



The Gallup Organization's Cuba ThinkForum Executive Summary

The Gallup Poll of Cuba offers a rare look at the island's understudied population. The findings represent a fascinating portrayal of a populace living with the paradoxes of a communist regime. Cuban respondents are satisfied with their well-funded schools, for example, but they may become dissatisfied workers who see limited opportunities to make use of their talents. They enjoy long lives thanks to a universal healthcare system — but few are satisfied with the freedom to choose what they will do with their lives.

Between Sept. 1 and Sept. 15, 2006, in-person interviews were conducted with 1,000 residents of Havana (600) and Santiago (400), aged 15 and older. The state of Cuba's transportation infrastructure made it unfeasible to collect a nationwide sample; thus, the results are representative only of the nearly 3 million inhabitants of Cuba's two largest cities. Comparison results for all of Latin America are based on data from urban populations in 20 Latin American countries.

Leadership

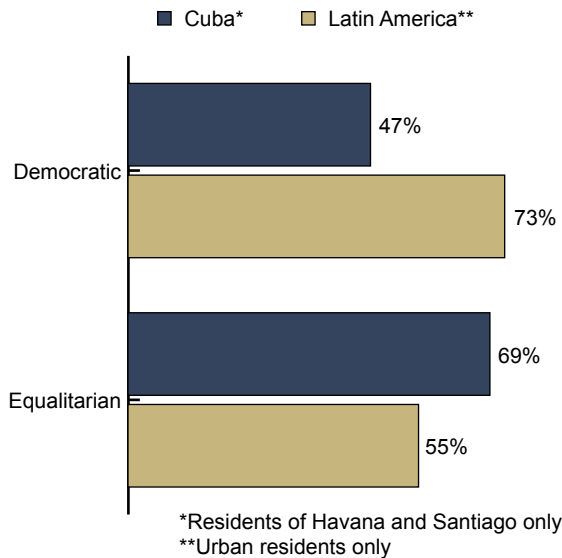
Cuban President Fidel Castro's illness has generated much speculation about possible social and political changes after his death. Castro's brother, Raul, has been Cuba's acting president since late July and would succeed his brother if Fidel does not recover. Nevertheless, preparations for the transition of political power appear to be underway. The poll results support the idea that any changes are likely to take place within the existing political system.

- Having been born in Castro's era, the majority of respondents see themselves as children of the revolution. Asked whether a series of adjectives describe the Cuban people, respondents were much more likely to say Cubans are "fair" (78%) and "equalitarian" (69%) than they were to say they are "democratic" (47%).
- When asked about the country's current leadership, respondents split fairly evenly: 49% said they approve of Cuba's leadership, while 39% disapproved, and 13% did not offer a response.



Personal Traits: Cuba vs. Latin American Region

I am now going to read a series of personal traits that may or may not describe your country's people. As I read them to you, please tell me whether you believe the trait describes your country's people well or not.



- One area in which Cubans appear particularly likely to support change is that of trade with the United States. Respondents were asked, "If Cuba wanted to increase its commercial relations with one other country, which country would be the ideal partner for Cuba?" The United States was the country most commonly mentioned, by 44% of respondents. China (17%) and Venezuela (15%) were distant runners-up. Trade relations between Cuba and the United States are currently suspended by a U.S.-imposed embargo that took effect in 1962.

Healthcare

The Cuban government has attached great importance to ensuring that all Cubans are provided with basic healthcare services. Cuba currently has more physicians per capita even than the United States. That emphasis is evident in these poll results.

- Almost all respondents (96%) say they think healthcare is accessible to anyone regardless of his or her economic situation, versus just 42% overall across urban Latin America. Three in four respondents (74%) say they have confidence in Cuba's healthcare system.

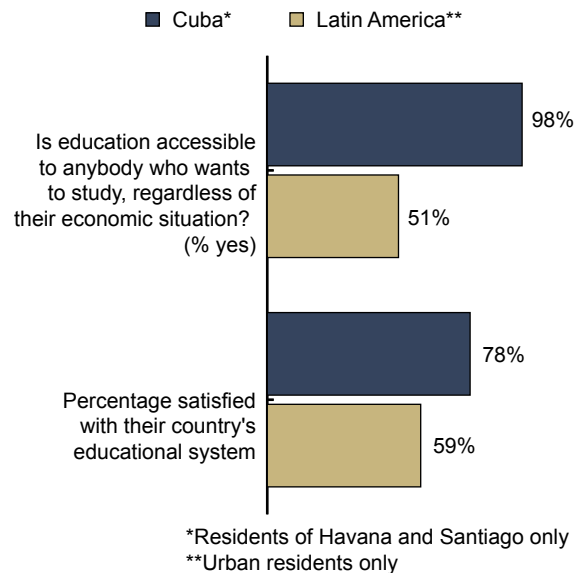
- On the other hand, respondents in the Cuban study were slightly less likely than urbanites across Latin America to say they are satisfied with their personal health — 76% vs. 85%, respectively.

Education

Respondents were also extremely positive about the country's schools, reflecting the success of a concerted effort by the state beginning in 2002 to make education a higher priority. In 2004, education spending represented more than 11% of GDP, compared with 6.3% in 1998.

- As they did regarding healthcare services, almost all respondents (98%) agreed that all Cubans, regardless of economic status, have access to education. A high 78% say they are satisfied with the schools in their communities. Perhaps most impressively, more than half of the Cuban respondents (60%) say the quality of the education students receive from Cuba's colleges is superior to that in other countries, more than twice the regional percentage for urban Latin America (26%).

Education Ratings: Cuba vs. Latin American Region



- The vast majority of respondents also perceive Cuban society as a good environment for child development. A full 96% say they think most children have the opportunity to learn and grow every day, head and shoulders above the 46%

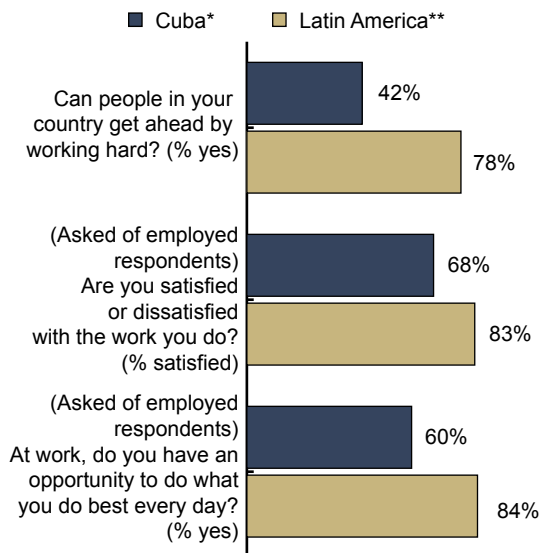
regional figure for cities in Latin America. Nearly as many Cuban respondents, 93%, say they think the country's children are treated with dignity and respect, compared with just one-third (33%) of respondents across Latin America.

Attitudes Toward Work

Somewhere along the way, the potential generated by Cuba's well-developed education system gets truncated. State control of prices gives workers little control over their earning potential, robbing them of motivation to work hard. Also contributing to the poor use of human resources is that underemployed workers are often kept in their existing workplaces to improve official employment statistics.

- Just 42% of Cuban respondents say people in their country can get ahead by working hard; the regional figure for urban Latin America is almost twice as high (78%).

Attitudes Toward Work: Cuba vs. Latin American Region



*Residents of Havana and Santiago only
 **Urban residents only

- Among Cuban respondents who say they have jobs, about two-thirds (68%) say they are satisfied with them. Sixty percent say their jobs give them the opportunity to do what they do best every day. Both figures are somewhat below the overall results for Latin American urbanites (83% and 84%, respectively).

- Lack of a sense of control may also curb entrepreneurial impulses in Cuban society: Although 94% of respondents say they would describe the Cuban people as “entrepreneurial,” less than one-third (32%) say they currently have a plan, idea, or invention in mind to improve their standard of living, compared with an average of 46% of urban Latin Americans.

Freedom and Well-Being

Cuban respondents were the least likely worldwide to say they are satisfied with the freedom they have to choose what to do with their lives.

- Just one in four (26%) respondents expressed satisfaction, dramatically lower than the regional figure of 79% for urban Latin America. Asked more specifically about their freedom to choose how they spent their time the day prior to the survey, 55% of Cubans interviewed said they were satisfied, also significantly lower than the regional finding of 74% for urban Latin America.
- Cuban respondents also posted lower-than-average scores on a number of other specific well-being measures. For example, 62% said they smiled or laughed a lot the day prior to the interview, compared with 81% of urban Latin Americans region-wide. Fifty-six percent of Cuban respondents said they were proud of something they had done that day, compared with 71% of urban Latin Americans.

Personal Characteristics

Nevertheless, Cuban respondents were more likely than average for urban respondents in Latin America to associate themselves with a series of positive characteristics, exhibiting a strong sense of pride in who they are as a people.

- Almost all Cubans interviewed said they felt the Cuban people are creative (97%) and friendly (96%).
- More than 9 in 10 also said they would describe Cubans as optimistic (96%), persistent (95%), entrepreneurial (94%), and brave (92%).

The Gallup World Poll is the largest available source of global public opinion data, providing access to the voices of citizens in more than 130 countries and areas. For more information, contact Poppy MacDonald, 202-715-3080, or poppy_macdonald@gallup.com