characters (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Female Royalty		
Domestic Figures		
Dolls		
Pretty		
Category of Characters (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Animals		
Stuffed Animals		
Cartoon Characters		
Educational		
Category of Characters (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (large, small)		
Non-conclusive Response		

Appendix E

Children's Favorite Toy Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	4	1
Action Figures	7	
Sports Equipment	4	
Action Equipment		
Building Materials		
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		13
Crafts		1
Domestic Items		
Physical Training Equipment		1
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books	1	1
Electronics	9	1
Board Games/Games	1	1
Stuffed Animals	2	4
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (judge)		1
Not conclusive Response	2	1

Appendix F

Toy Children Most Want Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	4	2
Action Figures	6	
Sports Equipment	2	1
Action Equipment		1
Building Materials	3	
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		6
Crafts		1
Domestic Items		2
Physical Training Equipment		2
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books		
Electronics	7	3
Board Games	1	1
Stuffed Animals	4	5
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (star)		1
Not conclusive Response	3	

Appendix G

Toys Played with at School Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	3	
Action Figures	4	
Sports Equipment	7	3
Action Equipment		
Building Materials		
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		2
Crafts		4
Domestic Items		1
Physical Training Equipment		7
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books		2
Electronics	2	
Board Games	2	
Stuffed Animals	2	3
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (plastic)	1	
Not conclusive response	9	3

Appendix H

Who Plays with Same Toys as Favorites Responses

	Boys	Girls
Boys	20	
Girls	1	20
Both	8	2
Non-conclusive Response	1	3

Note: that the category Boys includes any male relative or friend mentioned and the word “boys” does not need to be explicitly stated

Appendix I

Toys Boys Play With Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	6	11
Action Figures	14	9
Sports Equipment	12	15
Action Equipment	1	
Building Materials	1	
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		
Crafts		
Domestic Items		
Physical Training Equipment		2
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books		1
Electronics	5	
Board Games	1	
Stuffed Animals	1	2
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (big, small, things from movies)	3	1
Not conclusive response	3	2

Appendix J

Toys Girls Play With Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	1	1
Action Figures		
Sports Equipment		2
Action Equipment		
Building Materials		
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls	24	21
Crafts	1	6
Domestic Items		2
Physical Training Equipment	5	11
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books		1
Electronics		1
Board Games/Games	2	1
Stuffed Animals	5	1
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (long, small)	1	1
Not conclusive response	7	

Appendix K

Toys Children Report that Society Thinks Boys Play With

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	7	6
Action Figures	15	8
Sports Equipment	7	4
Action Equipment	3	
Building Materials		
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		
Crafts		
Domestic Items		
Physical Training Equipment		
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books		
Electronics	3	
Board Games		
Stuffed Animals	2	
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (noisy, scary, large, ugly)	5	6
Not conclusive response	10	10

Appendix L

Toys Children Report that Society Thinks Girls Play With

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	1	1
Action Figures		
Sports Equipment		
Action Equipment		
Building Materials		
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls	24	10
Crafts	1	3
Domestic Items	1	
Physical Training Equipment	1	5
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books		1
Electronics	1	
Board Games		
Stuffed Animals	3	2
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (Kings, small, computer, pretty)	3	3
Not conclusive Response	7	8

Appendix M

Toys Children Report that Society Thinks Both Play With

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	2	
Action Figures	2	1
Sports Equipment	1	6
Action Equipment	3	2
Building Materials	1	
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls	1	
Crafts		
Domestic Items	1	
Physical Training Equipment		5
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books	3	1
Electronics		2
Board Games	5	2
Stuffed Animals	7	6
Puzzles		
Educational Toys	1	
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (theater, medium bright, umbrella)	1	3
Not conclusive response	8	5

Appendix N

Boys and Girls Play with the Same or Different Toys Responses

	Boy	*Girl*
Same	3	1
Different	20	21
Some Play With Same	5	3
Don't Know	2	

Appendix O

Can Member of Opposite Sex Play With Toy

	Boys	Girls
Yes (Female Toy)		4
Yes (Male Toy)	13	
Yes (Neutral Toy)	10	7
No (Female Toy)		12
No (Male Toy)	4	
No (Neutral Toy)	2	
Non –Conclusive Response	1	2

Appendix P

Do Parents Buy Toys Responses

	Boys	Girls
No	10	2
Yes	12	10
Sometimes	8	13
Total positive responses	20	23

Appendix Q

Type of Toys Parents Like to Buy Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	4	
Action Figures	6	
Sports Equipment	3	
Action Equipment		
Building Materials		
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		4
Crafts		1
Domestic Items		
Physical Training Equipment		
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books	1	2
Electronics	1	1
Board Games	2	2
Stuffed Animals	3	4
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (small, normal)	1	3
Not conclusive Response	5	7
Parents don’t buy	4	1

Appendix R

Favorite Toy From Responses

Relation (Male)	*Boy*	*Girl*
Father	7	2
Male Relative		
Male Sibling		
Relation (Female)		
Mother	6	6
Female Relative	1	2
Female Sibling		
Relation (Neutral)		
Parents	4	6
"Three Kings"*	6	3
Other Neutral (grandparents)		
Relation (Other)		
Other (store, house)	4	4
Don't Know	2	2

Note: "Three Kings" is the Spanish equivalent of Santa Claus

Appendix S

First Toy Recalled Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	7	2
Action Figures	3	
Sports Equipment		
Action Equipment		
Building Materials	3	
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		10
Crafts		
Domestic Items		
Physical Training Equipment		
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books	2	
Electronics	5	1
Board Games		
Stuffed Animals	7	9
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (beach)	2	
Not conclusive response	1	3

Appendix T

First Toy From Responses

Relation (Male)	*Boy*	*Girl*
Father	2	3
Male Relative	5	1
Male Sibling		
Relation (Female)		
Mother	5	3
Female Relative	3	6
Female Sibling		
Relation (Neutral)		
Parents	2	3
"Three Kings"*	4	1
Other Neutral (grandparents, aunts/uncles)	2	1
Relation (Other)		
Other (found it, house, store, got if for birthday)	4	4
Don't Know	3	3

Appendix U

Have Parents Told Child that Some Toys are Only for Boys or Girls

	Boy	*Girl*
Yes	12	12
No	13	12
Non Conclusive Response	5	1

Appendix V

Parents Talk About Playing with Different Types of Toys Responses

	Boy	*Girl*
Yes (Gendered)		
Yes (Non Gendered)	12	7
Yes (Don't remember)	3	3
No	15	15

Appendix W

Do Parents Read Responses

	Boy	*Girl*
Yes	26	23
No	4	2

Appendix X

Types of Characters in Books Responses

Category of Characters (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Male Royalty	2	
Super Hero	3	2
Dragon	1	
Beast	1	1
Handsome		1
Category of Characters (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Female Royalty		7
Domestic Figures		2
Dolls		1
Pretty	1	2
Category of Characters (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Animals	5	10
Stuffed Animals	3	
Cartoon Characters	2	
Educational	4	2
Category of Characters (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (large, small)	5	2
Not conclusive Response	9	4

Appendix Y

Other Toys in House Responses

Category of Toy (Boys)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Transportation Toys	21	5
Action Figures	13	2
Sports Equipment	3	1
Action Equipment	3	
Building Equipment	3	
Category of Toy (Girls)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Dolls		19
Crafts	2	
Domestic Items		4
Physical Training Equipment		1
Category of Toy (Neutral)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Books	7	3
Electronics	6	3
Board Games	5	1
Stuffed Animals	10	13
Puzzles		
Category of Toy (Other)	*Boys*	*Girls*
Other (umbrella)	1	
Not conclusive Response	2	1

Capstone Summary

The focus of this study is on gender stereotypes in children's toys and how parents contribute to the acquisition of these gender stereotypes through their toy purchases, attitudes towards toys, and behaviors in response to children's play with certain toys. The first part of the study analyses data collected from interviews with 55 Spanish first and second-grade children at a school in Madrid, Spain. The questions revolve around children's favorite toys, what people think about toys, and about parents selecting toys for children. The second part of the study compares the findings from the Spanish sample with the body of research previously conducted on American children.

The methods used in this study included preliminary literature analysis, establishing connections with a Madrid school, drafting and translating the questionnaire, individually interviewing and audio recording each of the children. Once the data were collected, the responses were transcribed, translated to English, and back-translated to Spanish to account for language errors. In order to analyze the data, the researcher devised a coding system to break down responses of toys and sources of toys into categories of Boys, Girls, and Neutral. Finally, results were analyzed using statistical measures and results from the Spanish sample were compared to the American research results.

Consistent with predictions, Spanish boys were more likely to prefer boy toys and girls were more likely to prefer girl toys. About half of the children indicated a preference for same-gendered toys. Fewer boys indicated playing with girl toys than did girls playing with boy toys. Boys and girls were equally likely to

select gender neutral toys as their preferences. The Spanish children were more likely than expected to indicate a preference for gender neutral toys.

At school, children indicated playing with more gender stereotyped toys and less with gender neutral toys. Observations of children's play during the recess recreational period showed clearly defined boundaries between boys' and girls' play. The children had a clear understanding of this division; the majority reported that children play with different toys at school and accurately indicated boy toys and girl toys. They were less able to identify what society thinks are gendered toys.

Once we identified that the children have gender stereotypical conceptions, we were interested in how they acquire these stereotypes. We were interested in whether parents are socializing their children to these gender conventions through toy purchases, attitudes towards toys, and behaviors in response to children's play with certain toys.

Our data rely on children's reports, and their responses regarding their parents do appear to be inconsistent. Children seem to perceive their parents as preferring to buy gender neutral toys and read about gender neutral characters, and did not indicate that their parents make gender-typed statements regarding playing with certain toys. They recalled their first toys to be gender neutral, and indicated that these primary toys came from their mother, father, or parents together. Their favorite toy and toy most desired seem to be more gender-typed, indicating that with age these stereotyped preferences are becoming more ingrained.

Children, however, have gendered preferences in toys, stick to playing with same gender toys at school, and have an understanding that boys and girls play with different types of toys. Based on these data alone, one might conclude that children do not perceive their primary socializing agent to be the parents, but rather attain their gender stereotypes in toys from their peers and their societal exposure. It appears that the school environment was a socializing agent that prescribed children to particular same-sex roles, which would explain why children indicated less play with gender-neutral toys and significant differences by sex in play with boy and girl toys.

In comparing the Spanish children in this sample to American children, overall, children in Spain and in the US are presented largely with the same toy selections and come to internalize similar gender stereotypes of toys and of play behaviors. There are some subtle differences in preferences, which can likely be attributed to cultural variations. The question arises in how children acquire these stereotypes. American children have been found to be socialized to these gender conventions principally by parents and also influenced by their peers, media, school environment, and societal cues. Overall, Spanish children in this sample did not indicate that they view parents as having an influence on their preferences and behaviors.

Results indicate that both Spanish and American children have established gender identities, have developed stereotypes of how the sexes are different, prefer activities that are consist with their gender, and choose same-sex playmates. In both cultures, boys stick more rigidly to same sex-playmates and

gender-stereotypical forms of play. In both groups, boys engage in more aggressive behaviors, dominate more physical space, and play in larger groups, while girls spend more time in smaller groups and prefer passive activities.

There were some subtle cultural differences found; for example, in the United States sports are more likely to be classified as gender neutral. In their verbal descriptions and physical gestures, both boys and girls in Spain indicated a physical separation in play spaces with boys engaging in games of soccer and basketball spanning the majority of the blacktop, leaving girls to congregate off to the side. In addition, Spanish boys did not make any mention of climbing structures or outdoor play equipment as do children in the US, possibly because Madrid is a metropolitan location, largely without space for jungle-gyms and climbing equipment. Girls in Madrid did not mention pretend play, domestic toys, or art as preferences as do American children. Art projects were not an integrated practice within the curriculum as it is in the United States.

In terms of the influence of parents, both groups indicated that is rare that parents purchase cross-gendered toys. Spanish children reported that parents prefer to buy neutral toys more frequently than did American children. While research shows that American parents present their attitudes by simply discouraging one type of play by their child, for example deterring their sons from playing with dolls, the Spanish children did not indicate any instances of parents saying that they could not play with a certain toy and the majority did not report the statements their parents were making about toys to be gender-typed. Studies with American children also revealed that mothers and fathers interact differently

with their children and the results from the Spanish population did not indicate any different between the behaviors of mothers and fathers.

Another cultural difference is that American classrooms in the primary grades contain many toys, and play is often incorporated into the curriculum. In the Spanish sample, the school did not directly provide toys in the first and second-grade classrooms and the curriculum was academic work-based.

This study is significant because it adds a new dimension to the body of research on gender socialization. Although American children's experiences in this realm have been subjected to significant study, this study seeks to increase our understanding of how parents introduce gender through their toy selection, attitudes, and responses to play behaviors within a Spanish population.

It also helps us to understand the impact of society and the school environment. For example, while many American schools provide outdoor climbing equipment, the school in this study did not provide these options for play. Here, the blacktop was conducive to playing soccer and basketball and for jumping rope. By not providing toys, the toys with which children played were those that they brought from home. Thus, the home environment could be playing a greater influence on preferences and stereotypes.

In addition, this study may help to understand differences in cultural practices. Art, as a child play preference, may be a cultural practice and dramatic play toys may be more prevalent in American society. Overall, this study broadens our understanding of Spanish culture, parental practices, and gender stereotypes in terms of toys.