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THE IMPACT OF COEDUCATIONAL RESIDENCE HALLS ON
MEN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH WOMEN

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

by

Josh Wymore

May 2010

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**Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTERS THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Josh Wymore

entitled

The Impact of Coeducational Residence Halls on Men's Relationships with Women

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the
Master of Arts degree

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ABSTRACT

The college years are a critical time for the development of healthy male-female relationships, but institutions on the whole often neglect or poorly meet that need. Astin (1993b) found that “college does not eliminate or even reduce many of the stereotypical differences between the sexes” and often “serve[s] to widen gender gaps that existed at the point of college entry” (p. 9). One such remedy for this developmental issue is the coeducational hall, a learning environment designed to engender normal interactions between men and women and break down unsubstantiated biases between genders.

This study examined the relationship between coeducational housing and men’s attitudes toward women on one small, private college campus. 494 men completed the Attitudes toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973), and their results were analyzed by living situation. A comparison of means found that men living in coeducational residence halls scored higher on the feminism scale than did men living in all-male halls, demonstrating that men in these halls hold more progressive attitudes toward women. These findings both show there is a relationship between coeducational halls and healthy inter-gender relationships and provide a foundation for future studies into the effectiveness of such residential designs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise God! A couple months ago, this behemoth seemed like an insurmountable task, but He has been faithful to provide the strength, insight, and diligence necessary to research and write. In addition, God's used several people in my life to help me get to this point. To my parents, Larry and Lori: you've always been so supportive of whatever I've wanted to do. Thanks for encouraging me, telling me how proud you are, and being my lifeline through grad school. To my professors: Scott Moeschberger, who supervised this thesis and helped a conservative Texan understand why feminism is not actually the incarnation of the devil; to Tim and Skip who put up with my immaturity and gently (and not-so-gently) corrected me; to Scott Gaier who taught me in new ways the value and practice of humility; and to Randall, who challenged me to professionalism through ridiculous bets based on 1980s sitcoms.

Thanks to my cohort, the MAHEcans: you are my favorite part of the last two years, and I eagerly await seeing what God does through each of you. And finally, to my friends and mentors: Brad Bowser, Stan Coppinger, Brent Ellis, the LeTourneau student development staff, and everyone at Taylor who's contributed to my maturation and education in countless ways. I owe you big time.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Gender equality has continued to develop into a ubiquitous cultural issue over the past several decades. Rooted in feminist efforts, achieving equality for every person has become a goal for societal reformers at large. This movement has carried over to the realm of higher education, an institution renowned for its catalytic impact on social change and worldwide trends. Events like the Kent State massacre or U.C. Berkeley's free speech protests in the 1960s exemplify the collegiate dedication to embracing progressive ideas and standing behind their beliefs with solidarity.

But even though colleges have this reputation for furthering social restitution, little research has definitively identified characteristics formative for promoting gender equality. University figureheads can charismatically state that egalitarianism is a crucial value to instill in their graduates, but few can outline specific initiatives that lead toward that decided end. Colleges possess a teeming learning environment in the residence hall, yet few take advantage of its possibilities to render internal change.

Statement of Problem

This shortcoming on the part of institutions of higher education has not gone unnoticed. In his research on the college experience, Astin (1993b) found that "college does not eliminate or even reduce many of the stereotypical differences between the sexes" and often "serve[s] to widen gender gaps that existed at the point of college entry" (p. 9), a fact, according to Astin, that is due in part to single-sex housing. In general, higher education does not deconstruct denigrating gender roles well and cannot reliably

assess why positive change happens when it does. Colleges on the whole are compelled to philosophically and programmatically address egalitarian issues if they wish to solve this problem. This study will give guidance toward that end by beginning the conversation in the residence hall and investigating, through quantitative research, the unexamined hypothesis that coeducational residences bolster inter-gender relationships.

Surprisingly, no empirical research has connected men's living environments with their attitudes toward women. Although proponents of the philosophy testify to the beneficial aspects of living in a coeducational residence (Imes & Syracuse Univ., 1966), little research empirically supports their claims. For these reasons, the following research questions are posed: Do men's relationships with and attitudes toward women develop differently if they live in a coeducational residence hall as opposed to an all-male hall? Does time spent with women measurably affect attitudes toward women?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many undergraduate men have unsubstantiated biases about women's issues due to environmental influences in their youth (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Reingold & Foust, 1998). A number come from homes or communities where women are not appreciated or are designated a limited role in society (Twenge, 1997), and it is not until college that these men have an opportunity to examine their own beliefs in light of conflicting opinions and experiences and choose to either affirm or deny those values. The examination of one's previously unrecognized biases and prejudices is central to the concept of a liberal arts education (Holmes, 1975), an issue that must be addressed by academe. This study provides a snapshot of men's attitudes toward and relationships with women, creating a foundation from which administrators can proceed.

Philosophy of Coeducational Housing

Coeducational residences were created with many inter-gender issues in mind (Amato & Booth, 1995; Astin, 1993b; Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Halloran, 1998; Reingold & Foust, 1998; Twenge, 1997), the foremost being the goal of engendering natural male-female relationships. Begun in the United States as early as the 1950s, coeducational housing was designed to both create opportunities for natural relational development as well as offer a flexible living environment that accommodated fluctuating male-female enrollment numbers (Imes & Syracuse Univ., 1966). Opening up halls to both genders allowed universities to more effectively utilize scarce living spaces and opened up residence staffing positions to both men and women.

The practicality of coeducational housing still pales in comparison to the social benefits the arrangement provides. Early research on the phenomenon shows that the environment “provides a ready-made social life for the shy student...as well as a setting for casual friendships, which lead[s] to better understanding of attitudes and interests between men and women” (Imes & Syracuse Univ., 1966, p. 6). This casual setting is one of the greatest assets of combined housing because it alleviates the social pressures normally a part of inter-gender relationships, allowing men and women to regularly interact with each other in a variety of moods and circumstances without the supposition that a dating relationship must form. Populations like international students especially benefit from such a setting because it familiarizes them with the cultural norms and habits of their new environment (Imes & Syracuse Univ.).

According to experts, providing this opportunity for interaction is a clear need for colleges and universities. James Duncan (1972), Dean of Students at the University of Texas in the midst of the sexual revolution, firmly believed that “the traditional and continued separation of the sexes in our campus housing probably represents the most glaring case of our failure to apply what we know about the psycho-social development needs of college youth” (p. 4). His point was that separating sexes into different residences represents a refusal on the part of student personnel administrators to address pertinent issues of sexual identity, whereas “the coed living arrangement, by providing a living situation that is low in anxiety, may be the best way to help today’s student develop a capacity for true intimacy as well as to help him solidify his sexual identity” (p. 7).

Men, he argued, are repressed in their desire to develop meaningful relationships with the opposite sex, a fact that results in higher incidences of early marriage and divorce. Instead of hypocritically ignoring issues of inter-gender relationships, we should “seize the unique opportunity that is ours in residence halls to create an environment enabling the development of the ‘whole man’” (Duncan, 1972, p. 7). He predicted that rather than increasing sexual activity, coed dorms would foster a “sibling-type relationship” (p. 9) between men and women—a scenario that is often affirmed (anecdotally) by coed hall residents. Because they continually reside with these women, they cannot carry on casual sexual affairs and then abandon them; they are forced to live together and resolve their issues like responsible adults. The result should be men and women with mature understandings of the nature, responsibilities, and realities of coeducational relationships. Surprisingly, little research supporting this philosophy has been produced since the push for coeducational halls in the 1970s, a shortcoming that this thesis was designed to address.

Defining Feminism

One would be remiss to begin a conversation about equality of the sexes without first discussing the impact of the feminist movement on the matter. Since a key aspect of healthy, romantic, male-female relationships is equality (Halloran, 1998), and equality is the foremost issue of the feminist movement, an understanding of feminism’s history is crucial to implementing egalitarian change in men’s attitudes toward women.

Feminism asserts that, although all people are individuals who are free and equal (Hoffman, 2001), women are not currently treated as equals by society. Feminists seek to liberate women by emancipating them from the bonds of their limited gender roles and

empowering them toward achieving anything that men have the freedom to achieve. This movement takes on a variety of forms and impetuses, bringing diversity and an inherent amorphousness to the definition of feminism.

Wollstonecraft's (1792) foundational work *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, first published in 1792, candidly and eloquently identified the ignored rights of women and the disparity between their inherent rights and the actual treatment they receive. Wollstonecraft argued from a religious perspective that women have the right, as eternal beings, to improve themselves through challenging educations. She spoke out against men who viewed "females rather as women than human creatures" (p. 31), debasing them to an existence below humankind. She challenged women's acceptance of the diminutive role, stating that "elegance is inferior to virtue" (p. 34). Her argument for equal access to education was one of the first movements toward feminism in America, and her efforts laid the groundwork for pioneers to follow.

Since that time, feminists, though not called by that name until the 1910s (Cott, 1987), have focused on broader ranges of issues: owning property, gaining suffrage, ceasing economic discrimination, and having the right to choose abortion, to name a few. According to Kroløkke and Sørensen (2006), these gains all came in the wake of definable movements.

The first period identifiable with modern feminism was that of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This first wave aimed at obtaining voting rights for women. A second wave emerged in the 1960s with a focus on ending discrimination against oppressed peoples, especially blacks and homosexuals (Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1998; Merriman, 2006). Betty Friedan's (1963) *Feminine Mystique* was a powerful and

influential work at that time as it encapsulated the cause of the domestic housewife and the emotional oppression she faced. The third and current wave crested in the mid-1990s amidst heightened awareness of worldwide accountability with regard to issues like genocide and sex-trafficking (Merriman). Conversations moved from the American level to the international scale as momentum gained behind drives for liberating women of other cultures and ethnicities. Since the beginning of the last century, feminism has evolved from discussions of opportunity and equality to initiatives for emancipation and empowerment, relieving women from their repressed roles in society.

Factors Affecting Views toward Women

One of the chief goals of the feminist movement is the reshaping of misconstructions of sex and gender. Several researchers have created scales to quantify an individual's views toward women in these regards (Gender Role Conflict Scale, Bem Sex-Role Inventory, Sex Role Stereotype Questionnaire, etc.), the most widely used of which is the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS).

A meta-analysis of results of the AWS (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973) shows a trend toward liberality among college students in almost every area of feminism (Twenge, 1997). Although this fact is easily recognizable, little research, if any, has examined the role that residence halls play in accelerating or hampering this shift. Researchers have examined the effects of race (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Blee & Tickameyer, 1995), gender and age (Bolzendahl & Myers; Kremer & Curry, 2001; McKee, 2007; Twenge), religious affiliation (Baron, 1997; Bolzendahl & Myers; McKee), region of upbringing (McKee; Twenge), political views (Bolzendahl & Myers; McKee), level of education (McKee), self-esteem and attitudes toward men (Maltby &

Day, 2001; 2003), personality characteristics (Greenberg & Zeldlow, 1977), maternal relationship (Bolzendahl & Myers), social values (Loo & Thorpe, 2005), attitudes toward violence (Baron), and pornography use (Baron; McKee) on feminist views, but no research has examined the impact of the residence hall among these factors. Of these variables discussed, gender, age, religion, geographic area, and political views were found to be most significant.

A common thread running through gender equality literature is the positive effect of dissolution of gender stereotypes and roles. Baron (1997) found that geographic areas with higher percentages of divorced persons accepted a broader range of women's roles, stating, "as the level of social disorganization increases, gender equality increases" (p. 376). Apart from marriage separation, this finding implies that interaction with women who fill unique roles further expands the acceptance of other women in achieving expanded roles. Thus, men who have regular, positive interaction with working wives and mothers are more likely to hold progressive views toward other women pursuing careers. This finding is relevant to college men with a female resident director or a high percentage of female professors.

Several studies have also connected violence and aggression to anti-feminist attitudes (Baron, 1997; Parrott & Zeichner, 2003). Although these studies have not proven a causal relationship between the factors, they have shown that they are strongly correlated. Excessive physicality is more problematic in male-dominated cultures like fraternities, sports teams (Whitaker & Pollard, 1993), and all-male halls, and a continual female presence (such as female co-residents in a coeducational hall) would likely impede such violence.

Significant Demographic Variables

Age is consistently identified as a significant factor in determining feminist views, with most research agreeing that younger people are more liberal than older people concerning attitudes toward women (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Kremer & Curry, 2001; Twenge, 1997). Younger people are more likely to support women working outside the home, holding positions of authority, and operating in other roles most commonly associated with men. A study by Astin (1993b) found that this trend is split by gender. While women become more politically liberal and feministic in college, men become more conservative.

Not surprisingly, gender is strongly related to views toward women (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Twenge, 1997). Women have been found to be consistently more liberal than men in their views toward women (Twenge). Although this gap between their views is steadily decreasing, men are still more conservative overall (Twenge).

Region of upbringing was also found to be significant. In both a study by Bolzendahl and Myers (2004) and a meta-analysis by Twenge (1997), men from the southern United States were consistently more conservative than any other North American population. Area of residence was even found to be a significant factor in a survey of Australians (McKee, 2007), proving the validity of the variable outside of the American context.

Religion is a predicting value as well, especially if the population is Catholic or Southern Baptist (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; McKee, 2007; Twenge, 1997). Feminism's main stumbling point for conservative Christians is abortion. Although many respondents

from mainline religious sects held liberal work-related views, the majority could not agree with freedom of choice issues (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004).

Men who voted for conservative parties also have conservative views toward women (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; McKee, 2007; Reingold & Foust, 1998). Although these studies do not demonstrate causality, they show a strong tie between conservative gender concepts and political beliefs. Some studies have even gone as far as to state that political views are the single greatest predictor of feminist attitudes in men (Reingold & Foust). Reingold and Foust state that men's identification with feminism is "almost entirely a function of their ideological beliefs and core political values. Ideological and partisan identification, racial attitudes, and beliefs about equality and traditional 'family values' all have significant independent effects on men's feminist consciousness" (p. 39). Contrary to many other studies, this research effectively eliminates life experiences as an impacting variable of feminist ideals, attributing beliefs to childhood dispositions and ideological orientations.

Aberrant Factors

As previously stated, acceptance of work roles is not necessarily correlated with completely liberal beliefs. Applications of the AWS in both genders have shown that men and women often have liberal beliefs about work-related issues but not equally liberal views on feminist issues (Kremer & Curry, 2001). This finding somewhat contradicts the hypothesis that interaction with women in the workforce engenders wholly feminist views.

Other feminist issues deviate from the whole as well. Bolzendahl and Myers's (2004) longitudinal study found that views on abortion have actually become more

conservative in some samples since 1974 and have remained largely stable in the remaining populations. Again, subsets such as conservative Protestants and Catholics would fall in this category because of the moral gravity of issues like abortion, sexual freedom, or other liberal areas that conflict with their religious views. But rather than using this fact to adapt or create the AWS for this group, surveyors have disregarded certain denominations (such as Southern Baptists) as anti-feministic. This has been a great limitation in previous literature.

Social Theory

Literature speaks of two primary approaches to feminism: interest-based and exposure-based feminism (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004). These philosophies state that exposure to feminist ideas and personal interest in the furthering of those ideals prompts one to adhere to said beliefs. This suggests that interaction with liberal women and men increases the opportunity for efficacy of liberal beliefs, and men and women frequently interact in coeducational environments. An extrapolation of this theory supports the concept of coeducational halls for furthering liberalism.

Astin's (1993b) work on peer groups further grounds the exposure-based argument. He states: "the single most powerful source of influence on the undergraduate student's academic and personal development is the peer group" (p. 7), with one of its largest effects being on one's cultural awareness. He goes on to say that students tend to change their values and behavior in the direction of their peer group, meaning a liberally oriented group will draw its more conservative members toward moderation. Because of the weightiness of this influential factor, shaping peer groups may be the most effective tool that an institution possesses.

Kanter (2000) showed that adding a critical mass of women to social groups observably affects behavior. Since women show the greatest increase in feminism during college (Astin, 1993b), their effect on men is noteworthy. The minimum proportion of women, as defined by Kanter, is at least 40 percent of the group. If the subgroup forms less than that percentage of the total group, those members will most likely be viewed as “tokens” (p. 208). Since tokens are a relatively small number in comparison to the majority, they have no defense against generalizations: “So tokens are, ironically, both highly visible as people who are different and yet are not permitted the individuality or their own unique, non-stereotypical characteristics” (p. 211). Breaking down stereotypes is crucial to forming realistic perceptions of people, making the critical mass of women provided by the coeducational residence hall a readily available resource for inculcating gender equality.

Contact Hypothesis

These ideas about the workings of inter-group dynamics first found their voice in the contact hypothesis. Developed by Gordon Allport in 1954 (Pettigrew, 1998), this foundational premise rises out of a discussion of how racial prejudices are formed and how they are eliminated. Allport’s process of removing prejudice between groups required four conditions: equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support from authority (Pettigrew, 1998). For a member of one group to reduce as much as possible his or her prejudice against the other group, he or she must have personal contact with a group member under these conditions. Pettigrew has since developed an intergroup contact theory that adds a fifth dimension for optimal change (long-term friendship), while at the same time concluding that contact always

decreases prejudice, regardless of the circumstances or groups involved (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Each of the four conditions has a place in the coeducational dormitory. By extrapolation, this theory postulates that if both men and women have equal resident status, a common goal of living together, cooperation in that process, and support from residential personnel, men and women will develop healthier relationships and decrease stereotypes more than they would otherwise. Pettigrew (1998) notes that one of the drawbacks to implementing redemptive contact is the difficulty of prompting members of both groups to interact. Thus, some of the most formative situations in research were those in which group members had no choice but to interact (i.e. the military).

Although student development professionals could program activities that would meet all of Allport's criteria, few created environments apart from the residence hall force students of both genders to interact on a daily basis, making the coeducational residence hall a setting ripe for growth. Positive change in removing bias can happen through any sort of contact, but the setting of necessitated interaction created by the structure of the coeducational residence best bolsters this change.

Homans (1992) simplifies this concept with his proposal that, across all people groups, interaction increases liking. Even if the setting is not ideal, his theory posits that people will like each other more as they spend more time together. Because liking and positive behavior are strongly linked, interaction and healthy relationships are also tightly coupled concepts. Thus, if men in coeducational halls interact with women more than residents in all-male halls, they should theoretically develop better relationships with the opposite sex, regardless of the positive or negative dynamics of the hall.

Further research supports the concept of coeducational halls. In two separate studies, Maltby and Day (2001; 2003) found a negative correlation between men's attitudes toward men and their attitudes toward women. This suggests that as men become more exclusively coupled to members of their own gender, they begin to reject women as outsiders. Placing them in a residence with both genders limits the likelihood of forming such narrow relationships. This research is without significant basis, however, and should be tested further.

Summary

The literature strongly suggests that the two greatest factors in fostering progressive views toward women and positive relationships with women is exposure to women's issues and a personal interest in seeing those issues addressed. These two factors are both active, natural dynamics that arise from continued interaction with women and personal relationships that develop as a result. Although factors like age, political beliefs, and region of upbringing can play a significant role in shaping men's ideas about and treatment of women in a negative fashion, interaction with women significantly diminishes those wrongly held attitudes. Regardless of bias or predisposition, interaction with members of another definable group increases opportunity for liking, and no environment provides that opportunity better than a coeducational residence hall.

Hypothesis

Based on Homan's (1992) interaction-liking theory and Astin's (1993) work on peer groups, the men in coeducational halls will register more liberal views toward women, but that fact will be more strongly tied to the amount of time those men spend

with women overall rather than their living situation. Research suggests that men in all-male halls who have a high percentage of female classmates and professors and who spend a large portion of time interacting with women will hold progressive attitudes on par with coeducational residents. Thus, while the type of residence hall will be a significant variable, time spent with women will have stronger predictive value.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Participants

This quantitative study was administered to men living in traditional single-sex or coeducational residence halls at a small, private, non-denominational university located in the rural Midwest. The student population is primarily white, conservative Protestants who are more affluent than the average college student. Students come from all 50 states (Admissions, personal communication, April 17, 2009) and are largely from conservative political backgrounds.

The total number surveyed was 608, with 531 (87%) of the surveys returned. 34 surveys were less than 75% complete and were thus eliminated. One additional survey was removed because of a clear disregard for the questions (as demonstrated by the survey's reverse-scoring feature) bringing the final completion percentage to 81% (n = 494). Any remaining missing values were replaced by the overall averages for each item.

Procedure

Students were asked to complete a 15-question adaptation of the Attitudes toward Women Scale (AWS) added as a supplement to the yearly Residence Life survey that is distributed in the residence halls in November. Surveys were administered by Residence Life staff and were completed with full anonymity, with the only personal information collected being hall of residence and class status.

Measures

Attitudes toward Women Scale

The AWS is the most broadly used survey of attitudes toward women (Beere, 1990). The self-reported survey “measures attitudes concerning the rights, roles, obligations, and privileges that women should have in modern society” (Yoder & Others, 1980). Developed in the early 1970s, its data has been studied longitudinally and has demonstrated test-retest reliability of .74 or higher and a Cronbach alpha (α) of .81 or more (Yoder & Others). Three different variations of the scale exist: a 55-item questionnaire, a 25-item, and a 15-item (Beere). Each scale contains similar questions, with the difference being the depth of each concept examined and the number of questions included from each area of feminism. The specific tool utilized was an adapted version of the condensed, 15-item version (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) used in place of the larger measures in an effort to avoid survey fatigue. Two questions (numbers 8 and 14) were adjusted for the sake of clarity. Item 8 was reworded to update the cultural references employed in the question, while item 14 was replaced by a similar question from the 25-item form (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973). The survey was complemented by additional questions described below.

Added Measures

Primary in importance in this study is the question of residence situation. Students were asked to designate the hall they reside in, a category that was then simplified down to a two-level variable for statistical purposes. Since age is consistently identified as a significant factor in liberality (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Kremer & Curry, 2001; Twenge, 1997), the respondents’ class status was recorded as well. Also included was a

self-reporting section containing two questions: 1.) “How would you classify your relationships with most women?” and 2.) “What percentage of your time spent with others is in groups (3 or more people) of 50% or more women?” Respondents answered using a Likert scale to designate between “excellent” and “very poor,” “0%-20%” and “80%-100%,” respectively.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Attitudes toward Women and Hall Status

An independent samples *t* test was run to compare hall status (coed vs. single-sex) on the AWS. Although differences in group sizes existed (coed, $n=406$ vs. single sex, $n=88$), the *t* test indicates a significant difference between groups, $t(492) = -2.02$, $p = .044$, with participants from coed halls ($M=40.93$, $SD = 7.09$) scoring higher (revealing more positive attitudes) than those men living in a same-sex hall ($M=39.25$, $SD=7.07$). An effect size analysis revealed a small, but reasonable, effect ($d = .24$). In addition, the AWS scale proved moderately reliable with Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$.

Time Spent with Women and Relationship Quality

A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant ($p=.05$) differences between time spent with women and scores on the AWS. Thus, time spent with groups of women, though higher among coeducational residents (see Table 1), was not a significant indicator of liberal or conservative attitudes toward women. Based on medians of the "time spent with women" element of the survey, men in coeducational halls spent more of their time in groups of women on average than other males on campus. Most notably, 35% of coed men spent more than 60% of their time with groups of women, while only 20% of men in all-male halls did the same. Although time spent with women did not significantly impact AWS scores, residential status did.

Table 1

Time Spent in Groups of Women

Hall status		Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Single-sex	0%-20%	84	20.8	20.8
	20%-40%	120	29.7	50.5
	40%-60%	120	29.7	80.2
	60%-80%	64	15.8	96.0
	80%-100%	16	4.0	100.0
	Total	406	100.0	
Coed	0%-20%	12	13.6	13.6
	20%-40%	13	14.8	28.4
	40%-60%	32	36.4	64.8
	60%-80%	22	25.0	89.8
	80%-100%	9	10.2	100.0
	Total	88	100.0	

Time spent with women *did* have an effect on men's reported quality of relationships with women, however. A chi-squared test of independence was performed, and the two scales registered a strong connection between themselves, $X^2(4, n=488) = 97.74, p < .001$. As time spent with groups of women increased, so did the perception of relationship quality (see Table 2).

The relationship quality scale failed to correlate with any other variable, however. A comparison of means found that men who reported "excellent" relationships with women ($n=183$) scored almost as low on the AWS ($M=38.24$) as those who reported "very poor" relationships ($n=5, M=37.79$) and well below men who classified their relationships with females as "not great" ($n=17, M=41.27$). Although men in coed halls ($n=88$) reported higher AWS scores, their self-identified quality of relationship ($M=4.16$) was no different than that of men in all-male residences ($M=4.15$) (See Appendix C).

Table 2

Quality of Relationship by Time Spent with Women

Time Spent	Mean	N	SD
0%-20%	3.6105	95	1.10410
20%-40%	4.0602	133	.73608
40%-60%	4.3221	149	.62890
60%-80%	4.4588	85	.68231
80%-100%	4.7600	25	.43589
Total	4.1581	487	.83497

Class Status

The upperclassmen-underclassmen distinction also failed to provide any meaningful results. An independent samples t test, $t(476)=-1.61$, $p=.108$, indicated no significant relationship between the class status and attitudes toward women. The respondent's year in school did provide some interesting results at the class level, however. A chi-squared test of independence showed that time spent with women decreases consistently as one progresses through college, $X^2(3, n=488) = 16.42$, $p=.001$. Freshmen ($n=142$) spend the most time with women ($M=2.76$) and report the highest quality of relationships ($M=4.32$), yet they scored lower than any other class on the AWS ($M=38.66$). (See Appendix C for full results.)

Reactions to Survey

Many respondents reacted strongly to the survey. Men in both types of residence hall responded with disdainful comments regarding the scale, most of whom disliked the

Table 3

AWS Scores by Time Spent with Women

Time Spent	Mean	N	SD
0%-20%	39.3029	96	7.01061
20%-40%	38.9052	133	6.25021
40%-60%	40.1618	152	6.92082
60%-80%	40.6656	86	7.22471
80%-100%	36.4274	25	10.77030
Total	39.5528	492	7.09949

AWS because of poor wording, insinuating or leading questions, and the lack of a neutral option for responses. Others clarified their survey responses with Scripture references or allusions to Biblical examples of gender differences. While a few men made positive remarks about the study, a strong majority responded with disapproval. Representative samples of those comments are included in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Results

In sum, the only factor that consistently predicted scores on the AWS was residence hall status. Men who lived in coeducational halls registered more progressive views on the instrument than men in all-male halls, and coed men also spent more time with groups of women. In addition, the research found no distinction between upperclassmen and underclassmen with regard to feministic views, and no groups registered differently on the self-reported quality of relationships question. Relationship quality, however, was strongly tied to time spent with women.

Thus, the first hypothesis was in fact supported: within this sample, men in coeducational halls did hold more progressive views toward women according to the AWS. Although the difference in means was small, it was statistically significant. Consistent with the review of literature and theory, men in coeducational halls seem to have more egalitarian views toward women (if not healthier relationships as well). Although these findings cannot unequivocally prove the catalytic effect of the residence in creating such a disposition, the conclusions do support preexisting notions of their impact.

Men in these coeducational halls also spent more time in groups of women than their counterparts in other residences, showing that in this case, hall type was effective in creating an environment conducive for inter-gender interaction. Men who spent more time with women were more likely to report they had “Good” or “Excellent”

relationships with most women, a fact that supports Homans (1992) interaction-liking hypothesis. However, time spent with women and quality of relationship did not predict AWS scores as was hypothesized. While these results have several implications, due to some limitations of the study (most notably the lack of a pre-test and consequent possibility of selection bias), the results should be interpreted with caution.

Limitations

Since this study utilized correlation methods, no causal relationships could be defined. Even though the study found a significant relationship between progressive feminist views and participants' residence, the results cannot conclude with assurance that this egalitarian disposition was caused by living in the hall. Many men likely self-selected to participate in this study because of personal interest in the topic at hand (although this possibility is unlikely because of the high response rate). A larger percentage probably chose to live in a coeducational residence hall because of a desire to be closer to women and to develop natural relationships with them (or perhaps because of their already progressive attitudes toward women). Thus, regardless of the actual impact of the hall on inter-gender relationships, men in coeducational halls would likely report more feministic attitudes toward women than men in all-male halls.

What this research can conclude with assurance is that men in coeducational residence halls on this campus do possess more liberal attitudes toward women and their positions in society. They are less likely to believe in constricting gender roles and more likely to view women as equals. This finding is supported by coeducational housing philosophy (Duncan, 1972; Imes, & Syracuse Univ., 1966) and expert research (Astin, 1993b). Because of the correlation methods employed by the study and the absence of

several key variables (to be discussed later), these findings cannot prove these theories or establish causality but instead simply show a significant relationship between residence environment and attitudes toward women. Regardless, this correlation, coupled with strong theoretical and anecdotal support, cannot but suggest that living in a coed environment has an effect on one's inter-gender relationships.

Although that effect appears to bring about better quality of relationships, this research cannot confirm that idea, either. The scale administered was one of attitudes toward women, not actual behaviors, and the single self-reported question regarding relationship quality did not correlate with AWS scores as expected. Research shows that men with more progressive attitudes toward women have a higher quality of marriage (Amato & Booth, 1995; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Halloran, 1998). Thus, this research can cautiously state that these coeducational men likely have better inter-gender relationships in general than men in single-sex halls.

Implications for Professional Practice

These findings support the continued construction of coeducational halls. Based on the wealth of social theories (Homans, 1992; Kanter, 2000; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), past higher education research (Astin, 1993b), and this study, practitioners can reasonably conclude that coeducational halls are a meaningful investment of time and resources. Even if coed halls cannot demonstrate a tangible impact on men's relationships with women, the fact remains that they are still filled with progressively-oriented males. Creating a residence environment that attracts men who desire genuine, natural, egalitarian relationships with women inevitably has a positive

impact on the ethos and culture of the undergraduate population and is thus an opportunity that should be continued.

This claim is evidenced by the fact that progressive attitudes toward women and deconstruction of gender roles are positively correlated to issues like violence reduction (Parrott & Zeichner, 2003), marital happiness (Amato & Booth, 1995; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Halloran, 1998), and depression (Fragoso & Kashubeck, 2000; Shepard, 2002). Ideally, information presented in this research can help guide campus efforts to reduce those problems as well as fostering stronger community among the student body as a whole. An effort as simple as exposing men to a feminism questionnaire prompts conversations about women's rights and roles in society—conversations that help create reflective, critically thinking undergraduates.

This research suggests that coeducational residences are a powerful tool for creating such social changes, and these halls are much more than just repositories for liberal men. Studying the effect of these halls in greater detail will provide more conclusive evidence as to the actual benefits and limitations of such an environment. This thesis, while limited in scope and in the power of its conclusions, hopes to lay the groundwork for such work in the future.

Implications for Future Research

The most obvious limitation of this study is the inability to establish causality on the part of the residence hall. Because of the research design and limited scope of the thesis, these findings can only support, not confirm, the hypothesis that coeducational living inculcates progressive attitudes toward women and healthier relationships with them. Further research should examine a similar group with a pre- and post-test over the

course of the entire year to evaluate if the residence hall was an effective treatment in promoting healthy attitudes and relationships.

The difference, yet insignificance, of the time factor provides stimulating ground for future research. Coeducational respondents in this survey did report spending more time with women and registered higher scores on the AWS overall, but time spent with women failed to be a consistent predictor of liberality. Men who spent more time with women also reported a greater quality of relationship with them, yet no statistic could connect perceived relationship quality and AWS scores. These findings begin to suggest that perhaps egalitarian views toward gender roles are not as strongly tied to relationship quality as was assumed. If this is generally the case, then future research should continue to examine how attitudes toward women affect relationships with them and what exactly happens within a coeducational residence to promote healthy relationships. A qualitative or mixed-methods study examining those issues would provide valuable insight into the phenomenal impact of coeducational housing.

Class status provided some interesting ground for further research as well. If freshmen males spend more time with women and have better relationships, what changes in the course of their college careers to make them more isolated from women? Also, what factors cause their attitudes toward women to liberalize? This finding directly contradicts Astin's (1993b) statement that men become more conservative as they age. Future studies should examine the role of class status more carefully as a factor in relationship dynamics.

The limited scope of this thesis also forced the exclusion of several proven variables of predictability. Region of upbringing, one of the variables most closely tied to

anti-feminist attitudes, was eliminated based on the low percentage (less than 10%) of university students from the southern United States (Admissions, personal communication, April 17, 2009). Also eliminated was the question of religious denomination. While most students are from conservative Christian backgrounds, an extremely low percentage was raised as Baptist (Admissions).

In the same way, political preferences, though significant in past studies, were also eliminated because of low representation on campus. Although these variables would add to the study, the length limitations and lack of representative population would only distort the results. Other intended variables, such as hyper-masculinity, self-esteem, relationship status, spirituality, parents' marital status, and pornography use have also been eliminated because of scope restrictions. These limitations provide an excellent research opportunity for future studies.

Another issue worthy of discussion is the limitation of self-reported information. The questions are, by nature, transparent in their approaches to measuring attitudes toward feminism, meaning reports are undoubtedly skewed positively. Estimating time spent with groups of women is not necessarily an easy task, and quantifying quality of relationships with females may be even more unreliable and susceptible to positive exaggeration. This factor in effect creates a ceiling of significance, somewhat diminishing the importance of significant independent variables.

Because of these variable limitations, establishing actual relationship quality is difficult to determine. Besides the single self-reported question and largely philosophical correlations between attitudes toward women and relational behavior, this study could not measure the variable with complete assurance. This measure was only intended to

measure *perceived* quality of relationship, not the actual value or healthiness men's relationships with women. This shortcoming could be avoided by creating a measure that could accurately determine the quality of inter-gender interactions, a measure that will probably never exist because of the amorphous, unquantifiable nature of human relations. Most feasible would be a mixed-methods study designed to establish a relationship between behavior and beliefs—a study that would provide a springboard for further investigation into relationships in a coeducational setting.

A void in this study is the sole emphasis on the coeducational halls' effect on men. Anecdotes of these residences speak equally as much about the benefits to women as they do to men (though the gains are not necessarily in similar areas, e.g. feminist beliefs). Future studies should examine the impact of coed halls on women's relationships with and attitudes toward men as well as the changes in intra-gender relationships that may or may not occur.

Specific residence hall limitations also affect the outcomes of this research. Coeducational halls on the studied institution's campus are generally smaller than single-sex halls, a fact that exacerbates the "family" feel and brother-sister type relationships that develop. As such, the numbers of men in single-sex halls greatly outnumber those of men in coeducational halls. Ideally, this study would compare equal numbers of men living in comparably constructed residence halls, but because of the campus chosen, that ideal is not achievable. Also, several of the men's wings have brother-sister wing relationships, meaning some wings spend more structured time with women than others. This fact undoubtedly has a significant impact on their relationships with and attitudes

toward women, but because of the limited scope of this thesis, this variable is essentially compacted into the “amount of time spent with groups of women” question.

Lastly, the AWS was developed during the second wave of feminism, making it less than completely applicable to modern study participants. Many of the respondents complained as to the misleading or confusing nature of the questions and the absence of a neutral option for responses (see Appendix B: Comments). The scale should be updated to account for cultural shifts and should also take into consideration the split over moral issues like abortion. Doing so would require an understanding of Christian feminism and how religious advocates of women’s rights address issues consistently aligned with their movement. Designing a survey to measure feminism in a Christian context would be useful for similar studies in similar institutions.

Summary

This study contains many design limitations largely due to the constrained scope of the thesis, the most significant of which are the inability to establish causality between progressive attitudes toward women and living situation and the difficulty of measuring relationship quality. Future studies could remedy these shortcomings through design changes and the development of further measures for quantifying relationship quality.

However, despite the study’s many limitations, its findings are in keeping with established research and philosophy that support the idea of coeducational housing for the development of healthy, natural relationships with and attitudes toward the opposite gender. Colleges and universities should continue to construct such residence halls, and researchers should continue investigating the effect they have on residents.

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APPENDIX A: ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN SCALE

“Inter-Gender Relationships”

Residence Hall: _____

Class: FR SO JR SR SR+

The statements or questions listed below describe attitudes toward the roles of women in society which different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions.

Please circle the corresponding number that best reflects your opinion.

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

2. Under modern economic conditions, with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing laundry.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

3. It is insulting to women to have the “obey” clause remain in the marriage service.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

4. A woman should be free as a man to propose marriage.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

5. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

6. Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

7. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

8. It is ridiculous for a woman to be a plumber and for a man to knit socks.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

9. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

10. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

11. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

12. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

13. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of the children.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

14. Intoxication among women is worse than intoxication among men.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

15. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

Agree strongly	Agree mildly	Disagree mildly	Disagree strongly
1	2	3	4

16. What percentage of your time spent with others is in groups (3 or more people) of 50% or more women?

0%-20%	20%-40%	40%-60%	60%-80%	80%-100%
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17. How would you classify your relationships with most women?

Very Poor	Not great	Ok	Good	Excellent
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Comments:

APPENDIX B: COMMENTS

Single-Sex

“Women are great! Respect them!”

“I love the ladies but they are made different than doods [sic].”

“Stupid questions for multiple choice. Much of this is not quantifiable.”

“These questions feel rigged. I don’t think these results will in any way serve the purpose they’re meant to.”

“Pointless survey.”

“This survey is poorly constructed. On many of these questions I have no opinion.”

“Poor wording.”

“I would add some neutral options to this survey. It seems like the survey is geared to be sexist. I support opportunities for women, but we must remember that God created men and women differently.”

“The wording on many of these questions was not conducive for me to answer in a way that my opinion could be stated clearly.” There should have been a neutral option.

“There were many questions I would have answered “Neutral” to if I had the choice.”

“The questions in this survey were poorly worded. They are very leading and pointed. There did not seem to be a middle ground with many questions.”

“This is a loaded survey written by a feminist with an agenda. My guess is you are single, have a low view of men, or are married to a weak, pacifistic man. I am sorry for you. Women have equal value but different purpose.”

“Read Genesis 3.”

“There is no neutral.”

“This survey sucks.”

“Some of your wordings are incriminating.”

“Some questions need revised.”

“Random survey”

“This is an awful survey.”

“I believe it is very important for a woman to do what she loves as an occupation.

However, I also believe they are a vital part of a child’s upbringing. Also, the father in the family needs to help out more with the kids than they do in most households.”

“I feel like these weren’t the right questions to ask. The issue I have is that the father should be the leader of the house. This does not have anything to do with the workplace.”

Coed

“This survey felt a bit loaded even though it’s only asking for ‘opinion.’”

“The questions in this survey are worded in such a way that, generally speaking, they more readily accommodate extreme viewpoints.”

“These survey’s wording seems strongly biased.”

“These questions need neutral options. The questions are written with an underlying bias that shows through.”

“These questions are poorly written, They present bias and do not allow for all opinions.”

“Your wording for these questions is horrible and almost every question is an extreme.”

“I disagree with this survey and think that it is asking “leading questions” which cannot be answered without insinuating something which I disagree with. As such, I did not finish the survey.”

“Many questions are ambiguous.”

“Not enough options to answer.”

“This test is sexist.”

“Poorly worded.”

“What kind of offensive, backward sentiments were included in this survey? Haven’t such persons heard of equality, of feminism?...”

“Survey does not do a good job in allowing room for all views (for instance, more moderate positions are not possible with such loaded questions). Also, survey is highly centered on women try a more balanced approach.”

APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS BY CLASS

Class		AWS Mean	Time Spent	Quality of Relationship
Fr.	Mean	38.6590	2.7660	4.3165
	N	142	141	139
	Std. Deviation	7.10968	1.06663	.72268
So.	Mean	39.6215	2.7068	4.0379
	N	133	133	132
	Std. Deviation	7.12055	1.15982	.85966
Jr.	Mean	40.1219	2.4483	4.0431
	N	117	116	116
	Std. Deviation	6.88392	1.04959	.90786
Sr.	Mean	40.2733	2.4405	4.2500
	N	84	84	84
	Std. Deviation	7.32197	1.28336	.83414
Total	Mean	39.5724	2.6139	4.1592
	N	476	474	471
	Std. Deviation	7.10256	1.13595	.83673

