

# **MEASURING CUBAN PUBLIC OPINION: PROJECT REPORT**

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## **Preface**

As a result of the passage of the Torricelli and Helms-Burton legislation, the United States has committed itself to a policy of promoting the development of civil society in Cuba. This survey was undertaken on the premise that, to do that effectively, it is necessary to have a better understanding of Cuban public opinion. To that end, the University of Florida presented a proposal to USAID which was approved in April, 1998. The Project Team was led by Dr. Churchill Roberts, from the College of Journalism and Communications. Dr. Richard Scheaffer, from the Department of Statistics, provided advice on statistical methodology and supervised results tabulations. Dr. Guillermo Grenier, Director of the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University, supervised questionnaire development and interviews. Mr. Ernesto Betancourt was retained as consultant on current Cuban affairs and provided the rationale for the survey, as well as comments on survey results. Mrs. Norma Miranda acted as supervisor of interviewers.

The survey work was facilitated by the cooperation of the U. S. Department of State Cuban Affairs Coordinator, the Immigration and Naturalization Service offices in Washington and Miami, and by the various NGO offices in Miami that support recent emigres in their efforts to start new lives in this country. Mr. David Mutchler, USAID Senior Advisor/Coordinator for Cuba, and Kathleen Smith, USAID Program Officer, were extremely supportive in helping navigate through the bureaucratic network involved in this complex undertaking.

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## Executive Summary of Findings

On the first group of topics, respondents' reaction to the supply of goods and other social services, the results reflect a majority support for *humanitarian aid*, despite the fact that an overwhelming majority of respondents were not recipients themselves of such aid. There is also a significant proportion that supports the claim that the regime deviates such aid to other purposes. On the *overall supply situation*, the most revealing finding is that an overwhelming majority rejects regime propaganda that shortages are caused by the US embargo. This rejection prevails when the responses are weighted by age, sex, location (whether they lived in or outside Havana) and age, thus indicating a consensus. A second point of importance is the degree to which the respondents "solved" their supply problems by resorting to private sources, whether authorized or black market. These findings indicate the degree to which the state is retrenching in Cuba, despite the official propaganda line.

The respondents confirm the satisfaction of Cubans with the revolution's accomplishments in *education* and *health*. The results reveal however, that this is more so in the case of education than in healthcare. In the latter, the lack of medical equipment and drugs result in a much lower percentage of satisfaction. There is also great resentment of the privileged access granted government officials and tourists to Cuban medical facilities. In education as well as in healthcare, the number one favorable factor mentioned is the free nature of the services provided by the government.

The massive decline in college attendance, from 250,000 to 100,000, is explained by respondents in terms of the distortion of economic incentives resulting from the dual economy and the government rules forbidding provision of private and dollar professional services.

The so-called *reforms* introduced by the regime to cope with the collapse of Soviet subsidies seem to be a case of too little too late, according to the reactions of the respondents. The overwhelming majority felt that these reforms were introduced too late. In terms of their importance, those relating to dollar circulation and farmers markets were perceived as more important than the religious opening. But the religious opening was considered more important than the approval of joint-ventures. An interesting finding is that the majority of respondents consider the reforms have mostly maintained the existing supply situation in relation to a variety of goods and services. This perception of the respondents is in apparent contrast with that in many studies by foreign experts portraying the reforms as the beginning of a new era leading to the transition to a market economy.

In a more detailed aspect, when asked for the motivations for self-employment and joint-venture work, the respondents gave the logical answers to be expected in terms of more

income and access to dollars. However, the most surprising negative aspect mentioned for joint-venture work was that a very substantial majority considered it subjected them to too much State Security control. This finding seems to contradict arguments of Canadian and European investors who believe their investments are helping open up Cuban society and reduce repression in the long run. The perception of the respondents is that foreign investors are exposing those who work in their companies to more repression.

As to *freedom of expression* the respondents were asked about a series of events. In some cases, they were also asked about the observed reactions of regime supporters. The most impacting event on freedom of expression was the Pope's visit and the respondents—even non-Catholics—reported an overwhelming acceptance, although regime supporters were reported to be less than enthusiastic about it. The overwhelming majority of the respondents felt that the messages uttered by the Pope were likely to fade-out and not have a permanent impact.

An issue used to test the diversity of public opinion responses was the UN Human Rights Commission vote in 1998 that lifted the monitoring of Cuba's human rights violations. The contrast between regime opponents, who were mostly annoyed with the UN or considered it a betrayal of the dissidents and political prisoners, and that of regime supporters, who were reported to be overwhelmingly happy with that outcome, reveals the extreme polarization that prevails in Cuba today.

8. In relation to freedom of expression, the most overwhelming answer of respondents was to the perception of being subjected to repression. This seems to be one of the points of greater consensus. When asked how they felt about it, the overwhelming majority agreed that repression was present in their neighborhoods, their work places and the streets, not to mention the pervasive presence of State Security.
9. Finally, respondents were asked about the observed behavior of the population in general, and regime supporters, in relation to the "actos de repudio," events in which gangs of hoodlums, with tacit police tolerance and encouragement, are unleashed against citizens who, in one way or another, have incurred regime disfavor. The majority of citizens either help the victims discreetly or lock themselves in their homes to avoid retribution, while the majority of regime supporters join the demonstrations or criticize the victims as being crazy.

The group of questions on *communications media* was aimed at determining how Cubans obtain information, as well as what information they seek to obtain. Although Cubans have overwhelming access to radio and TV, they manifest a low interest in news. Rather, they prefer to use those communication instruments for access to music and entertainment. Although this may be a pattern that prevails in other societies, in the case of Cuba, it may well reflect the fact that Cubans have news fatigue. They want to escape their reality.

Of the international broadcasts reported to reach Cuba, respondents tuned in to Radio Marti six times more frequently than to the closest Miami radio station. TV Marti was not seen by the majority of Cubans and, of those reporting seeing it, the overwhelming majority saw it at the US Interest Section in Havana. National newspapers are read by few people and even less have access to foreign publications. Asked how they found out about a series of significant events in the last few years, national media is the source of information for events which the regime wishes to disclose, while international media are the only sources for news on events the regime wants to downplay. One means of news communication that is underused is phone conversations. The phone is used almost exclusively for family news.

12. In relation to the *Dissidents*, the responses obtained from the survey reflect it is still at an incipient stage of development. Respondents report they had discussions about the future while in Cuba. However, their concerns were more about domestic political and economic issues than about human rights or the fate of dissidents. Foreign policy or nationalism, topics highlighted in regime propaganda, did not seem to elicit any significant interest. Although the majority of respondents considered themselves dissidents, they had little knowledge of dissident leaders and organizations. In other words, they were not active dissidents.
13. When confronted with specific events and dissident leaders, barely a majority expressed awareness.
14. As to *social participation*, respondents were not very active in any of the so-called mass organizations, with the local Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) being the only one having a fair number of participants among respondents. This low participation is explained by the fact that, once a formal request for departure is made, the applicant becomes a non-person for the regime and its organizations; and, second, because even if active, respondents would be reluctant to mention participating in regime organizations. As to the respondents' perception of the various mass organizations, the largest minority thought the CDRs were the most powerful, with the majority of these organizations being perceived as irrelevant. One example of that irrelevance in the eyes of respondents corresponds to labor unions. An overwhelming majority concurred that belonging to a labor union did not offer any protection to members. This extended to the independent labor movement, which is, first, little known and, second, has not been able to organize any significant action so far in defense of workers.
15. The perception of *regime leaders* and *institutions* is highly negative, although it should be noted that the respondents represent a segment of the population that is so estranged from the regime that it wishes to leave the country.
16. Of the list of present leaders presented for reaction, only Carlos Lage got a positive

response, although from a modest minority. The majority of present regime leaders elicited very high negative responses. A similar result was obtained when the respondents were asked to rate regime institutions. The highest negative responses on regime institutions corresponded to the entities associated with the Communist Party. Then came those entities associated with the military and the repressive apparatus. Even entities such as the farmers association and the writers and artist union elicited high negative responses, although there was some favorable reaction to them.

17. The section on *tourism* and *jineteras* reflects a very sophisticated reaction. On the one hand, the overwhelming response to tourists is cordial and reflects the Cubans traditional hospitality to visitors. Only the privileged treatment enjoyed by these visitors, along with the highly discriminatory treatment given to Cubans in tourist facilities by the government under its apartheid practices, is the source of strong resentment by the respondents.
18. As to the issue of *jineteras*, what is most surprising is the very high proportion of respondents indicating they knew more than ten of them. As to the reactions to the *jineteras*, the survey again tried to differentiate between respondents' reactions and the behaviors of regime opponents and supporters. The different reactions reflect the polarization of Cuban public opinion. While among respondents and regime opponents the prevailing reactions were of understanding, sympathy and embarrassment, the prevailing response observed among government supporters was of extreme hostility, with a minority even making this another humiliation due to the US embargo. Sympathy and understanding, not to mention embarrassment, are low in the observed regime supporter responses to the predicament of these women.
19. As to the future, respondents were overwhelmingly convinced that political and economic changes were necessary. In other words, mere economic reforms without a political opening do not seem adequate to them. And, they have no illusions as to how long it will take for Cuba to be rebuilt. A majority of responses suggest between five and more years. As to the potential source of leadership for such a transition--confirming the above negative perceptions of the present leadership--eight of thirteen current leaders received a zero rating as to their possible role in a transition. Lage got the highest response and it was only nine percent. Meanwhile, among opposition leaders, although they are less well known overall, two of them, Vladimiro Roca and Gustavo Arcos, elicited responses in the low teens. That is higher than those of Lage. Nevertheless, the most important finding, perhaps, is that an overwhelming majority said they did not know anyone who could lead a transition. As to the issues that will have to be faced in the future, the most difficult is perceived to be economic reconstruction, with a large minority mentioning crime and corruption and the absence of ethical and moral values as difficult issues for the transition.

The final section centered on the topic of the *transition*. A variety of issues were raised



in relation to this topic. One of them was migratory behavior. Contrary to the usual perception that economic motivations prevail, respondents were more likely to return if there was a political opening, regardless of the economic situation, than if the opposite occurred. They also perceive as less likely for their relatives to try to migrate to the US should a change occur in Cuba.

21. When asked as to what system they hoped would prevail in a future Cuba, an overwhelming majority supported democratic capitalism as the favored system to be installed. There was no sympathy whatsoever expressed for dictatorship, which received a zero rating. Democratic socialism does not fare well either.
22. As to what they found most bothersome to them in the current situation, fear of repression and lack of liberty are by far the most important issues, with the lack of sincerity in daily life and the climate of corruption eliciting majority responses also. Lack of food comes fourth in their ranking.
23. One important question dealt with fears a possible change arouses among Cubans in the island. The perception of respondents is that the number one fear of a majority is that chaos and violence may prevail; for a large minority, the fear is that exiles may return to claim the homes where they live; then, there are fears expressed in relation to losing free healthcare, jobs and free education. The possibility of a return of American hegemony during a transition is perceived to be a matter of concern for a small number of those in the island. Again, this is the view of regime opponents. Regime supporters are likely to have a different view.
24. The respondents were very skeptical on the possible role of the Catholic Church in the transition and overwhelmingly doubtful that the regime would allow such a role. An overwhelming majority is convinced that change will occur only after Castro's passing away. International repudiation of the regime and an armed forces rebellion are also perceived to be potential causes for a transition to occur. A censure by the Pope is accepted as a possible factor by a large minority, while only a small proportion thinks that lifting the US embargo could lead to a transition.
25. People's reaction to an event thought to have had national significance evoked an interesting response. On January 28, 1997, President Clinton released a document called "Support for a Democratic Transition in Cuba." Castro reacted by requiring members of the armed forces—250,000 of them—to sign an oath of allegiance to Castro and the revolution. Despite many public pronouncements about the document, only a small proportion of the respondents recall having heard anybody mentioning it. Again, comparing the perceived reactions of regime opponents and supporters, extreme polarization was reported.

26. According to the respondents, Cubans in general accept the US condition of a change of leadership before any US assistance is provided for a transition. Obviously, if regime supporters were asked, the response will be very different. And, finally, a majority of those interviewed supported or strongly supported a dialogue among representatives of stakeholders in the future of Cuba—dissidents, exiles and regime leaders—to find a solution to the Cuban dilemma. Only a small minority opposed or strongly opposed it.

## **RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY OF CUBAN PUBLIC OPINION**

The need to do public opinion research on the current mood of Cuba's people is a consequence of two important changes in the situation. One is the change in US policy towards Cuba in the last decade and, the other, is the change in Cuba itself as a result of the collapse of Communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc. And, finally, it is necessary to consider how these two streams of changes converge to encourage the emergence of a civil society in Cuba.

### Changes in US Cuba Policy

The first relevant change took place in 1992 when Congress enacted and the President signed the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992. Under section 1705-g of that Act the US Government was authorized to provide assistance "through appropriate non-governmental organizations, for the support of individuals and organizations to promote nonviolent democratic change in Cuba". The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, also known as Helms-Burton, expanded these efforts to cover activities oriented not only to assist the promotion of a democratic transition but also to build a civil society in Cuba, which is essential to provide the social infrastructure for a peaceful transition. The most recent action by the Administration in furthering these goals took place on January 5, 1999 and expanded the access to food and agricultural inputs to non-governmental entities. It is not clear, as of this writing, to what degree the Cuban government will allow such trade. If they don't allow it, the burden of limiting access to food to the Cuban people then will be on the Castro regime.

Among the factors to be considered by USAID in making the grants mandated under the Helms-Burton law to attain such a national US objective, is the need to build the capability/knowledge that will contribute to a peaceful transition. Such knowledge requires an understanding of the mood of Cuban public opinion. Therefore, information on the evolving changes in Cuban public opinion is essential for the US to pursue the policy of encouraging a civil society in Cuba.

At present, we are assuming moods of the Cuban people that may or may not be correct. There is no question that if you consider the wealth of anecdotal information that is available, there is a clear increase in popular dissatisfaction and willingness to express it openly, along with some hesitancy on the part of the government in exerting its repressive powers.

As long as we kept our Cuba policy limited to a question of how to deal with a pesky, hostile and irritating government in the sphere of international relations, knowledge of Cuban public opinion was desirable but not essential. However, now that we have made our policy promoting in that country a civil society and a peaceful transition, knowledge of Cuban public opinion is essential to successful execution of our Cuba policy.

Castro's panicky reaction to the Clinton Administration's release, on January 28, 1997, of the paper on support for the transition reflects his concern for the response it could elicit among

Cubans. Castro follows closely the reactions of Cubans to any event through a very elaborate system of public opinion canvassing carried out by the MININT. One recent defector reports that Gorbachev thought the system was so good that he sent some of his people to look it over. The methodology used by the Cubans is fairly simple. Whenever there is an important event, Castro's staffer responsible for following public opinion asks for a so-called "estado de opinión." A network of people attached to the MININT are then requested to report on what they hear in buses, workplaces and waiting lines on the subject. A basic rule to encourage candor and overcome reluctance to inform on others is that these people do not have to identify who said what, merely what was said. The raw data gathered by MININT informants is tabulated and analyzed by a special staff attached to Castro's office. On the basis of their findings, they suggest ways to counter negative popular perceptions, drop the subject or, when relevant, take other initiatives to counter the event's negative impact.

There is no question that there are methodological difficulties in making any type of polling in the case of Cuba. If you do it in the island, you are met with Cubans double-talking their way out of trouble with the regime. If you do it outside the island, you have a sample that has already shown a bias by leaving the island. The approach followed to overcome such difficulties will be discussed under the methodology section..

### Changes in Cuban Society

The Cuban revolution was the result of a Cuban society rebelling against the usurpation of its democratic rights by the Batista Coup of 1952. Cuba was on the way to consolidate its representative form of government when Batista seized power by force ninety days before the election. True, corruption was rampant in the political system. But, contrary to the usual perception, Cuba had a vibrant civil society which included one of the most powerful labor movements in Latin America, and very active student, business and professional associations.

After Batista's defeat, Che Guevara created the legend of the revolution being a guerrilla military victory to justify the displacement from power of those in the 26th of July Movement underground in the cities who, along with their support groups under the banner of the Civic Resistance Movement, endured the brunt of Batista's repression. These individuals--leaders of student, labor, business and professional associations--were committed to the restoration of the 1940 Constitution and not to the communization of Cuba.

In this initial phase, Castro was helped by the Bay of Pigs failure and the US commitment after the 1962 Missile Crisis not to intervene in Cuba. These events enhanced Castro's stature and completely demoralized those who disagreed with the course he was following. Castro was able to consolidate his control of Cuban society. In the face of such victories and the introduction of a police state, which imprisoned and executed its opponents, the only option left for those who disagreed was to go into exile.

Contrary to the prevailing impression, the first wave of exiles was not limited to former

Batistianos. It included many who had fought along Castro and opposed his betrayal of the democratic goals of the revolution. Others opted to stay and join the victorious Communist bandwagon. The unpleasant truth is that those Cubans who stayed, willingly abdicated their political rights, allowing Castro a virtual monopoly of power in ruling the country. This is basically the situation that prevailed during the sixties. The vibrant civil society of pre-Castro's Cuba was seriously weakened and co-opted by the state.

The failure of the 10 million tons sugar crop in 1970 was a turning point. This was essentially a manifestation of the risk involved in allowing one man unchallenged decision making power. Castro's hold over Cuban public opinion suffered a severe downturn and although his dramatic mea culpa and offer to resign did not end his rule, individuals expressed their dissatisfaction through massive work absenteeism. The Soviets took advantage of this crisis to press Castro to formalize the Communization of Cuba by introducing their economic and political structures as a condition for Cuba's integration into the COMECON.

Castro's tropical caudillism had to be meshed with the more formal institutional framework prevailing at the time throughout the Soviet Bloc. This was codified at the First Party Congress in 1975 and through the enactment of the Soviet modeled Constitution in 1976. Unwilling to accept any constraints on his exercise of power, Castro established a parallel system of government under his own personal control, with power to overrule any decisions of the newly established formal institutions, including the judiciary.

Precisely at this time, Cuba projected its military power across the Atlantic with Soviet logistical support. "Internationalism" became an additional source of personal glory for Castro, provided a sense of national importance for Cubans and generated Soviet subsidies which grew into several billion dollars per year, obscuring the basic inefficiencies of the Cuban economy. Cuba was able to finance a very generous welfare state from crib to grave which exceeded the productive capacity of Cuba's economy. The Soviets were paid with the blood of Cuba's soldiers.

The 1980 Mariel crisis shook the credibility of the regime in ways that were not properly perceived and, much less, understood overseas. The impact of the earlier 1979 Cuban exiles visits led to the Mariel exodus. It opened the eyes of the population to what they had missed by staying in Cuba. Castro was forced to make an economic opening. Free craft and peasant markets were established under pressure from the Soviets who wanted to decrease their economic burden. At that time, the intellectual leadership for opening Cuban public opinion came from visual arts artists. Painters and sculptors expressed through their art critical views of the regime. They also started exhibiting in parks and some private galleries, selling their works in open markets to foreigners.

In 1983, "Internationalism" suffered a severe setback when the US sent troops to Grenada. The myth of Cuban military prowess was shattered when Government propaganda claimed that all Cubans had been killed by US forces--in a dramatic broadcast the last ones were described as dying embraced to the flag--and, afterwards, several hundred of them were repatriated. Their

commander, Colonel Tortoló, after being hailed as a hero, was brought before a court martial , downgraded to private and sent to Angola as an infantryman. These events, which received limited attention overseas, shocked Cuban public opinion.

By 1985, Radio Martí broadcasts went on the air. The regime initially tried repressing listeners but eventually realized that the repressive effort required exceeded the benefits. Instead, they opted for competition, revamping Cuban radio and TV broadcasts to make them more attractive to the listener. For the first time since Castro came to power, the Cuban people had a mass media alternative source of information. Combined with the economic opening, which freed many Cubans of government control of their economic well being, an incipient public opinion independent of the state began to develop. The basic requirements for the emergence of a civil society started to appear in Castro's Cuba.

Castro became concerned with the impact on his absolute rule of the expansion of individual entrepreneurship and the emergence of a civil society around people who were no longer dependent on the state for their livelihood. He was also concerned over the resentment of loyal Party cadres generated by the conspicuous consumption of these new rich. In 1986, he closed the peasant free markets and backed out of the incipient opening. Humberto Perez, the Soviet protege who had introduced the economic opening, was dismissed from his State and Party positions. Despite continuing Soviet financial support, Cuba defaulted that year in its foreign debt with the Paris Club.

Unfortunately for Castro, it was at that time that Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union with his ideas about Glasnost and Perestroika. Many in the Cuban nomenklatura embraced the Soviet reforms. Eventually, having studied in the Soviet Union became a negative factor in the career of members of the nomenklatura and a source of suspicions of disloyalty to Castro. Soviet publications were banned. Castro was faced with a new public opinion challenge. Ideas subversive to his Stalinist brand of Communism were shaping an adverse public opinion within regime ranks.

"Internationalism", the projection of Cuban overt or covert power overseas, which Brezhnev had enthusiastically supported, was not consistent with Gorbachev's new foreign policy orientation. The Angola conflict, in which several hundred thousand Cubans of the post-revolutionary generations served, came to an end in a negotiated peace among the great powers. Cuba had to struggle to be admitted to the negotiations. Castro lost a powerful issue he had exploited to persuade Cubans of the international importance of their country. And, of course, of its leader.

After highly significant military and security defections in 1987, by 1989, Castro was forced to face a more serious internal division within his cadres. To deal with that crisis, he made a fabricated accusation of drug dealing against one of Cuba's most popular "internationalist" heroes, General Arnaldo Ochoa. This crisis within the military and the security apparatus took place two months after Gorbachev's visit to Cuba. It was not caused by drug dealing but by Gral. Ochoa's dabbling on the issues of Glasnost and Perestroika.

After frantic polling of Cuba's public opinion, Castro resorted to the drug accusation as a way of discrediting General Ochoa. Even so, he had to acknowledge in his statement announcing Ochoa's death sentence that Cuban public opinion did not endorse his execution. This happened shortly before the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc.

During the preparations for the Fourth Party Congress in 1991, Castro was toying with the idea of an opening. The head of the Department of Revolutionary Orientation (DOR) within the Party Central Committee, Carlos Aldana, was encouraged to advance reform ideas for the Congress along the lines of Gorbachev's reforms. But precisely at that time came the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself as a result of the attempted coup against Gorbachev. Aldana followed the fate of the previous reformer of the 1980s, Humberto Perez, and Cuba embarked on the road to Castro's own brand of Socialism.

This brand of socialism is predicated on a single party dictatorship that allows Castro to control all organs of the state. No freedom of speech, assembly or organization is allowed. Under the new post-Soviet collapse international climate, hesitant repression is used to dissuade people from engaging in unwanted behavior while not antagonizing unduly potential supporters in the international arena. The legislature meets for two days twice a year and the judiciary depends from the executive branch.

On the economic side, it resorts to a dual economy based on dollarization, which Castro acknowledged publicly had to be done because they lacked the repressive power to stop illegal currency transactions. The opening of the export sector to foreign investors, probably with a significant component of money laundering for its financing, is used to raise foreign exchange earnings to compensate for lost Soviet subsidies. Finally, a very limited reform of internal economic management merely legalizes some previously ongoing illegal activities. The so-called "cuentapropistas," self employed workers, can be accurately described as working under non-profit Capitalism. Castro's confiscatory taxes are aimed at preventing the private sector from accumulating any wealth.

Needless to say that the reaction of Cuban society to these events has been to demand increasing autonomy of the citizen from the state. The verb "resolver", to solve, has become the most frequent verb used to describe the behavior of Cubans. The dollar market sucks real goods from the peso market. In order to survive a rationing system that provides essential goods for only the first two weeks of every month, Cubans are forced to openly violate the regime's laws. Therefore, the legitimacy of the state in Cuba is collapsing. Individuals are increasingly asserting their rights, not written in any laws, to obtain the food, clothing, medicines and whatever is necessary to survive.

Politically, the regime's failure has manifested itself in the emergence of the dissident movement, despite all regime efforts to prevent its articulation in intermediary organizations and much less their exercising the right to assemble by organizing any meetings. For a while, and as a way of

defusing internal pressures, the regime allowed and even encouraged the more daring among these dissidents to migrate in rafts to the US. This escape valve is now closed by the Cuba/US migration agreement. This agreement is a turning point because in effect it bottles up dissent. No longer is the escape valve of exile open to the unhappy.

Needing to capture dollars from international telephone service, the regime has been forced to allow direct dial calls from overseas. According to some estimates, the volume reaches into thousands of calls daily. Thus, weakening further regime control of public opinion.

The dissident movement, which is the infrastructure to build a civil society in Cuba, attained sufficient strength to dare to challenge the last repressive obstacles to its functioning by organizing an umbrella body Concilio Cubano and by calling for a national meeting. This meeting was to take place precisely the day Castro ordered the downing of two American civilian planes over international waters. The recent indictment of Cuban spies by a Miami Grand Jury confirms that this action was not the result of a provocation but of a murder conspiracy on Castro's part through his minions in Cuban intelligence. As is well known, this action triggered approval of the Helms-Burton legislation, which up to that time was bottled up in Conference.

In this respect, the dissident challenge to the present regime's monopoly of Cuban public opinion in response to the call for the Fifth Party Congress the second week of October, 1997 has had international resonance. The regime issued a document to provide the basis for the deliberations of the Congress entitled "The Party of Unity, Democracy and the Human Rights we Defend". In response, the Internal Dissident's Working Group for the Analysis of the Cuban Socio-Economic Situation, who have become known worldwide as The Group of Four, issued a critique in a document entitled "The Fatherland Belongs to all".

After making it public at a press conference on June 27, the members of the Working Group were detained and were held by security forces for eighteen months without being formally charged. On February, 1999, after passing the so-called "Gag Law," the Group of Four was finally brought to trial and sentenced. Radio Marti did broadcast the text of the document several times when it was first released and after the trial was broadcast over Cuban TV, many listeners have called asking for copies of the full text of the Working Group's statement. For the first time since Castro came to power, Cubans who care would be able to have a coherent alternative manifesto on the status and future of the island drafted by people who are actually in prison. There is no question that issuance of such a document is one of the most daring actions of dissidents in challenging the state monopoly of ideas, policies and public opinion.

The Pope's visit reinforced the attitudes of those wishing to say the truth and free themselves of their fears. The initial twisting of the Pope's message to demand only the "opening of the world to Cuba" and ignoring the equal demand that "Cuba open itself to the world," is slowly giving way to a realization by the Europeans and the Latin-Americans that it is Castro's unyielding stubbornness that blocks the transition and not US policy. The recent vote at the UN Human Rights Commission is a reflection of that new perception. Castro's hesitancy in applying the



“Gag Law,” and the defiant response it met from the dissidence, indicates that the climate for the emergence of a civil society in Cuba is consolidating.

### The Changing Cuban Situation and the Emergence of Civil Society

Fortunately for the US, therefore, the present policy is being applied at a time when, despite the extremely repressive nature of Castro's regime, a civil society is emerging in Cuba on its own as a result of the dynamics of Cuban public opinion. Even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation in Cuba was loosening up. This was taking place despite the loss of those civic leaders from the past who would have been in the forefront of this effort had they stayed in Cuba, or not being imprisoned and executed. With few exceptions, the dissident movement is led by younger people all of whom were in one way or another associated with the revolution. Many have suffered imprisonment and other forms of harassment, in particular the infamous "actos de repudio" through which the government unleashes groups of hoodlums to intimidate dissidents and their families.

Historically, the emergence of a civil society has taken place when individuals decided to assert their own rights and reduce the scope of state control over their lives. The concept goes back to the Enlightenment and is based on the notion of liberty as a right of citizens. It is closely associated with the emergence of capitalism and the right to private property, which allowed individuals to be free of state control for their well being.

Civil society provides the fabric or network for social interaction between the citizen and the state. It includes all types of associations through which local, labor, professional, business and other issues are articulated within a society. It is an essential component of representative democracy in which individuals or issue associations can channel their diverse interests within society through political parties to influence state policies.

The Marxist model is predicated on the state controlling civil society by depriving intermediary organizations of their autonomy--and responsiveness to individual needs and aspirations--through vesting the monopoly of power in a single Party, the so-called vanguard of the proletariat. That is why the process of reform in the Eastern Bloc is essentially one of allowing civil society to free itself of state control and giving it a greater role in state matters. The debate advanced by the dissident movement in Cuba is predicated precisely on the issue of freeing Cuban citizens from state control.

If we look at the evolution of the Cuban situation briefly described above from the perspective of civil society, it is clear that after the victory against Batista and the Bay of Pigs disaster, the existing civil society practically disappeared in Cuba. The old social fabric of labor, professional, student and business associations which played such a crucial role in Castro's rise to power all became subject to state control. They lost the autonomy to represent the interests of their members. Instead, they became conveyor mechanisms to impose on their members the decisions taken at the top of the regime, in most cases by Castro himself.

The first widespread manifestation of an effort to act individually in defiance of state or Party guidance manifested itself among workers in 1970. This took place after the failure of that year's sugar crop which caused a severe decline in public opinion support for the regime. The labor leadership, with some exceptions, failed to respond to the membership of the labor movement. And, those who tried to articulate the interests of rank and file members, were removed from their leadership positions. Absenteeism became the only behavior accessible to individual workers to express their unhappiness.

Later on, the 1980 Mariel exodus was a escape valve for a second massive loss of public opinion support generated by the eye-opening experience of the visits by the exile community during 1979. Again, individuals felt that the only way open to them to express a disagreeing position from that of the state was by applying for exit visas. Of course, by leaving the country they were acknowledging the futility, in their view, of trying to change the course of state policies. There were those within the Party and state structure, like Minister Humberto Pérez, who tried to allow a legal expansion of private economic activities through the peasant and craft markets. In the end, Castro reversed the process to assert undisputed state control over Cuban society. The growth of civil society was stunted again.

Radio Marti broadcasts expanded the rights of individuals to have access to information not controlled by the state. As was mentioned above, the massive audience it enjoyed made resort to repression a futile response. It was a crucial step in the growth of the informational infrastructure for a civil society in Cuba.

A decade later, the systemic collapse of Communism worldwide faced the regime with serious dissent within its state apparatus. This was dealt with by discrediting and executing General Ochoa and dismissing Carlos Aldana, the Party's ideological head who had the temerity of embracing Glasnost and Perestroika. The 1992 revised Constitution preserved Castro's personal control of the state. The only concession made to individual choice was in the area of religion. The door was open to expansion of religious activities, with many limitations. This is the only legal outlet in Cuba for organized activities outside state control. The churches have become the only civil society entities officially allowed to function by the state in the island.

In the nineties, individuals asserted their rights, despite state policies to hold dollars, to undertake certain business activities and even to celebrate Christmas Eve, a traditional festivity that was banned by the state. Eventually the regime was forced to restore Christmas as an official holiday after allowing it, for that year alone, right before the Pope's visit. While in the eighties they asserted the right to listen to Radio Marti's uncensored information, in the nineties individual Cubans have asserted the right to speak, despite prohibitions in the penal code. Although there is still some monitoring of overseas calls, they have gained freedom to receive thousands of direct dial phone calls from overseas daily. Faced with the possibility of massive disobedience, the regime has reluctantly relented in its total control over these matters, but has tried instead to retain some control through intimidation, regulation or taxation. Nonetheless, the

space for civil society keeps growing.

The greatest challenge to the regime from civil society, however, has been the dissident movement. Starting with associations to denounce human right violations in the seventies, the dissident movement did not gain strength until mass dissemination of their activities by Radio Martí in the eighties. The present situation reflects a broadening of the scope of such entities to include lawyers, medical doctors, economists, labor leaders and student groups among others. Independent agricultural cooperatives and even libraries are emerging from the bottom up. Perhaps the most significant of these dissident groups for the creation of the infrastructure for a civil society are the independent news services that have expanded the right of access to information by providing timely coverage of news within Cuba and transmitting them overseas.

One characteristic common to these groups is their fragmentation. This fragmentation is misread by some observers from free countries where civil society can function enjoying the rights of association and assembly. In Cuba, the fragmentation occurs because members limit their association to small circles of acquaintances who, besides sharing their positions on relevant issues of common interest, they know well on a personal basis. It is one way of overcoming the relentless infiltration tactics of Cuban security agencies. This has not prevented the emergence of more organized challenges to state monopoly of power at higher levels of social organization, as reflected in the existence of Concilio Cubano and the Working Group of the Dissidence.

In his essay on "The Virtue of Civil Society" Edward Shils discusses the need for civility as an essential social climate for political action of the civil society. This civility is required from all individuals and, in particular, from those in positions of power. Such civility is totally lacking in the behavior of Castro's regime. One has only to refer to his dictum to intellectuals: "Within the revolution everything, outside the revolution nothing."

Such an implacable approach to dissenting citizens eventually generates equally uncivil responses. This may well be the explanation for the recent rumors about unrest within the military and party ranks not to mention the abrupt dismissal of Roberto Robaina, Castro's Foreign Minister. The most repressed segment of Cuban society are those in the military and security services who may dissent from the regime. Castro tries to buy their loyalty by placing them in joint ventures and other jobs with access to dollars. They also are among those benefitting from the Paladares restaurants and room rentals to tourists to earn the dollars the regime cannot provide to them. But they are vulnerable due to the corruption that prevails in those activities. When the complaints of diehard Party elements are too loud, Castro cracks on them.

That is why the regime is becoming increasingly unstable. The most worrisome signal for Castro in this respect is the recent defection of the deputy head of his security detail at the meeting of Caribbean Heads of State in the Dominican Republic. He was forced to depart before the close of the meeting for fear that his security had been jeopardized. Such a defection reflects cracks in the ranks of the most important segment for regime survival: the security apparatus.

As we move into the future, development of a civil society in Cuba will be predicated on the evolution of attitudes among Cubans towards their society and state: the role they are willing to allow the state to take in their lives and the space they wish to reserve for themselves. As the previous review reveals, this they will do as individuals or as members of the many intermediary organizations of the dissident movement, which are really the building blocs for a civil society. It is evident that the Cuban state is yielding space to citizens, albeit reluctantly, when a large number of them are willing to defy state authority. The time is coming when this yielding may have to be extended to the rights of association and assembly. Once this happens, civil society will grow beyond its present fragmentation.

For the US to pursue an effective policy for promotion of civil society in Cuba, it will be necessary to have a reading of that country's public opinion in relation to diverse issues. It is not possible to make an exhaustive coverage of all possible issues, therefore, it was decided to concentrate this survey on a several selected topics: the reaction to the supply of consumer goods and social services; their perceptions of the reforms undertaken and how adequately they meet their needs and aspirations; their perception of, and response to, lack of freedom and state repression, in particular the impact of the Pope's visit; their access to information through national or external media; their reaction to the emerging dissidence and the most relevant issues that concerned them; their opinion of, and willingness to participate in, state sponsored organizations or independent ones; their views of people's response to regime leaders and agencies; their perceptions and attitudes towards tourism and jineteras; and, finally, their outlook for the future of the country and themselves and how change may occur and when.

Since dissidents wishing to develop a civil society may not only be overt, as is the case with open dissidents, but covert, as may be the case with those within the regime. To a limited extent, the methodology for this effort tried to address also that segment of the population, their concerns, reactions and fears. That is why, in some cases, those interviewed were asked not only for their reactions but also for the reactions of those they knew who were either supporters or opponents of the regime. Cuban families are not in blocs on one side or the other, although in some families that may be the case. In many cases, within the same family there is a full range of positions for or against the regime. Using the interviewees as surrogates to peek into those positions provides an extremely useful perspective of the range of reactions within Cuban public opinion to various events.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling Concerns**

Traditional methodologies for gauging public opinion are unavailable to researchers who wish to study the attitudes and behavior of the people of Cuba. First of all, there is limited access to Cuba. Any polling organization would have to have government approval and would be closely monitored. A second problem is that, for all practical purposes, there are no Cuban tourists who travel abroad. At least in the case of the former Soviet Union, a small number of tourists

traveled to places such as Helsinki and Vienna and provided an opportunity for researchers to gather data on media use and a host of other activities. And while phone service to Cuba has vastly improved in the past few years, normal telephone sampling would be highly suspect inasmuch as Cubans would likely be distrustful of strangers calling and asking questions about life on the island. Even under the best of circumstances, researchers would have to be concerned about the validity of their data. Cubans have a long history of having their conversations and behavior monitored and reported and would likely be cautious or even evasive in expressing any opinion which they thought might be perceived unfavorably by an interviewer.

In the 1980's a number of public opinion surveys were commissioned by Radio Marti of recent emigres from Cuba. Despite the potential usefulness of the results, there was no doubt a strong bias against the Castro government which precluded any meaningful assessment of public opinion on the island. After all, emigres represented the disillusioned and disenfranchised. To what extent their attitudes and behavior reflected those of other Cubans was anyone's guess.

Despite the obstacles to traditional data gathering techniques, there are ways to gauge public opinion in Cuba which would represent improvements over previous attempts. In the 1980's researchers at MIT used a technique developed in the U.S. Census Bureau for adjusting sample data to reflect known characteristics of a population. The technique, called Mostellerization, was used to determine the size of the listening audience for Radio Liberty. It seemed to yield good results for sample survey data, especially when the sample sizes for subgroups did not reflect the same balance as in the population. A somewhat similar technique, described below, was used in gathering information about Cuba.

#### Sample Selection

This study used an availability sample of Cuban emigres who had been in the United States three months or less. With the cooperation of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, interviewers contacted recent arrivals at the Miami International airport and asked if they would be willing to participate in a study of public opinion in Cuba. A letter of introduction from the University of Florida described the project and how the data would be used. The letter also emphasized that participation was voluntary. Interviewers also located respondents through relief agencies such as Catholic Charities. Interviews lasted approximately an hour and were conducted in the homes of host families or at a place convenient to the respondent. From December, 1998 to April, 1999, 1023 interviews were obtained.

Initial plans called for an additional availability sample of Cubans on the island who would be contacted through telephone interviews from the homes of friends or family in the Miami area. This second sample would provide a means of determining whether responses of Cubans on the island—admittedly those with contacts with friends and relatives in the United States—differed in the responses of Cuban emigres. However, a change in law in Cuba which made contact with foreigners subject to criminal prosecution precluded calls to Cubans in Cuba. Nevertheless, an

attempt was made to tap the opinions of other Cubans. The questionnaire was worded in such a way as to ask for the opinion of other Cubans and also of Cuban who supported the regime. In addition, as will be described below, the data were weighted according to known characteristics of the Cuban population.

### Questionnaire

The initial survey questionnaire covered seven major areas: 1) availability of goods and supplies, 2) outlook for the future, 3) attitude toward reforms, 4) perceived level of repression, 5) media use, 6) civic participation, and 7) opinions on international issues.

#### Availability of goods and supplies

Despite some improvement in the Cuban economy in the past few years, almost everything is in short supply and therefore rationed, or unavailable. Questions in this section dealt with the availability of food, clothing, medicine and medical services, housing, and utilities, and whether these items were more readily available or less readily available than a year ago.

#### Outlook for the future

While one would expect emigres to see little hope for the future of Cuba under the present government, the question was whether Cubans in Cuba and special sub-groups of the Cuban population expressed similar attitudes. Questions dealt with the respondent's perception of the future for himself or herself, for his or her family, and for various others such as supporters of the regime.

#### Attitude toward reform

Questions in this section asked for reaction to reforms in Cuba since 1991: legalization of the dollar (and its consequences), joint economic enterprises, free farmers' markets, and self employed small entrepreneurs called cuentapropistas.

#### Perceived level of repression

Respondents were asked whether they believed the Cuban government was allowing greater freedom of expression, whether they were aware of the activities of opposition groups, whether those groups appeared to have more "breathing space," whether neighbor committees for the defense of the revolution were as vigilant in monitoring and reporting criticism of the government as in the past, and whether they personally knew of anyone who had been harassed--interrogated, detained, picketed, or jailed--by the government for voicing criticism.

### Media use

Because of a shortage of paper, ink, and electricity, Cuban media have been sharply curtailed in the 1990's. Questions in this section tapped Cubans' use of domestic media, and use of foreign media, particularly broadcasts from other countries. Cubans were asked whether they listened to Radio Marti and whether they watched TV Marti, the U.S. government services which are jammed by the Cuban government.

### Civic participation

One index of a civil society is the degree to which its citizens participate in organizations which have some say-so in how their society functions. Cubans were asked to list the organizations they belonged to, whether they were active participants in the organizations, and whether their participation had increased or decreased in the past few years.

### Opinions on international issues

In this section respondents were asked their opinion of other countries, including the United States. Also, they were asked whether they are aware of specific legislation directed at Cuba, such as the Cuban Democracy Act and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, and their opinion of these foreign policy initiatives. Finally, respondents were asked how they viewed the Cuban American community in the United States.

As work progressed on the design of the questionnaire, particularly after it was field tested, the breakdown of areas or topics covered was modified somewhat. These modifications are reflected in the Results section and in the final version of the questionnaire (Appendix B).

### Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 1023 emigres who had arrived in the United States within the past three months. Of this number, 41% were female and 59% male; 87% were white and 13% non-white. Most respondents lived outside Havana province (64%). The most common age group was 15 to 50 (93%). The rest (7%) were 51 or older. Almost half the sample (43%) reported they had obtained a visa through the lottery system, while a small percentage indicated they had been political prisoners (3%) or dissidents (1%). A slight majority (51%) entered the United States through a third country or came as balseros. More than half the sample said they were Catholic (58%), while slightly more than a quarter (28%) expressed no religious denomination. Respondents varied considerably in educational background: 19% had a secondary education of less; 40% had pre-university education; 22% had technical school education; and 19% had a university or post-graduate education. Half the respondents reported that during their last year in Cuba they were employed, while 25% said they were unemployed. A smaller percentage said they were self employed (15%), students (5%), or retired (1%). The most frequently listed

occupation was technician (21%), followed by professional (17%), housewife (16%), health care (12%), and military (11%). In terms of family income, less than a quarter of the sample reported making 500 or more pesos a month. Most respondents (52%) reported family incomes of 100-400 pesos a month.

### Statistical Treatment of Data

The statistical analysis of the data from the survey was essentially of two types. The first and most straightforward was simply a presentation of the observed frequencies for each answer to each question, accounting for the fact that some questions allowed multiple answers. This analysis also summarized the response to each question at each level of four demographic variables, race (white and non-white), location (Havana and not-Havana), age (15-49, 50 and older), and gender.

Since good estimates of population counts for the important demographic variables of race, location, age, and gender were known from other sources, and since the sample proportions attained in the survey data were different from the population proportions produced by these estimates, the sample proportions for each question were adjusted to reflect the fixed marginal counts suggested by the population estimates. The adjusted data should be less biased than the original counts when used to estimate corresponding population quantities. The method of adjusting sample frequencies to reflect fixed marginal totals is a standard statistical procedure as discussed by Deming (1), Little and Wu (2), and Mosteller (3). A simple version of the type of adjustment used is seen most easily by an example.

In the table below, assume a survey question has three possible multiple choice responses, of which each respondent selects only one. The responses are then categorized by racial group. In the table,  $n_{11}$  denotes the frequency of response option one among the whites, with similar definitions for the other entries in the table. The sum  $n_1$  denotes the total number of responses from whites.

White	Non-white
$n_{11}$	$n_{21}$
$n_{12}$	$n_{22}$
$n_{13}$	$n_{23}$
Total = $n_1$	Total = $n_2$

If  $n$  is the sample size of the survey and  $p_1$  is the known proportion of whites in the population, then the expected frequency for the white cell is  $m_1 = n(p_1)$ . The adjustment on the counts that forces the marginal total to equal the expected total is of the form

$$m_{11} = n_{11}(m_1/n_1).$$



This type of adjustment is made to the observed counts for each response.

A similar method of adjusting observed counts was made for multivariate adjustment across three demographic variables: race, location and age, simultaneously. It turns out that the marginal distributions of these adjusted counts are quite similar to the univariate adjustments. (For those familiar with log-linear models, the multivariate adjustment is equivalent to fitting a log-linear model to pseudo-data with the correct fixed marginals while using the observed counts as an offset.)

Since the data did not come from a probability sample selected according to a specific design, sampling errors cannot be estimated accurately. However, since there is some randomness in the people interviewed, one could use the standard variance for percentages calculated from binomial counts to approximate the standard error of any one sample percentage. For a sample size of around 1000, these margins of error are around 3%. For the adjusted data, there is some evidence that the margins of error might be slightly smaller than those for unadjusted data.

#### References

1. Deming, W. Edwards, 1943, *Statistical Adjustment of Data*, New York: Dover.
2. Little, Roderick, and Mei-Miau Wu, 1991, "Models for Contingency Tables with Known Margins When Target and Sampled Populations Differ," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, vol. 86, no. 413, pp. 87-95.
3. Mostellar, Frederick, 1968, "Association and Estimation in Contingency Tables," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, vol. 63, no. 321, pp. 1-28.

### RESULTS

In commenting on the results of the survey we will refer to the frequency tables and the respective percentages. Since, as was commented under the Methodology section, the central tendency in the results was not affected significantly when the results were weighted by race, sex, location and age, only in exceptional cases will the comments refer to significant deviations worthy of attention. (Examples of adjusted tables can be found in Appendix A.)

#### On Humanitarian Aid

The issue of humanitarian aid has recently been a focus of debate due to its being raised as an alternative to the various proposals for lifting the US embargo. The Cuban Government has been adamant in rejecting such options. Others, consider that it offers a valid and relevant alternative to alleviate the problems faced by Cubans in meeting their daily needs. The purpose of the questions raised during the survey was to assess how average Cubans view this issue. According to Table 1, the majority of the respondents, 84 percent, had not benefitted from

humanitarian aid. Of those who had received aid, Table 2 reveals that 69 percent mentioned Caritas as the source. A majority of respondents favored the idea of humanitarian aid, with 61 percent approving it and only 11 percent considering it a bad idea, as is recorded under Table 3. When asked why they felt as they did, as Tables 3A and B reveals, 87 percent considered the people need it and 44 percent that any non-government aid was good. On the negative side of the

the responses, there was again a clear clustering, 82 percent agreed with the accusation that has been made that the government was deviating humanitarian aid for other purposes. This opinion, however, reflects the position of only about one third of total respondents. Nevertheless, this response supports the position of those who insist that any assistance must be closely monitored to avoid it being channeled to the Nomenklatura or tourists, instead of to Cubans in need.

Opinions are significantly more divided in relation to who benefits from the humanitarian aid. The differences between the opinions of the respondents themselves and what they perceived were the opinions of the Cuban people in general are too small to be of any significance. Therefore, we will comment only on the results reflected on Table 4B. Again, the largest group of responses, 41 percent, considers that the assistance benefits the people, while 24 percent consider that the regime is the main beneficiary and to this must be added the 8 percent who answered the same question phrased in a different manner. Finally, 17 percent responded that both the people and the regime benefitted. Although, not showing the same supportive strong central tendency of the previous responses, there is no question that the prevailing opinion among respondents was supportive of the idea of humanitarian aid.

### **Refer to Tables 1 to 4B**

#### On the Overall Supply Situation

This group of questions addresses an issue that is central to the debate on the embargo: whether or not the US is responsible for the collapse in the supply of food, medicines and other basic needs afflicting the Cuban people. The results of the survey reveal that, at least the segment of the total Cuban population the respondents represent, rejects such a proposition. An overwhelming majority considers the supply crisis results from the failure of the system or people behavior and not from the US embargo.

There may be those who will challenge this conclusion on the basis of the frequently mentioned “ingratiating effect:” interviewees try to please those interviewing them. But this does not seem to prevail in this case. In the first place, those doing the interviews were not US government employees or contractors, but students and others hired through Florida International University, therefore there was no need for the respondents to ingratiate themselves with anybody.

In addition, a previously tested menu offering multiple options was presented to dilute such a possibility. And, finally, the central tendency in the results clusters in such a way that the overwhelming result focus on the failure of the government directly or indirectly. Seen from

another perspective, the two explanations frequently given by the Cuban government for supply failures are overwhelmingly rejected by the respondents: only 5 percent blame the US embargo and only 4 percent climatic conditions. And, the same low level of responses to these two options prevails regardless of race, sex, location or age.

On Table 5, the three top options selected by respondents to explain the supply failure, with 90, 71 and 70 percent of the responses, are directly related to government policies, the other three, with 53, 50 and 39 percent of the answers are indirectly related to government policies. They

refer to people behavior in reaction to the regime, rather than regime's direct actions. It is evident from these results that the segment of the population represented by this sample overwhelmingly rejects the regime's propaganda that the US embargo being the cause for the supply situation faced by the Cuban people. When, in Table 6, the same options are offered but in a ranking as to importance, the only answer that gets more than half of the responses, actually 66 percent, is that policies of the government bear the most responsibility for causing the supply situation.

As to how Cubans cope with the situation, Tables 7A and B, reveal that in relation to the most essential needs, food and medicines, the formal official rationing and supply system is the source only for one fourth of the required needs. The black market, with 49 percent in both cases, is a much more important source of supply. This reveals the degree to which citizens are being forced to violate the law in order to meet their needs. In the case of food, the farmers markets, with 51 percent, is the main source reported by respondents. When these two sources are added we discover that, in Cuba today, it is the private sector, not the public enterprise sector, that provides the overwhelming source of food supply. Another revealing finding that emerges is that medicines from abroad and through dollar stores, with 18 and 6 percent respectively, represent a significant source of supply, although not the main one.

When obtaining clothing and shoes, Table 7C reflects the degree to which the Cuban population is living in a dollar economy. The most important source of these consumer goods, with 49 percent, is the dollar store, with the black market following, with 27 percent of the respondents mentioning it as a source of supply for their needs.

Tables 7Da and 7Db, on the use of leisure and entertainment facilities paid in Cuban currency and in dollars, may reflect the impact of the Apartheid policy of reserving these activities for foreigners by restricting Cubans access to those facilities. Besides, it is also a matter of buying power. Most Cubans just do not have the discretionary buying power required to compete as consumers in beaches, hotel and restaurants developed for tourists. As will be seen later, this is a source of significant resentment.

Finally, Table 7E, reveals that a majority of the respondents, 79 percent, owned their homes. Of them, the highest proportion, 37 percent, through the urban reforms enacted early in the revolutionary regime or the application of rent payments to buy their homes, 16 percent . A

surprisingly high proportion, 26 percent, report that their families owned their houses since before the revolution. This last fact reflects that a substantial proportion of these recent arrivals come from the old middle and upper classes.

**Refer to tables 5 to 7E**

### On Educational Attainments

This group of questions addresses an issue associated with one of the revolution most praised accomplishments: expanded educational opportunities. There are some questions on this matter that have been raised by critics of the regime and it was thought recent arrivals could offer their reaction to them. In addition, there has been a massive decline in college attendance, from the top figure attained of 250,000 to 100,000 in 1999, and it was considered worth inquiring on the reasons for such a significant shift.

According to Table 8, a significant majority of respondents (67 percent) agree with the conclusion that the revolution has improved education. There was a small variation between whites and non whites, with a higher percentage of 78 agreeing and between Havana and non-Havana with 74 percent of people in Havana agreeing while only 62 percent of those outside of Havana thought so.

An overwhelming majority of those agreeing, according to Table 8 A, think so because it is free (93 percent), is equally available regardless of race (72 percent), professors are very able (60 percent) and school supplies are free (58 percent). An overwhelming majority of those favorably impressed (90 percent in Table 8 B) support that these benefits be retained if there is a change in government in Cuba. Within this group of responses, there was little variation when the responses were weighted by race and location.

As to deficiencies of the educational system, the respondents record under Table C, their responses to some of the reservations that have been raised. The most accepted objection, that education is politicized, with ideology given more priority than knowledge, is agreed by a significant majority of 84 percent. Lack of study materials is the second most accepted criticism, with a majority of 58 percent, followed closely by the lack of freedom in choosing a career, with 56 percent. Lack of religious education and the requirement to engage in work-study programs is chosen as a deficiency by 49 percent of respondents, while 46 percent complain on the lack of jobs once you graduate. Finally, only 36 percent consider a deficiency the requirement to join the revolution to have access to education and 18 percent unqualified professors. With minor variations these trends persist in weighted answers by race or location.

Then, under Table 9 A, an overwhelming majority of 88 percent support the idea of private schools and, under Table 9 B, a whopping majority of 98 percent support religious schools. And the results reveal extraordinary consistency when weighted by race and location. Under Table 10, a majority of 70 percent, reject there is a policy linking children attending schools to their parents loyalty to the regime, with only 25 percent agreeing with that statement. This rejection is much

more prevalent among non-whites. According to Table 10 A, a majority of those agreeing, 68 percent, accept it because there is no choice, since that is regime policy, while 23 percent disagree with the policy and 9 percent strongly resent it. A substantial number of non-whites, 35 percent, prefer not to think about it, in contrast with only 7 percent of whites choosing that option.

Finally, Table 11 records the responses when given a menu of explanations for the decrease in college attendance. A significant majority, 75 percent, agreed that being a professional had lost appeal because you could earn more in a trade job and in dollars, while 61 percent attribute it to dollarization of the economy. Two other explanations got lower responses, with 43 percent attributing the decrease in registration to loss of faith in the revolution and only 26 percent to unwillingness to attend college preparatory schools in the countryside. There were minor variations in the weighted answers by race and locations but the same trend prevailed in those cases.

The main conclusion is that the decline in higher education registration is the result of the regime policy of forbidding professionals to earn dollars while working in their professions. In Cuba, dollarization is providing upside down economic incentives to the detriment of the country's manpower quality. The impact of this regime policy on Cuba's long-term development potential is very negative.

### **Refer to Tables 8 to 11**

#### On Health Attainments

Public health improvements is another of the areas proclaimed as a success of the revolution. It was considered worth to inquire from these recent arrivals how they view this success. In addition, there are two aspects of health service in Cuba that have been controversial. One, the privileged treatment given to government officials, who have hospital facilities reserved for their use. And, two, the medical tourism industry which creates medical enclaves for foreign visitors, where services are paid in dollars and, under the general Apartheid policy the regime applies to tourist facilities, are out of bounds for Cubans.

When asked about improved health care, according to Table 12, only a majority of 53 percent had a favorable response. There is a significant different perception among non-white respondents, 73 percent of whom gave favorable responses, while the variations in the results weighted by location are minor. This differs significantly from the findings commented above in relation to education. There are some reasons for that. As will be commented further, they result, first, from the additional issues mentioned above on privileged access to medical facilities, which of course do not apply in the case of education; and, second, to the greater role of medical supplies and medicines in ensuring adequate medical treatment. The different response on the basis of race may indicate that non-whites in the past had less access to medical attention and,

therefore, seem more appreciative of the improvements made by the revolution.

In Table 12 A, 90 percent of respondents, a highly significant majority, consider that the greatest accomplishment is to have made medical services free. The quality and quantity of medical doctors elicit 53 and 52 percent responses as an explanation for the high rating, while 46 percent agree with the explanation that there are enough hospitals. Only 34 percent respond to the explanation that it is due to the family doctor program. And, under Table 12 B, a highly significant majority, 89 percent, favor that the revolutionary health system be retained after a change in government.

When asked to respond to a menu of explanations to the perceived deficiencies of the Cuban health system, according to Table 12 C, an overwhelming majority (92 percent) choose lack of medicines; 70 percent say they do not have the technology to perform medical tests, while long waiting periods for surgery is chosen by 64 percent. The resentment for the privileged access system to medical care is reflected in the significant majorities that chose foreign favored access, 72 percent, and the 65 percent choosing the need to pay in dollars as perceived difficulties. A minority of 39 percent considered there was corruption in the healthcare system, while only 24 percent mentioned the family doctor as a deficiency. Finally, 18 percent considered availability of hospitals and 10 percent doctor training as perceived deficiencies of the health system. There are no significant variations in central tendency in the results when weighted by race or location.

Going further deeper into the family doctor system, considered one of the great medical service innovations introduced by Cuba, an overwhelming majority of 91 percent had some reservations. As shown in Table 13, of the menu offered on this issue, 48 percent thought it would be good if they had the resources, 33 percent felt it did not resolve anything, and, 20 percent agree with the explanation that it would be good if they had the required diagnostic equipment. Only 7 percent felt it resolves many problems. When weighted by race no significant variations emerge, while in the results weighted by location, outside Havana respondents seem more favorably impressed with the family doctor system than those in Havana. In conclusion, the perception of these recent users of the health system is more critical than the view portrayed in regime propaganda and foreign regime supporters.

The interview moved to test the response to the privileged status granted government officials in accessing medical treatment. According to Table 14, the overwhelming majority of respondents, 95 percent, considered government officials did not receive the same treatment as average citizens. And, in Table 14 A, 96 percent report that the treatment was provided in special hospitals for them and 15 percent that this was done in facilities reserved for foreigners. The weighted results by race and location showed strong consistency in these perceptions.

Asked about the reaction of the people to this privileged status, according to Table 15, a majority of the population, 67 percent, felt strong resentment, while a much smaller proportion, 24

percent, are reported to accept it, while still resenting it, because this was a benefit for government work. Only 4 percent did not care. Non-whites seemed less critical of this privileged status, while responses from people outside Havana do not reflect any significant variation.

These results were slightly different when respondents were asked how they themselves felt. In Table 15 A, a higher majority, 76 percent, report feeling strong resentment and a much smaller minority, only 15 percent, are resentful but forgiving due to government work. Again, only 4 percent did not care. The non-whites were less forgiving themselves than what they reported was the reaction of the people in general in relation to this issue.

The contrast between the respondents own views and what they perceive is the reaction of the people in general is just a matter of degree. In general, the clustering of answers in both cases reflects this issue is the source of significant popular resentment against a regime that prided itself in its promoting equality. Privileges for the nomenklatura have existed all along, it is just that the decline in overall wealth has highlighted the differences in a more offensive fashion, therefore, leading to it being more resented.

Then, the interview shifted to the reaction towards medical tourism. An overwhelming majority, 98 percent under Table 16, responded that tourists were not treated at the same facilities provided for Cubans; and, under Table 16 A, an almost unanimous 99 percent indicated that those facilities were better than those available to Cubans. There was absolutely no variation by race or location in these responses. As to the popular reaction to this discrimination, the overwhelming majority, 85 percent, are reported to resent it, with 51 percent feeling a strong resentment, and 34 percent accepting it as a governmental policy although being resentful. Only 10 percent of the people were perceived by the respondents to accept it in order to earn foreign exchange and, 3 percent, did not care. Weighted results were consistent with the general trend.

When the respondents were asked for their own reactions to medical tourism, there was a similar pattern of stronger resentment as in the case of government officials. Under Table 18, 88 percent were resentful, of whom 73 felt a strong resentment and only 15 percent, were inclined to accept the need to earn foreign exchange, while 10 percent did not care. The differences in this case are even stronger than in the case of government officials. A much higher proportion of respondents expressed strong resentment of treatment of foreigners, while a much smaller proportion, although resentful, was willing to forgive. A much larger proportion, 10 percent, just did no care. These new arrivals evidently have a much higher resentment along nationalist lines than those staying behind. At the same time, a higher proportion of them just don't care any longer. The variations in weighted results were minor.

As to the future, an overwhelming majority, 98 percent under Table 19, considers a free market economy will allow for a better medical care system. In an inconsistency that will bring a headache to those who will have to assume responsibility for this social service in the future,

under Table 20, when asked what aspects of the present system they favor be retained, 71 percent of respondents favor maintaining free health care, 51 support preserving the quality of medical training, 32 percent the availability of hospitals and only 16 percent continuation of the family doctor system. The weighted results do not reflect any significant variations. Under Table 21, only a plurality of 49 percent support private medical practice, while a high proportion, 39 percent, reported they did not know. In this case, a higher proportion of non-whites than whites supported private practice, while there was no difference by location.

Evidently the expectation is that free medical care will be retained while private practice is restored. The only explanation to the inconsistency in these responses is that respondents assumed that, under a free market economy, medicines and medical equipment will be available. The rest of the components of the present medical system will then be able to provide satisfactory medical services to the people. The economics of the situation obviously escaped the respondents, Cubans just do not produce enough to maintain a ratio of one doctor for every 200 inhabitants or less. Either doctors migrate or medical services as an export industry will have to be substantially expanded. That will be the dilemma future policymakers will have to unravel.

### **Refer to Tables 12 to 21**

#### **On Reforms**

Faced with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Castro's regime started the so-called Special Period in order to adjust the Cuban economy to the massive loss of subsidies this entailed. As part of the adjustment, the regime introduced several reforms aimed at a mixed system in which Cuba legalized the circulation of dollars for domestic transactions; allowed the sale of agricultural products in farmers markets; promoted foreign investment in export activities through joint ventures; and, legalized self-employment in a very limited number of activities. At the political level, the only opening allowed so far has been a very limited relaxation of restrictions to the practice of religion, mostly as a public relations ploy to encourage the Pope's visit.

Many foreign researchers have been going to Cuba in recent years to analyze the meaning of these reforms, mostly from the point of view of their representing an opening to private enterprise on the part of the regime. In many cases, there has been a propaganda component in these efforts aimed at justifying the lifting of the embargo on the grounds that Cuba was finally undertaking economic reforms that, eventually, will lead to a market economy. This position is taken, notwithstanding the reiterated announcements of the Cuban leadership that all these changes were transitory and that Cuba remained committed to the goal of building Communism.

In this segment of the survey, the objective was to find out how the respondents reacted to these reforms in terms of their impact on their own lives, as well as how they impacted on the well-being of the population in general. Respondents to this survey do not seem to be as impressed as foreign researchers with the impact of the reforms on the lives of the average Cuban.



The initial issue addressed dealt with the speed at which the reforms were introduced. In their responses, the prevailing perception is that the introduction of these changes was too slow. As shown on Tables 22A, B and D, 90 percent of the respondents considered that the farmers markets should have been introduced at a faster rate, 77 percent thought so in relation to the legalization of dollar circulation and 67 percent in relation to the joint ventures. The weighted analysis revealed the same central tendency of the answers, although non-white responses were consistently lower than those of whites, but by a small proportion.

In the case of the lessening of religious restrictions, Table 22 C reveals that 86 percent considered it was too slow. A central tendency that prevails regardless of how the responses are weighted. This may be a reflection of the fact that the sample is more religious than the Cuban population as a whole.

When asked to rank the reforms in terms of their importance, Table 23 reveals that the respondents ranked as first circulation of the dollar, with 52 percent, and the farmers market second, with 49 percent, while religious tolerance was ranked third with 39 percent and joint ventures had a low third of 16 percent. It is worth noting that a majority of respondents, 55 percent, responded under did not know in relation to joint ventures. This reflects the priorities of the population. Access to dollars and farmers markets are the reforms that have the greatest impact on the daily lives of the majority of the population. Religion, although evidently important to the respondents, does not help in the surviving efforts related to access to foods and medicines. Finally, joint ventures is a complex issue involving a limited number of people, mostly regime collaborators. As to any variations resulting from weighting, there was basic consistency in central tendency. In the case of farmers markets, non-whites seemed to consider them more important than the rest but, again, only by a small proportion.

When asked about the popular response to the reforms, according to Table 24, the respondents considered that an overwhelming 78 percent of the people favored them. On the specific impact of the legalization of dollar circulation on them and on the population at large, 77 percent considered that it had too much of an impact or a big impact on them and 89 percent thought the same as to the impact on the population at large. This reflects the pervasive consequences of this measure on the life of all Cubans. The response is not affected by the weighting in any significant manner.

Contrary to the opinions of foreign experts writing on the significance of the reforms, when asked whether the reforms had improved, worsened or merely maintained the status quo as to the supply situation and the quality of life, the answers reflect that they have had little impact on either one. As Table 26 A reveals, in food 51 percent considered it had only maintained the same situation, while 35 percent saw an improvement; in medicines, 73 percent considered that the same situation continues to prevail; in clothing and shoes, 49 percent responded the situation was the same, while 29 percent saw an improvement.

In the case of leisure activities, 64 percent saw the reforms as not changing too much, while 22 percent felt it was worse. In transportation and housing the results were equal, 67 percent felt there has been no change, 25 percent felt the reforms had worsened the situation and only 6 percent perceived an improvement. Finally, in terms of the overall quality of life, 71 percent saw not much change, 15 percent felt it had become worse and only 11 percent felt it had improved. Evidently, the segment of the population represented by these respondents is not favorably impressed by the results of the reforms introduced by the regime.

To explore further the reaction of the population to the economic reforms introduced by the regime, some questions were asked in relation to self-employment and joint venture employment. As Tables 27 and 28 reflect, only 25 percent of the respondents had engaged in self-employment and, of them, 60 percent had done it illegally. In the case of non-whites, illegal self-employment increases to 65 percent. These numbers reveal the reality that self-employment, which is portrayed as the main private sector reform that is paving the way to the return to a market economy, has a very limited presence as a source of earning a living. And, when it does, it is done in a majority of cases in violation of the law.

The results on the reasons for becoming self-employed are most telling. Table 29 reveals that 51 percent consider it more profitable than other types of employment, while 31 percent resort to it as a way to survive. Finally, 26 percent give a non-economic motivation, you feel freer of government control. In a reflection of Cubans lack of familiarity with the issue of taxation, according to Table 30, 50 percent of the respondents did not know how to react to self-employed people paying taxes. For decades, Cubans have been exempted from paying any individual taxes. Only recently has the regime tried hesitantly to reintroduce them.

As to the advantages of working for a joint venture, Table 31 is most revealing. The number one reason given as an advantage, by 68 percent of respondents, is that you can obtain more of the goods to meet your daily needs, while 44 percent mention earning dollars and 41 percent the opportunity of meeting foreigners and solving problems. Only 20 percent mentioned job opportunities. In conclusion, survival more than a career seems to be in the mind of contemporary Cubans. There does not seem to be any significant difference in the responses when weighted according to race or location.

As to the disadvantages of working for joint ventures, the perception of the respondents challenges the claims of foreign investors that they are having a beneficial effect in opening Cuban society and making it less repressive. According to Table 32, a staggering 74 percent mention that the biggest disadvantage of working for a joint venture is that State Security controls everything you do, with 35 percent making a similar complaint in relation to the pressure from Party and Youth organizations. The lack of unions is mentioned by 29 percent and only 14 percent complain that there is too much discipline at work. This means that, contrary to the claims made by Canada, the European Union and, now, the US Chamber of Commerce, rather than offering greater freedom, work for foreign private investors is perceived by these respondents as taking place under the regime's repressive apparatus. The weighted results are

similar except in the case of race, under which 60 percent of non-whites, while still a majority, seem to be less concerned with State Security than whites. Also, more of them, 17 percent, find no disadvantages in joint venture employment, while among the total sample, only 6 percent reported no disadvantages.

### **Refer to Tables 22 to 32**

#### On Freedom of Expression

This section of the survey aimed at eliciting responses on how people perceived the climate for expressing ideas freely as well as the level of repression they were exposed to. It starts with question on the reaction to the Pope's visit not only from the perspective of the respondents but also from that of non-Catholics and government supporters. It also tries to obtain a perception of the long-term impact of the themes raised by the Pope in his homilies. Then it moves to more secular issues such as the reaction to Castro's attack on the movie *Guantanamo* and the failure of the UN to sanction Cuba for human rights violations. On this last issue, opinions of regime opponents and supporters, in addition to those of the population at large, were also solicited. Finally, respondents were asked about repression and how they perceived it, as well as how the population at large and regime supporters behaved in the face of the acts of repudiation organized by the regime against dissidents and those who leave Cuba.

The overwhelming majority of respondents, 96 percent according to Table 33, were in Cuba during the Pope's visit. A plurality of respondents, 47 percent, felt that the visit benefitted the Church and the people, while the second largest cluster of responses, with 24 percent, felt that it also helped the regime's image. A small proportion, 11 percent, felt that only the regime benefitted. There were minor deviations in these results when weighted by race and a significant difference between those living in Havana and outside, with 52 percent and 43 percent respectively, thinking that both the people and the church benefitted.

In terms of the visit's impact on freedom of expression, according to Tables 35 and 36, the majority, 54 percent, felt that it increased it, while there was doubt on its duration, with 56 percent feeling that the impact was temporary and 9 percent that it will not last. Although the clustering was very similar according to the weighted results by race, this was not the case again between Havana and countryside respondents. Outside of Havana respondents, according to Table 35, were less optimistic about the impact, only 51 percent in contrast with 61 percent for Havana. More respondents from outside Havana, 31 percent, felt it had no impact than those from Havana, with only 24 percent. This may indicate that the presence of his Holiness in Havana resulted in a significantly more receptive audience than in the provinces. It must be kept in mind that the Pope visited only three cities outside of Havana, therefore a majority of non-Havana residents were not directly exposed to his charisma.

As to the reaction from non-Catholics and regime supporters, the overwhelming majority of the first, 74 percent, according to Table 37, expressed approval, while as Table 38 reveals only 41 percent of regime supporters reacted that way. In this last group, the option that elicited the majority response, 47 percent, was that they accepted it, although did not like it. A significant higher number of non-whites than whites responded they did not know, 17 percent against 9 percent, and this resulted in a substantially lower number of responses to the previous option of approving while disliking, with only 39 percent of non-whites choosing that option.

Then, the interviewees were asked to react to some of the messages brought by the Pope in terms of whether they thought they will occur or not. The responses are listed in rank order according to the improbability of their occurrence, which was the overwhelming choice of the majority of respondents in all cases. That is, the majority was rather skeptical that the messages sent by the Pope in his various homilies and public statements will prevail in the long run.

Message	Unlikely to prevail (%)
Freedom of association	92
Freedom of assembly	92
Freedom of expression	91
Abandon the practice of abortion	81
That you should tell the truth	76
That you should not have fear	76
Children should be allowed to have a religious education	70
That the world should open to Cuba	58

In looking at the rank order of these responses, it is significant that the three most threatening to regime control, freedoms of association, assembly and expression, are considered very unlikely to prevail in the long run. The next three, which involved personal choices, are less improbable to occur, although a very high proportion is highly skeptical that they will prevail.

Religious education for children is also perceived as highly improbable to occur, it will require a lessening of regime control. In general, there was no significant difference in responses to the nine messages from the Pope according to the various weighting criteria used.

The message given by respondents the lowest rating of improbability to occur, 58 percent, is that “the world open to Cuba.” And, this is precisely what has happened. This was the only message of interest to the regime. After the Papal visit, during what they called the “depopification” period, the regime blocked all other messages, while focusing their propaganda on this last one. In the end, this message is also unlikely to occur because its corollary, “that Cuba open itself to the world,” is not acceptable to the regime. And, as recent reactions coming from Canada show, the initial optimism that an opening was possible through dialogue and exchanges is giving way to realism. The regime is not sincere in wanting an opening.

As to one specific incident brought to the attention of interviewees, Castro's attack on the movie *Guantanamera*, it reveals the indifference of the population to these matters. Only 40 percent of the respondents, according to Table 40, had seen it. This is a satire of regime incompetence developed around the transportation of a corpse to be buried in Havana. One would assume that those waiting to migrate would enjoy seeing this critique of a regime they obviously dislike. But less than half went to see it. And, according to Table 41, 58 percent had no opinion on the popular reaction to Castro's attack on the producers, which became a matter of national debate for weeks. This could well reflect the survival obsession that makes people indifferent to any event other than those related to meeting their most basic needs. On this topic there was no significant difference in results when weighted.

The next topic in this segment of the survey deals with the United Nations vote in 1998 lifting the sanctions on Cuba's human rights violations. The responses reflect the great divide in Cuban public opinion between regime sympathizers and opponents. According to Table 41A, an overwhelming 88 percent of regime supporters were perceived as happy with that decision, while according to Table 41B, 56 percent of the opponents were perceived as being annoyed and 25 percent considered it a betrayal of dissidents and political prisoners. As to the rest of the population, Table 41C reveals that, only 42 percent were perceived as annoyed and 14 percent considered it a betrayal. However, according to the respondents, 25 percent did not give it any importance and 15 percent were not even aware of the vote.

In relation to these issues, the only significant difference observed when the response were weighted is that a much larger proportion of non-whites under Tables 41, A, B and C, 22 , 25 and 24 percent respectively, answered do not know.

The final questions in this segment addressed the perception of repression among respondents. There is outstanding unanimity on this issue, reflected in the 97 percent affirmative answer in Table 42. The pervasive nature of the repressive apparatus is reflected in the answers on Table 42A, which reveals that respondents felt the presence of the repressive apparatus in the streets, in their neighborhoods, in their work places and, in overall terms, as a result of the omnipresence of State Security in their lives. To a lesser extent, they also perceived it through the acts of repudiation against others and in the restrictions in access to education if regime authorities associate you with an opposition stance. That is why the statement by Martha Beatriz Roque, one of the authors of "The Fatherland Belongs to All," at present in prison, is so fitting: *every Cuban carries his own internal policeman*. To survive the regime's pervasive repressive apparatus, Cubans have become well adjusted schizophrenics. In relation to these topics, there were no major discrepancies with the weighted answers obtained.

A final view of this situation is offered by the responses to the questions on the most despicable of regime techniques against its opponents: the acts of repudiation. Again interviewees were asked to distinguish between the reactions of the general population and those of regime supporters to these acts. The various behaviors, as tabulated in Tables 43 and 43A. are listed and

the two columns register the answers for the two groups in percentages.

Behaviors	General population	Regime supporters
Openly demonstrate	06 (solidarity)	26 (rejection)
Help in silence and with caution	43	03
Criticize the victims as being crazy	02	20
Join the persecution, considering them as enemies or for self-protection	05	32
Lock themselves in their houses	39	23

The great divide in Cuban public opinion is reflected in these answers. The majority of the population is perceived by the respondents as refusing to participate in these events. Although some in the general population join in the persecution or criticize the victims, the overwhelming majority 43 and 39 percent, either lock themselves out of the unpleasant situation or help in a discreet way to avoid becoming targets themselves. On the other side, among government supporters, the respondents perceived 26 percent reject the victims, 20 percent criticize them, and 32 percent join in the persecution. Nevertheless, a significant 23 percent are considered by the respondents to stay in their homes and not get involved.

As to weighted answers, there was a significant difference in perception of behavior between whites and non whites in relation to two of the options offered. Non-whites perceived a substantially smaller proportion of people in general helping in silence, only 30 percent, and a much larger proportion, 13 percent, joining the persecution as a matter of self-protection. There was no significant difference between Havana and non-Havana responses.

### **Refer to Tables 33 to 43A**

#### On Communications and Media

The interviews then shifted to the various media sources accessible to Cubans and what information was of interest to them, as well as how they found about a series of news events. Under Tables 44 A and B it is shown that an overwhelming majority of the respondents have access to radio, 97 percent, and TV, 96 percent, at their homes. Tables 46 A and B, on the other hand, reflect that there are few receivers available at workplaces, 15 percent for radios and 7 percent for television.

Table 45 reflects a highly significant fact, the majority of respondents, 55 percent, report low use of radio or TV to receive news. Only 12 percent report listening to news through radio and 35 percent through TV. These responses are highly consistent when responses are weighted by race, location and age. On Tables 47 and 48 the use made of radio and TV is further expanded. Respondents indicated that radio, with 78 percent and TV, with 86 percent, were the most

important sources for entertainment and music, while news was mentioned by only 14 percent and TV by 11 percent. The weighted responses do not reflect significant deviations. This raises very pertinent programming concerns. Although it may well be a manifestation of the anomie that prevails over a substantial segment of the Cuban population. Whatever the explanation, this low interest in news weakens governmental propaganda efforts, but also those from overseas, such as Radio Marti. It should be taken into account when designing programs.

Further information on radio listening and TV watching, according to Table 49, reveals that Radio Marti is the most popular station with the respondents, with 58 percent listenership. And, when the data was segregated according to number of hours of daily listening, the Radio Marti advantage became even greater. The two closest overseas stations from Miami in listening are La Cubanisima and CMQ Radio, with 10 percent each, Radio Mambi runs fourth with only 7 percent and the two FM stations, 106.7 and 107.5 attain only 5 percent each. In other words, the Radio Marti audience among the respondents is larger than the combined audience of all Miami stations. As to others official radio stations, the results for all of them are single digit, with Radio Exterior de Espana and the BBC obtaining 6 and 5 percent respectively. In conclusion, even if overall listening to news in radio has a low priority among respondents, they overwhelmingly prefer Radio Marti over other overseas sources.

The situation is quite different in the case of TV Marti. According to Tables 52 and 52 A, only 13 percent of the respondents reported watching it and of them 89 percent watched it at the US Interest Section in Havana. The main reason was insurmountable, according to Table 52 B 96 percent of the respondents just could not pick the signal in their home TV sets. According to Table 51, the best reception among signals of foreign networks was reported for Univision, with 7 percent. These signals are picked up with home made antennas from TV satellite services offered by hotels to their guests. Again, in this case, there was no significant variation between these results and the weighted results.

As to written media, the most significant finding is that a majority of respondents, according to Tables 53 and 54, did not read local newspapers, 55 percent, or foreign publications, 60 percent.

In the later case, as Table 55 reveals, those who read foreign publications, mentioned friends as their main source of supply, with 86 percent.

To explore even deeper how Cubans obtained their information, questions were asked on how they learned about a series of important events that occurred in the last few years. For each event they were given a menu of several sources to choose. The results from Tables 56 A through 56 I, are presented in percentages in the following table.

Event	National Media	International Media	Relatives Abroad	People in Street
The Ochoa crisis	91	08	00	07
The boat and raft people	62	34	02	30

The downing of the planes	30	61	02	35
The US-Cuba migratory agreements	64	32	02	09
The popular riots at the Malecon	50	40	01	28
The sugar harvest	74	09	01	09
The Special Period Regime Policies	83	13	01	08
Enactment of Helms-Burton	63	30	01	10
Sinking of "13 of March" tugboat	18	60	02	43

The weighted results are basically similar to those of the total sample of the respondents. There are some minor variations but it would be too cumbersome to discuss them in a summary report like this. Suffice to say that the clustering of the results is basically the same, with significant variations in the use of international media between those living in Havana and outside. A logical result in view of the fact that regime jamming of Radio Marti is heavier in Havana, although not limited exclusively to the capital. And, Radio Marti, as was shown above, is by a very large margin the most important external source of information mentioned by respondents.

In reviewing the results for patterns, there are some interesting observations. Two repressive events which the regime was evidently not interested in being known, the downing of the Brothers to the Rescue planes in 1996 and the sinking of the tugboat "13 de Marzo" in 1994, reached the respondents through foreign media, rather than national media. The importance of word of mouth communications through people in the street is the greatest in relation to dramatic human events that interest the population, rather than those having policy connotations.

Finally, it is evident that, at present, the massive network of family communications is not a source for news transmission. In relation to all events the responses are in the low single digits. This indicates that, first, international sources of information, such as Radio Marti, are essential for Cubans to have access to information the Cuban government wishes to downplay. Second, that the emerging independent internal press could well become a source for international media in view of the importance of word of mouth news diffusion, provided adequate means of verifying rumors and converting them into news stories are developed. And, thirdly, that family phone calls is the most underdeveloped means of ensuring the diffusion of information within Cuba.

The final Tables on the issue of communications refer to this last matter. Table 57 reveals that only a majority of respondents, 59 percent, communicated at all with relatives, with 41 percent reporting no communications. This may reflect that many of the respondents did not have any close relatives abroad or that they did not have close relations. As is reflected in table 58, an overwhelming majority of the communications, 96 percent, did not involve topics outside family matters. This may be the result of the primacy of survival and personal issues dominating the limited time available during these calls or just another reflection of the futility people in a state of anomie feel about current events. If they don't perceive any way to influence them, why



bother to talk about them. Finally, it may be the result of sheer fear of engaging in topics that may get those at the receiving end in the island in trouble

### **Refer to Tables 44 to 58**

#### On the Dissidents

The new arrivals were then asked about their views on various aspect of life in Cuba that worried them and on their knowledge about the dissidence, including their organizations, leadership, statements and relevant events.

Table 59 reflects the respondents interest in the future of Cuba while in the island, with a significant majority, 70 percent stating that they discussed the issue with their friends. As Table 60 reveals, their main concerns were the possibility of political changes, 44 percent, and economic changes, 38 percent, with the issue of human rights following at a distance, only 11 percent. What is most surprising, however, is how little interest is reported on issues given top priority by the regime, such as Cuba's policy towards the US, with 3 percent, and US policy towards Cuba, with 1 percent. International support for Cuba, the future of dissidents and nationalism all get only one percent.

This reflects a serious disconnect of the respondents with the issues given priority by both the opposition, in this case the dissidents, and the government. Although, it may well reflect that there is a substantial portion of the population that is tuned-out of the current debate, the substantial plurality reported to be involved in discussing political and economic changes reflects that there is interest in those themes in broad terms, just that the national debate is presently focused on narrower issues not related to what interests these individuals and the segment of the population they represent. Weighting does not reflect major deviations from the main results.

When asked to rank the most important issues, the results in Table 61 reflect that the priority given to political changes increases to 54 percent, while economic changes decline to 32 percent. The other issues are given low single digit priority. When the results are weighted a significant difference of priority emerges between whites and non-whites, with the later giving significant more priority to political changes than the whites, while the results by location are much closer.

When asked frontally whether or not they consider themselves dissidents, according to Table 62, a small majority of 51 percent answered in the affirmative. Yet, when asked whether they knew dissidents, Table 63 reveals that a clear majority of 63 percent answered in the negative. In other words, although they felt themselves identified with the dissidence, they kept those feelings to themselves. This may well be a manifestation of Beatriz Roque's *internal policeman*. In any event, it is indicative of how effective has been the regime in preventing people from exercising the rights of association and assembly which are guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of

## Human Rights.

This perception is reinforced by the results reported under Table 64, in which 65 percent of the answers to which organization did the dissidents they knew belong were given under Other, with the Pro-Human Rights Party scoring 26 percent and Concilio Cubano 23 percent. This is very close to the 29 percent reported under Table 65 as being familiar with Concilio Cubano, the umbrella organization of the dissidence that emerged in 1995 and was crushed by the regime on the wake of the downing of the planes. Weighted results do not reflect significant variations. The dissidence is too fragmented to be able to pose an effective challenge to the regime. Again, this is a consequence of the effectiveness of regime's repressive policies, which, at present, are concentrated in preventing the articulation of the increasing dissatisfaction with the situation by making it difficult for the opposition to organize beyond the lowest possible level.

Tables 65 A and B, reveal that only 22 percent of respondents were familiar with "The Fatherland Belongs to All," the first anti-regime manifesto that has emerged so far. And among these respondents, only 35 percent, or about 8 percent of all respondents, were familiar with the contents of the document. Such a manifesto offers the incipient basis for an alternative ideology, without which it is impossible to undertake mass mobilization and action. The broadcasting over domestic TV of the trial and sentencing of the Group of Four, who authored this document, is certain to have created much more awareness among the population of its existence and contents. However, that happened after the interviews for this survey were completed. Therefore, these results in no way reflect this new important development.

A similar comment can be made in relation to the results reported under Table 66 in response to a listing of dissident leaders. Not one of these leaders was recognized by a majority of respondents, and the four who authored the above document were included in the list. That situation is likely to have changed significantly as a result of their trial. Finally, the responses under Table 67 reflect that an overwhelming majority of the population is perceived by the respondents to be supportive and sympathetic of the dissidence, with only 14 percent reporting that they are perceived as harmful. This reflects the fact that, shall the regime relent in its present policy of repressing the right of association and assembly, Cuba seems to be ready for the emergence of alternative national movements spreading from the present dissidence..

### **Refer to tables 59 to 67**

#### On Social Participation

An effort was also made to elicit a response on the degree of participation of respondents in the so-called mass organizations. At times, naive or ideologically biased, foreign researchers portray these as non-governmental organizations. In reality, these organizations are popular mobilization instruments of the regime, with not one of them having a leadership freely elected by its members.

There is a possibility the responses in this section may reflect a defensive mechanism not relevant in relation to other questions that do not involve respondent's personal behavior. Respondents could have a legitimate fear of being identified with regime organizations and that any information on their personal behavior may be used in the future by US Federal agencies against them. These individuals have developed avoidance mechanisms in Cuba to stay out of trouble and these personal questions could make them feel uneasy. For example, the experience with Radio Marti surveys revealed that one of the fears expressed by those interviewed was that, shall there be a change in US policy towards Cuba, the INS could use their addresses to locate them for deportation. The sample selected for this survey was designed to include people with a short stay in the US. It takes time for people to get used to live in a free society where their legal rights are respected. Therefore, the possibility of a defensive mechanism at play should be kept in mind in relation to the personal behavior questions in this section.

Under Table 70, the majority of respondents, 59 percent, indicated they belonged to none of the mass organizations presented to them in the menu. Of them, 35 percent mentioned they participated in the CDRs, or Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. The remaining organizations elicited no responses or lower digits. In Table 70 B, 81 percent of the respondents reported attending meetings at such organizations more than a year ago. No significant variations are reflected in weighted results. This makes sense in terms that the respondents had to go through a long process to get their exit visas and, once they made explicit their intention to leave the country, the policy is to automatically exclude them from participation in any mass organization. The above referred defense mechanism may have also resulted in a lower response to this question than is actually the case.

The survey then moved to the issue of which of these organizations were most and less powerful. In this case, according to Table 71, the CDRs are perceived by 43 percent as the most powerful among the mass organizations, while only 19 percent consider the labor confederation to have most power. The others attain only single digit responses. Those living outside Havana perceived the CDRs as less powerful than Havana residents. This reflects the fact that the CDRs are the most pervasive instrument of repression of the regime, being active at the block level. As seen under Table 79, later on, they have one of the highest negative indexes of any regime organization. As to the least powerful mass organizations, as can be seen under Table 72, the responses are very dispersed, with most organizations getting low ratings. These responses tend to confirm the fact that mass organizations are just regime mobilization tools and the people perceive them as ineffectual in relation to whatever is their main mission.

The final set of questions under this section aimed at determining the relevancy of the labor movement. Under Table 73, a significant majority, 69 percent of the respondents, said they did not belong to the labor federation. Among non-whites there were more union members than among whites, while there were less union members outside Havana than in the city. And, according to Table 74, an overwhelming majority of 97 percent considered that belonging to a union did not bring any benefits to the workers. On this matter, there was consensus in the

weighted results. This is really a sad commentary on the futility of a labor organization.

Moving to the issue of independent labor unions, a majority of 61 percent in Table 75 did not know whether that will be of any help for workers seeking a political change, while 34 percent thought that it could help. Under Table 76, a significant majority of 79 percent thought that the labor federation, CTC, was unlikely to help bring a political change and only a minuscule 2 percent thought that could happen. Then, on Table 77, an overwhelming majority of 96 percent did not know any independent labor leader. No significant difference of perceptions emerge from the weighted results in relation to these matters. This indicates that it would require a very aggressive and effective organizational drive for the Cuban labor movement, whether official or independent, to play any significant social or political role in Cuba's future. The regime seems to have been successful in crushing labor unions as effective intermediary organizations through which workers could organize to defend their rights and interests.

**Refer to tables 70 to 77**

On Ranking Regime Leaders and Organizations

The interview then shifted to how respondents ranked a menu of selected regime leaders and organizations. They were asked to indicate the most hated, loved, respected and feared for each menu. In their answers to the leader menu, a significant number of respondents added a combined category of most hated and most feared. Therefore, a negative index of most hated, most feared and combined has been prepared and the results listed in rank order. A similar index was prepared with the two positive responses of loved and respected. Under the unknown heading are listed the answers from those who indicated they did not know, reflecting mostly lack of familiarity with the individual but also that they did not know what rating to give.

Regime Leader	(-) Index	(+) Index	Unknown
Fidel Castro	93	04	01
Raul Castro	93	02	01
Juan Escalona	82	03	07
Roberto Robaina	81	03	03
Ricardo Alarcon	78	10	03
Abelardo Colome	76	03	12
Ulises Rosales del Toro	71	03	16
Osmany Cienfuegos	71	08	11
Jose Machado Ventura	66	04	20
Carlos Lage	64	19	07
Ramon Balaguer	63	05	21
Jose Luis Rodriguez	57	09	22

These ratings represent the opinions of respondents. No claim is made that they represent those

of the total population not to mention regime supporters. Nevertheless, if we project these findings to the moment of a transition, when the majority of the population is likely to reflect openly feelings similar to those of the respondents, we can speculate on who are the regime leaders that could play a role at that time. Recognizing, of course, that their behavior during the final days of the regime could significantly change these perceptions.

**Fidel** and **Raul Castro** share the top position in the negative index and have very low positive ratings, with Raul's rating being even lower than his brother. This makes it doubtful that he could inherit power. **Juan Escalona** probably earned his high negative rating as the prosecutor in the Ochoa trial. Also has low positive ratings. **Roberto Robaina** has already been summarily dismissed as Foreign Minister, without causing any unrest among the younger people he was supposed to represent. His high negative ratings may be a result of his being perceived as too subservient to Castro. **Ricardo Alarcon**, as president of the legislature, has already expressed his willingness to substitute Castro if asked to do so. Still his high negative ratings may be an obstacle unless he plays a leading role in the opening to a transition. Although at an abysmally low level, he is one of two with two digit positive ratings. **General Abelardo Colome**, as Minister of Interior, is likely to enhance his negative ratings if he is associated with repressive actions during the final stages of the regime. **General Ulises Rosales del Toro**, at present Sugar Minister, but previously Armed Forces Chief of Staff, has a significant negative index which could get worse if he continues to assume repressive roles, as he did recently during the popular protests in Puerto Padre. **Osmany Cienfuegos**, at present Tourism Minister, does not have any personal following and basks in the memory of his brother, a very popular revolutionary hero. He is associated with corruption and repressive measures and is unlikely to provide any leadership for a transition. **Jose Machado Ventura**, as Party Organization Secretary, controls appointments, transfers and dismissal within the nomenklatura and, besides being totally committed to Castro, is a hard line advocate. Many respondents rated him unknown, 20 percent, probably because he works in the background. **Carlos Lage**, Vice-President of the Council of State, gets the highest positive ratings, still a meager 19 percent, because he is perceived as the leader of reformists within the regime. His Marxist convictions may lead him to take an intransigent stand that could preclude his being able to survive the end of the regime. On the other hand, if he takes the lead in an opening, could play a role in the transition. **Ramon Balaguer**, responsible for Party ideology and propaganda matters, shares with Machado Ventura the hard line position and has high unknown ratings, 21 percent, for the same reasons, he is a background figure. Finally, **Jose Luis Rodriguez**, as Minister of Economy and Planning, has provided the leadership for the modest reforms enacted. His negative index is the lowest (57), while his positive is not too high (09). Yet, he has the highest unknown response (22). Has no association with repression and, depending on his role in the opening, may be able to play a role in the transition. If Castro continues to back away from reforms, may eventually be dismissed like Robaina.

As can be appreciated, the present regime leadership has such high negative ratings and such low positive ratings that it seems very difficult to see how they may be able to provide the source for

leadership of a transition regime. By definition, at that time, Cuban public opinion is likely to have shifted overwhelmingly to positions very similar to those held at present by survey respondents. Therefore, the most likely figures from the regime to be able to play a role will be less known ones who emerge during the period of the opening immediately previous to the transition and manage to get the trust of emerging dissidence leaders, whose cooperation is essential for a peaceful and orderly transition.

In this respect, what is worrisome in terms of the feasibility for such an orderly and peaceful transition is the equally negative ratings of regime organizations. The results from Tables 79 A to D are presented in the following consolidated table to ease comparisons. In this case, only two ratings will be given, the negative index and the positive index. The negative index consolidates most hated and most feared responses and the positive, most loved and most respected. The order of presentation is according to the order in which they appeared in the menu that was presented during the actual interview.

As in the previous ratings, these results are the opinions of survey respondents and, therefore, no claim is made of their representing the opinions of the total population and, much less, of regime supporters. In this case, it was felt that it would not be feasible to ask the interviewees for the ratings they thought would have been given by others. Therefore, no attempt was made to have the respondents act as surrogates for other segments of the population. However, as was commented above, it is reasonable to assume that the respondents opinions are representative of a segment of the population that, whatever is its present magnitude, would be a majority whenever the regime comes to an end.

Regime Organization	(-) Index	(+) Index
Office of the Commander in Chief	78	05
National Assembly (Legislature)	72	06
Popular Power (Local Govt.)	66	08
MINFAR (Armed Forces Ministry)	78	07
MININT (Ministry of Interior)	72	05
Dept. of State Security (Secret Police)	71	05
Quick Response Battalions (Paramilitary Gangs)	76	04
CDRs (Neighborhood Vigilante Committees)	79	05
CTC (Labor Federation)	71	07
FMC - (Women's Federation)	61	09
PCC (Communist Party of Cuba)	82	05
Central Committee (Of the PCC)	81	05
Politburo (Of the PCC)	81	05
UNEAC (Writers and Artists organization)	49	13
ANAP (Farmers National Association)	50	10

As can be appreciated, the respondents reacted in the most negative terms to the three entities identified with the Communist Party, the PCC (82), the Central Committee (81) and the Political Bureau (81). This constitutes an overwhelming rejection of the Party apparatus. Castro's office (78) and the MINFAR (78), Raul's fiefdom, also get very high negatives. The four agencies associated with repression and spying on the population: MININT (72), State Security (71), the Battalions (76) and the CDRs (79) obtain also highly negative ratings. The political agencies, the legislature (72) and the local governments (66) receive very negative ratings, although the later, being closer to the population, fares a little better, with one of the highest (08) positive ratings.

The so-called mass organizations CTC (71) and the FMC (61) have too negative ratings when one considers they are supposed to be supportive of segments of the population. This is a consequence of their having a control role from the top down more than of NGO's representing their membership before the regime. The two less unpopular entities, UNEAC (49) and ANAP (50) are also the ones with the highest positive ratings, 13 and 10 percent respectively. As is the case with all institutions in Cuba, whether political, professional, sectorial or civic, the rank and file never elect their officials. They are all appointed and dismissed at will by Castro.

Needless to say that the highly negative image of the existing networks of mass organizations makes it highly doubtful that they will be able to play any significant role in post-Castro's Cuba. First, they will have to democratize themselves with leaders responsive to the rank and file. It may be argued that these negatives apply only to the respondents or the segment of population they represent. However, as has been pointed above, at the time there is a transition, the majority is likely to share the points of view expressed at present by respondents to this survey. Were that not the case, it is unlikely that a transition will take place.

As to government agencies, the loss of legitimacy they have in the eyes of the population will deprive them of the minimum acceptance that is required for effective governability. The fact that MINFAR has such a negative image is very worrisome. Cuba's armed forces were held in high esteem by the people during the period of internationalism, that is until 1988 or 1989, precisely when the Ochoa crisis revealed a challenge to Castro's rule from within that revolutionary institution. The loss of the internationalist role, the increasing corruption that prevails as Castro tries to dole out graft to the military to ensure their loyalty and their becoming identified with repression as a result of the takeover of MININT by MINFAR officers in the wake of the Ochoa affair, has eroded that prestige. Without the trust and respect of the population, maintaining law and order will be increasingly difficult.

#### On Tourism and Jineteras

The survey moves then to assess the reaction of Cubans to tourism. The regime resorted to this industry as a means of earning foreign exchange after the collapse of Communism ended the era of massive economic subsidies from the Soviet Bloc. Tourism became a priority development sector and visitors have increased from 326 thousand in 1989 to more than a million in 1997,

with the likelihood of attaining a goal of 2 million by the end of the century. A massive investment program has been undertaken to expand tourism facilities.

On the positive side, this industry is offering employment with access to dollars to tens of thousands of Cubans and, although due to the inability of Cuba to produce goods of enough quality for foreign consumption, its net revenues in dollars are small--only 29 cents on the dollar of gross revenue--it is already generating several hundred million dollars a year to the Cuban balance of payments, having surpassed sugar as a net earner of foreign exchange.

The emergence of this industry has created a situation which is the source of national irritation in two aspects. One is the privileged treatment given to foreigners for whom the government has created enclaves to which Cubans are denied access, leading to the accusation of practicing Apartheid against nationals. The other is the emergence of the so-called "jineteras," women and young girls forced to practice prostitution in order to survive the economic collapse. The survey, therefore, tried to elicit the response of the Cuban population to this emerging industry.

On Table 80, the responses to a menu of how Cubans view tourists is recorded. As can be observed, the majority of the respondents, 54 percent, perceived a favorable popular reaction, with 29 percent of the respondents expressing they perceived no hostility and 25 percent that they perceived sympathy to tourists among the population. On the other side, 44 percent of the respondents reported observing hostility, with only 2 percent being extremely hostile reactions, 27 percent some hostility and 15 percent a sense of humiliation.

When asked about the degree of acceptance of the various nationalities by Cubans, according to Table 81, the most popular nationalities were Europeans in general with 44 percent, followed by Italians 32 percent, Spanish 30 percent, Canadians 29 percent and Americans 17 percent. The other nationalities got single digit responses. Non-whites were less receptive to Europeans in general, with only 28 percent giving them a favorable rating, while variations on other cases were minor, as was the case when weighted on the basis of location. Seen from the other perspective, according to Table 82, the least popular nationalities were Russians, with 27 percent, and Africans, with 24 percent. All the other nationalities generated single digit least accepted ratings, with the Mexicans at the top with 9 percent. There was an identical response towards African tourists by whites and non-whites, as was the case, in general, in all responses to these questions. The same was the case with responses weighted by location.

As to the advantages in being a foreigner in Cuba, a significant majority of 88 percent of the responses in Table 82, consider that they enjoy more rights than nationals. Then a plurality of 48 percent linked it to the easily available sexual tourism, while 37 percent felt the attraction was the low costs, one of the least expensive places available in the Caribbean and the Americas. Only 30 percent thought it was because of business opportunities and, finally, only 24 percent considered that medical treatment was what attracted the tourists. Non-whites gave greater weight to medical treatment and sexual tourism as attractions.



As to the problems facing tourists, according to Table 83, a majority of 87 percent felt crime was the most serious disadvantage, with 63 referring to stealing and 23 percent to swindles. For 58 percent, it was the threat of being expelled for dealing with dissidents and for 39 percent that they may be harassed by the omnipresent control of State Security. Non-whites gave less weight to the problems caused by contacting dissidents, as did to a lesser degree those outside of Havana. For Cubans, tourists are exposed to the same problems they face, although with less intensity: crime, corruption, and repression, if they make a mistake of treading in forbidden territory.

Moving to the reactions of Cubans to the preferential treatment enjoyed by tourists, according to Table 84, a significant majority of 85 percent resent it, of which 66 percent do so strongly and 19 accept the need for that preferential treatment. On the other hand, 13 percent favor that preferential treatment, with 10 percent merely justifying it because it is necessary and only a tiny 3 percent strongly accepting it. The weighted results are similar, although non-whites are less inclined to report strong resentment. According to Table 85, when asked if they witnessed any openly expressed hostility against a foreign tourist, a highly significant majority of 87 percent answered in the negative. In this, there is complete agreement in weighted results.

In summary, Cubans seem to have decided to make a sophisticated response. They differentiate their response to guests who are visitors in the island, to whom they are inclined to offer their traditional welcoming hospitality, and the resentment they feel over the privileges these visitors enjoy and the practice of Apartheid. In making this distinction, they seem to recognize that the privilege and isolation responds mostly to regime security concerns for which these visitors bear no responsibility. This differentiation in no way reduces their resentment of regime policies and practices that they feel are demeaning and humiliating to them.

Then, the survey turned to the more emotionally loaded issue of “Jineteras.” Under Table 86, a significant majority of respondents, 80 percent, indicated to have known “Jineteras.” Among non-whites this response reached 90 percent, while outside Havana it declined to 67 percent. In Table 86 A, they were asked how many. The result was surprising, as can be observed, an overwhelming majority (74 percent) reported knowing more than ten, 11 percent knew from five to ten, 10 percent between two and five and 6 percent reported knowing only one. These results were consistent with those weighted by race and location. This reveals that regime sponsored, or at least tolerated, prostitution is incredibly prevalent in contemporary Cuba. After the survey was completed, there has been a crackdown and thousands of these poor women have been arrested and sent to rehabilitation camps. But the practice still continues.

In the following section, an effort was made to establish a clear distinction between what respondents thought and what they observed was the reaction of regime opponents and supporters. The results of Tables 86 B, B1 and B2 are consolidated in one Table to facilitate the comparison of reactions. They are consistent with weighted results.

Reaction	Respondents Percent	Regime Opponents Percent	Regime supporters Percent
Extreme hostility	01	01	46
Contempt but no hostility	05	06	17
National embarrassment	30	30	17
Sympathy	28	24	03
Humiliation due to embargo	01	01	17
Justified as a way to survive	52	36	07
Other	07	15	07

The different reactions are most revealing of the polarization of Cuban public opinion. As can be observed there are minor variations in the reactions of respondents and regime opponents but, in general, what prevail are humane explanations of need to survive and sympathy with equal responses as to this being a national embarrassment and very small levels of hostility. Regime supporters, on the other hand, react with overwhelming feelings of hostility and contempt for these poor women. Reflecting the usual aggressive regime reaction, they have a lower feeling of national embarrassment, while showing little sympathy or justifying it as a way to survive. And, a much higher proportion of them tend to blame the US embargo for this unpleasant outcome.

#### **Refer to Tables 80 to 86**

#### On the Future

The next section of the interview was oriented to the perceptions people had on the future. They were asked whether they thought political and/or economic changes were the most necessary, how long it will take and who they thought could lead the change, as well as what they thought were the most important problems that will be faced.

The answers recorded in Table 87 reveal that an overwhelming majority, 88 percent, are convinced that both, economic and political, changes are necessary. On Table 90, this majority records its opinion that it will take a long time, with 58 percent thinking that it will take five years or more, while 35 percent do not know. A pessimistic minority (5 percent) stated that in their opinion it will never occur. Similar results with small variations, prevail in the weighted results.

Confirming the perspective emanating from the views expressed in the previous segment of this survey about the regime leadership, Table 91 reveals that an overwhelming majority, (85 percent) think that none of the present leaders could provide leadership for a transition. The only one perceived as having some, although albeit modest, potential is Carlos Lage with 9 percent. Weighted results reveal a remarkable consistency in this perception between whites and non-whites and between Havana and outside Havana respondents.

As a possible explanation for the prevailing catatonic state of Cuban political dynamics, when asked the same question about the dissidence leadership, in Table 92 an overwhelming 75 percent answered they did not know. There were more mentions of individual leaders having such potential than among the regime leadership, with **Vladimiro Roca** rating number one with 13 percent and **Gustavo Arcos** with 12, and three, **Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz**, **Oswaldo Paya** and **Martha Beatriz Roque** obtaining 5 percent each. As can be appreciated, however, responses indicate a very low level of leadership potential. In this case, while the overwhelming central tendency of don't know responses prevails in the weighted results, non-whites are more skeptical about leaders like Roca and Arcos and overall provide a higher don't know response of 83 percent.

There is no doubt that, as new events focus the people's attention, new leaders names will emerge and some of the present ones will get more recognition. For example, the trial of the Group of Four, which as was mentioned before took place after the survey interview phase was completed, is likely to have raised the recognition level of **Vladimiro Roca**, **Martha Beatriz Roque**, **Rene Gomez Manzano** and **Felix Bonne Carcasses**. And **Oscar Elias Biscet** who led the recently completed 40 day fast, which had nationwide and international support and media coverage, is probably a well known name today.

Nevertheless, the reality is that neither within the regime, nor within the dissidence, the respondents perceived a leadership with enough following to articulate an alternative to Castro and his brother. However, the situation seems to be changing rapidly and, as the failure of the regime to offer a way out of the present predicament prolongs itself, leaders will emerge, within and outside the regime, articulating alternatives which eventually may capture the imagination of the Cuban people. But that time is not here yet.

As to the problems or issues that this new leadership will have to tackle, according to Table 93, the respondents perceive that the most difficult are economic reconstruction (62 percent), crime and corruption (43 percent), absence of ethical and moral values (38 percent), lack of a national leadership respected by the public (36 percent) and with a very low rating (10 percent)

preserving national sovereignty in a devastated country. The weighted results reflect minor variations by race and location. These results provide a sad portrayal of the state to which the regime has brought the Cuban nation.

Finally, in relation to the future, the new arrivals were asked about their plans in case of changes in the situation in Cuba. Table 94, reveals that were the economic situation to improve a plurality of 41 percent indicated they will not go back, with 24 percent making the categorical statement they "will never go back." The results, weighted by race, reveal that a larger proportion of non-whites, 47 percent, are not likely to go back, while a much larger proportion of whites expressed they did not know 33 percent, against 20 percent for non-whites. In the case of location, the results reveal that those outside Havana are more likely to go back if the economic situation improves.

The response changes when the question is posed on political changes, even if the economic situation continues to be unfavorable.. Confirming that people who leave Cuba are more motivated by lack of freedom and repression, according to Table 95, a much smaller proportion of 32 percent said they are not likely to go back. When weighted by race, the results reveal that 46 percent of non-white will not return either were this to happen.. Under this option, again, those from outside of Havana are more likely to return than those from Havana.

The last migration-related issue raised with the interviewees was whether in their opinion, should a change take place in the political and economic situation, their relatives were still likely to want to migrate to the US. Under Table 96, the do not know are the largest plurality, with 39 percent, while an almost majority of a combined 49 percent think they are not likely to come, 19 percent improbable and 30 percent never. Relatives of non-whites were less likely to migrate, with 55 percent combined improbable and never responses, than of whites, with 48 percent. Don't know responses were high again, with non-whites having more certainty, only 30 percent, than white, 39 percent of whom did not know what their relatives were likely to do. When weighted by location, the outside of Havana don't know turn to 41 percent, against 34 percent in Havana. As to those unlikely to come, the results reflect small variation.

The responses on migration behavior, whether by new arrivals or their relatives, indicate that a change of regime in Cuba is likely to substantially reduce migratory pressure, although not end it completely. It also reveals that political problems of repression and lack of freedom, play a bigger role in the decision to migrate than economic motivations.

#### **Refer to Tables 87 to 96**

#### On the Transition

The final section of the survey was focused on selected aspects of the transition. Interviewees were asked about the kind of regime they thought best, what bothers them the most about the present situation and whether they would like for some revolutionary changes to be retained, as well as what are the fears of those in the island about what may happen. They were also asked in reference to the possible role of the Catholic Church in the transition and what may be required for a change to occur. Another issue raised was the response by regime opponents and supporters to the message issued by President Clinton on January 28, 1997, offering assistance for the transition. The final questions were related to whether or not they felt that US offer was attractive to Cubans and what was their opinion with respect to a national dialogue among all stakeholders in the future of Cuba.

On Table 97, the responses to the question on what system would be best in the transition, a significant majority (68 percent) favored democratic capitalism, while only 1 percent supported democratic socialism and less than one percent, only 3 out of 1023, supported the idea of a military dictatorship. This may reflect the visceral reaction of respondents, and the segment of

the population they represent, to the word socialism. Ironically, this reaction in system's terms is inconsistent with the high rating given above to Vladimiro Roca as a potential transition leader. Mr. Roca proclaims himself to be a social democrat. At the same time, the total rejection of the idea of a military dictatorship is very reassuring. The weighted results by location and race reflect substantial consistency with very minor variations. Therefore, at least for the segment of the population represented by these respondents, there is a substantial consensus that the future Cuba should be democratic and capitalist.

In terms of what bothers them the most about the current situation in Cuba, Table 99 reveals an overwhelming rejection of lack of liberty and fear of repression (85 percent); lack of sincerity in personal relationships follows (61 percent); corruption and privileges of regime leaders is next (59 percent); lack of food and privileges for foreigners are next (58 percent each); then comes lack of transportation (48 percent) and of religious freedom (46 percent); and, finally, lack of a future for children (40 percent). This listing reveals that the ranking of motivations of the respondents reflect more a reaction about the way people have to live than frustration with material shortages and discomfort. Also, that although the respondents are more religious than average Cubans, they give religion a lower priority that is consistent with the Cuban national character. Although there were some variations with weighted results, the prevailing central tendency is the same in all cases.

When asked what they thought were the biggest fears of the Cubans left in the island about the future, Table 100 provides a very clear ranking of issues. The one fear a majority (51 percent) perceive is the most important is that chaos and killings will occur during a transition. On this issue there is little variation when data is weighted. The second fear (40 percent) is that exiles will return demanding the return to the homes were they live at present. Although this is a declining issue and the Helms-Burton legislation explicitly excludes them, regime propaganda has exploited—very effectively it appears—the frequent claims of exiles for the return of their previous homes to threaten those occupying them at present. Non-whites perceive less concern over the housing issue than whites. The non-Havana residents also perceive less concern over the housing issue than those from Havana. Then, in declining order appear the fear to lose some of the benefits provided by the revolution, free healthcare (32 percent), guaranteed employment (30 percent) and free education (24 percent). There are minor variations in responses when the data is weighted by race and location.

What is most revealing in these results is that only a tiny 2 percent are perceived by the respondents to be concerned about the possibility of a return of American hegemony over the island. On this issue non-whites perceive a greater concern, although still in single digits. No difference is perceived when weighted by location. Certainly, the opinions of regime supporters will result in a significantly different scale of priorities. But, again, we must keep in mind that, once a transition occurs, the motivations reported in this Table are likely to reflect the feelings of the majority at that time.

When asked whether they favored retaining some of the changes introduced by the revolution, as Table 101 reveals, the majority (55 percent) is inclined to the affirmative. This is consistent with

the position expressed in other sections of this survey, particularly in relation to health and education. However, in these responses there are very significant discrepancies with weighted results. A much higher proportion of non-whites (67 percent) favor retaining revolutionary changes than of whites (53 percent). Another significant difference is that when weighted by location, people of Havana are more inclined to retaining revolutionary changes (62 percent), than those from outside Havana (50 percent).

As to the role of religion in a transition and whether the government would allow the Catholic Church any role, according to Tables 102 and 103 the responses were overwhelmingly negative. A significant majority (67 percent) thought unlikely that religion could play any role in the transition and an overwhelming majority (95 percent) rejected the notion that the regime would allow the Catholic Church any role. In both cases, this central tendency is consistent with weighted results.

As to what events would have to happen for real changes to occur, Table 104 provides interesting insights. An overwhelming majority of respondents (89 percent) think that change will happen only after Castro dies, while significant majorities consider as feasible sources of change an international repudiation of the regime (74 percent) and an armed forces revolt (70 percent). Only 45 percent think an open censure by the Pope will trigger the desired changes and an insignificant 7 percent consider that lifting the embargo would result in real changes. There was no significant variations in the weighted results. This reflects that the respondents, and the segment of the population they represent, have a very realistic notion of the dynamics of change in contemporary Cuba. These results reinforce the conclusion that, as Canada and the European Union have discovered, and the US Chamber of Commerce is going to discover, the notion that lifting the embargo and dealing with Castro offers an alternative, is an ideal but unrealistic approach to solving the Cuban problem.

On January 28, 1997, the US Government released over the signature of President Clinton a message to the Cuban people detailing the support the US was prepared to provide for a democratic transition. The full document was broadcast over Radio Marti several times and discussed in various panels. Castro reacted vigorously to this statement, 250,000 members of the armed forces, reserve and active, were asked to sign a pledge of loyalty to Castro personally and to the revolution. Ricardo Alarcon, the president of the legislature, spent several evening challenging the document page by page over national television networks.

Despite such extensive and high level coverage, according to Table 105, an overwhelming majority of respondents (84 percent) had not heard anyone talk about this document. The results in the survey, which has the best consistency of any question when weighted, are worth analyzing. The lack of comments on a matter that evoked such a strong response from the regime seems to indicate that the population is not tuned in. This reinforces the hypothesis that there is a substantial proportion of the population that is in such a state of indifference, or anomie, that they do not care about any statement, whether from Castro or the US government.

Analyzing in more detail the responses reported by those who had heard comments, we find from Tables 106 A and B, that while regime opponents (64 percent) thought the document respected Cuban sovereignty, an overwhelming majority of regime supporters (81 percent) thought the complete opposite. A similar polarization of opinions is reported in relation to the question of whether the assistance was adequate. Regime opponents thought so (50 percent), while regime supporters (45 percent) thought it was inadequate. The discrepancy reaches its highest level in relation to whether the level of assistance of US\$8 billion mentioned in the document was doubtful or not. Only one percent of regime opponents are reported to have questioned the validity of the amount, while 32 percent of regime supporters are reported to have thought it was doubtful it could reach such high levels of financial resources. In this case, although the weighted results are basically consistent, there are not enough answers to the question to justify a detailed analysis of the breakdown data.

In addition, according to Table 107, a majority of respondents (53 percent) perceive that Cubans accept the condition placed by the US that assistance for a transition be contingent on a change in leadership. This condition was included in the Helms-Burton Law and was mentioned in the above referred document. It has been challenged as an invasion of Cuban sovereignty in some quarters, including members of the dissidence. It is possible that explains the low percentage of approval reported and the high rate of don't know answers.(39 percent).

Finally, the interview ended with a question on their opinion with respect to the idea of a dialogue among the various stakeholders in the future of Cuba, regime representatives, dissidents and exiles. Table 108 reports the results: while 58 percent favor it, 15 percent oppose it. The support for such a dialogue is much higher among non-whites, 71 percent of whom responded affirmatively. The results by location show that those outside Havana are the least supportive, with only 54 percent in favor, while Havana resident favored this dialogue by 64 percent.

**Refer to Tables 97 to 108**

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study uses as a surrogate for Cubans on the island Cuban emigres who have been in the United States for only a short period of time. In an attempt to match the characteristics of the Cuban population, the data were weighted according to age, gender, race, and place of residency in Cuba. In addition, the questionnaire included a series of issues which tapped not only what the respondent thought in relation to the issue, but also what the views of other Cubans would be, including supporters of the regime. By making explicit a separate request for the points of views of others, as distinct from their own, interviewers were able to obtain both the opinions of Cuban emigres and the perceived opinions of other segments of the society. Over a period of several months, December 1998 to April 1999, interviews were obtained from 1023 persons. The initial plan contemplated a small sample of direct phone calls to Cubans on the island as a way of validating responses of recent Cuban emigres. However, with the passage of Law 88, that idea was discarded in order to avoid jeopardizing Cubans participating in such calls.

Recent emigres commented on a variety of issues ranging from humanitarian aid and reforms to the future of Cuba and the prospects and consequences of a transition. Few Cubans have received any humanitarian aid, although a majority responded favorably to the idea. To make ends meet, Cubans resort to a variety of means, including use of the black market and the farmer's market. Almost half used dollars (at special dollar stores) to purchase clothing and shoes. A similar proportion purchased pharmacy supplies on the black market. The emigres saw free education and free health care as the major accomplishments of the revolution. Many of them resented the preferential medical treatment given to foreigners. Cuban emigres believe the reforms have come about too slowly and are too late, although the legalization of the dollar and the farmer's free market are seen as positive steps. The emigres thought the Pope's visit was beneficial though unlikely to bring about permanent change. Respondents were well aware of repression in Cuba and how it is manifested.

Recent emigres said they watched television in Cuba mainly for entertainment. Of the foreign broadcasts that reach the island, Radio Marti is by far the most listened to station. Few respondents had ever seen TV Marti. When Cubans (or recent Cuban emigres) talked to relatives abroad, they mainly discussed family affairs.

Only about a third of the respondents knew dissidents on the island, although 30% to 50% recognized the names of prominent dissidents. Few respondents said they belonged to political organizations on the island. Most who did belonged to the CDR. Perhaps as could be expected, respondents had a highly unfavorable view of Cuban leaders and regime organizations. When asked about tourists, most Cubans expressed a somewhat favorable view of them. The least accepted were Russians. Respondents were well aware of the increase in jineteras. Almost three-quarters said they knew more than ten persons who worked as prostitutes.

Respondents uniformly said both economic and political changes were necessary for Cuba. They



saw no current leaders who could provide leadership during a period of reforms, including leaders of the dissident movement. Emigres expressed concern about the economic reconstruction of Cuba, to the extent that only about 30% would return to Cuba if conditions changed. The greatest perceived fear of Cubans on the island is that a transition will bring about chaos and killings, that exiles will return and take away their homes, that free health care and free education will disappear, and that jobs will be lost. Most see little chance for change until Fidel Castro dies. Cuban emigres believe most Cubans would welcome U.S. support for a change in government, and they (the emigres) are in favor of a dialogue among exiles, dissidents, and representatives of the Cuban government.

There can be no doubt that the Cuban emigres in this study represent an unhappy and disillusioned segment of the population. Their responses to societal conditions provide much food for thought for U.S. policy makers as they try to create conditions favorable to the development of a civil society in Cuba. Despite the wealth of information in this report and in data yet to be analyzed, a one-time cross-section survey is severely limited in what it can reveal. A major improvement over the current study would be a trend analysis based on repeated surveys of both Cuban emigres and Cubans on the island.