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The Disappearance of a Gender Gap: Tolerance and Liberalism in Denmark from 1971 to 1990

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Based on data from Denmark, the paper examines the development of gender differences in political tolerance during the 1970s and 1980s. There was a large gender gap in tolerance at the beginning of the 1970s, which had totally disappeared by the end of the 1980s. The analysis shows that at the beginning of the 1970s, the gender gap is partly explained by differences in political involvement, interpreted as a result of the different political socialization of men and women. However, part of the difference is unchanged by any control, and this "unexplained" difference is interpreted as the result of a specific female culture. Against this background, it is surprising that the gender difference in political tolerance has vanished only twenty years later. The paper argues that, during these twenty years, a cultural shift has taken place in Denmark, merging the female and male cultures, and eliminating the hitherto "unexplained" gender difference.

In addition to conservatism, moralism, and lack of involvement, intolerance belongs to the traditional picture of "women and politics". But while this picture has been revised with regard to women's political ideology and involvement, little attention has been paid to their tolerance. Women have become more politically involved and have moved to the left of men on a number of issues. But what about tolerance?

In his famous study from 1955 of the American public's attitudes towards communists and other divergent groups, Samuel A. Stouffer found an overall gender difference of seven percentage points in favor of men in the distribution of tolerance. Stouffer used a whole chapter of the book to discuss this difference, but was, nevertheless, eager to minimize its importance. First of all, the difference was not very large, and apparently only appeared in connection with questions about communists. Nothing indicated more general gender-based differences in tolerance. Furthermore, it was difficult for Stouffer to explain the difference, because a control for the most obvious factors, such as education, political interest, or religion, did not eliminate the gender gap (Stouffer 1955). Commenting on Stouffer's findings, David Riesman pointed to women's "cultural role of protecting the young", but he concluded that "it is not entirely clear why women, who

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In addition to conservatism, moralism, and lack of involvement, intolerance belongs to the traditional picture of "women and politics". But while this picture has been revised with regard to women's political ideology and involvement, little attention has been paid to their tolerance. Women have become more politically involved and have moved to the left of men on a number of issues. But what about tolerance?

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as various studies show are more empathic than men, should register on Stouffer's scales as almost invariably more intolerant" (Riesman 1956, 61; cf. Nunn et al. 1978, 112).

Later studies have shown that the findings were neither restricted to Stouffer's data nor conditioned by the special political climate at the beginning of the 1950s. An equally large gender gap appeared in the mid-1970s, but also this time only in connection with the communists (Nunn et al. 1978, ch. 7; Jennings & Niemi 1981, ch. 9). During recent years the question has not received much attention, but available studies suggest that the differences have diminished during the 1980s and probably do not exist any longer (McClosky & Brill 1983; Bobo & Licari 1989; Golebiowska 1992; Gibson 1992).

In the United States, women's intolerance has apparently been a real, but rather limited, phenomenon, and is, in any case, a phenomenon of the past. American women may, however, be more tolerant than women in most other countries. In general, American women are, and have been for a long time, more integrated in the political system than women elsewhere (Verba et al. 1978; Baxter & Lansing 1983; Kaase 1989; Jennings & Farah 1990). Regardless of the much commented gender gap in voting, comparatively, only few and small gender differences in political attitudes and behavior have been found in the United States (Goertzel 1983; Shapiro & Mahajan 1986; Deitz 1986; Gilens 1988; Conover 1988; Carroll 1989; Jennings & Farah 1990; Cook & Wilcox 1991). Until recently, however, the exclusion of women from the political system has been more pronounced in Europe than in the United States. Consequently, gender differences in political tolerance may also be greater in Europe. The picture of women's relations to the political system has perhaps been colored by the fact that most information comes from American studies.

Contrary to the popular image of Nordic women as being politically progressive as well as sexually liberated, evidence from Denmark suggests that as late as the 1970s the gender gap in tolerance was also greater there than in the United States (Table 1).[1] Women's intolerance was most pronounced in connection with the idea of a strong man taking power in times of economic crisis, but also appeared in connection with censorship, the banning of political parties, and control of foreigners. Both the range of women's intolerance and the gender differences are larger than those found by Stouffer in 1955.

However, the table also shows that the situation has changed completely during the past twenty years. In 1979, women were still less tolerant than men, even if the differences had decreased, but in 1990 the gap closed. There are no differences in the tolerance or liberalism of men and women. This closing of the gender gap is solely the result of women becoming more tolerant. If we look at the only item asked in all three surveys, namely the

Table 1. Gender Differences in Attitudes, 1971–79–90. Percent Tolerant Attitudes[a].

		Men	Women	M–W
	1971			
1.	When the country is facing economic crisis it would be best to have a strong man taking power	47	29	18**
2.	Parties going against the welfare state should be banned	54	39	15**
3.	Radio and TV should not lend themselves to the expression of extreme viewpoints	60	48	12**
4.	Parties supporting socialism should be banned	81	69	12**
5.	The authorities should keep better check on tourists entering the country	25	17	8**
6.	Foreign workers should not be allowed to force Danes out of their jobs	11	8	3
	1979			
1.	When the country is facing economic crisis it would be best to have a strong man taking power	56	43	13**
2.	Radio and TV should not lend themselves to the expression of extreme viewpoints	64	55	9**
7.	When a country faces serious problems, democracy falls short	39	30	9**
8.	Foreign workers should have the same right to their own way of life and culture as other people	43	39	4*
9.	We have to be more on guard against indoctrination in schools	13	10	3
10.	Violent crimes should be punished more severely than today	7	5	2
11.	Groups not accepting the democratic system have to put up with the police keeping an eye on them	22	21	1
	1990			
1.	When the country is facing economic crisis it would be best to have a strong man taking power	62	60	2
10.	Violent crimes should be punished more severely than today	9	9	0
12.	It's better to fight crime with prevention and counselling than with harsh sentences	24	26	−2
13.	The government uses too much money on refugees	55	58	−3
14.	Immigration is a threat to our national character	41	45	−4
N[b]	1971	639	663	
	1979	900	1014	
	1990	459	515	

[a] "Agree completely" and "agree somewhat" to tolerant statements or "disagree completely" and "disagree somewhat" to intolerant statements.

[b] The percentages are computed on the basis of the number of respondents answering the questions. Therefore the N's change a little from item to item.

Data: Election surveys 1971, 1979, and 1990.

* Significant at the .05 level.

** Significant at the .01 level.

one about a strong man taking power, we can see that both men and women have become more tolerant during the 1970s and 1980s. However, the development has been much stronger for women than for men, raising women to the level of men.

The Concept of "Tolerance" and its Operationalization

In the tradition of Stouffer, political tolerance is generally defined as "a willingness to put up with those things one rejects or opposes" (Sullivan et al. 1982, 2) or as "a willingness to apply such procedures – the right to speak, to publish, to run for office – on an equal basis to all" (Sullivan et al. 1979, 781).

In later years a great deal of effort has been put into creating more valid and reliable operationalizations of tolerance. Sullivan et al. have claimed that the measure of tolerance should be content-free, especially if we want to compare over time (1979 and 1982), whereas Gibson tends to conclude that tolerance is a more universal dimension and that differences in operationalizations are unimportant, the correlates of tolerance being almost identical regardless of the measure used (Gibson 1992).

Moreover, Gibson and Bingham argue that "tolerance traditionally has been considered broader in scope than support for opposition rights (speech, assembly, and associations" (Gibson & Bingham 1982). Taking such a broader concept of tolerance as a starting-point, they included attitudes towards such diverse phenomena as majority rule, civil liberties for political, social, and ethnic minorities, police enforcement and free abortion. Although they singled out several different dimensions of tolerance, their overall conclusion was that all dimensions were strongly interrelated and formed a common syndrome of tolerance (Gibson & Bingham 1982). Similar results have been obtained from Danish studies (Gaasholt & Togeby 1992). On the background of Gibson & Bingham's analyses one can conclude that even if it were preferable to distinguish between different more precisely defined subdimensions of tolerance it is acceptable to work with an operationalization of the broader and more diffuse concept.

As shown in Table 1, Danish election surveys have since 1971 contained a few items which together tap a rather broad concept of tolerance, including attitudes towards majority rule, civil liberties, police enforcement and immigrants. To make things even worse, only a single item is repeated in all three surveys, making it necessary to vary the operationalization of tolerance from one survey to another. According to Przeworski and Teune, however, this is an acceptable procedure in comparative research, especially when comparing relationships between systems. In that case it is acceptable to use equivalent indicators instead of identical indicators (Przeworski & Teune 1970). The remaining problem is, therefore, to establish the equivalence.

The "tolerance items" of all three surveys have been subjected to scale analysis, using the procedure proposed by Mokken[2] (1971), with rather similar results. In 1971 the six items shown in Table 1 formed a scale with a weak unidimensional structure (Loevinger's H = .33, Cronbach's alpha =

.59), suggesting they stem from a common attitude syndrome if not from a single dimension. The unidimensionality is a little stronger for the seven items in 1979 (Loevinger's H = .34, Cronbach's alpha = .67) and the five items in 1990 (Loevinger's H = .39; Cronbach's alpha = .65). The item of a strong man taking power appears in all three scales, and the content of the other items does not differ much from survey to survey. In all three cases we deal with items covering a broad or diffuse concept of tolerance or liberalism. Thus, it should be safe to conclude that it is acceptable to build indices of these items in order to compare the relationship between gender and tolerance over the three years.

For each year a simple additive index is constructed, varying between 0 and 6 in 1971, between 0 and 7 in 1979 and between 0 and 5 in 1990. Measured by Pearson correlations, the relationships between gender and tolerance amount to .23 in 1971, to .15 in 1979 and to .01 in 1990 with women as most intolerant. These combined measures also show that a considerable gender gap in tolerance in 1971 has disappeared in 1990.

But what does it actually mean that men in 1971 have a higher score on tolerance than women? As shown in Table 1 it does not mean that men are tolerant and women intolerant. Both men and women give a surprisingly high number of intolerant answers, but women more often than men. Neither does it necessarily mean that women act more intolerantly than men. The relationship between attitudes and behavior is far from perfect in the case of tolerance (Sullivan et al. 1982, ch. 2). But in a country such as Denmark, where political tolerance is part of the dominant political culture, a gender difference in tolerance means that women are not so well integrated in the dominant and official political culture as men, and that they, therefore, are less inclined to express tolerant views.

Political Tolerance in Denmark 1971

Not all citizens are exposed to the dominant norms of society to the same degree. And since norms of tolerance are difficult to understand, citizens vary in the degree to which they learn tolerance. As Duch and Gibson point out "this in turn leads to the hypothesis that greater social integration results in greater political tolerance, at least within democratic polities" (Duch & Gibson 1992; 240; cf. Stouffer 1955; Lipset 1960; McClosky 1964). It is therefore plausible that the theories developed to explain women's weaker integration into the political system also explain their lower tolerance.

In recent years, three theories have prevailed: the structural explanation, the situational explanation, and the socialization theory (Orum et al. 1974; Welch 1977; Jennings 1983; Clark & Clark 1986; Welch & Thomas 1988;

Table 2. Tolerance by School Education and Gender, 1971. Percent Tolerant.[a]

	Men	Women	M–W
Low education	51	30	21**
Medium education	72	57	15*
High education	94	(86)	(8)
All	57	35	22**

[a] At least three "tolerant" answers to the six items from Table 1.
(): The N's are between 10 and 29.
Data: Election survey, 1971. (The N's are in the appendix).
* Significant at the .05 level.
** Significant at the .01 level.

Bennett & Bennett 1993). The aim is now to examine whether some, or any, of these theories explain Danish women's greater intolerance or lack of liberalism in the beginning of the 1970s, or whether other theories are necessary?

The structural explanation takes its point of departure in the fact that women do not have as many social resources, e.g. education, position, and training, as men. Generally speaking, higher education inculcates the general principles of democracy and tolerance and also furnishes the psychological resources necessary for the practice of democracy and tolerance, such as self-esteem, political trust, political interest, and a sense of political efficacy. Furthermore, in general, women are placed at a lower position in the labor force than men, and earn less money, making them more alienated and economically insecure (Pateman 1989), and probably also more intolerant. It is possible to test the structural explanation by controlling the original gender difference in tolerance for such factors as school education, professional training and occupation. If women's lesser tolerance can be explained by their lower position in the social structure of society, the control should eliminate the gender difference.

Education is generally perceived as one of the most important determinants of tolerance and liberalism, and it also has a strong impact in this study. While there are conflicting views about the interpretation of this relationship, no one denies that education is strongly related to tolerance (Stouffer 1955; Davis 1975; Jackman 1978; Nunn et al. 1978; Hyman & Wright 1979; Jackman & Muha 1984; Sniderman et al. 1984; Engesbak & Todal Jensen 1991). In Denmark in 1971 men's level of education was higher than women's, and this difference might, therefore, explain the gender gap in tolerance. Table 2 shows, for groups of men and women defined by their school education, the percentage scoring high on tolerance (at least three tolerant answers to the six items from Table 1). The control for school education reduces the gender difference, but not much, because

Table 3. Tolerance by Socioeconomic Factors and Gender, 1971. Percent Tolerant.[a]

	Uncontrolled			Controlled by age and school education[b]		
	Men	Women	M–W	Men	Women	M–W
21–29 years	59	39	20	56	35	21**
30–39 years	66	46	20	62	46	16**
40–49 years	61	34	27	60	35	25**
50–59 years	56	36	20	57	37	20**
60–69 years	46	28	18	48	32	16**
70+ years	38	18	20	40	22	18*
Professional training:						
none	50	28	22	52	31	21**
vocational	57	44	13	57	42	15*
theoretical	90	79	11	72	69	3
Unskilled workers	47	20	27	49	20	29**
Skilled workers	54	–	–	54	–	–
White collars: public sector	79	66	13	70	56	14
White collars: private sector	65	54	11	57	47	10
Self-employed	60	(40)	20	59	(39)	(20)
All	57	35	22	56	36	20**

[a] At least three "tolerant" answers to the six items from Table 1.
[b] MCA-analysis. The relationship between age and tolerance is only controlled by school education.
Data: Election survey, 1971. (N's are in the appendix).
* Significant at the .05 level.
** Significant at the .01 level.

only very few people are in the highest category. More than 80 percent of the population is placed in the lowest educational category, and the gender difference here is almost as large as the difference in the whole population. Thus, school education does not explain the gender difference.

Perhaps, the most interesting finding is that the magnitude of the gender difference varies with educational levels. The higher the level of education, the lower the gender difference in tolerance. In the highest educational group which, admittedly, is very small, we find only a small difference between men and women.

Table 3 shows the results when the gender difference is controlled for the other structural factors: professional training, occupation, and age. All three factors are related to gender, including age, since women live longer than men. As expected, all three factors are also related to tolerance, even when controlled for school education. Age does not reduce the gender differences, which are almost identical in all age groups. The patterns regarding professional training and occupation resemble the one already shown for school education. The gender difference in tolerance is reduced somewhat, but not decisively. At the same time, however, the magnitude

of the gender difference is strongly determined by professional training and occupation. Almost no differences appear between men and women with a theoretical (college) education, whereas strong gender differences appear between people without any professional training and especially among unskilled workers. Women at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy have the lowest scores in political tolerance, as should also be expected by resource theory.

Women's lower position in the social hierarchy does not explain their lower tolerance. (A simultaneous control for all structural factors only reduces the original gender relationship from .23 to .19). But it is conspicuous that very high and very low resources are especially important to women. The most resource-rich women do not differ much from their male counterparts, whereas women with fewest social resources deviate from all other groups of men and women by their lack of tolerance and liberalism. So even though structural factors do not abolish the gender gap, they are important for an understanding of it.

The situational explanation points to the special restrictions on women's lives attributable to their obligation towards home and family. In particular, women with responsibility for small children have few social contacts, little free time, and, consequently, a more restricted field of interest. The result is that women, especially in the early days of marriage, are further removed from political life than men, have less interest in politics, and participate less. Riesman's comments – about women's cultural role of protecting the young, suggesting differences in priorities between men and women – are also relevant. In any case, as a result of their greater distance from politics, mothers and home-makers should have less tolerant political attitudes. If women's lower level of tolerance is explained by their connection with children and family, we should find large differences between women according to their family situation, whereas there should be no differences between men and women without family ties.

Table 4 shows the relationship between gender and tolerance, this time controlled for situational, or family factors. The first observation is that not marriage, home-making, or children have the expected relation to tolerance among women. Divorced women are most tolerant, and single women least, with married women falling in-between. Correspondingly, housewives and pensioners fall in-between the two groups of working women, unskilled workers and white-collar workers, with the unskilled workers as most intolerant. The table clearly demonstrates that employment per se does not make women more tolerant, but that special kinds of employment might. As Stouffer also found, female workers are less tolerant than other groups. With regard to children, women without children are most tolerant, but the tolerance increases slightly with an increasing number of children, and, in general, the differences are small. Furthermore, in

Table 4. Tolerance by Family Factors and Gender, 1971. Percent Tolerant.[a]

	Uncontrolled			Controlled by age and school education[b]		
	Men	Women	M–W	Men	Women	M–W
Single	56	27	29	53	26	27**
Married/cohabitating	58	36	22	56	37	19**
Divorced/separated	(61)	51	(10)	(64)	48	(16)
Widowed	(35)	24	(11)	(48)	35	(13)
Children: none	55	34	21	57	40	17**
1	58	30	28	56	29	27**
2	63	39	24	56	35	21**
3+	53	41	12	49	36	13
Housewives	–	33	–	–	34	–
Pensioners	42	23	19	51	33	18**
White collars	71	60	11	62	54	8
Unskilled workers	47	20	27	50	21	29**
All	57	35	22	56	36	20

[a] At least three "tolerant" answers to the six items from Table 1.
[b] MCA-analysis.
Data: Election survey, 1971. (N's are in the appendix).
* Significant at the .05 level.
** Significant at the .01 level.

neither case does the control for family factors reduce the gender difference. (A simultaneous control for all family factors reduces the original gender difference from .23 to .20). Thus, the situational explanation does not gain any support from the data.

The third explanation claims that women's greater distance from political life is a result of *the gender specific socialization* of children, which relates politics to the male role, and not to the female. Women are less politically involved, have a less developed sense of political efficacy, and are also less tolerant, because, from early childhood, they have learned not to take an interest in or be involved in politics. A direct empirical test of this theory is difficult, but an indirect test might do: if an apolitical socialization in childhood and adolescence accounts for women's intolerant views, we should find strong associations between political involvement and tolerance, and these associations should not be eliminated when controlled for structural and situational factors. On the other hand, the gender difference in tolerance should be eliminated when controlled for political involvement.

In Table 5, the relationship is controlled for political involvement, represented by factors such as political interest, political knowledge, and political efficacy. In all three cases, the relationships between political involvement and tolerance are strong, prior to the control for social resources. After control for age and education, the associations are weaker,

Table 5. Tolerance by Political Involvement and Gender, 1971. Percent Tolerant.[a]

		Uncontrolled			Controlled by age and school education[b]		
		Men	Women	M–W	Men	Women	M–W
Political interest:[c]	low	36	23	13	38	28	10**
	medium	57	39	18	53	35	18*
	high	72	55	17	69	56	13**
Political efficacy:[d]	low	35	23	12	37	25	12**
	medium	57	38	19	56	40	14**
	high	71	54	17	67	54	13*
Political knowledge:[e]	low	22	14	8	25	17	8*
	medium	51	36	15	52	36	16**
	high	73	57	16	69	56	13**
All		57	35	22	56	36	20

[a] At least three "tolerant" answers to the six items from Table 1.
[b] MCA-analysis.
[c] Constructed on the basis of three items asking the respondent to evaluate his or her own political interest.
[d] Measured by an additive index based on three of the traditional efficacy items: "Sometimes politics is so complicated that people like me do not understand what is going on", "I know so little about politics that I should not vote", "So many other people vote at a general election that it does not matter much whether I vote or not".
[e] Measured by an additive index based on ten items.
Data: Election survey, 1971. (N's are in the appendix).
* Significant at the .05 level.
** Significant at the .01 level.

but not much. Political interest, knowledge, and efficacy have a strong relationship with tolerance among both men and women, a relationship not explainable by differences in social resources such as education. Equally important, however, is the fact that, this time, the gender difference in tolerance is really reduced. Considerable gender gaps still remain, but they are much smaller than before. (A simultaneous control for the involvement factors reduces the original relationship from .23 to .09). Low political involvement could, therefore, be responsible for part of women's greater intolerance. And, as shown, this low political involvement is not caused by structural or situational factors. Together, this gives some support to the socialization theory.

So far the conclusion is easy to draw. The most important reason for women's lower tolerance in Denmark in 1971 seems to be their low political involvement. Women were less interested in politics, felt less efficacious, and knew less about politics. Altogether, these characteristics explain more than half the gender difference. Part of this low political involvement is explained by women's fewer social resources – primarily their lower level of education – but most of the difference in political involvement is appar-

ently due to the different socialization of men and women, in which men are assigned a political role and women an apolitical one. But not all the gender difference in tolerance is explained by the above factors. Therefore, we have to conclude that other aspects of female upbringing and of women's lives contributed to women's less tolerant attitudes.

A point of departure for understanding this difference might be the theory of a specific female culture, formulated by Nordic social scientists (Ås 1975 and 1982; Halsaa Albrektsen 1977). This theory claims that men and women live in very different economic, social, and cultural worlds. Women live in the private sphere, i.e. the family, whereas men live in the public sphere, i.e. the workplace and the political system. The female culture is characterized by sensitivity, orientation towards others, compassion, empathy, but also by object-identity, passivity, and dependence on others. It is important to note that the female culture includes both positive and negative qualities. The social norm-system also differs between men and women in the sense that women are not as familiar as men with abstract political principles such as democracy or political tolerance.

The theory of female culture has been used to explain differences between men and women in the area of political participation, but is equally suited to explain gender differences in political tolerance. In 1971, women were less tolerant than men because they lived in an apolitical culture guided by other moral principles than the political culture of men. A quality of this fourth explanation is that it offers us an understanding of the fact that up till now has puzzled social scientists, namely that women at the same time were both empathic and intolerant.

In contrast to the first three theories, all referring to the characteristics of individual women, the theory of a female culture refers to women collectively. It claims that women as a group, regardless of their individual education, employment or political involvement, are more intolerant than men. For analytical reasons, women's low political involvement has been separated from the specific female culture, but they are actually two sides of the same phenomenon. While the concept of "female culture" underlines the fact that we are dealing with a collective quality encompassing all women, which is transmitted from one generation of women to the next, one of the defining qualities of this female culture is that it is apolitical.

The Development from 1971 to 1990

It is a problem that the above conclusion, concerning the causes of women's less tolerant and liberal views, makes little allowance for the possibility of a rapid change. If gender differences in political tolerance are primarily

Table 6. Changes in the Composition of the Danish Population, 1971–90. Percent.

	1971		1990	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
School education: low	79	84	48	42
medium	15	14	32	37
high	6	2	20	21
Professional training: none	47	71	33	43
vocational	45	22	44	34
theoretical	8	7	23	23
Occupation: Unskilled workers	24	17	11	13
Skilled workers	18	2	15	4
White collars: public	11	10	15	24
White collars: private	14	9	22	23
Self-employed	15	3	11	6
Pensioners	15	18	19	21
Housewives	0	39	0	4
Students	3	2	7	5
Political interests:[a] low	25	47	31	43
medium	33	33	45	41
high	42	20	24	16
Political efficacy: low	15	31	12	24
medium	63	59	59	61
high	22	10	29	15

[a] The operationalization has changed from one study to the other.
Data: Election surveys, 1971 and 1990. (N's are shown in the appendix).

attributed to women's upbringing and to the different political socialization of men and women, then the situation should be rather stable. But, as already shown in Table 1, the situation did indeed change rapidly. In less than two decades women have become just as tolerant and liberal as men. What has happened?

Something in the above findings indicates the possibility of breaking the existing cultural pattern. Tables 2 and 3 showed that, not only did the small groups of very resource-rich women with a higher level of education reach the same level of tolerance as men in general, but even the level of the most resource-rich men. A higher, theoretical education seems to provide a form of adult socialization capable of changing the intolerance inherent in female culture and socialization. Radical changes in women's social resources may, therefore, result in a general lowering of their intolerance.

As Table 6 shows, a strong increase in women's social resources occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. The educational level of men also increased, but not as much as women's. In the 1971 study, only 2 percent of women had completed school at the highest level, compared with 21 percent of women in the 1990 study. In 1971, only 29 percent of the women had some

Table 7. Changes in Political Participation, 1979–87. Percent.

	1979		1987	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Participation in party meetings	9	4	7	5
Participation in union meetings[a]	42	33	46	47
Participation in grassroots activities	30	25	29	31
High and medium political interests	72	54	65	56
N	893	876	848	909

[a] Only measured for employees.
Data: Election surveys, 1979 and 1987, and the Mass survey, 1979.

kind of professional training, while in 1990 the figure was 57 percent, and about half of these had completed the equivalent of a college education. In the same period, almost all Danish women had joined the labor force. If we disregard pensioners, about half of the women were housewives in 1971, whereas this only applies to 4 percent of the women in 1990. But the composition of the female labor force also changed, because the growth in employment was limited to white-collar jobs. In fact, the number of unskilled female workers declined during the time of the general increase in female employment. In general, the female workforce had far more resources in 1990 than twenty years earlier.

Women's political involvement has also increased during recent years, but at first sight this is not as impressive as the increase in social resources. The strong gender gap in political interest in 1971 had been reduced, but not totally eliminated, by 1990. And there are no changes with regard to political efficacy. These results are surprising, because other studies have shown that the political participation of women has increased strongly and that Danish women today participate at the same high level as Danish men. However, also in these other studies, the self-reported political interest of women is relatively low (Table 7). Women are, apparently, integrated into mass political activities, but still lag behind men in self-confidence and in having a sense of political efficacy (similar results are shown for the US by Beckwith (1986, 148 and 153)). The results raise the question of the validity of political efficacy as an indicator of political involvement, however. In any case, Danish women have, beyond doubt, been much more politically involved during the 1970s and 1980s than previously, and also much more integrated into political life. How do these developments relate to the development in tolerance?

Let us begin by looking at the relationship between tolerance, school education, and gender (Table 8). As already mentioned, in the population at large the gender gap of 1971 had disappeared in 1990. Generally speak-

Table 8. The Relationship Between Gender and Tolerance by School Education, 1971 and 1991. Pearson's r.

		1971	1990
School education:	Low	.24**	.06
	Medium	.14*	.01
	High	.06	.03
All		.23**	.01

* Significant at the .05 level.
** Significant at the .01 level.
Data: Election surveys, 1971 and 1990. (N's are shown in the appendix).

Table 9. "A Strong Man Taking Power", by School Education and Gender, 1971 and 1990. Percent Tolerant.[a]

	Men			Women		
	1971	1990	Difference	1971	1990	Difference
School education: low	45	53	8	26	52	26
medium	46	65	19	41	58	17
high	72	81	9	64	75	9

[a] "Agree completely" and "agree somewhat".
Data: Election surveys, 1971 and 1990. (N's are shown in the appendix).

ing, the differences have also disappeared in each of the three educational groups. The development has, therefore, been greatest for women with the lowest education. The increase in women's social resources has not erased the gender gap, but the increasing tolerance of the least educated women has. In 1971, well-educated women had already reached the level of men, and by 1990 this also applied to other groups of women. The unexplained difference from 1971 had disappeared by 1990.

We can get a more precise illustration of the development by looking separately at the item about a strong man taking power, an item repeated identically in all three surveys (Table 9). The table shows that all groups in Danish society have moved in a more tolerant or democratic direction. This applies to both men and women and to all educational groups. But the increase in tolerance has been most impressive for the least educated women. And this is really a surprising result because, in general, women with a low level of education have been left behind by the development of the 1970s and 1980s, when education became an increasingly important social factor. This suggests a profound cultural change during this period, integrating all women into the dominant political culture, which had pre-

Table 10. The Relationship[a] between Tolerance, and Gender by a Number of Explanatory Factors,[b] 1971 and 1990.

	1971	1990
20–29 years	.17**	.06
30–39 years	.16**	.01
40–49 years	.29**	−.03
50–59 years	.23**	.07
60–69 years	.22**	.09
70+	.20*	.02
Professional training: none	.24**	.01
Vocational training	.15*	.07
Theoretical schooling	.02	−.07
Unskilled workers	.32**	−.02
White collar: public sector	.15	.08
White collar: private sector	.09	.04
Self-employed	.10	−.13
Pensioners	.22**	.06
Single	.28**	.01
Married/cohabitating	.21**	.02
Divorced	.22	−.10
Widowed	.13	.15
Political interest: low	.16**	.04
medium	.11*	−.05
high	.16**	.01
Political efficacy: low	.15**	.04
medium	.17**	.03
high	.16*	−.08
All	.21**	.03

[a] The entries are beta-coefficients. The relationships are controlled for age and school education. A positive correlation signifies that men are the most tolerant.

[b] The 1990 election survey includes fewer variables than the 1971 election survey, restricting the possibility for comparisons.

* Significant at the .05 level.

** Significant at the .01 level.

Data: Election surveys 1971 and 1990. (N's are shown in the appendix).

viously been reserved for men and the few women with many resources. Education is still an important determinant for tolerance, but has less influence on women today than it had twenty years ago.

The other explanatory factors in Table 10 all tell more or less the same story. The unexplained differences have, generally speaking, disappeared. In some groups men are most tolerant, in other groups women, but the differences are in almost all cases negligible. And the largest gains in tolerance have always occurred among the least resource-rich women, e.g. women without professional training or unskilled female workers. It is, furthermore, conspicuous that all generations have experienced the same development. If, for instance, we look at the generation in its fifties in 1971

Table 11. The Development of Feminist Attitudes Among Married and Cohabitating Women from 1965 to 1987.

	Opposition to a traditional divison of work	Support for a traditional division of work
1965		
Married women should not take employment if this results in a man becoming unemployed	17	83
The wife has to take care of the house and children	20	80
It is only natural that the mother does most of the childcare	9	91
1987		
In periods with a high level of unemployment men have more right to employment than women	82	18
It is best for the family if the husband is the breadwinner and the wife takes care of the home and family	74	26
Today, it is most fair that husband and wife share the housework equally	95	5

Data 1965: Noordhoek & Smith (1970). N = 2610.
Data 1987: Election survey. N = 366.

and in its seventies in 1990, the relationship between gender and tolerance has diminished from .23 in 1971 to .02 in 1990.

These results clearly demonstrate that the increased resources of the individual woman do not explain the development from 1971 to 1990. The gender gap in tolerance has not disappeared because more women have obtained more educational or other individual social resources, or because more women have become politically involved. The decisive change has taken place within all educational categories and within all involvement categories. Women have become more resource-rich, more politically involved, and more tolerant. not as individuals, but as a group. The female culture has changed.

It is not possible, on the basis of the two data sets analyzed here, to present a direct measurement of the changes in the female culture, and we therefore run the risk of reducing the concept of culture to a residual. However, other data make it possible to find indications of a cultural shift. Women's growing political participation, as documented in Table 7, is one indicator. Another is a strong change in gender role attitudes among married women in Denmark. Table 11 shows that, in the mid-1960s, a large majority of married women supported a very traditional division of work between men and women, whereas, at the end of the 1980s, an equally

large majority rejected the same position. The women of the 1960s asserted that their first duty was to the family, while the women of the 1980s expressed a strong engagement in life outside the home, and demanded that men should share the household chores. This clearly demonstrates that the wall between the lives of women and men has broken down during the 1970s and 1980s.

Discussion

There were fairly large gender-based differences in political tolerance in Denmark in the early 1970s. On the basis of the above analysis, the conclusion is that these gender differences should be explained by differences in political involvement and by a specific female culture. As we suspect these differences to be rooted in early gender socialization, they should be relatively stable and difficult to change. There were, however, a few examples of women deviating from the general women's culture, namely women with a comparatively very high level of education, which suggests that low political tolerance is not necessarily a characteristic of women.

By 1990, the difference in tolerance between men and women had completely disappeared in Denmark. In the light of the above analysis, this rapid development is surprising. During recent decades, women have obtained more social resources and have become more politically involved, but these changes at the individual level do not explain the rising tolerance. The decisive factor seems to be a collective cultural change, by which especially women with few resources have become more tolerant. During this process the so-called unreduced difference between men and women has also disappeared.

Therefore, what has happened is neither the development expected on the basis of the situation in 1971 – i.e. that more and more women obtained sufficient educational resources to break the dominant pattern – nor the one foreseen by Nunn et al., i.e. that higher education and greater gender equality would lead to more diverse and complex experiences, particularly in the younger generations of women, resulting in higher political tolerance (Nunn et al. 1978, ch. 7). Instead, all women, regardless of their individual experiences, education, and age, have become more tolerant, indicating a comprehensive cultural change.

In this paper, the unreduced gender difference in tolerance of the 1970s has been explained by the coexistence of two different political cultures: a female culture and a male culture. The female culture, encompassing both positive and negative qualities, was determined by women's responsibility towards the family and by their restricted roles as mothers and wives. The

point is that all women – with a few exceptions – shared this culture regardless of their actual situation, i.e. regardless of their marital status, mothering experiences, participation in the labor market, education, or political activity. Women were, in general, less politicized than men, and, therefore, voiced less tolerant views. Men lived in a more politicized political culture and voiced – in accordance with the dominant norms – more tolerant views.

The conclusion of this paper is that, today, these separate political cultures have merged, resulting, among other things, in women being more politicized and more tolerant. Another part of the story, not told in this paper, is that the male culture has also changed during the same period. This leads us to the question about how such a profound change could take place in less than twenty years?

It is not possible to point to any single explanation. A number of factors seem to have interacted to produce the new situation. For one thing, the Danish society has, in general, become more democratic and less authoritarian over the last twenty years. The youth revolt of the late 1960s and 1970s has probably influenced the Danish society more than most other countries. The structures of decision-making have changed both on the more intimate level (in schools, in places of work), and on the political level. Many decisions have been decentralized, and grassroots activities have taken over from more hierarchical and bureaucratic organizations. More people have practiced democratic decision-making in their everyday lives. If it is true that political participation has an educational effect (Pateman 1970), the Danish population should have moved in a more democratic and tolerant direction. However, this change may have affected men and women almost equally even if the changes on the level of participation have been larger for women than for men.

Another general development in Danish society has been the rising level of education (cf. Table 7). In this area, however, the changes have doubtlessly been much stronger for women than for men, resulting in an equal level of education for men and women in the younger generations. The change in the collective level of women's resources is important, not the rising level of resources of individual women. In 1971, well-educated women constituted a negligible minority of all women, and were unable to influence the general female culture. In 1991, well-educated women may still be a minority, but the younger generations of women, in particular, possess many educational resources, and who can say that daughters cannot influence their mothers (cf. Sapiro 1991)? In 1971, about half the female population was gainfully employed, many in low-status jobs (cf. Table 7). Today, almost all women work outside their homes, many in interesting and challenging jobs. In 1971, almost all women identified themselves exclusively with their roles as mothers and home-makers, whereas women

in 1990 identify themselves equally with their job and their home. Women are no longer primarily defined by the family. And to complete the story, during the same period, men have become more involved in family matters (Togeby 1994). As a result of these developments, the wall between women's and men's lives has broken down, and, at the same time, the political culture of men and women has merged.

However, it is still puzzling that these strong changes have taken place during such a relatively short period. It would probably not have happened at all had it not been for the intense political upheavals and strong political mobilizations which took place in Denmark in the 1970s. Both the modes of participation and the party system changed fundamentally. Two groups were mobilized during this period: the new middle class and the women. Women became much more politically active, much more left-wing, and much more feminist (Togeby 1994) and rejected the traditional division of roles between men and women (cf. Tables 7, 8 and 11). Basically, the breakdown of the specific women's culture was caused by the changing conditions of women in Danish society, but the social movements of the 1970s, including the women's movement, provoked a speeding-up of the development.

It is remarkable that the changes have been sufficiently comprehensive to affect all generations of women. This is really a case of adult socialization replacing old cultural norms and customs by new ones. Even women not personally experiencing great changes in their lives have participated in the collective learning process. And while this has definitely been headed by resource-rich women and the younger generation, it has gradually encompassed all groups of women in Danish society.

NOTES

1. The election survey of 1971 was conducted in connection with the general election on 21 September 1971 by Ole Borre, Erik Damgaard, Hans Jørgen Nielsen, Steen Sauerberg, Ole Tonsgaard and Torben Worre, all from the Universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus. The survey was financed by The Danish Social Science Research Council and the data were collected by The Danish National Institute of Social Research. It was a two-wave panel study where 62 percent (or 1302 persons) of the original sample participated in both waves.

   The 1979 election study was conducted in connection with the general election on 23 October 1979 by Ole Borre, Jørgen Goul Andersen, Ingemar Glans, Hans Jørgen Nielsen, Steen Sauerberg and Torben Worre, all from the Universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus. The survey was financed by The Danish Social Science Research Council and the data were collected by "Gallup Markedsanalyse A/S". The response rate is not reported.

   The 1990 election study was conducted in connection with the general election on 12 December 1990 by Ole Borre, Jørgen Goul Andersen, Steen Sauerberg, Hans Jørgen Nielsen and Torben Worre, all from the Universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus. The survey was financed by The Danish Social Science Research Council and the data were collected by "Gallup Markedsanalyse A/S". The response rate is not reported.

2. The scaling procedure used in this paper is that of R. J. Mokken, which is an alternative to the Guttman scaling. Whereas Guttman scaling is based on a deterministic model, Mokken's procedure is based on a probabilistic response model, or latent structure model. Instead of the coefficient of scalability used in Guttman scaling to evaluate the scale, Mokken uses Loevinger's coefficient of homogeneity as a measure of unidimensionality. Loevinger's H ranges from 1 to −1 and conventionally a coefficient above .50 is regarded as indicating a strong unidimensional structure, a coefficient between .40 and .49 a medium strong structure, and a coefficient between .30 and .39 a weak structure (Mokken 1971).

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Appendix. Number of Persons Scored on Tolerance in Different Categories in the Election Surveys of 1971 and 1990.

	1971		1990	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
All	634	636	455	505
20–29 years[a]	138	118	92	81
30–39 years	129	124	89	119
40–49 years	117	122	103	126
50–59 years	107	110	70	65
60–69 years	98	95	60	72
70+ years	45	67	41	42
School education: low	501	528	218	214
medium	97	95	147	185
high	36	14	90	106
Professional training: none	297	449	152	219
vocational	286	144	199	170
theoretical	51	43	104	116
Number of children: none	288	289		
1	127	122		
2	129	147		
3+	88	74		
Single	81	48	85	52
Married/cohabitating	507	481	325	361
Divorced/separated	18	35	25	27
Widowed	26	68	20	65
Unskilled workers	149	108	50	66
Skilled workers	116	13	67	20
White collar: public sector	67	61	67	123
White collar: private sector	91	57	100	114
Self-employed	95	20	49	29
Pensioners	96	112	87	107
Housewives	0	247	0	19
Students	20	16	34	28
Political interest: low	158	292	138	216
medium	211	213	207	209
high	265	131	110	80
Political efficacy: low	89	193	52	116
medium	408	378	270	313
high	137	65	133	76
Political knowledge: low	68	159		
medium	313	330		
high	253	147		

[a] Following the official voting age the youngest age group in 1971 is 21–29 years old whereas in 1979 and 1990 it is 18–29 years old..

Data: Election surveys, 1971 and 1990.