

Quarterly Profile

OF NEW MEXICO CITIZENS

A UNM INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER REPORT

FALL 1995—VOL 7/NO 4

FOCUS 1: GAMBLING IN NEW MEXICO

Background

No longer the exclusive trademarks of Las Vegas and Atlantic City, coins clinking, cards slapping and dice rolling have become increasingly familiar sights and sounds throughout the country. As of 1994, at least 10 states authorized casino gambling and 37 states offered lotteries.¹ These numbers have continued to rise, and numerous state governments now have gaming compacts with Native American tribes and pueblos.

A significant contributor to the growth in gaming has been the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. Signed in 1988, this Act declares that if a state allows gambling, Indian tribes may establish gaming facilities offering the same types of gambling free of state control, although they must enter into a compact with the state. Since 1988, a plethora of casinos have popped up on reservations from Connecticut to California. One estimate shows that nationwide, Indian gaming revenues will top \$6 billion in 1995 and profits will exceed \$1 billion.²

The long-term economic and social effects of this growing industry remain uncertain. For the tribes themselves, the economic benefits seem irrefutable. Many tribes have used casino revenues to improve educational opportunities, health services, and employment. For example, a survey of the Winnebago Ho Chunk casino in Wisconsin revealed that before they were hired by the casino, 18% of its employees were on welfare.³ The Mashantucket Pequot tribe in Connecticut claims that their casino generates more income tax revenues than any other company in the state.⁴

At the same time, some evidence links casinos to higher crime rates, and psychologists and social service providers have expressed concern that the increased availability of legalized gambling will lead to an increase in the number of pathological gamblers. These effects could, in turn, lead to higher costs for law enforcement and social services.

New Mexico is home to at least ten Indian casinos (as of December, 1995) with several more in the planning and development stages. Governor Johnson signed compacts with the New Mexican pueblos in February, 1995, but in the summer of 1995, the New Mexico Supreme Court declared the compacts invalid and in December, U.S. Attorney John Kelly ordered the casinos to close by January 15, 1996.

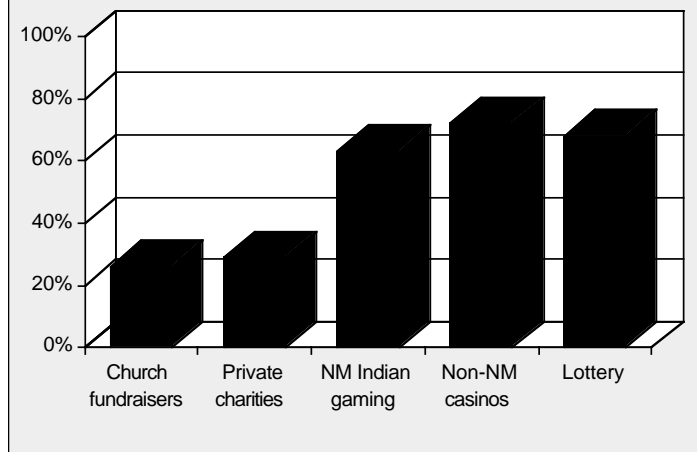
¹Gold, Steven, "It's Not a miracle, It's a Mirage," *State Legislatures*, 20:2, February 1994, p.28.

²Cozzetto, Don A., "The Economic and Social Implications of Indian Gaming: The Case of Minnesota," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 19:1, Winter 1995, p. 119.

³Zelio, Judy, "The Fat New Buffalo," *State Legislatures*, 20:6, June 1994, p.38.

⁴Moore, W. John, "A Winning Hand?," *National Journal*, 25:29, July 17 1993, p. 1796.

FIGURE 1
Where New Mexicans Gamble



Gambling Behavior

While the New Mexico government debates gambling, it is important to know how New Mexicans view the issue. This *Quarterly Profile* asked New Mexico citizens a series of questions about their gambling behaviors and attitudes. Thirty-nine percent of New Mexicans surveyed said they gamble at casinos or other facilities.

Of those 203 respondents who said they gamble, Figure 1 shows the percentages that gamble at church fund raisers (27%), private charitable events (31%), Indian facilities in New Mexico (64%), casinos outside of New Mexico (71%), and lotteries in other states (69%).

These gamblers expected to visit a New Mexico casino an average of five times per year and spend an average of \$185 per visit on lodging, meals, and gambling. When they travel to casinos outside New Mexico, respondents said they do so two times each year and spend \$524 per visit. A small portion of respondents visit *very* frequently and spend large amounts of money, so the *median* number of visits and amounts spent are much lower, as shown in Table 1 on the following page. (continued on page 2)

INSIDE

Focus 1: Gambling in New Mexico (continued)	2
Focus 2: Ethnic Identity in New Mexico	3
Trends:	
Most Pressing Policy Concerns	4
Citizen Approval Ratings	4

FOCUS 1: GAMBLING IN NEW MEXICO

Gambling Behavior

(continued from page 1)

In light of the debate over the gaming compacts, we asked respondents if the availability of casinos in New Mexico would affect their visits to casinos elsewhere. Sixty-one percent of gamblers replied that they would not reduce their out-of-state trips even if casinos remain available in New Mexico.

If they weren't spending money on gambling, most respondents who gamble said they would spend it on other entertainment. Thirty-seven percent would spend it on entertainment in New Mexico, and 18% would spend it on entertainment elsewhere. Twenty-one percent said they would put it in savings, and 24% said they would spend it on "something else."

Attitudes Toward Gambling

In addition to asking about gambling behavior, we asked New Mexicans to express their attitudes toward gaming. Over three-fourths of respondents (79%) *disagreed* with the statement that "gambling is morally wrong and should not be permitted." Women (27%) were more likely to say that gambling is morally wrong than were men (14%). (We expected similar sex differences to appear for all of the gambling questions we asked, but this was the clearest difference we found.)

Forty-six percent of New Mexicans surveyed believed that when they visited an Indian gaming facility, they were likely to lose money. Thirty-five percent expected to break even, and 19% anticipated winning money. Respondents reiterated this view when asked why they gambled: 60% said they found it entertaining but did not expect to win a lot of money. Only 3% expected to win a big jackpot or win more than they lost in the long run; however, an additional 25% declined to answer this question, which could indicate an unwillingness to discuss why they gamble.

A bare majority of New Mexicans (53%) said that gambling is good for the state's economy, and 71% believed that the people most likely to lose at gambling are those who can least afford it. These responses demonstrate that the general public perceives gambling to have the potential for both aggregate economic benefits and individual economic harms.

Public Support For Gambling

When we asked New Mexicans direct questions about their support or opposition to different forms of gambling, respondents were in favor

of a lottery, Indian casinos, and horse races, but the extent of public support varied considerably. As Table 2 shows, 67% of respondents supported having a New Mexico lottery, whereas 58% supported gambling on in-state horse races, and 49% supported Indian gaming facilities. In addition, Table 2 shows some polarization, with significant numbers of New Mexicans either strongly opposing or strongly supporting the three different forms of gambling.

TABLE 1

Frequency of Visits and Amount Spent per Visit at Indian Gaming Facilities or Casinos in New Mexico and Elsewhere

	Indian gaming facility or casino	
	In New Mexico	Elsewhere
Average Number of Visits	4.5	3.6
Median Number of Visits	1	1
Average Amount Spent per Visit	\$185	\$524
Median Amount Spent per Visit	\$80	\$300

TABLE 2

Support for a Lottery, Horse Racing and Indian Casinos in New Mexico

	Lottery	Horse Races	Indian Casinos
Strongly Oppose	17%	17%	23%
Oppose	4%	5%	6%
Somewhat Oppose	3%	8%	8%
Neutral	10%	12%	14%
Somewhat Support	13%	19%	16%
Support	10%	12%	10%
Strongly Support	44%	27%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Quarterly Profile

OF NEW MEXICO CITIZENS

A UNM INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER REPORT

Subscriptions: \$30.00/year

Subscription requests and other inquiries:

Carol Brown (505/277-1099)
The University of New Mexico
Institute for Public Policy
Department of Political Science
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-1121

Director: Hank C. Jenkins-Smith
Associate Director: Carol L. Silva
Administrator: Carol Brown
Quarterly Profile
Project Managers: John Gastil and Carol Silva
Survey Manager: Scott Goold
Contributing Staff: Bianca Belmonte and Kristan Cockerill
Production/Layout: Carol Brown

UNM INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

The Institute for Public Policy serves New Mexicans as a non-partisan forum for research, analysis, data collection and training. The Institute's Survey Research Center conducts surveys and research on the policy preferences and political attitudes of New Mexico citizens. The *Quarterly Profile* is distributed to federal, state, and local New Mexico policy makers, corporate and civic leaders, private organizations, the media and interested citizens.

SURVEY DATA

The UNM Institute for Public Policy conducted its survey of New Mexico citizens through telephone interviews with 525 adult New Mexicans in September of 1995. The telephone numbers were selected randomly by computer. The results of the poll have a four percentage point margin of error at a 95 percent level of confidence, which means that 19 out of 20 times the findings should be within four percentage points of the results that would be obtained if all New Mexico households were surveyed. The margin of error is larger for subgroups of the sample because of the smaller number of observations. As with any survey a potential source of error is the possibility that variation in the wording of questions or the order in which questions are asked could produce different results.

FOCUS 2: ETHNIC IDENTITY IN NEW MEXICO

Diversity of Ethnic Labels

This *Quarterly Profile* posed several questions to examine ethnic identity in the State of New Mexico. We used this survey to learn the diversity of ethnic labels that New Mexicans use to describe themselves. Most surveys ask respondents to classify themselves using a standard list of racial or ethnic terms. This standardized list evolved from the U.S. Census classifications. Using this standardized list, 55% of our respondents identified themselves as White, Non-Hispanic, 27% as Hispanic, 13% as Something Else, 3% as American Indian, 1% as Black, and 1% as Asian.

It is difficult to compare directly these figures and 1990 Census data because the *Quarterly Profile* randomly samples New Mexico households rather than *individuals*. Average household size varies among ethnic groups, so individual-level Census data does not match our random survey of households. In addition, it is difficult to compare these data because 12% of respondents in the *Quarterly Profile* identify themselves as “something else,” a catch-all category that includes self-identified “Americans” and people with mixed ethnic identities (e.g., “African American and Cuban”). Keeping these difficulties in mind, 51% of respondents in the Census identified themselves as White, non-Hispanic, 38% as Hispanic, 8% as American Indian, 2% as Black, and 1% as Asian.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Labels

Respondents were asked which terms would be acceptable to them when describing their ethnic or racial background. More than 76% of New Mexicans accept only one or two racial or ethnic descriptors. A plurality (43%) considered only one term acceptable. Among the acceptable terms or labels respondents mentioned, most were standard identifiers. Twenty-six percent of respondents named “White,” 19% “Hispanic,” 14% “Caucasian,” and 13% “Anglo.” Only 5% of respondents said that “American” was an acceptable term or label to describe ethnic or racial background.

We also asked respondents an open-ended question, “When other people describe your ethnic or racial background, which terms or labels are unacceptable?” Overall, 24% said that any term was acceptable, 22% were unsure what they would find unacceptable, and the other 54% gave a variety of answers. Eighteen percent of Hispanics said “Mexican” was unacceptable, 9% did not approve of the label “Chicano/a,” and another quarter named specific, unprintable derogatory labels. For Whites “honkey” was the only unacceptable label named by a noticeable percentage (9%). (Sample sizes were too small in other ethnic groups to permit similar analyses for them.)

Preferred Labels

We also asked respondents to identify their *preferred* label among the ones they found acceptable. Overall, only 8% listed the term “American” as their label of choice. Of those respondents who did provide an identifying ethnic label, answers varied within each broad ethnic group. Tables 3 and 4 show the responses to these questions broken down by ethnic categories and compare New Mexicans’ responses with those obtained by the U.S. Labor Department.⁵

The overwhelming majority of Hispanic New Mexicans (72%) preferred the label “Hispanic” or “Hispanic American,” and only

TABLE 3

Ethnic Labels Preferred by Hispanics in New Mexico and the Nation

	National	New Mexico
Hispanic	66%	72%
Spanish	14%	19%
Latino	13%	1%
Other	7%	9%
Totals	100%	100%

Note. New Mexico results based upon a subsample of n = 165.

TABLE 4

Ethnic Labels Preferred by Whites in New Mexico and the Nation

	National	New Mexico
White	74%	42%
Caucasian	20%	28%
European (or Specific European Nationality)	3%	7%
Anglo	1%	23%
Totals	100%	100%

Note. New Mexico results based upon a subsample of n = 344.

19% said “Spanish American,” “Spanish,” or “Spanish Origin” was their preferred term.

National figures were similar to our survey results, except that 13% of national respondents chose “Latino,” which only one respondent in the *Quarterly Profile* chose. Our figures are close to those obtained by the 1992 Latino National Political Survey (LNPS), which found that nationally, only a small fraction of Hispanic respondents identified themselves as Latino. Many Latino intelligentsia have argued that “Latino” and “Latina” are the best labels one can use to identify individuals of Spanish origin, but these data suggest the term is not popular among Hispanics.⁶

To provide yet another perspective on this question, we asked those respondents who identified themselves as Hispanic whether they viewed themselves as Mexican-American, Spanish-American, or something else. Sixty-percent identified themselves as Spanish American, and 30% said they were Mexican-American.

Table 4 shows that among White respondents, a plurality (42%) preferred “White,” 28% said “Caucasian” was their preferred label, and 23% chose “Anglo.” The national figures were quite different, with 74% preferring White, 20% choosing Caucasian, and only 1% calling themselves “Anglo.” Anglo appears to be a much more widely accepted term in New Mexico.

(continued on page 4)

⁵Labor Department figures from a survey of 60,000 households reported in *U.S. News and World Report* (November 20, 1995), p. 28.

⁶Rodolfo O. de la Garza, Louis DeSipio, F Chris Garcia, John Garcia, and Angelo Falcon, *Latino Voices* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), p. 13.

FOCUS 2: ETHNIC IDENTITY IN NEW MEXICO

Reflections on Ethnic Labels

(continued from page 3)

These findings suggest that there are labels that are *almost* uniformly acceptable and, generally, preferred within each ethnic group. None of the Native Americans surveyed found “American Indian” unacceptable, and only one objected to “Native American” itself. Among Hispanics, “Hispanic” was the preferred term, and unacceptable terms were derogatory variations, “Chicano/a,” and the assumption of “Mexican” national origins. For Anglos, “White,” “Caucasian,” and “Anglo”

were generally preferred, and very few found these terms unacceptable.

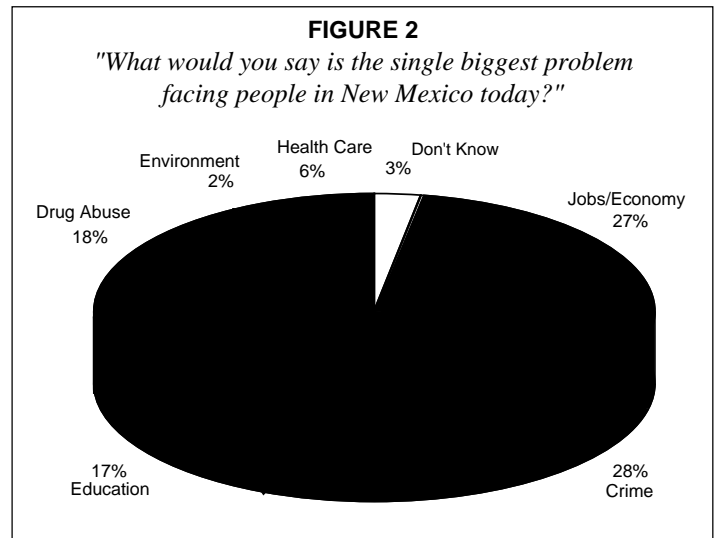
To put it simply, the average New Mexican is not persuaded by either side in the debates on “Native American” versus “American Indian,” “Hispanic” versus “Spanish origin,” or “White” versus “Anglo.” If one wishes to use a term so as not to offend, these *all* appear to be adequate labels most of the time for the vast majority of New Mexicans.

TRENDS

Most Pressing Policy Concerns

By a narrow margin, crime surpassed jobs and the economy as the most pressing problem facing New Mexico in this *Quarterly Profile* survey. Twenty-eight percent of those surveyed identified crime as the biggest problem, whereas 26% cited jobs and the economy. Drug abuse was third with 18%, followed by education at 17%.

Comparing these results with those from a year ago, it appears that general concerns about crime have declined slightly, but more specific worries about drug abuse have risen. Combining the four surveys conducted in 1994, about 38% of New Mexicans listed crime as the biggest problem, and only 11% viewed drug abuse as most serious. In all, 49% viewed crime or drugs as the primary problem in the state. In the present survey, 46% viewed one of these issues as primary, but compared to 1994, a higher percentage focused their concerns on drug abuse.

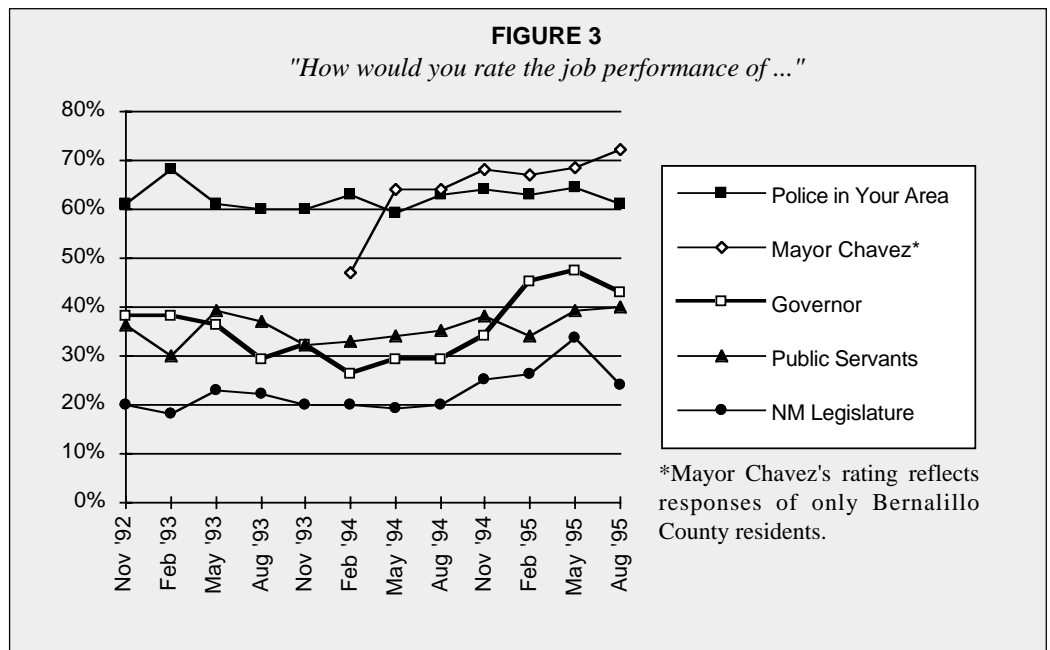


TRENDS

Citizen Approval Ratings

After experiencing a slight increase between February (45%) and May (47%) of this year, Governor Johnson's approval rating fell to 42% in the latest survey. Even with this slight setback, his ratings remain significantly higher than those of his predecessor.

The police and the legislature also saw declines in approval. The police, however, maintained a rating above the 60% mark and second only to Mayor Chavez's, which is based only upon Bernalillo County residents. The legislature's rating took a tumble from 34% in May, 1995, to 26%, and it continues to have the lowest approval rating of any New Mexico public institution or official rated in the *Quarterly Profile* survey. (continued on page 5)



TRENDS

Citizen Approval Ratings

(continued from page 4)

Telegrams to the Mayor

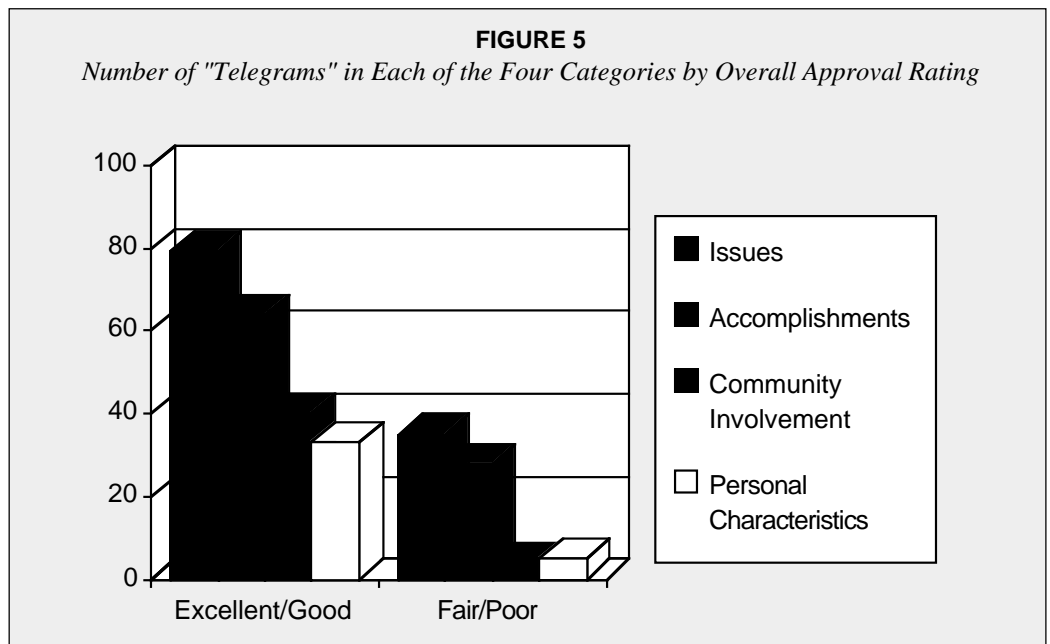
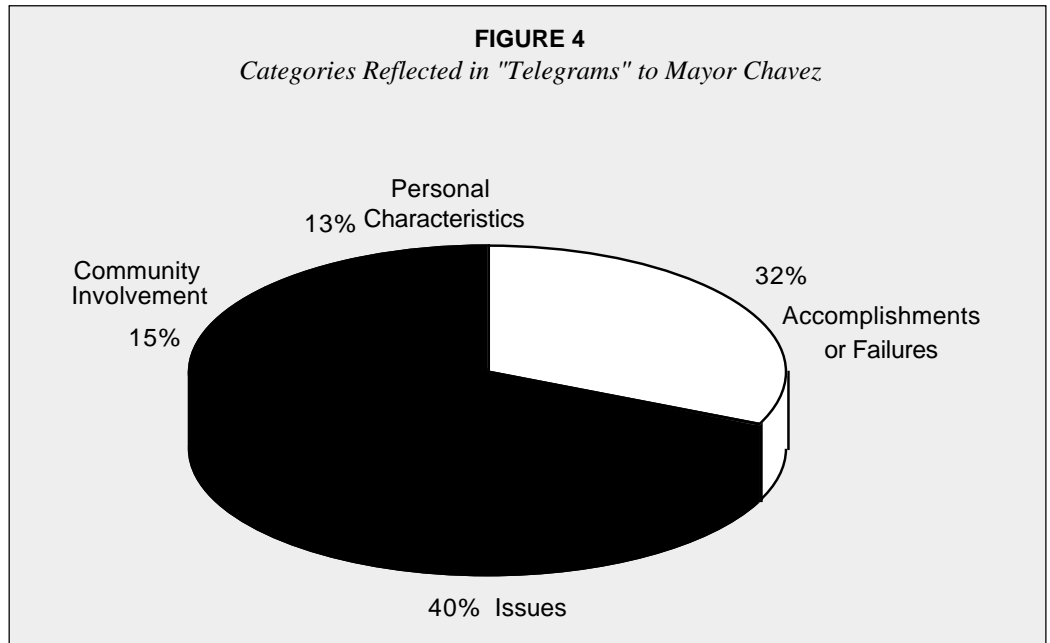
The steady, high approval ratings for Mayor Martin Chavez prompted us to ask an additional question, probing the reasons underlying the public's views of the Mayor. After asking our standard approval questions, we gave Bernalillo County residents the opportunity to "send a telegram" to Mayor Martin Chavez. The respondents could voice their opinion on any topic related to the Mayor himself and his job performance. The vast majority of respondents chose to send a telegram, and their responses fell into four different categories:

- His accomplishments or failures as mayor (e.g., "He is doing what he promised");
- Comments on specific issues (e.g., "not enough support for public institutions like education and safety");
- Comments on his community involvement and communication with citizens (e.g., "He seems to be involved with the people of the city rather than with politics"); and
- Comments on his personal characteristics ("He is decisive, a good listener, pragmatic, and has a metropolitan attitude").

Figure 4 shows that most telegrams concerned either a specific issue (40% of all telegrams) or the Mayor's accomplishments and failures (32%). Thirteen percent of the telegrams concerned Mayor Chavez's personal characteristics, and 15% discussed his involvement in the community.

Figure 5 shows that there was a greater propensity for those who rated the mayor as fair or poor to comment on issues or accomplishments and failures, rather than on community involvement or personal characteristics. Among those who rated him as fair or poor, issues and accomplishments/failures accounted for 88% of the comments, versus 67% percent among those who rated him as excellent or good.

Ninety percent of those who rated the Mayor as "excellent" or "good" also made positive comments when asked to "send the



mayor a telegram." When respondents mentioned specific issues, they usually were making a positive comment about Mayor Chavez's actions regarding the Montañño Bridge or crime. Of those telegrams discussing specific issues, 33% mentioned the bridge, and 74% of those comments were positive (i.e. they supported the mayor's position). Another third of the telegrams dealt with crime and related topics; 82% of these comments were favorable to the mayor's performance on these issues. (continued on page 6)

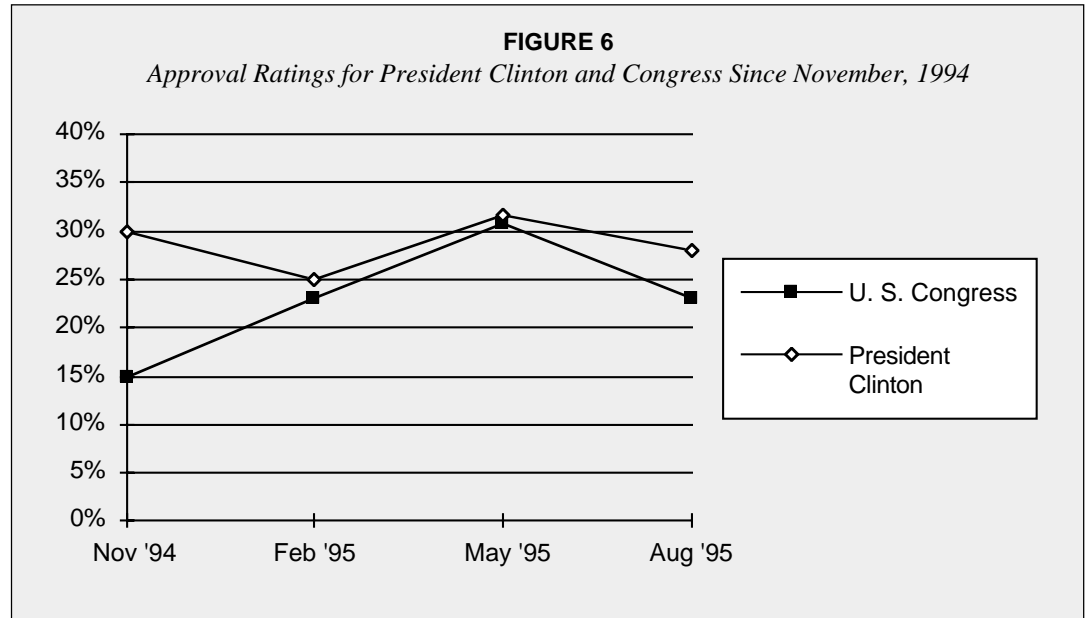
TRENDS

Citizen Approval Ratings

(continued from page 5)

The President and Congress

At the national level, the approval ratings for the U.S. Congress and President Clinton for the past nine months follow an interesting path, shown in Figure 6. In November, 1994, the President's approval rating was double that of Congress. The President's rating has fluctuated around 28% since that time, but Congress' rating rose steadily until it nearly matched the President's rating in May. In this most recent *Quarterly Profile*, however, Congress' approval rating fell eight points while the President's dropped only four. These changes appear to reopen the gap between approval of the President and of Congress.



The University of New Mexico
 Institute for Public Policy
 Department of Political Science
 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-1121

(505) 277-1099