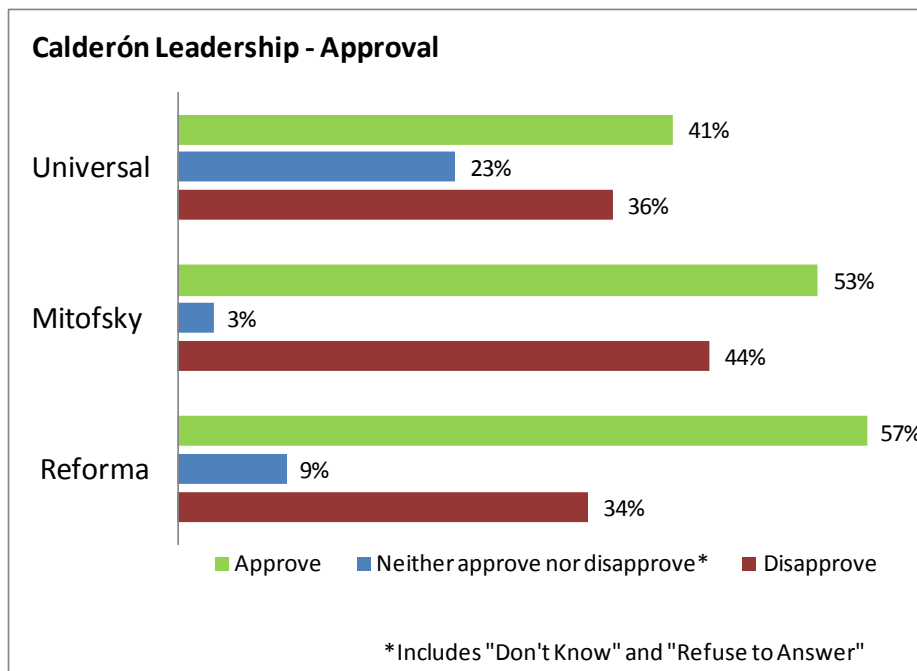




## Polling the Presidency in Mexico



The current quarterly polls on Presidential approval and policy questions are being released this week,<sup>1</sup> and there are seemingly sharp differences among several of the leading surveys. The *Universal* poll found 41% approval for the President, the *Reforma* poll put Presidential approval at 57%, and the Consulta Mitofsky group had approval for the President at 53%. Polls on public questions are often a few percentage points apart, but the 16% difference between *Universal* and *Reforma* calls out for some reflection.



The *Universal* and the *Reforma* polls are close together on the percentage of respondents not approving -- *Universal* 36% and *Reforma* 34%, while Mitofsky has 44% not approving the President's work. On the other hand, Mitofsky and *Reforma* are closer together on the question of respondents who can neither approve nor disapprove of the President, or who don't answer, don't know (Mitofsky 3% and *Reforma* 9%, while *Universal* registers 23%).

<sup>1</sup> The general sequence in the current period for national polling in Mexico is quarterly; the Presidential approval and related policy surveys are released at the beginning of March, June, September and December each year.

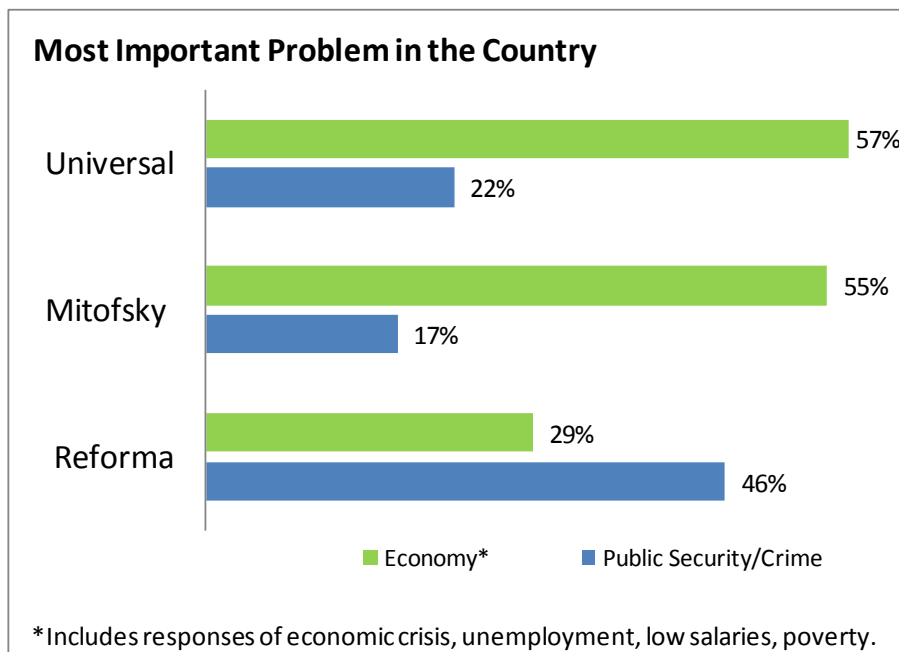


This suggests that the questionnaire and the interview of *Universal* in the field may give more options for the sample to register an opinion distinct from approve or disapprove. The Mitofsky and *Reforma* polling may tend toward forcing (a legitimate approach under some circumstances) an opinion “up or down.” If this is the case, then some of the 53% approval in Mitofsky and some of the 57% approval in *Reforma* may be soft and would come out in neither approval nor disapproval in a *Universal* type format.

That this may be the case is suggested in the responses to another question used by *Reforma* in the same poll. The question translates as “How would you evaluate Felipe Calderón with regard to leadership?” (...as opposed to “do you approve or disapprove of the way in which Felipe Calderón is handling his work as President of the Republic?”) To the leadership question, the *Reforma* sample finds 47% answering “very good” or “good.” This compares with 57% so answering in 2007, 54% in 2008 and 51% in 2009 in the quarterly *Reforma* poll.

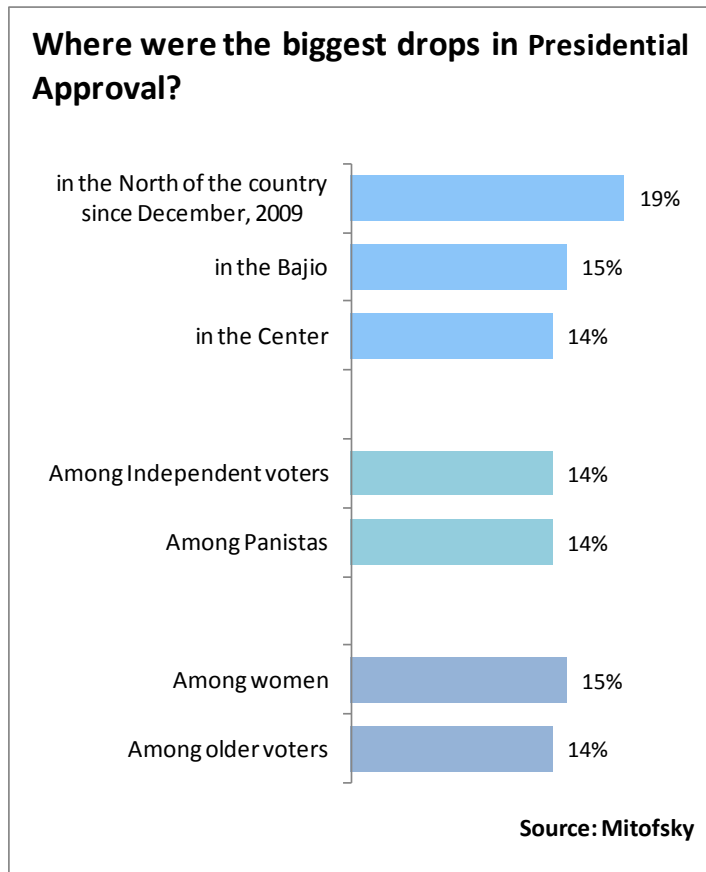
In some ways, the polls may not be so far apart. Further, *Reforma* finds high levels of disapproval in specific policy areas: the 57% general approval fades in front of the 52% disapproval on handling the economy, along with the 50% disapproval on handling employment and another 50% disapproval on dealing with corruption.

And yet in other ways, they seem to measuring two different samples: Mitofsky and *Universal* are talking to people who see the economy as the overwhelming question in the country, while *Reforma* finds people who see security and crime as the most important.





Finding the key to understanding this potentially profound difference in opinion measuring requires a more detailed review of the texture of findings and sampling. In the meantime, we can get a hint of texture with the categories noted by the Mitofsky report where there are significant drops in approval of the President since their last measuring in November, 2009:



For an administration that is as focused on self-promotion as the current one, the findings of each of the newly published polls are hardly comforting.

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