

The Shopping Center “Scavenger Hunt”

People who belong to majority groups (based on race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) are often unaware of the advantages provided by their group memberships. This activity is intended to provide you with a hands-on way of exploring group-based differences in privilege.

Location: Go to either a shopping mall or a “Big Box” superstore such as Wal-Mart or Target.

Challenge: Find as many of the following items in the store/mall as you can.

1. A Barbie doll and/or G.I. Joe action figure that are not White (record the approximate number of toys you can find that meet this requirement)
2. A Barbie doll and/or G.I. Joe action figure that are White
3. Holiday cards: Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa
4. A Valentine’s Day, wedding, anniversary, or romance card designed for heterosexual couples and for LGBT couples
5. Signs in the store/mall featuring individuals who are overweight
6. Signs in the store/mall featuring individuals who are over 60
7. Picture frames containing “filler pictures” of people who are Asian, Latino/a, Black or African-American, or White
8. An item that features a Native American sports team mascot
9. An item that features a Native American who is not related to a sports team

While you are in the store, please also do the following:

1. If there is a clothing section, notice how far apart racks are spaced and how high the racks are. Would someone who is in a wheelchair or is physically challenged be able to navigate this section of the store easily? Why or why not?
2. Is there a section of clothing for plus-size women? Is there a section of clothing for plus-size men? What names are given to these sections of the store?
3. Who are the workers in the store? Who are the customers? What do you notice, if anything, about the race, gender, and age of the staff and customers in the store?

Paper assignment:

Write a 1-2 page paper about your experiences, including how difficult or easy it was to find the items on the list, what reactions you had while you were looking around the store, what interactions you had (if any) with other customers or employees, and your overall reaction to the assignment.