GOVERNABILITY AND PUBLIC VIRTUES: ON WOMEN'S INTEREST IN AND CAPABILITIES OF BECOMING CITIZENS

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(…) when beliefs weaken, we are left with attitudes.
V. Camps, *Virtudes públicas*

The central purpose of this article is to place the subject of gender citizenship in the context of democratic governability. For this purpose, we understand the term *governability* as "the condition of quality of relations between government and society such as to make private interests flow together towards a collective interest which, on being defined by those who govern, endows political control with ascendancy and legitimacy" (Guzmán, 2002:7). In empirical terms, the source of the present article is the results obtained from the application of the second National Survey on Political Culture and Citizenship Practice [1] (*Encuesta Nacional sobre Cultura Política y Prácticas Ciudadanas*: ENCUP) carried out by the Mexican Interior Ministry (*Secretaría de Gobernación*) and the National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Informatics (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática*: INEGI) at the beginning of 2003, with the aim of assessing the political culture of citizens of both sexes in Mexico.[2] The first part of this article develops a

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[1] The ENCUP 2003 consisted of 74 questions —of open and closed type or involving association of ideas— designed to obtain information at the national level regarding political behavior and interest in politics among the population aged over 18. It also set out to assess the prevailing level of civic participation (or *citizenship*) among Mexicans of both sexes, relating these phenomena to conditioning factors such as sex, age, level de education and income, among others. From a probabilistic and stratified sample of 5,256 households throughout the country, a total of 4,580 effective interviews were obtained, of which 2,691 were answered by women and the remaining 1,889 by men.

[2] In Mexico at the present time the staging of opinion polls is a widely used resource both by private agencies or communications media and government

nexus proposed between democratic governability and gender equality, on the assumption of the need to place women within a universe of citizenship, as an inherently inclusive democratic perspective would require. The second part of the article analyzes the insertion of Mexican women in the construction of citizenship on the basis of the empirical material, while the third presents the conclusions, with an eye to reviewing the pertinence for women of what the philosopher Victoria Camps has called the *public virtues*, such as solidarity, responsibility and tolerance, as democratic values of the first order and as characteristics of a gendered citizenship.

Governability and gender citizenship

Although the terms *governability* and *citizenship* are closely related, their origin lies in quite different domains. *Governability,* as is clear from Virginia Guzmán's definition, comes from the sphere of political control, whereas *citizenship* moves more naturally in the field of rights. Viewing the question within a context of institutional authoritarianism, the two terms would represent the opposite ends of the spectrum: on the one hand

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institutions. The latter is the case of the ENCUP 2001 and 2003 surveys and also that performed by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) entitled "The Nature of Civic Commitment: Social Capital and Political Culture in Mexico (*La naturaleza del compromiso cívico: Capital social y cultura política en México*)" (IFE 2003). It is worth mentioning that the ENCUP was not conceived explicitly with the intention of exhibiting the gender dimension in the sphere of political culture; it is, therefore, at times somewhat difficult to reconstruct this dimension as the transverse axis of analysis. On the other hand, the fact that the sample was of a probabilistic type means that it would be wrong to regard it as representative of the national female population. This becomes evident when one sees that less than 10% of the women who answered the questionnaire were single, over 50% had a level of education that did not extend beyond primary school, and that 65% did not go out to work; this in effect reflects the types of women who were found at home to be questioned. Despite the problems of representativeness that may underlie the data, the survey provides quantitative instruments for research which enabled us to work with information proceeding from an actual social situation showing trends and characteristics with a necessary level of credibility and closeness difficult to obtain through micro-social studies.

there are those who have power, and on the other those who obey; but then, in such context one would not really be talking of citizenship, and still less about rights. It is for this reason that we speak of *democratic governability*, and in this context we are dealing not merely with a unilateral capacity for governing, but also with the condition of a country for being governed and that of its people for participating in government:

> To think of increasing democratic governability implies thinking of democratic systems capable of providing security and well-being to the population. It also means, however, that the systems must offer sufficient possibilities for participation so that a diverse society can perceive that its problems and demands are being processed in the political system. Legitimate representation and good government must, then, be accompanied by participation of citizens (Bareiro 2003:10).

Line Bareiro follows a similar approach to that of other major studies that have been carried out recently in Mexico on the linking of governability and gender, identifying the inclusion of women in the spaces of representation and in the institutions of government as a matter of fundamental importance.

In this sense, one must emphasize that, in terms of effective participation, Mexican women have indeed managed to advance, over recent years, both in terms of their physical presence in decisive spaces, and in the generation and application of mechanisms that guarantee their participation; particularly with regard to the adoption of positive measures such as the Law on Quotas (*Ley de Cuotas*) which was applied for the first time in the country on the federal mid-term elections of 2003.

In the present legislature, for example, there are 113 female deputies, accounting for 22.8% of the total seats. This represents the most significant increase (6%) in the number and proportion of women over a previous legislature that the country has witnessed up to now. Nonetheless, in the regional field there is not one single woman serving as governor of a state, and only about 3% of municipal councils are chaired by women. Likewise, in the federal public administration only 2.1%

of top executive posts are held by women, with 27.4% at the assistant director level, and 23.1% at intermediate and lower levels of the bureaucratic hierarchies. These figures show that it is still not easy for women to accede to formal political spaces in Mexico, and that their problems of incorporation are related directly to a deficit of governability, if we understand this as

> (…) the capacity of a social system for self-government between the political actors and society, as a form of organization of human conviviality in the liberties: effective, tolerant, transparent, participative and equitable, and with respect for democratic rights (Chapa 2002).

But, what lies at the base of this problem, beyond the numbers and insertion of women in politics? In an analysis of the concept, Prats identifies a first important moment in the focusing of attention on governability: the Report presented to the Trilateral Commission in 1975 on the governability of democracies,[3] where the nub of the problem is identified as the deficit of democracy:[4]

> In order to deal with the risks of ungovernability changes are needed not only in institutions and in the capacities of government but also in the attitudes of citizens. In more up-to-date language, in order to strengthen democratic governability it is necessary not only to reinvent government but also citizenship.

Twenty-five years later, in the presentation of a new report[5] - as Prats remarks -:

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[3] Prats refers to the report presented in 1975 by Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki.

[4] It is worth remembering that this was the period in which authoritarian regimes were a threat, and a reality, throughout the world, and especially in Latin America, which has resulted in a lasting awareness of the fragility of democracy in this region.

[5] Prats refers to the new report on the health of the advanced capitalist democracies commissioned by the Trilateral Commission in the year 2000 (S. Pharr and R. Putnam, 2000). A comparative analysis of both reports has been carried out by E. Feldman (2000).

> The independent variable, and the problem that is focused on, is the decline in general confidence in institutions and political leaderships. In effect, though the commitment to democratic values is firmer than ever, one observes empirically that confidence in institutions has diminished […]. This manifests itself at times in important demands for political and electoral reforms, for reconstruction of citizenship and the democratic space, for new channels for political participation (Prats 2001).

Effectively, as is shown by the great variety of answers given by women to the National Survey on Political Culture and Practices of Citizenship, levels of confidence in Mexico are too low. To illustrate the point: 72 per cent of women have "little or no confidence" in government programs to combat poverty; the same goes for 66 per cent regarding government programs to fight corruption, and for 50 per cent as to public health services (Figure 1). Similarly, as this article will show repeatedly, the disaffection for politics reflected in the number of questions receiving a *Don't-know* response, or left unanswered, is alarming for both men and women, but even more so in the latter case.[6] The problem is one which the authors of the above-mentioned report (Pharr and Putnam) identify. In an attempt to account for this phenomenon, they offer the following three explanatory variables: the information available to citizens; citizens' criteria of evaluation; and the performance of democratic institutions. The three variables help to support a notion of governability which places citizens and institutions in a reciprocal relationship and identifies as fundamental to governability factors such as access to and use of information, commitment and participation — areas which are undeniably elements in the construction of citizenship.

As has been argued by political theorists with a feminist point of view, democracy must give importance to spaces of articulation involving both government and citizens[7], and this requires of

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[6] This is also borne out by the results of the survey applied by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE, 2003), which in the end does no more than reflect the enormous distance between the formal institutional spaces of politics, and the day-to-day life of women.

[7] See in general the work of Bareiro, Guzmán, Jelin, Tarrés, Vargas, among Latin American researchers; this is, however, a constant observation which is

the latter adequate information and opinion-forming capacity regarding matters of public life. Citizens must be knowledgeable, and prepared to demand fulfillment of rights while accepting obligations; they must adopt a critical attitude in respect of the exercise of democracy and, finally, they must perceive their impact on the public agenda and their presence in decision-making institutions. It is undeniable, as Virginia Guzmán states, that

> If women are not present in the spaces where the foundations of a new governability are debated and constructed, it cannot be ensured that public institutions will provide for their different needs and values, include them in the processes of professional education and job training, or accord them the same degree of agency as is recognized to the remaining actors in the public space (Guzmán 2002:13).

It is also certain, however, that if women do not articulate themselves in formal spaces of civic action, it will be very difficult for them to channel their demands, to join forces in favor of broader social claims, or take part in the collective actions and networks upon which the interaction of society and government is sustained.

We see the relations between democratic governability with gender equality as pivoting on the reinvention of citizenship, of a citizenship in which the gender focus has made, and may continue to make, valuable contributions. What is called for is a notion of citizenship that might transcend the purely mechanical aspect of democracy —the vote— enabling women to make progress towards an equilibrium between ethical principles and values and strategic and practical interests (Tarrés 1993).

We repeat, that while the question of gender in its connection with governability has hitherto been centered principally within the practical and strategic sphere of the inclusion of women in the hierarchies of the public domain, we cannot leave aside the

widely encountered elsewhere: see, for example, the work of Lister and Pateman or the compilation edited by Castells; it is, in fact, a nodal point in the construction of women's citizenship.

ethical aspect of citizenship. What we aim to present in this article is, therefore, the idea that it is possible to conceive of a form of citizenship proper to women; in other words, that women might be able to express their own ways of being citizens, guided by values close to those socially attributed to them as characteristics of their feminine nature, and that this particular form of citizenship should be fully engaged in the spaces where public policy is debated, and integrated in the processes of institutionalization — the nodal processes of governability.

From a subordinate insertion to a deficit of citizenship

The question of diversity of identities of subjects —which has acquired considerable importance in present-day political theory— impacts in different ways on political culture as regards practices and perceptions. However, gender identity —which is our concern in the present case— depends in turn on specific factors that, apart from being in large part constitutive of one's condition as male or female, also affect one's condition as a citizen. We are speaking of factors that —in the literature on political sciences with a gender-relations approach— may mark subtle differences, but are also associated with different forms or degrees of incorporation in the public and political space, which, as we have already pointed out, is not a universal space. These are marital status, number of children and the years of child-raising that lie ahead, or the fact of interacting with greater or lesser intensity in the public or private spheres, through education or work outside the home. The performance of women on the public stage depends to a large extent on the material and symbolic resources that can be mobilized in the exercise of their citizenship, on their condition and position in social organization and on the opportunities that the institutional context provides. In this sense there could be as many intervening factors in the ascription of women to a certain type or level of citizenship, as there are combinations of their distinctive features in relation with their degree of political participation and culture.

Nevertheless, even after saying all this, we do not observe in the results of the ENCUP 2003 survey important differences of opinion between men and women such as would allow us to make any significant declaration regarding polarized opinions, for example, regarding almost any of the questions formulated by the survey. The tendencies are rather more homogeneous than what, in accordance with stereotyped criteria, we might have expected, and they do not show a substantial difference in terms of a gender reading. One does, on the other hand, find small but perceptible and persistent distances between one sex and the other, throughout all the analyzed frequencies, which show identifiable tendencies. Persistent in this sense is the tendency corresponding to the percentage of *Don't-Know / No-Answer* responses, always higher in the case of women.

Turning to the data, we can say that only 7.2% of women show any clear interest in politics (11.7% in the case of men), while 89% of them state that politics interests them little or not at all. One does, however, notice a slightly greater degree of interest in politics as one moves up the educational scale, though without ever reaching what one might call satisfactory levels; even among the most highly educated group of women (postgraduate), those who are very interested in politics amount to barely over 20 per cent. One senses a response to the traditional exclusion of women that manifests itself in withdrawal and lack of interest in the explicitly political.

Women also express a high degree of disaffection for politics in their replies to questions regarding mechanical aspects of political behavior like "being able to vote"; the idea of having rights and obligations has more relevance for them as a constitutive element of citizenship than mere voting. Another predominant feature is their *no* to the question of whether they have talked about politics or taken part in meetings to discuss the matter.

However, if we draw a comparison with the results of the first survey, applied in 2001,[8] we find a positive change as regards both tolerance and participation in our incipient democracy; in the case of both men and women, the willingness to listen when politics is spoken about showed an increase of 17 per cent in 2003, while the willingness to participate with one's own opinions rose by 7 per cent.

Interest (or lack of interest) in politics is also associated with levels of information and the means to accede to it. In this sense, television predominates as the outstanding information medium. While the general tendency is the same for men and women, the latter watch television more, while reading newspapers and other written media less than men. This seems to indicate a somewhat lower participative and active attitude on the part of women: less critical, to judge by the research of M. Delli Carpini, who emphasizes the predominantly passive and less critical attitude of those who obtain their information mainly from television.

In general, the results show considerable differences among those questioned in relation with political subjects and actors. Among the many possible explanations for this fact one must place in the first instance the degree of education. The level of schooling reached does seem, indeed, to be a variable positively associated with higher levels of opinion, of knowledge and participation in the different subjects. Education is directly related to interest in politics and to the expression of such interest; this seems to be reflected, on the one hand, in a fear among women of expressing opinions freely, attributable to a lack of information or knowledge. On the other hand, interpreting this in a more positive light, we might be witnessing a greater degree of coherence between knowledge and opinion, in terms of which women do not hold opinions about what they

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[8] In 2001 a first version of the ENCUP was staged, so that we have an instrument of a consecutive panel type, with a basically equal sample and only minor adjustments in the instrument; this makes comparison of certain aspects feasible.

do not know, something which is not so clear in the case of men.

These data regarding the lack of interest, misinformation, disaffection or insecurity in the exercise of citizenship may well be negative correlatives of the aspects that we previously set as central in the practice of democracy: information, commitment and participation. Lack of information limits critical judgment and participation, let alone commitment or confidence, in a chain which leads back on itself like a serpent biting its own tail. Disaffection for politics is not only a women's problem; men also suffer from a lack of information and interest. Political matters, at least in their present expression seem scarcely seductive for those who ought to participate in their construction on a day-to-day basis.

In the analysis of the results of the first ENCUP, Tarrés also finds great disaffection for politics, and formulates the hypothesis that for women, silence —as expressed in the *Don't Know / No Answer* responses— is a form of expression of gender subordination (Tarrés 2003). She broadens the hypothesis suggesting that the phenomenon transcends the socioeconomic condition of the people interviewed and that they avoided answering, not so much out of lack of knowledge as from fear of the consequences of their replies; i.e. they wished to evade confronting the conflict implied in taking up a political position. For Tarrés, this question is identified with the authoritarian political culture that has characterized public life in Mexico, and which is proving slow and difficult to disarticulate. If in the case of men this is fairly evident, for women, their insertion in public life —partial and hedged around by conditioning factors associated with gender— is characterized by an even greater distance and disaffection, by greater doubts and a perception of obstacles in the way of democratic forms or variants of participation.

Tarrés seeks to account for this fact revealed by the survey, with the help of an indicator of *individuation* based on A. Giddens' basic perspective of the subject and applied in the

reading of the survey to the fact of going out or staying at home.[9] In order to provide more elements to help explain the phenomenon, and making use of the results obtained in the 2003 edition of the survey, we included other conditioning factors that might present some explanatory potential and allow other aspects sides of the issue to come forward. In this sense, we place the marital status of the women on an equal level as the fact of leaving or not leaving the house, in response to the idea that gender relations constitute identities that are articulated in the case of women not only by virtue of opposition but, even more so, through the link of relationship with men.

Doubtless, the woman who goes out is positively exposed to a much greater degree to information, ideas, opinions, experiences, challenges and possibilities than one who neither goes out, nor works nor studies. By introducing the condition of being part of a couple we have tried to include in the considerations of domesticity, enclosure, or years of child raising, the possible gender condition of dependence and subordination, specifically in relation to the male sex. Four groups of women were identified:

  Group 1: Single women who leave the house;
  Group 2: Women who leave the house and live with a partner;
  Group 3: Single women who stay at home;
  Group 4: Women who stay at home and live with a partner.

We found that the women of Group 1 (single women who leave the house) are definitely more active politically in comparison with the rest and are better informed in comparison with men in general. Thus 32.5% of these women participate and give their opinion in conversations on politics as against 31, 15, and 18% of the remaining groups. Likewise, they have the highest

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[9] This author identifies women who remain at home, differentiating between them and those who, besides housekeeping, do or have done paid work, study or carry out any other activity outside the home: the important point is the present or past contact with the public world, which influences their condition of individuation.

percentage of correct answers regarding the period that deputies hold their seats (38.8%), and their interest in politics — "very interested" (10.1%) or at least "not much" (54.4%: as opposed "to not at all"), stands at levels higher than those for men (9.1 and 48.9% respectively). Women who fall into the second group show percentages lower in the above-mentioned aspects than the women of Group 1, despite the supposed level of "individuation" that the fact of leaving the house ought to indicate; apparently, the fact of having a partner limits their action in political terms. The women of Group 3 (single women who remain at home) likewise do not necessarily show much interest in politics; their percentages of participation are actually slightly lower (15% participate in discussion and give their opinion on politics, and 49.6% are *not at all* interested in politics) than those for women who remain at home and have a partner (18% participate and give their opinion on politics and 50% are *not at all* interested in politics); nonetheless, this contrasts with a higher level of information. The performance of the figures for this group is variable and more research is necessary into the profile of these women and what factors influence their configuration as citizens.

In general the exercise opens new questions regarding what the intervening variables would be in the construction of models of female citizenship and how they are related by women themselves with their daily activities. To a large extent Tarrés' hypothesis of individuation is borne out, but one notices other aspects too.[10] As can be observed, Groups 2 and 3, which we will refer to as the intermediate groups, do not necessarily comply with the expectation of higher levels of participation or information, despite presenting one of the characteristics which we identify as variables of individuation (such as leaving the house or being single); the presence of these two variables does, however, mark a great difference between the women situated in the groups at either extreme: that of disinterest in

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[10] Tables 1, 2 and 3 present data obtained from three questions included in the ENCUP, which reflect aspects relevant to participation and access to information.

politics (Group 4) and that of a greater inclination towards it (Group 1), on the part of the women interviewed.

As various studies of the subject of citizenship have insisted, the level-of-education variable marks perceptible differences in the relation of women (and men) with politics. Education seems to be a key element in the decision to participate and express opinions with greater confidence, as can be observed from the data highlighted in Table 1.

TABLE 1

In general, when you are in conversation with other people and they begin to talk about politics, what do you do?

| | Group 1 | | | Group 2 | | | Group 3 | | |
| | Leaves the house - Single | | | Leaves the Couple - house | | | Stays at home - Single | | |
	%	With't prepa*	With prepa	%	With't prepa	With prepa	%	With't prepa	With prepa
Don't pay attention	18.0	21.0	15.0	16.0	18.7	10.0	15.0	15.4	12.5
Listen without taking part	43.0	48.0	38.0	46.0	51.0	37.0	60.5	64.0	25.0
Participate and give opinion	32.5	24.0	41.0	31.0	24.0	45.0	15.0	10.0	62.5
Sometimes give opinion	5.2	4.5	6.0	4.4	3.3	6.6	1.2	1.3	
Don't know/ No answer	1.3	2.5	0.0	7.0	3.0	1.4	8.3	9.3	0.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100.0	100	100	100	100

| Group 4 | | | Men | | |
| Stays at home - Couple | | | | | |
%	With't prepa	With prepa	%	With't prepa	With prepa
17.0	18.0	11.0	12.4	13.9	8.4
56.0	58.0	42.0	48.0	**54.0**	31.0
18.0	14.5	42.0	33.0	25.0	**56.0**
3.1	3.0	4.5	4.0	4.4	2.7
5.9	6.5	0.5	2.6	2.7	1.9
100	100	100	100	100	100

* *Escuela preparatoria*: equivalent of the British sixth form/A-levels or the French *baccaulauréat*. Source: Own elaboration based on ENCUP 2003

TABLE 2

In general, how interested are you in politics?

	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3		
	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*
A lot	10.1	9.0	11.1	9.5	6.5	15.9	5.8	5.1	12.5
Not much	54.4	46.6	62.2	49.6	45.8	57.4	41.9	39.7	62.5
Not at all	33.2	43.6	23.0	37.0	43.8	22.9	50.0	52.6	25.0
Other	2.2	0.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.9			
Don't know				0.1	0.2		2.3	2.6	
No answer				0.1	0.2				
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Group 4			Men		
%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*
5.6	5.1	9.0	9.1	8.4	22.1
41.1	38.8	59.3	48.9	55.4	56.8
49.6	52.4	27.7	38.7	33.4	18
1.7	1.4	4.0	2.4	2.5	2.9
1.8	2.0		0.8	0.2	
0.3	0.3		0.2	0.1	0.2
100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Own elaboration based on ENCUP 2003

TABLE 3
Do you know how long federal deputies hold their seats?

	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3		
	Goes out - Single			Goes out - Couple			At home - Single		
	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*
Correct answer	38.8	27.1	50.4	37.3	31.4	49.6	34.9	30.8	75.0
Incorrect answer	23.9	25.6	22.2	27.9	27.0	29.1	16.3	17.9	0.0
Don't know / No answer	37.3	47.3	27.4	34.8	41.6	21.3	48.8	51.3	25.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Group 4					
At home - Couple			Men		
%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*	%	With't *prepa*	With *prepa*
28.2	26.5	41.2	37.8	31.2	55.7
26.1	25.1	33.3	30.6	31.8	27.3
45.7	48.4	25.5	31.6	37.0	17.0
100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Own elaboration based on ENCUP 2003

These differences among the designated groups leads one to think that not only are we in the presence of a subordinated insertion but also a deficient one — if one accepts the framework of what traditional political science has defined as full participation in the construction of citizenship. Obviously, one could delve in much greater detail into factors of the building of identity and the specific contexts of the women

represented in these groups, but this would exceed the scope of the present work; we concentrated rather on hazarding — introducing, we would prefer to say— a new hypothesis: that there are fields prescribed as political in which women are not interested in participating, and in turn, others in which women participate actively but which are not seen as political acts, exercises of citizenship.

What kind of citizenship are we referring to? Perhaps it is only when we regard citizenship in the light of parameters established traditionally by political science and practice that we can speak of a deficit of citizenship. We prefer to speak of an inconclusive process of citizenship building — one limited to a large extent to the immediate sphere of the satisfaction of needs, for which women have been historically designated as culturally responsible.[11]

In attention to the last question, one must distinguish between formal and substantive citizenship. It is obvious that, despite the continued existence of enormous inequalities in Mexico, women have rolled back the breach to a considerable degree as regards education, work and the generation of mechanisms that guarantee their democratic participation in formal terms — if we consider political rights such as the vote and eligibility, for example. Clearly, conditions for exercising citizenship have improved in formal terms and their capacities for exercising it have increased in substantive terms, but great difficulties still exist for their insertion in political life and their exercise as citizens; it is surely this which manifests itself in their apathy. The difficulties we refer to are vulnerability, ignorance, poverty and exclusion, as elements implying a risk for democratic governability. In view of this, the opportunity of creating

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[11] An important indicator in this respect is the more critical vision of women regarding democracy, sparked off by the unfavorable economic results, as can be appreciated from several of the questions. What we are seeing is perhaps the public expression of the dissatisfaction of people who have been accustomed to the clientelist practices of a system that based its legitimacy in its success in providing for community needs.

capacities is evident; the *empowerment* of women in the mechanisms, instruments and procedures for their insertion in the condition of formal citizenship,[12] is an indispensable means for forestalling this risk.

We remain, however, with the problem of distinguishing between the capacity for exercising citizenship and the will to do so. In this sense, García and Gomáriz (2000) offer a typology made up of three sub-groups as follows:

- Women with weak capacity for exercising citizenship and, therefore, serious difficulties for doing so;
- Women with sufficient capacity for the exercise of citizenship, but who do not exercise in the public sphere — especially in decision-making spaces;
- Women with sufficient capacities —especially on the symbolic level— who exercise their citizenship in the public sphere and are prepared to do so in the political sphere *sensu stricto*;

We can find similarities between these sub-groups and the groups we situated in terms of the conditions of individuation. The women interviewed in Group 1 would correspond to the group of women who, having the required capacities, exercise their citizenship. Likewise, Group 4 would correspond to types of women who are weak in respect of the exercise of politics, while the women in Groups 2 and 3 would fall into the type which simply does not opt to exercise its citizenship.

This becomes even more noticeable when we introduce into the analysis the educational variable, as can be seen from the tables. Those single women who remain at home and who have a higher level of education, show a higher level of information (75% give the correct answer to the question regarding the period for which federal deputies occupy their posts), but this

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[12] In the framework of the Project on Democratic Governability (*Proyecto de Gobernabilidad Democrática*), the National Institute for Women (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres) has published a volume which brings together systematically all the legal resources for the political participation of women, with the aim of achieving such empowerment. See Inmujeres (2003).

does not necessarily guarantee a greater participation. To the question, "When you are in conversation with other people and they begin to talk about politics, what do you do?", the answer "sometimes give an opinion" is blank, whereas the total of answers are distributed among the 62% who effectively "participate and give opinion", the 25% of those who "listen but do not participate", and a further 12% who definitively "do not pay attention". It would simply seem that these types of women decide to hold opinions and to participate, but only in a partial manner. What we would like to emphasize here is that the element of will comes to play a fundamental role in the construction of citizenship. Clearly, there will also be those who decide on an alternative type of participation, and even those who consider that their participation is not political, as can be seen from other answers, for example those in Figure 2.

Why do women not wish to participate in politics in a conscious way? Some authors attribute this to the fact that women perceive politics as a harsh, aggressive and competitive space which is not of their competence, but something alien to them. Or perhaps, as García and Gomáriz (2000) claim,

> (…) we would be looking at women who decide voluntarily that their interests are elsewhere, while they develop their autonomy in terms of gender. They can decide not to participate in politics, to have a low-intensity participation, or to take part much more actively in local spaces. And this may also involve the decision to associate with feminist organizations, or not to do so (while, to be sure, taking advantage of the conditions created by the said movement).

The point is, according to these authors, that we may be dealing with a segment of women who, while possessing sufficient capacities for exercising citizenship and participating in politics, decide to do so only in private spaces or simply not to do so. Would it not be fair to speak of intentionally apolitical subjects?

If a segment like the above-mentioned one becomes stronger, the consequences could be precisely to damage the essential process of governability, to the degree that a progressive loss

of social interlocutors in the formulation of the public domain might occur. This is something of great importance for politics, which needs to discover how to convoke those who have sufficient capacities but opt not to take part. It is possible that a considerable part of the answer lies in the construction, or reinvention, as mentioned above, of citizenship. In such a reinvention one can be sure that women would have much more to contribute, in the practical, strategic and ethical aspects. Not with the idea of constructing an exclusive, differentiated type of citizenship, but —on the contrary— one which takes gender into account while implicating both men and women in their relations within the public and private spaces constituted by politics, democracy and citizenship, and which, in the final analysis, are what make good government possible.

Public virtues

The reinvention of citizenship may involve substantive and formal elements springing from a variety of conceptions, and which enrich each other mutually in diversity and difference, but which may also channel aspects that for centuries have remained expelled from politics, such as feelings. Perhaps the hypothesis —with a strong base in experience— of the perception of politics as an obdurate affair which repels female participation can be countered through the discovery or making visible —because they do in fact exist— of those features of political life that rely on friendship or solidarity, for example, as valid components of civic participation.

It is along these lines that we offer an approach, developed by the philosopher Victoria Camps, which may contribute new definitions and open alternative and more harmonic paths towards the future. This approach is concordant with a tendency in feminist writing that proposes a citizenship of gender in which women are protagonists of a construction centered on their own sensibilities. What we are dealing with are aspects that are seen as essential to women's nature, evident features of practices attributed and reproduced

throughout history. We shall apply Camps's philosophical approach (Camps, 1990)[13] to the results brought to light by the application of the ENCUP, illuminated by the focus on gender relations.

The ethics of justice to which Camps refers on the one hand, the incorporation of feelings that can be expressed in terms of friendship, and which form part of a scenario of democracy implying in practice an ethics of the virtues. This requires —in order to avoid succumbing to temptations of liberal individualism— a climate of collaboration and cooperation in a process that brings ethics, as we used to say, closer to the feelings.

If the fundamental rights derived from the ethics of justice are equality and liberty, it must be possible to speak of practices, attitudes and dispositions coherent with the search for equality and liberty. We call these dispositions public virtues; they imply the capacity to make the defense of fundamental rights a collective necessity.

It is thus that Rawls, for instance, understands *justice as fairness* as implying certain political virtues of social cooperation: relations of civility, tolerance, reasonableness, sense of fairness. In no way do we consider it pertinent —following an essentialist inspiration— to contemplate different ethics for men and women, or differential bases for the same ethics. We do, however, believe that this apparently simple framework brings us closer to some of the practices that human culture has identified as modes of behavior or aptitudes proper to women and, in fact, reproduced from within the world closest to them. It is no futile matter, therefore, to reflect on the behavior of women when considering those virtues necessary for democracy.

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[13] From this point on, our article represents a constant dialogue with this work of Camps.

Solidarity

This is a value neighboring on justice; but it does not constitute justice. Unlike justice, solidarity implies good feelings. Justice is imperfect because it refers to general needs and interests; the law is uniform, intransigent, and punishes; justice is never universally or uniformly applied, and life itself is unjust. Therefore solidarity is both a condition for justice, and something necessary in order to complement it and compensate for its shortcomings. Once again, as we have already suggested, the political virtues of civility, tolerance and reasonableness are necessary characteristics that ought to apply to all citizens, whether male or female, in a society in search of justice.

It is easier, however, to change institutions and laws than attitudes: the absence of solidarity leads to a deficient public life, a diminished social capital, producing reciprocal mistrust among social actors and between government and society. Because, as we have just remarked, the law is of a general nature, while solidarity, on the other hand, responds to a contract of cooperation in the production of a general will. It implies the recognition of differences —race, sex, religion, age, etc.— without renouncing our sense of *us.*

More than half (57.6%) of women think that most people show solidarity; such solidarity manifests itself in practices such as the fact of having at some time donated money for social causes, helping a stranger, donating objects in cases of disaster, or participating as a volunteer in activities that benefit the community. At the same time, however, in more than 88% of cases, the women interviewed agreed with the notion that if we do not look after ourselves first, other people will take advantage of us. It is also worth noticing that women disagree, to a greater extent than men, with the statement that the individuals' first debt is to the community; this is a response that contradicts the literature in the sense that women are generally credited with a greater sympathy for community affairs and

confidence in their actors. They are critical of others; show mistrust; criticize the selfishness of others. We believe, however, that the way the questions in the ENCUP are formulated could be leading women to manifest their rejection of what they perceive as an individualistic normativity. This is possibly what is evidenced in the low percentage of women (23%) who think that most people frequently help others. We leave this as a suggestion of a possible alternative explanation.

In this same sense, except for the fact of organizing oneself with other affected people (37%) or complaining to the authorities (30%), women have availed themselves of few types of activities or public demands; this is a fairly clear example of limited civic-political expression.

As we noted above, absence of solidarity affects directly key aspects in the construction of democracy, such as the generation of social capital and the links of trust that determine the relation between different social actors and between the latter and the government.

In Putnam's terms, social capital is defined as a set of horizontal associations, such as the tissue of networks of civic commitment and the totality of norms associated with it which affect the (social) productivity of the community (cited in Rabotnikof, 1999). From this point of view, some of the actions investigated in the ENCUP may be considered indices of social capital, such as, for example, the attendance at meetings that express different groupings or significant social networks. First and foremost for women is participation in meetings of parents' associations (45% as against 35% of men) followed by those related to religious affairs (28% as against 24%); next in importance, although in a lesser degree than with men, comes participation in meetings of neighbors or local residents. Attendance at meetings of citizens' groups is considerably less, and at those of political groups or parties less still, being particularly scant in the case of women (16% for men as against 9% for women). This very low participation, ranging from a high of 45 down to 9 per cent of the interviewed

population, is indicative of a deficit in participation closely associated with the perception that citizens of both sexes have of difficulty in organizing themselves (Figure 2).[14] Participation in organizations of citizens around a common cause —difficult or very difficult for 54 and 56% of men and women respectively— is directed mainly towards the demand for public services or services of attention to the community. But what is most striking is the *Don't-knows* from people who are simply unaware of the problems of their community which they might organize themselves to resolve.

Faced with these replies, the question arises: what kind of citizenship are we talking about? Most of the problems, as well as the possible solutions, lead us back to the satisfaction of immediate needs, rather than to the obtaining of citizens' rights. This brings to mind the concept of the political regime which bases its legitimacy on its ability to deliver the goods to a clientele, and of a certain passivity of the population accustomed to this kind of relationship with governmental authority. Problem solving is conceived in terms of citizens' participation in a good 23% and 18% of cases for men and women respectively, but the *Don't-know / No-answer* response predominates greatly (43% and 49% respectively) in subordination to the solution designed and handed down from outside the community.

Another facet that this analysis brought to light is that of the debate involving public and private spaces, in as much as the boundaries between these spaces imply certain connotations that impose limits on women's ability to enter the field of what is theoretically conceived as political. Once again, on the basis of Figure 2, we can see how participation is conditioned directly by women's relation towards such spaces, and this in turn manifests itself in their levels of trust towards political actors

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[14] This limited participation is still more surprising when we bear in mind that ENCUP was carried out in January 2003, just a few months before the intermediate federal elections of July of that year, in circumstances of high political effervescence.

and institutions. To the question regarding whether at any time they had belonged to some organization, affirmative answers were most often given in connection with organizations of a religious nature or those related to the life of the immediate environment such as local residents', neighbors', or condominium organizations, while those falling within the public-political sphere such as trade unions or political parties scored a mere 9% and 9.6% respectively in the case of women, contrasting sharply with the scores of 22% and 15.4% corresponding to men.

As a correlative of this participation we find the levels of confidence. Women trust more teachers, clergymen and the medical profession — more closely related with the private sphere— than political parties, the police and trade-unions (concerned directly with the public space: see Figure 3). In general, women show greater mistrust than men regarding the government and other persons, but their trust increases in aspects more involved with daily life and attention to the family —in other words with their own obligations— such as education and health. The narrow circle of the intimate spheres of (for example, in the family) predominates in terms of women's confidence; but these are not precisely the spaces most suited to favoring governability.

Responsibility

As Camps notes, only a free being can be responsible; otherwise he or she would simply be complying with imposed orders.

One can hardly avoid noticing that this refers us to commitment and responsibility, with the recognition and exercise not only of rights but also of obligations. For citizens of either sex the responsibility to fulfill such obligations should be seen as a commitment; but we also have the right to demand the same of others. On this aspect, we note a firm conviction that responsibility is a fundamental part of the construction of

democracy, and the answers are quite favorable to this view: for 48% of women, being a citizen means having rights and obligations, over and above other possible answers such as being able to vote or being of age. Likewise, when asked whether *people should or should not take the initiative regarding problems the government is trying to resolve*, more than 80% of the women answered in the affirmative.

Rights imply their correlative responsibilities, and these responsibilities, in turn, suppose both clear commitments and clear identities; this implies a proactive response in the face of public and/or shared sets of problems. On inquiring into *how often conversation takes place with friends and neighbors regarding problems that affect the community*, the answers "frequently" and "from time to time" account for 57% of the cases in women, and 67% of the cases in men. And to the question, *is there some problem in the community which you are interested in helping to resolve?*, 50% of the women responded in the affirmative, as opposed to 57% of men. While this is a positive datum, one notes a difference of over 10 percentage points in the first case and 7 points in the second between men and women.

One could, of course, read these responses as inconsistent[15] when compared to those given to the questionnaire's request to *identify a problem in the community that could be resolved with citizens' help*. Here what most claims the attention is the very high percentage (nearly 90%) of *Don't-knows* expressing unawareness of the problems of respondents' communities which might be resolved through their organizing themselves.

Responsibility has to do unavoidably with the autonomy of the individual as well as with the capacity to commit oneself — particularly, in common with others— and this implies taking responsibility for one's own actions and their consequences.

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[15] In *Ulysses and the Sirens*, however, Jon Elster, a champion in the exaltation of rationalism, points to such inconsistencies as a common aspect of men and —we suppose— of women.

This relation of commitment, expectations or demands means that responsibility is an essentially dialogical attitude. Finally, only those beings who are capable of taking the initiative in order to achieve particular goals, who can make their own decisions, who wield a certain power, and consequently, some type of authority, are autonomous.

We can thus understand in this connection —which Camps calls dialogical— a founding of the sense of legality as a form of responsibility. Legality implies authority and commitment to a reciprocal attitude that permits the assumption of norms that formalize, or institutionalize: to express this in terms of governability, the interaction of government with society. In the terms of this kind of responsibility, a good government must have the backing that we call legality and which is summed up both in citizens' respect for the law, and in the credibility of institutions, whence the mutual commitment arises.

In Mexico, nonetheless, 60% of both men and women consider that the laws are applied for the benefit of the few, of those few who hold power. The answers to the question, *In your experience, are the laws in Mexico used in pursuit of justice, as a pretext for covering arbitrary behavior, for defending the interests or society, or for defending those of people with power?* complete the previous image, with the score of 52 and 53% (for women and men respectively) —reflecting a negative view of the application of the laws for arbitrary ends and in defense of the interests of the powerful, as against the 39 and 40% who have a positive perception. Once again women duplicate the *Don't-knows* of the men.

In the hypothetical case of a law that appears unjust, women present an attitude of greater acceptance, tending to obey (24.6%) and a high rate of *Don't-knows* (nearly 8%), while men show more proactive attitudes, in the sense of obeying the law while trying to change it or seeking protection against its effects. On this point, men would seem to have an attitude of greater responsibility and commitment as opposed to that of women

who seem to accord greater weight to authority as a value in itself.

Tolerance

An unchallengeable virtue of democracy, already addressed be Locke in his *Letter concerning Toleration*, written in the late seventeenth century, and by J. S. Mill in *On Liberty*, two centuries later, tolerance first came into focus as a necessity in view of religious diversity; but in recent times it has broadened out, incontestably, to embrace liberty of conscience and of expression (individuality), freedom of thought and feeling (privacy), and of tastes and goals (individual life-styles), liberty of meeting and association, respect for others, their plurality and equality, their beliefs and opinions. This is a sign of the times, evidence of postmodern heterogeneity.

As Camps says, "In the communications age it is logical that the accent is on pluralism and that tolerance is consolidated and on the increase", but do we find evidence of this in our citizens?

Turning to the answer to the question, *Would you agree to let someone appear on television to say things that are against your way of thinking?*, we find a response which is somewhat alarming. Nevertheless, between the first survey and the second (a distance of two years), the percentage who did not answer was reduced by half, and a favorable increase in terms of tolerance was defined (Figure 4). Women, however, showed a higher degree of disagreement with the expression of plurality. Similarly, in the case of allowing various specific groups of social actors to take part in politics, many women were reluctant to admit the participation of the clergy and the military —these being the two categories most highly appreciated by them— fearing perhaps that such a social exposure would damage the image of such appreciated social subjects. As for the men, we find that they preferred the participation of journalists to teachers and that of military men to homosexuals.

One of the most interesting questions included in the survey had to do with freedom of conscience and life styles, as an immediate consequence of modern theories of tolerance. And here there does seem to be a positive response on the part of the women interviewed, in spite of the general conservatism with which they have been stereotyped. This is evidenced by their receptiveness to the participation of hitherto marginalized groups in politics: women themselves, young people, indigenous people, for instance (Figure 5), which speaks of a tendency relatively favorable to inclusion. It is, however, at the same time, worrying to note the very high proportion among those interviewed who reject such inclusion, even that of women themselves, thus de-legitimizing their own participation.

In the same context, in answers to the question whether one would be *prepared to sacrifice freedom of expression, liberty of organization or beliefs, in exchange for living without economic pressures*, the conviction increases —from 47% to 59% in comparison with the first survey of 2001— that one should not sacrifice any freedom even for the benefit of the economic situation, a matter more highly emphasized in the case of women. This, however, may seem to contradict other studies that have show a strong criticism -on the part of the least well off- regarding the material results of democracy.

The obvious limits of democracy —as an imperfect system or, perhaps, one in a process of permanent improvement— can lead one to postulate a condition of partial tolerance, which would contemplate, for example, a reasonable intolerance regarding what is conceived as unjust or wrong.

On this point, it is interesting to take up Wolff (cited by Camps), for whom the pluralism natural to liberal democracy implies a philosophy of equality or of justice, but whose application actually favors inequality, by tending to ignore certain social groups. In this argumentation we find a clear support for the

justification of much reviled policies of affirmative action, on the other hand.[16]

For Camps, virtues have generally been assimilated to the masculine ethos: why is a positive sense accorded strength, self-determination, or coherence? one asks. It is pertinent, Camps says, to win back for women the historical sense of the characteristics attributed to them — stereotypes which mask concomitant dispositions and attitudes that should be taken seriously. This is the positive version of the *experience* (as opposed to the *essence*) of women; and this would lead us to reconstruct on these experiential bases the possibilities for a specific form of insertion in the political sphere, one which at the same time would contribute to the dignity of human existence, beyond the considerations of politics.

Conclusions

At a certain moment in recent history, the incorporation of women in the formal labor market —and the much-commented phenomena that accompanied this process— led not only to unexpected results at the analytical level, but required wide-ranging socio-political adjustments (public services, changes in legal norms, for instance), and above all, redistribution of costs and benefits in the domestic-familial space.

Nowadays, the challenge —in particular the need for new articulations for constructing processes aimed towards a new democratic governability— implies necessarily the incorporation of women on the national agenda —along with their presence in public authorities, in spaces of representation, in the activity of designing public policies— as a way toward overcoming their subordinated insertion and their deficit of citizenship.

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[16] See the recent book by Cahn (2002) which systematizes discussion regarding affirmative action.
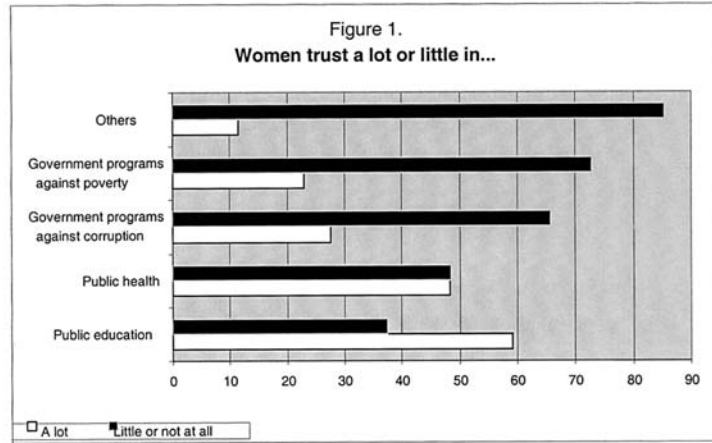
Camps poses the question —which brings us back close to the point at which we started— of whether it is possible to think of another moral foundation specific to women, another interpretation of the good, of justice and politics — another foundation, then, for democracy.

What we are witnessing in these Mexican surveys can be described as an underdeveloped citizenship (and this applies equally to the men and the women who took part in them), one that is scarcely discovering the parameters of its exercise, barely recognizing the channels of an expression to which it is still not accustomed. In the specific case of women, we identify the need for a willingness to take a share in responsibility (along with political maturity on the part of the social institutions), in order to analyze the most diverse events, to criticize in a positive manner, offering proposals of our own, while defending the conquests of the women's movements as a whole in an inclusive exercise of tolerance. We need to put into practice the same spirit of tolerance that informed the feminist movement on its appearance as a first questioning of the new order of modernity, and to do so with the same persistence as characterized that original demand.
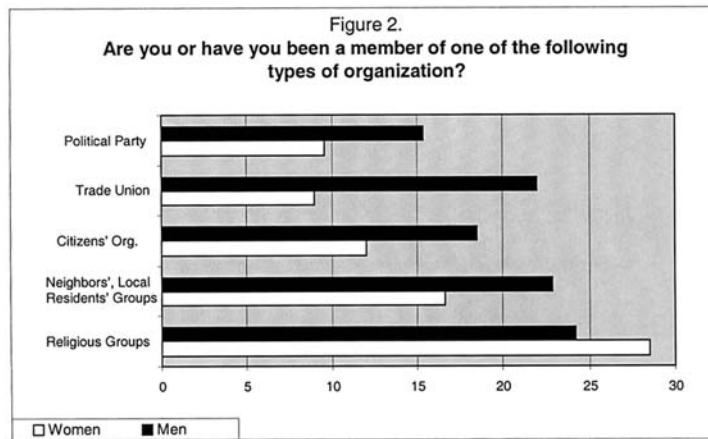
But, as Elster well observes, one should not expect too much coherence or rational consistency. What we have described implies a challenge to the current conception of citizenship and governability. It expresses the need to make good the deficit in women's incorporation in an order that has relegated them since its founding moment. Once again, would the distance, the indifference that women perceive, or their subordinate or incomplete insertion have to make us think in terms of searching for a different moral basis, a fresh foundation for democracy defined in new terms?

For the moment, the analytical-explanatory potential of gender leads us, incontestably, to new views on the articulation of private and public spheres, of political practices and social institutions.
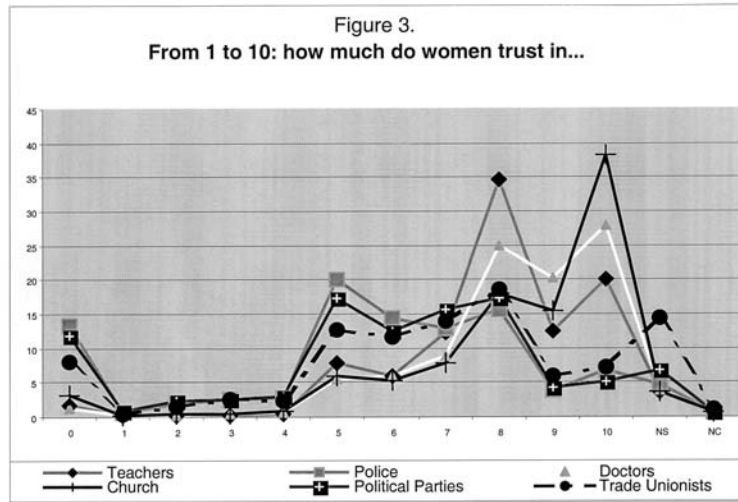
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But, to conclude, paraphrasing MacIntyre, *"(...) no virtue, neither justice nor solidarity, is possible in these times, since we are not a community, we do not have the same purposes nor do we share the same interests"* would mean we accept a scenario of inexistent communities. Instead, it seems preferable and more constructive to identify those differential characteristics in the formation of social conglomerates capable of being articulated for the ends of achieving strategic collective action.
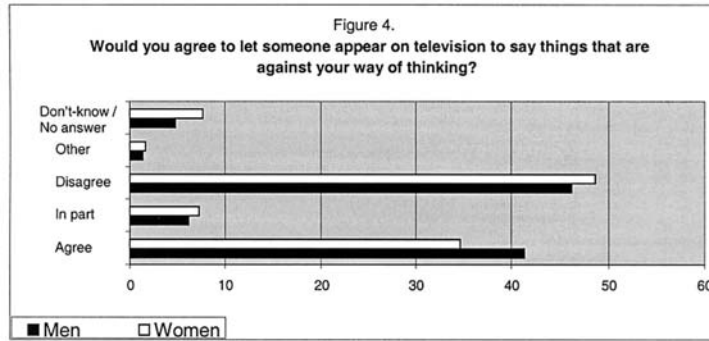
Figure 1.
Women trust a lot or little in...

Legend: □ A lot   ■ Little or not at all

Source: ENCUP 2003

Figure 2.
Are you or have you been a member of one of the following types of organization?

Legend: □ Women   ■ Men

Source: ENCUP 2003

Figure 3.
From 1 to 10: how much do women trust in...

Figure 4.
Would you agree to let someone appear on television to say things that are against your way of thinking?

Source: ENCUP 2003

Figure 5.
Who ought to participate in politics?
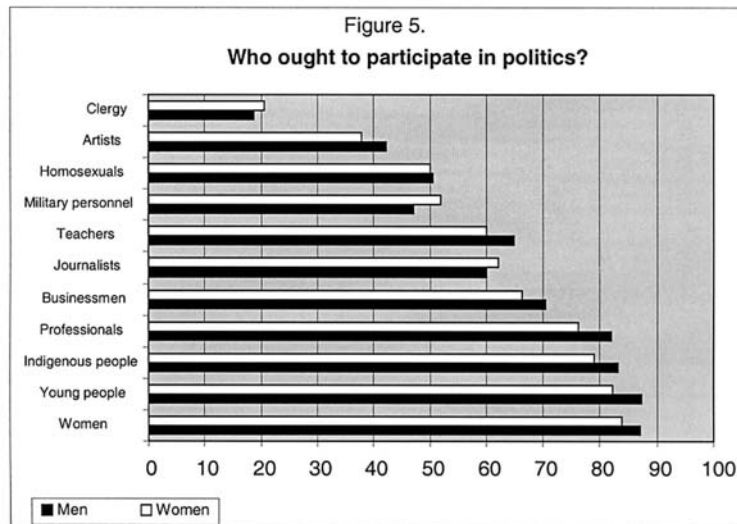
Source: ENCUP 2003

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