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Civic Impressions, Civic Culture and
Information Factors in Border Settings:
Findings from El Paso/Ciudad Juárez

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Findings from El Paso/Ciudad Juárez**

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Introduction

One of the things we learn living on the border is that the border has special meaning. Of the issues that have come to the forefront of our research agenda is that civicism in the border seems to be more challenging, at least in the western hemisphere/North American context, than it may be in other settings. The idea that within border regions a multi-centric view might emerge, especially as a result of economic integration through NAFTA, has been discussed repeatedly and is well laid out by Rosenau (1993). Using a cross border survey and building off the work of Pfau (2001) we have begun to explore these issues in the context of the U.S.-Mexico border and the Paso del Norte region, which includes Ciudad Juárez and El Paso.

We also are hoping to go a bit further and examine the question of whether civic knowledge about the institutions of the “other” border state is specialized knowledge. Spirited by Steel and Lovrich (2002) and a lengthy period of discussions about the role of technical information and knowledge holding in other areas, especially the environment and natural resources (for example, Pierce and Lovrich, 1986; Soden, 1990; Steel and Soden, 1989) we began to consider how civic knowledge impacts border communities.

Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) found that information is a source of political participation. Those informed citizens participate and are more consistent and logical in their political thinking and interpretations. They found that most people are generalists in terms of civic knowledge, well informed across a variety of political and social issues (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996: 18). While these findings are informative, we believe Lovrich and Steel (2002) have brought forward a question that fits well into the theme of communicating at borders. What is the relationship between general knowledge and knowledge within the border regime? Are border residents knowledgeable about the political process of their neighbors? Do they carry strong opinions and attitudes that are “specialized?” Or, is knowledge within a border setting really generalized knowledge in light of the border context? In the long run, and beyond this initial foray, can civic knowledge be used to improve the political and policy processes in the border context?

In general, our findings suggest that there is some specialized knowledge at one level; but, other border residents are relatively well-informed about the political setting of the other nation and have a “specialized knowledge” that we would not expect to be exhibited across the border region.

Methodology

Our initial examination is the result of a survey conducted in May 2002 in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. In total, 1270 citizens from the region were interviewed through intercept surveys. Ciudad Juárez residents accounted for 553 of the respondents and El Paso residents for 717. Terminated interviews were not included in the final sample which one can state with 95 percent confidence is reliable at +/- 5% overall, +/- 5 % for El Paso, and +/- 5% for Ciudad Juárez.

The survey was designed so that similar questions were asked in each location. Thus residents of Ciudad Juárez were asked their impressions about El Paso, while El Paso residents were asked about Ciudad Juárez. These mirror questionnaires were as similar as possible and designed to determine general levels of knowledge ability, attitudes and impressions. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish based on the preference of the respondents.

Preliminary Findings and Questions for Deliberation

The following provides a summary of the findings and suggests some questions that border residents, border scholars and those interested in areas where cultures meet might find of interest.

In brief:

Impressions: Citizens of Ciudad Juárez are more likely to view El Paso as “Pleasant” or “Very Pleasant” than are El Paso resident’s views of Ciudad Juárez. Is this the poor versus rich country factor?

Political Views of the Other Nation: El Pasoans are more likely to see interest by Mexico in other countries as beneficial to Mexico. As a developing nation, are Mexicans more isolationistic or would they rather see national resources focus on their country?

Connection through Personal Actions: El Paso residents are less likely to routinely cross the border and El Paso residents are more likely to regularly read local newspapers than are Juárezens, while those from Mexico are more likely to depend on local TV for their news. Readership of the

newspaper from across the border is more likely to occur by residents of Ciudad Juárez as is watching of news programs originating from El Paso. Are Mexicans more interested in U.S. news, is it just convenient, or is it the draw of network television?

Connection through Sources of Information: The most common sources of information about the other border community are the El Paso newspaper for those from Mexico and local TV news for those from the United States. Mexicans seem slightly more reliant on print media than their U.S. counterparts, while Spanish language television seems to be more popular than we might have expected. Both communities exhibit similar traits in obtaining information. Does this lead to equal knowledge about each other?

Trust in Information Sources: The most trusted sources of news in the border region are television sources, followed by family and friends, and newspapers. No particular source appears to be favored or providing a bias in one nation over the other. Does this bode well for civicism in the region?

Self-Assessed Knowledge: El Paso residents are more likely to believe they have knowledge about Ciudad Juárez than Ciudad Juárez residents believe they hold about El Paso. Is this United States ethnocentrism?

Political Knowledge: In general, residents on both sides of the border exhibit equal knowledge of the political setting and history of the other country; however, there is a segment, which is poorly informed making up well over half of the respondents.

Political Trust: The Ciudad Juárez sample seems less trusting of their government to deal with border issues and is more trusting of the U.S. government to do what is right for the border than U.S. residents are of the government in Mexico City to service the border. U.S. respondents are more prone to view the Mexican government as serving a few big interests while Mexicans see a more democratic system in the U.S. and even a higher level of cynicism about the big interests being served by the Mexican government. Americans are more prone to believe that government is understandable than are the Mexican respondents, but both samples do not feel that elected officials in the other nation care about the views of their own citizens; however, there are many respondents who are unsure. Those in Ciudad Juárez are also more likely to follow U.S. elections than are El Pasoans, while El Paso residents report a more liberal tendency on both economic and social policies. Is the apparent cynicism in the border deserved or earned and does it unite the border residents in a way we may not have considered in the past?

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Figure 1
Overall, What Is Your Impression of Your International Sister City as a Community?

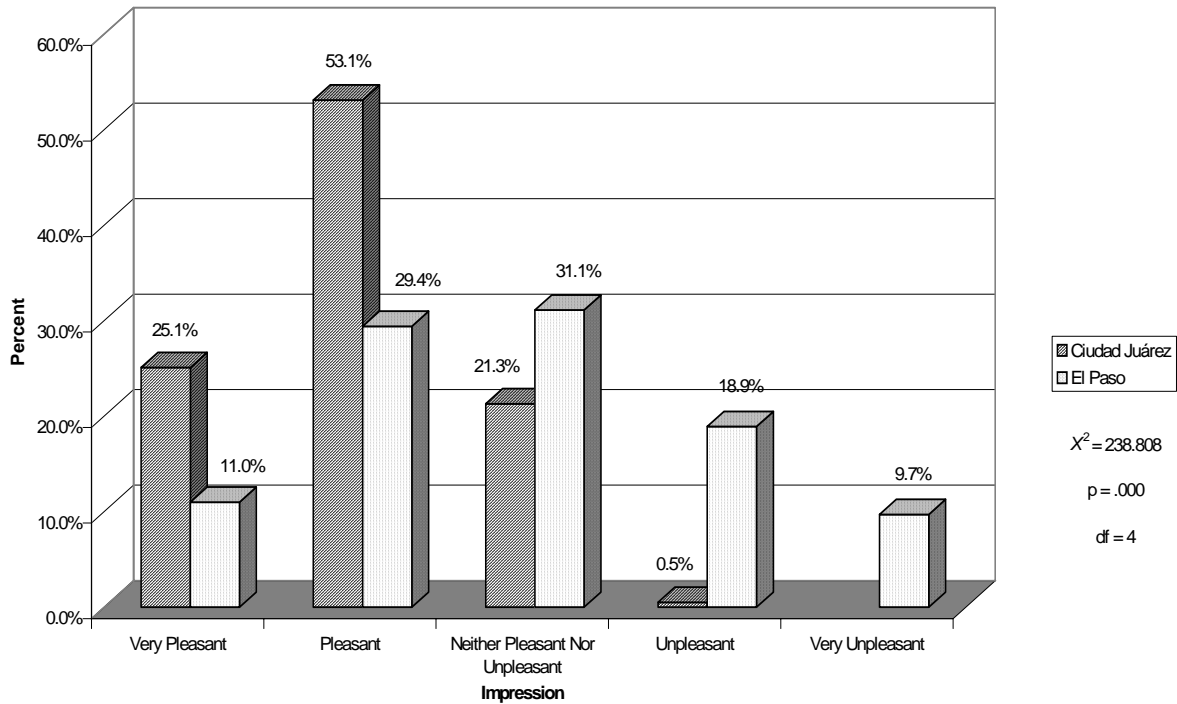


Figure 2
Given the Following Statement: Your International Sister Country Would Be Better Off If It Did Not Concern Itself with Problems in Other Countries, Do You?

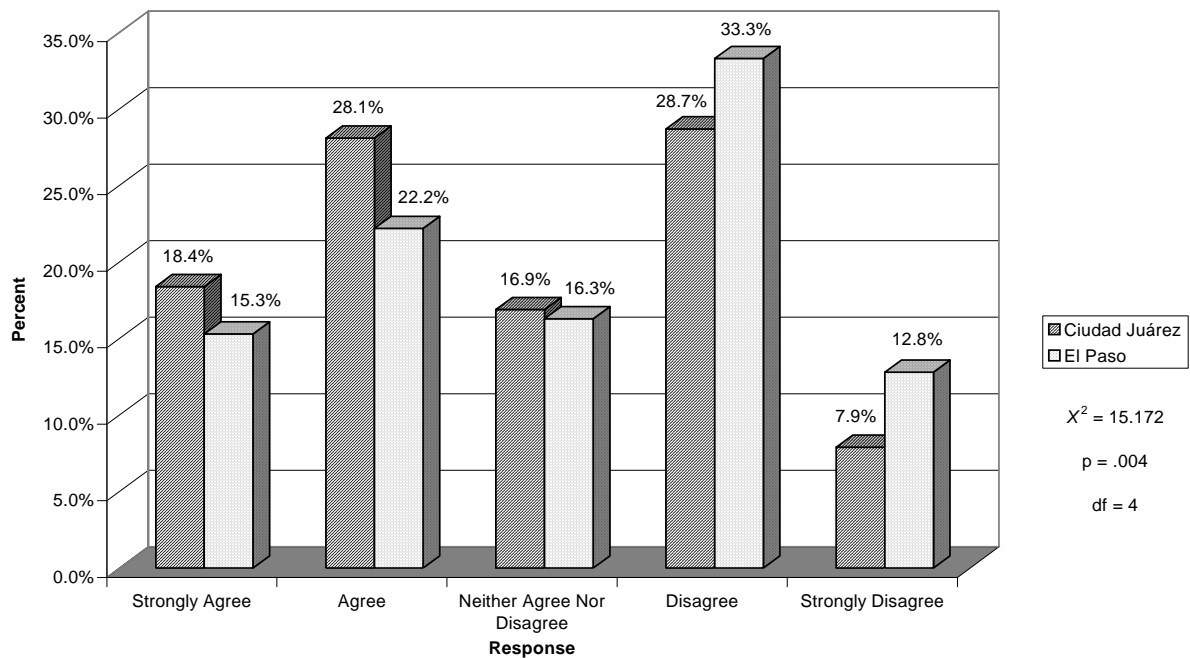


Figure 3
How Many Times A Month Do You Cross The Border Into Your International Sister City?

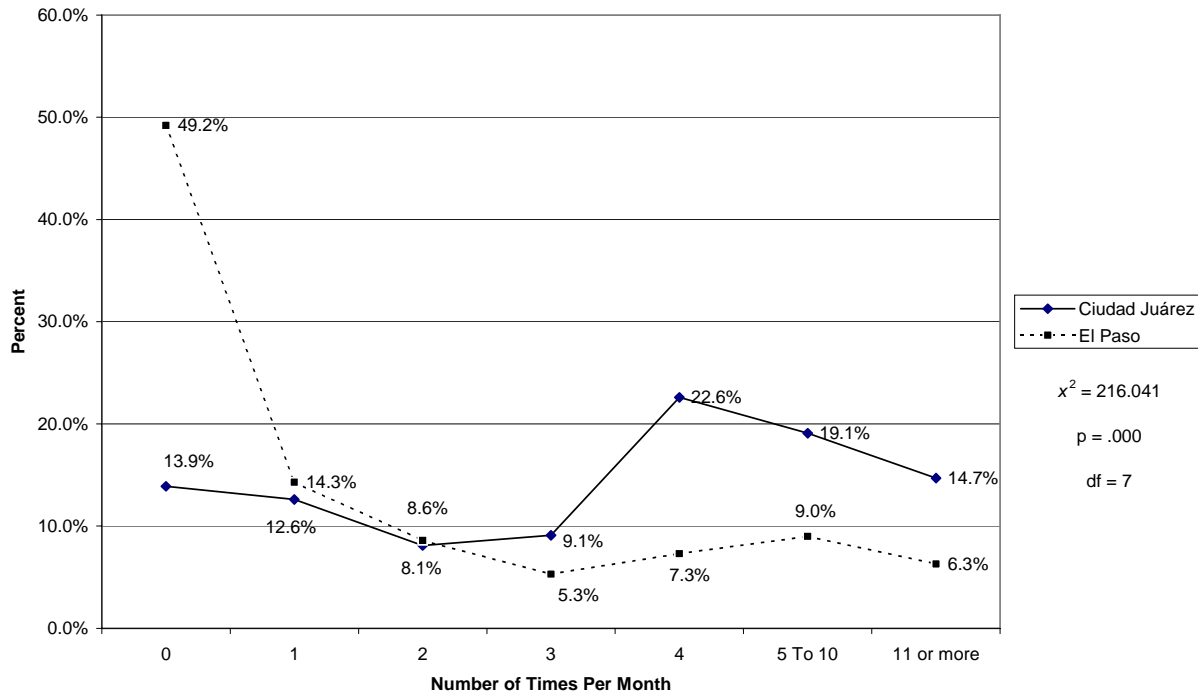


Figure 4
Approximately How Many Days Last Week Did You Read a Newspaper Published in Your Own City?

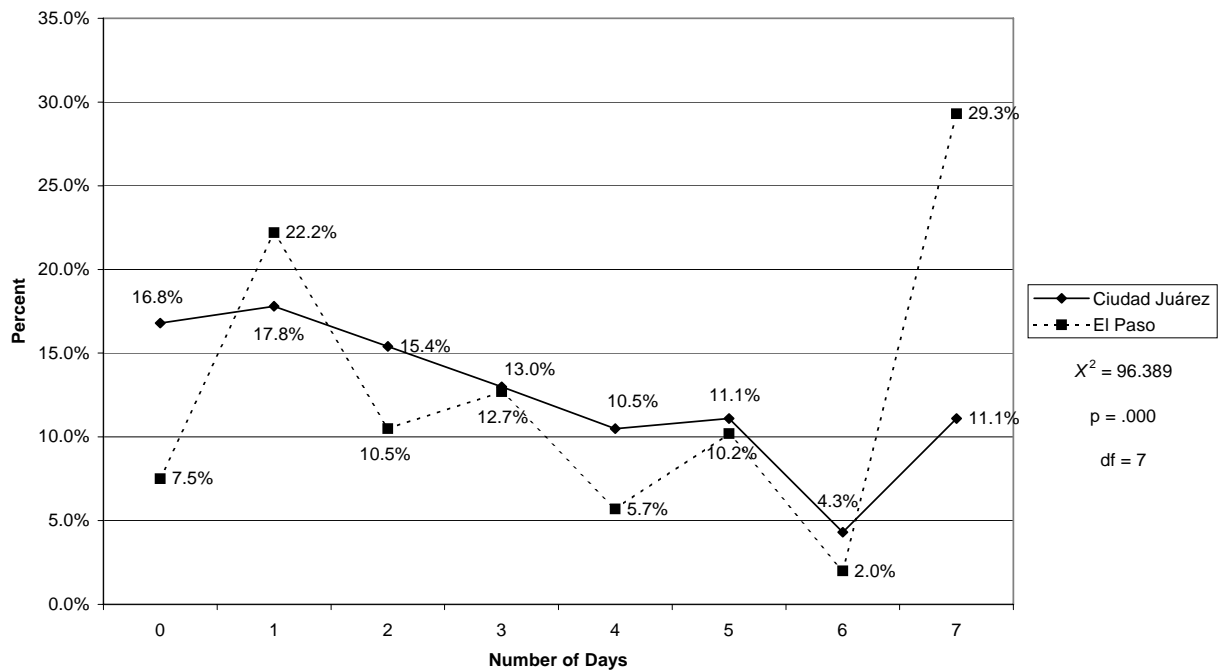


Figure 5
Approximately How Many Hours Last Week Did You Watch The News On Television Broadcast From Your Own City?

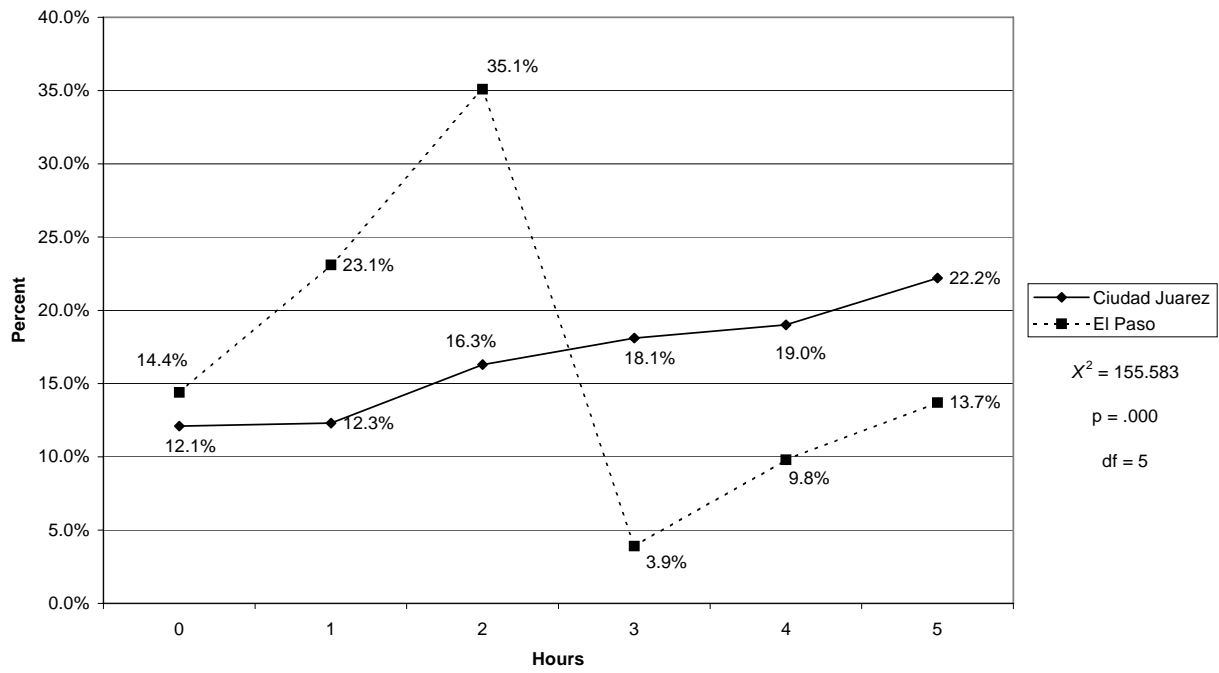


Figure 6
Approximately How Many Days Last Week Did You Read A Newspaper Published In Your International Sister City?

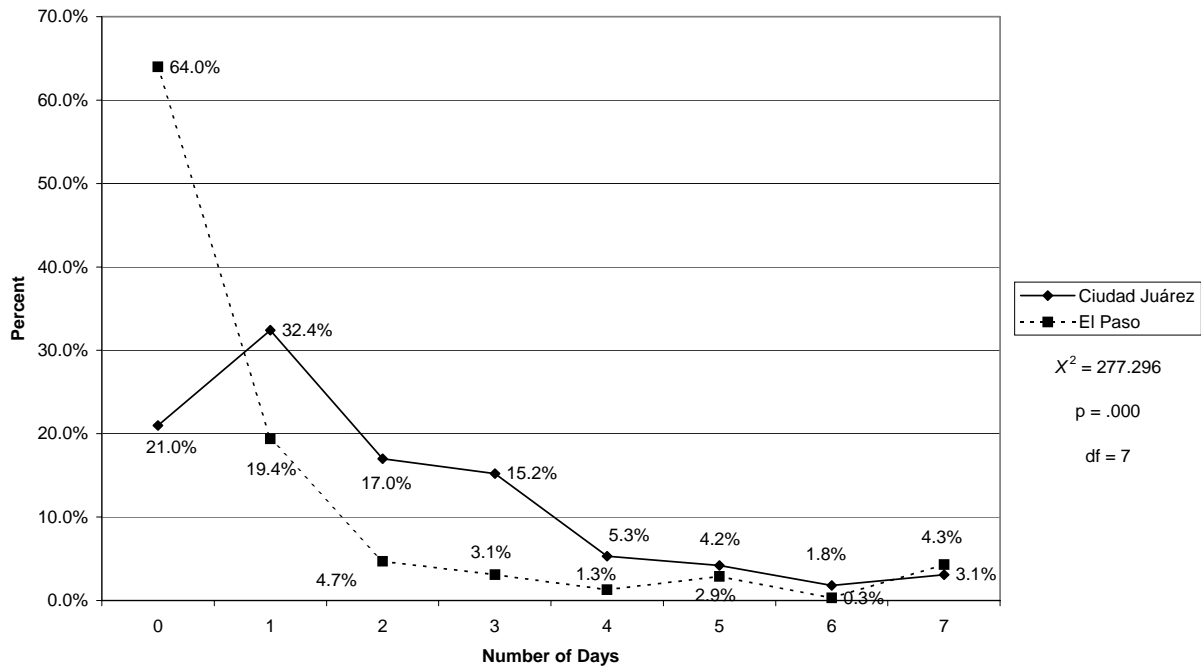


Figure 7
Approximately How Many Hours Last Week Did You Watch The News On Television
Which Is Broadcast From Your International Sister City?

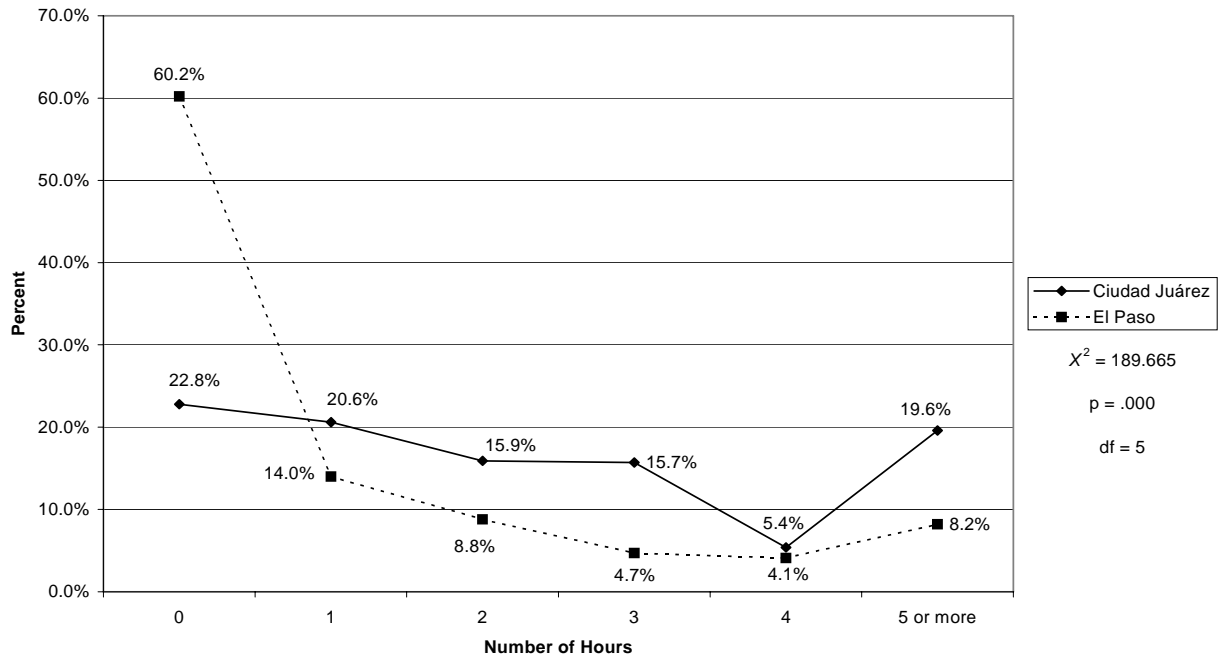


Figure 8
What Is Your Most Common Source of Information About Ciudad Juárez/El Paso?

Source	Most Common		Second Most Common		Third Most Common		Rank	
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso
Ciudad Juárez TV News	144	96	82	44	134	77	2	5
$\chi^2 = 1.085$	$p = .581$		$df = 2$					
El Diario	138	81	111	31	89	88	3	7
$\chi^2 = 26.240$	$p = .000$		$df = 2$					
El Paso Times	179	161	94	167	84	81	1	1 tie
$\chi^2 = 199.565$	$p = .000$		$df = 7$					
Stanton Street.com	65	34	17	19	39	65	8	11
$\chi^2 = 16.283$	$p = .000$		$df = 2$					
AM Radio	82	55	53	26	32	82	6	8
$\chi^2 = 36.436$	$p = .000$		$df = 2$					
Magazines	57	38	47	45	41	63	9	9
$\chi^2 = 8.494$	$p = .014$		$df = 2$					
Family	55	113	49	47	60	97	11	3
$\chi^2 = 8.664$	$p = .013$		$df = 2$					
El Paso TV News	86	161	75	167	107	81	5	1 tie
$\chi^2 = 33.4280$	$p = .000$		$df = 2$					
La Frontera	56	37	31	33	39	59	10	10
$\chi^2 = 7.992$	$p = .018$		$df = 2$					
El Paso Inc.	46	31	26	39	44	63	12	12
$\chi^2 = 7.771$	$p = .021$		$df = 2$					
Univision	103	104	78	157	127	92	4	4
$\chi^2 = 119.235$	$p = .000$		$df = 4$					
FM Radio	45	120	79	75	87	96	13	2
$\chi^2 = 22.459$	$p = .000$		$df = 2$					
Friends And Acquaintances	66	92	69	85	77	108	7	6
$\chi^2 = .422$	$p = .810$		$df = 2$					

Figure 9
Index Scores¹
How Much Trust Do You Have In the Accuracy and Fairness of Each Of These Sources of Information about the United States/Mexico?

	Index Score		Rank	
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso
Ciudad Juárez TV News	55.4	-4	3	9
$\chi^2 = 118.154$	$p = .000$	$df = 4$		
El Paso TV News	69.9	29.2	2	6
$\chi^2 = 20.919$	$p = .000$	$df = 4$		
El Diario	50.1	-8.2	5	11
$\chi^2 = 166.939$	$p = .000$	$df = 4$		
La Frontera	25.8	-3.1	9	9
$\chi^2 = 26.415$	$p = .000$	$df = 4$		
El Paso Times	36.3	50.4	7	2
$\chi^2 = 17.210$	$p = .002$	$df = 4$		
El Paso Inc.	14.9	8.0	11	8
$\chi^2 = 1.734$	$p = .785$	$df = 4$		
Stanton Street.com	7.5	-3.2	12	10
$\chi^2 = 11.143$	$p = .025$	$df = 4$		
Univision	70.7	31.1	1	5
$\chi^2 = 74.279$	$p = .000$	$df = 4$		
AM Radio	29.1	12.4	8	7
$\chi^2 = 11.162$	$p = .025$	$df = 4$		
FM Radio	55.2	37.5	4	4
$\chi^2 = 12.585$	$p = .013$	$df = 4$		
Friends And Acquaintances	23.1	49.7	10	3
$\chi^2 = 30.456$	$p = .000$	$df = 4$		
Family	45.8	55.8	6	1
$\chi^2 = 14.810$	$p = .005$	$df = 4$		

¹ The index score is the sum of those responding “A Great Deal” and “Some” minus the sum of those responding “Not Much” and “None.”

Figure 10
Overall, How Much Would You Say You Know About Your International Sister City?

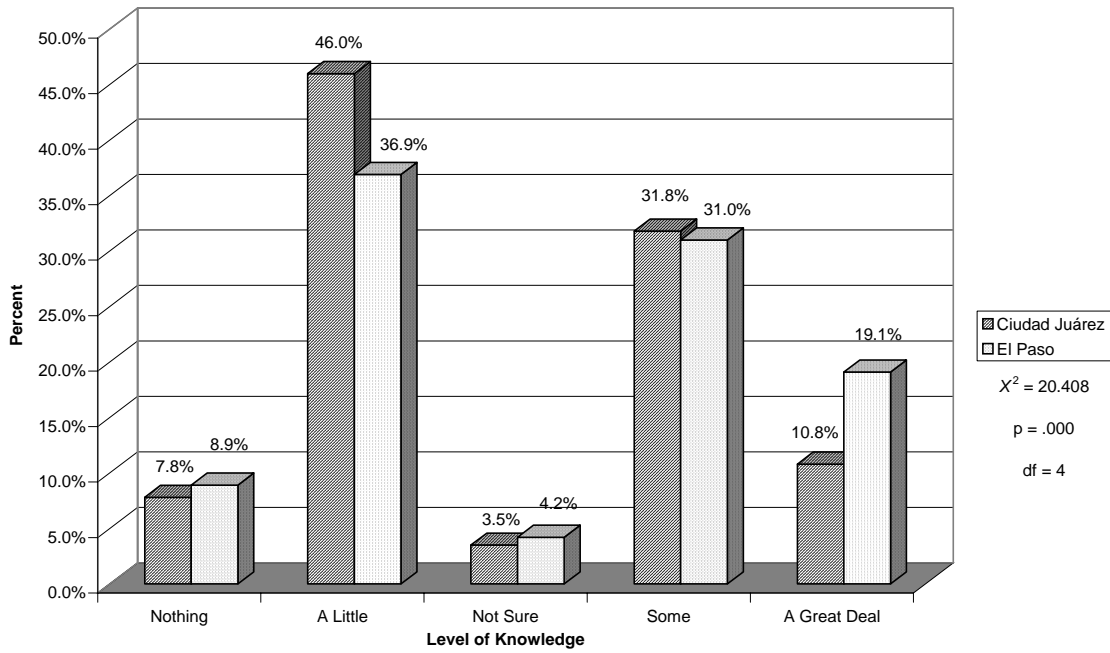


Figure 11A
Index of Civic Knowledge

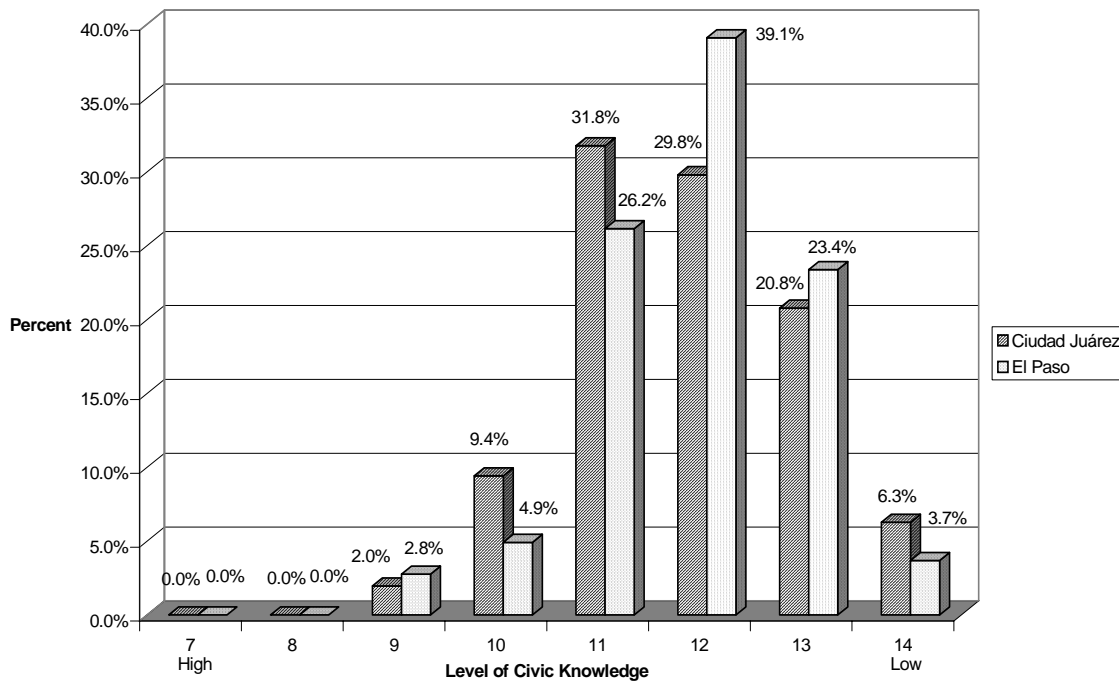


Figure 12
How Often Do You Feel You Can Trust Government To Do What Is Right As It Relates To The Border Region?

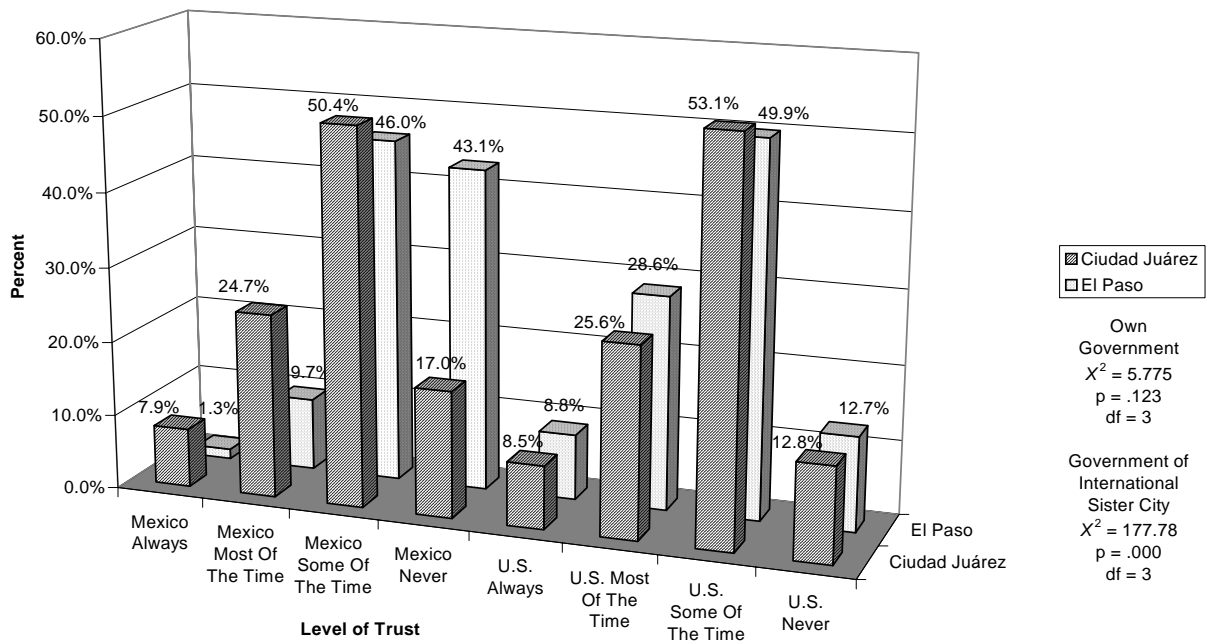


Figure 13
Would You Say Government Is Run By A Few Big Interests Looking Out For Themselves
Or Run For The Benefit Of All People?

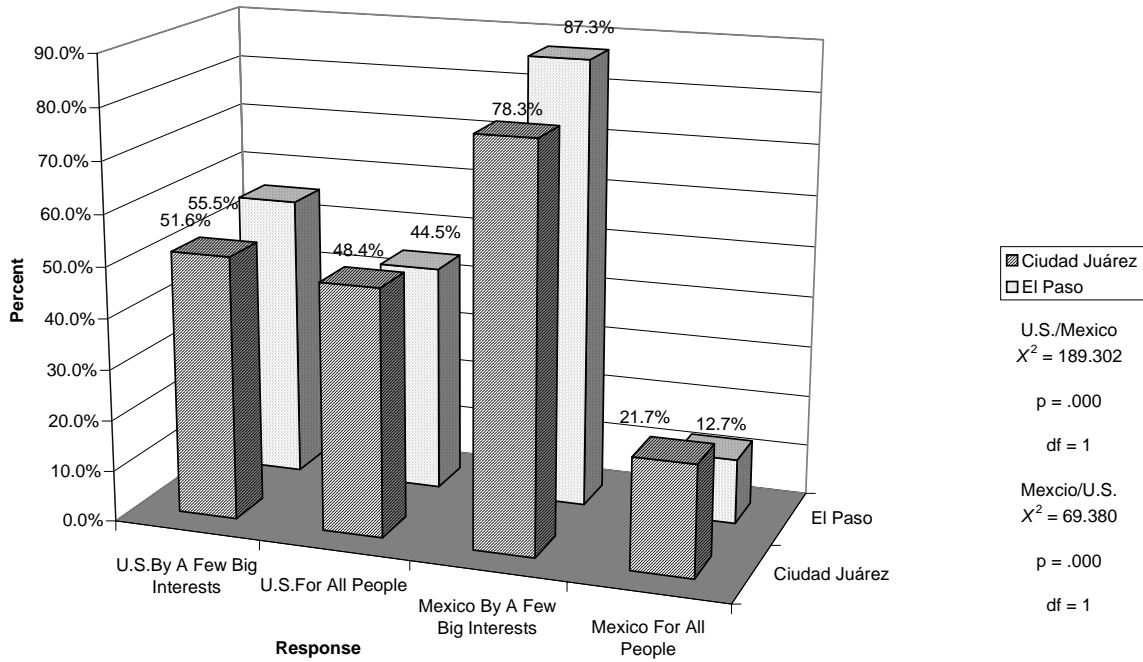


Figure 14
Some People Believe Government Is So Complicated That
A Normal Person Cannot Understand What Is Going On.

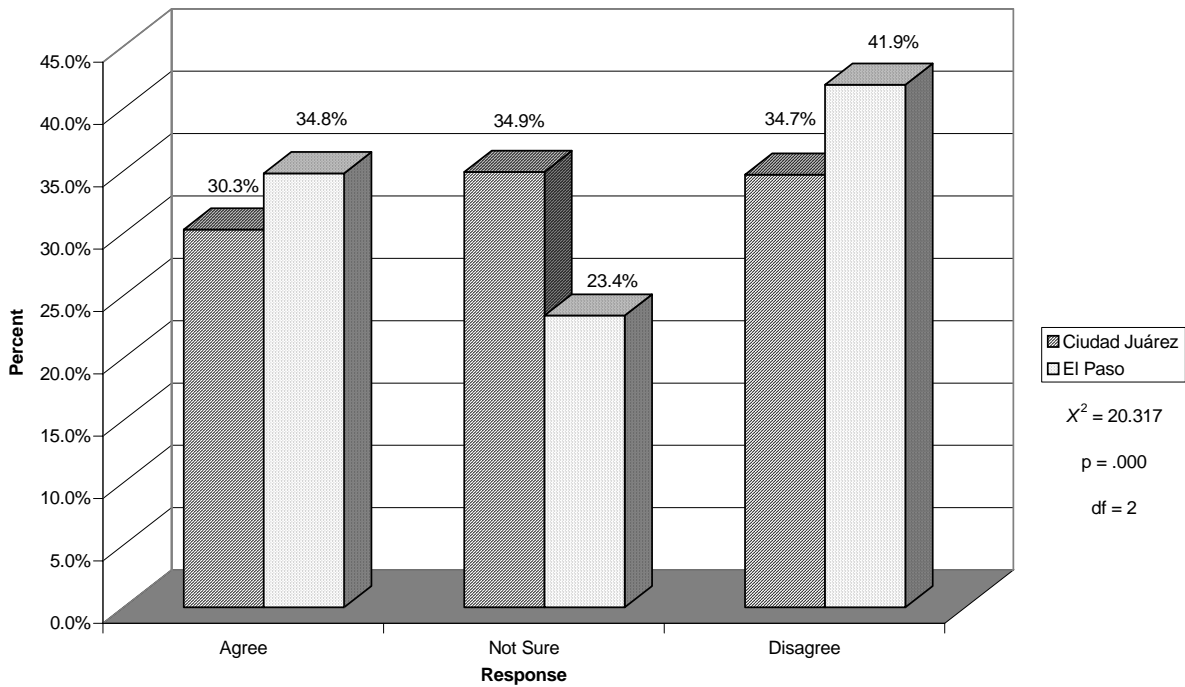


Figure 15
Do You Think Elected Officials In Your International Sister Country Care About
What Citizens Of Your Country Think?

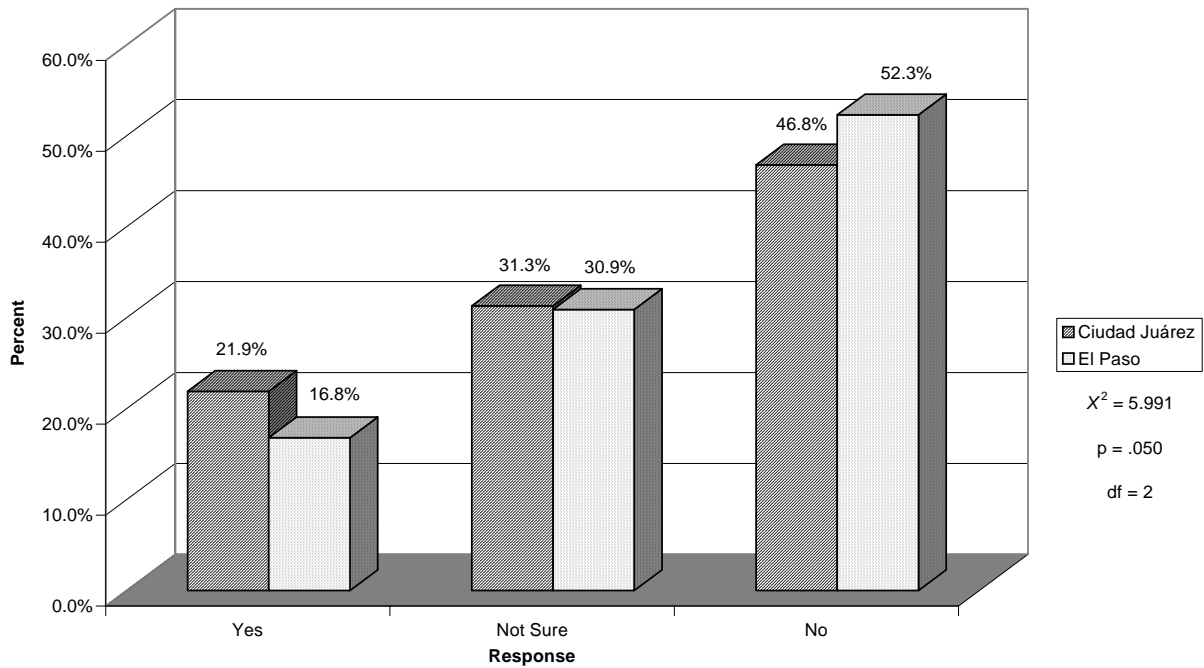


Figure 16
Do You Follow Elections In The Other Country When They Are Held?

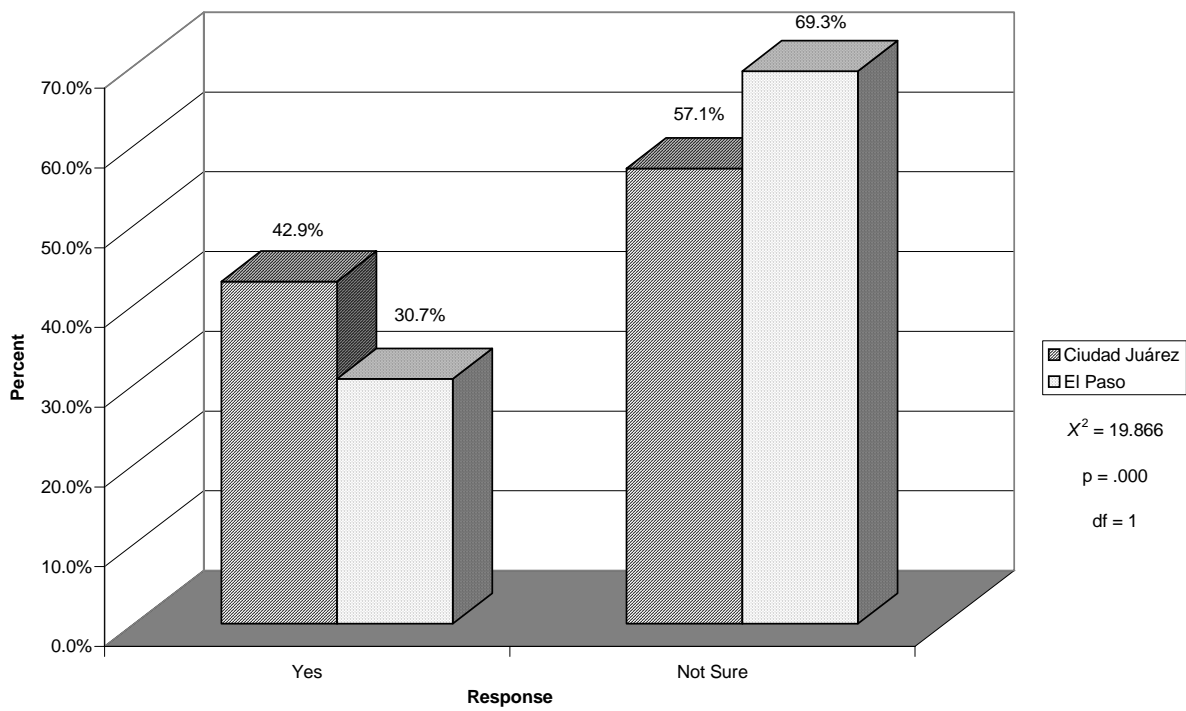


Figure 17
On Economic Policies Would You Say You Are?

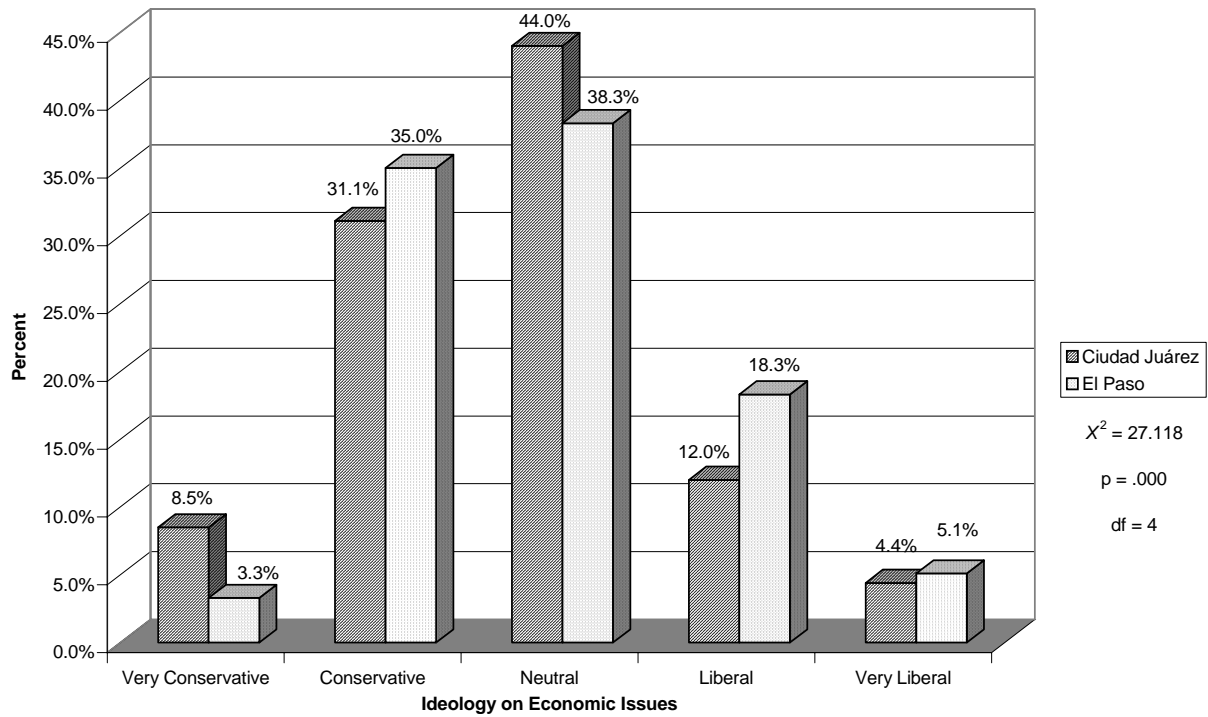
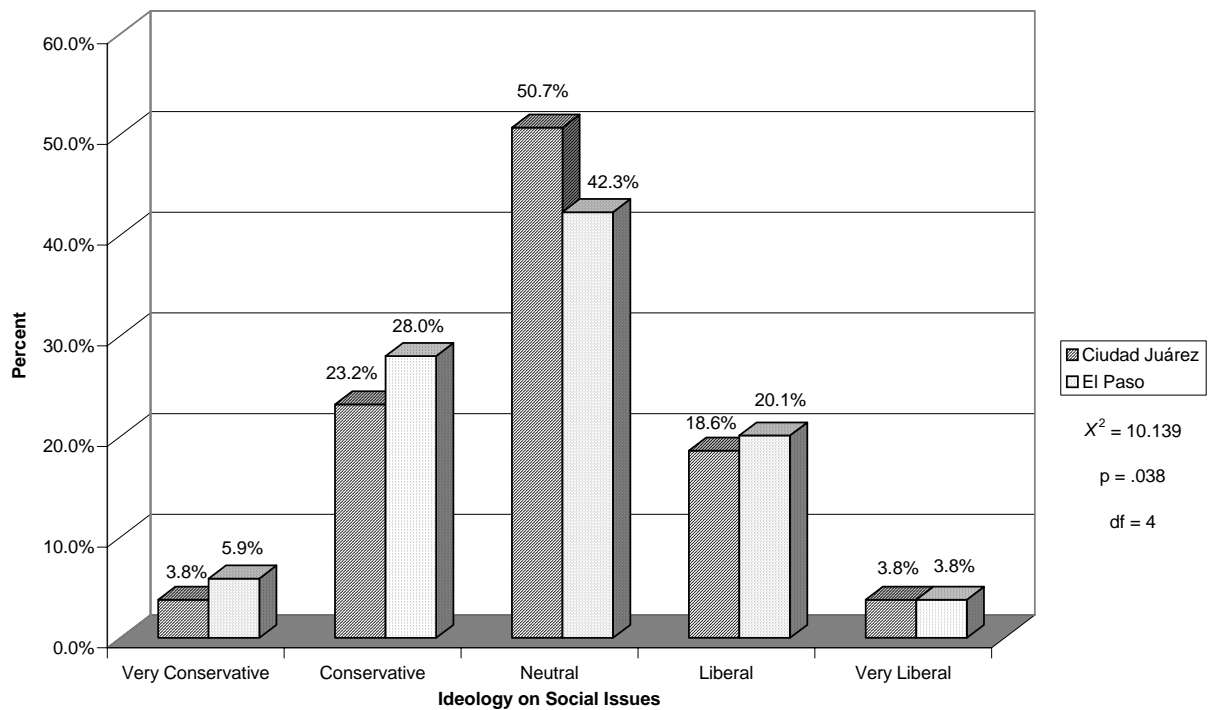


Figure 18
On Social Policies Would You Say You Are?



Demographics

Figure 19
How Long Have You Lived In Ciudad Juárez or El Paso?

Years	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
Less Than Three Years	5.3%	7.5%	6.6%
3-5 Years	7.5%	6.9%	7.2%
6-10 Years	11.5%	7.2%	9.0%
11-15 Years	10.5%	7.5%	8.8%
16-20 Years	24.0%	12.4%	17.3%
21-30 Years	19.8%	19.3%	19.5%
More Than 30 Years	21.4%	39.2%	31.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 62.660$ $p = .000$ $df = 6$

Figure 20
Age

Age	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
18-25	27.6%	18.1%	22.2%
26-30	17.4%	11.4%	14.0%
31-35	13.6%	11.6%	12.5%
36-40	11.3%	11.7%	11.5%
41-50	13.8%	17.8%	16.1%
51-60	8.2%	11.3%	9.9%
61-74	6.2%	12.7%	9.9%
75 Or Higher	2.0%	5.4%	3.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 50.650$ $p = .000$ $df = 7$

Figure 21
What Is Your Marital Status?

Marital Status	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
Married	47.7%	18.1%	30.8%
Single	36.5%	11.4%	22.2%
Divorced	6.8%	11.6%	9.5%
Widowed	2.0%	11.7%	7.5%
Living With A partner	5.9%	17.8%	12.7%
Other	1.1%	29.4%	6.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 400.241$ $p = .000$ $df = 7$

Figure 22
How Many Children Under 18 Years Of Age Live In Your Household?

Children In Household	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
0	14.0%	2.8%	16.8%
1	26.4%	53.0%	41.4%
2	20.8%	26.1%	23.8%
3	13.6%	9.9%	11.5%
4	1.6%	2.8%	2.3%
5	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
6 or more	3.8%	2.0%	2.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
$\chi^2 =$	205.188	$p = .000$	$df = 6$

Figure 23
What Is Your Highest Level Of Education?

Highest Level of Education	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
primaria/Less Than HS	9.6%	41.4%	23.1%
Graduado De Secundaria/High School	15.2%	32.3%	22.5%
preparatoria/Some College	28.7%	16.4%	23.5%
Algunas Clases De Universidad/2 Year College	17.8%	4.8%	12.3%
Carrera De Dos Anos O Diplomado profesional/4 Years	5.8%	1.5%	4.0%
Carrera De Cuatro Anos/Licenciatura/Bachelors	15.4%	3.5%	10.3%
postgrado O Carrera profesional/post-Graduare Degree	7.5%		4.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
$\chi^2 =$	246.363	$p = .000$	$df = 6$

**Figure 24
Profession**

Profession	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
Scientific/Technical	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Professional/Managerial/Executive	12.5%	25.3%	19.7%
Sales	3.9%	13.5%	9.3%
Clerical/Bookkeeping	2.4%	4.7%	3.7%
Service	1.8%	3.5%	2.8%
Laborer	13.9%	4.3%	8.5%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	22.0%	.9%	10.1%
Manufacturing/Processing	25.1%	.8%	11.4%
Construction	2.0%	1.2%	1.5%
Transportation	1.0%	3.2%	2.2%
Homemaker	.4%	8.3%	4.8%
Unemployed	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%
Student	6.7%	15.5%	11.6%
Disabled	2.2%	1.4%	1.7%
Retired		10.9%	6.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 483.899$ $p = .000$ $df = 14$

**Figure 25
Income**

Income	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
Less Than \$1,000 (\$10,000 pesos)	10.5%	3.3%	6.3%
\$1001 To \$5000 (\$10,001 A \$ 50,000 pesos)	18.8%	7.5%	12.2%
\$5001 To \$10,000 (\$50,001 A \$100,000 pesos)	16.3%	7.3%	11.1%
\$10,001 To \$20,000 (\$100,001 A \$200,000 pesos)	17.5%	11.5%	14.1%
\$20,001 To \$30,000 (\$200,001 A \$300,000 pesos)	15.3%	11.7%	13.2%
\$30,001 To \$40,000 (\$300,001 A \$400,000 pesos)	4.1%	14.5%	10.1%
\$40,001 To \$50,000 (\$400,001 A \$500,000 pesos)	5.4%	12.7%	9.6%
\$50,0001 To \$75,000 (\$500,0001 A \$750,000 pesos)	5.2%	22.0%	14.9%
Over \$75,000 (Over \$750,000 pesos)	7.0%	9.4%	8.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 183.800$ $p = .000$ $df = 8$

**Figure 26
Gender**

Gender	Place of Residence		Total
	Ciudad Juárez	El Paso	
Male	48.8%	48.1%	48.4%
Female	51.2%	51.9%	51.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = .047$ $p = .828$ $df = 1$