

MEASURING CUBAN PUBLIC OPINION: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES

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This paper, which is based on a larger report submitted to USAID by the Project Team,¹ summarizes the results of the survey of public opinion with respect to the following areas: (1) humanitarian aid; (2) availability of goods and supplies; (3) educational attainments; (4) health attainments; (5) attitude toward reforms; (6) freedom of expression; (7) use of media; (8) dissidence; (9) social participation; (10) regime leaders and organization; (11) tourism and *jineteras*; (12) the future; and (13) the transition. A companion paper by Churchill Roberts² discusses methodological issues related to the survey.

In commenting on the results of the survey we will concentrate on the frequency tables and the respective percentages. Since the central tendency in the results was not affected significantly when the results were weighted by race, sex, location and age, we will only discuss the latter in the exceptional cases when there were deviations worthy of attention.

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 U.S. 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.

The majority of the respondents, 84 percent, had not benefitted from humanitarian aid. Of those who had received aid, 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.

When asked why they felt as they did, 87 percent stated that the people needed it and 44 percent that any non-government aid was good. On the negative side of the responses, there was again a clear clustering, with 82 percent agreeing with the accusation that has been made that the government was misdirecting 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. Again, the largest group of respon-

1. Churchill Roberts, Ernesto Betancourt, Guillermo Grenier and Richard Scheaffer, *Measuring Cuban Public Opinion: Project Report* (Gainesville, Florida: The University of Florida, September 1999).

2. Churchill Roberts, "Measuring Cuban Public Opinion: Methodology," in this volume.

dents, 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 benefited. 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.

THE OVERALL SUPPLY SITUATION

A second set of questions addresses an issue that is central to the debate on the embargo: whether or not the United States 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 U.S. embargo. There may be those who will challenge this conclusion on the basis of the frequently mentioned “ingratiating effect.”

In the first place, those doing the interviews were not U.S. 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. Secondly, 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, and the two explanations frequently given by the Cuban government are rejected: only 5 percent blame the U.S. 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.

The three top responses regarding the cause of the economic ills—Cuban government policies (90 percent of respondents), the economic disaster (71 percent), and a high level of corruption (70 percent)—

are directly related to government policies, while three others—people are not productive at work (53 percent), people earn very little and do not want to work (50 percent), and people no longer believe in the Revolution and would rather fend for themselves (39 percent)—are indirectly related to government policies. It is evident from these results that the segment of the population represented by this sample overwhelmingly rejects the regime’s propaganda as to the cause for the supply situation the Cuban people is confronting. When 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 hardships, the formal official rationing and supply system is the source only for one fourth of the most essential needs, foods and medicines. 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, account for the main source reported by respondents. This indicates that, regardless of government propaganda, and contrary to its ideological dogma, in Cuba today it is the private sector, not the public enterprise sector, that provides the overwhelming source of supply for basic needs. 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.

The degree to which the Cuban population is living in a dollar economy is illustrated by how clothing and shoes are obtained. The most important source of these consumer goods, with 49 percent, is dollar stores, followed by the black market, with 27 percent of the respondents mentioning it as a source of supply for their needs.

The impact of the Apartheid policy of reserving leisure and entertainment activities for foreigners by imposing access restrictions to Cubans in the use of those facilities is also evident from the survey. 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.

A majority of the respondents, 79 percent, owned their homes. Of them, the highest proportion, 37 percent, became owners 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.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS

Another group of questions addresses an issue associated with one of the revolution most praised accomplishments: expanded educational opportunities. There are some doubts 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 university 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.

A significant majority of respondents (67 percent) agree with the conclusion that the revolution has improved education. An overwhelming majority of those agreeing think this is 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) support that these benefits be retained if there is a change in government in Cuba.

As to deficiencies of the educational system, the criticism most commonly raised, 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 a person graduates. 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.

An overwhelming majority of 88 percent support the idea of private schools and a whopping majority of 98 percent support religious schools. 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. 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.

With regard to the decrease in university 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. 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.

HEALTH ATTAINMENTS

Public health improvements is another of the areas proclaimed as a success of the revolution. It was considered worthwhile 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: (1) the privileged treatment given to government officials, who have hospital facilities

reserved for their use; and (2) 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, only a majority of 53 percent had a favorable response, while 73 percent of non-white respondents gave a favorable response. 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.

Ninety 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; 46 percent attribute it to the availability of hospitals; and 34 percent to the family doctor program. 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 of the perceived deficiencies of the Cuban health system, an overwhelming majority of 92 percent choose lack of medicines and 70 percent that 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.

Going further deeper into the family doctor system, considered one of the great Cuban medical service innovations, an overwhelming majority of 91 percent had some reservations. More specifically, 48 percent thought the family doctor system 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. 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. The overwhelming majority of respondents, 95 percent, considered government officials did not receive the same treatment as average citizens. For example, 96 percent reported that the treatment was provided in special hospitals for them and 15 percent that this was done in facilities reserved for foreigners. Asked about the reaction of the people to this privileged status, 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.

These results were slightly different when respondents were asked how they themselves felt. 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 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.

Turning to medical tourism, an overwhelming majority, 98 percent, responded that tourists were not treated at the same facilities provided for Cubans; and an almost unanimous 99 percent indicated that those facilities were better than those available to Cu-

bans. 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.

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. Eighty-eight percent were resentful, of whom 73 percent 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.

As to the future, an overwhelming majority, 98 percent, 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, 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. Only a plurality of 49 percent support private medical practice, while a high proportion, 39 percent, reported they did not know. 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 pro-

vide 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 policy-makers will have to unravel.

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 lives, as well as how they impacted on the well-being of the population in general. Needless to say that 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. There are other changes

that have an impact on the population, in particular expansion of tourism, but that is dealt with in another segment of the survey.

The initial issue addressed dealt with the speed at which the reforms were introduced. The prevailing perception of respondents is that the introduction of these changes was too slow. Ninety percent of the respondents considered that the farmers markets should have been introduced at a faster rate, 77 percent thought the same in relation to the legalization of dollar circulation and 67 percent in relation to the joint ventures. In the case of the lessening of religious restrictions, 86 percent considered the changes were too slow.

When asked to rank the reforms in terms of their importance, 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, with a majority of respondents 55 percent expressing that they 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.

When asked about the popular response to the reforms, the respondents considered that an overwhelming 78 percent were in favor of 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 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.

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 sit-

uation and the quality of life, the answers reflect that they have had little impact on either one. With regard to food availability, 51 percent considered it had only maintained the same situation, while 35 saw an improvement; in medicines, 73 percent considered that the same situation continues to prevail; in clothing and shoes, 49 percent responded that the situation was the same, while 29 percent saw an improvement; for leisure activities, 64 percent saw the reforms as not changing too much, while 22 percent felt it was worse; and in transportation and housing the results were similar: 67 percent felt there has been no change, 25 percent felt the reforms had worsened the situation and only 6 percent perceived an improvement. To sum up, in terms of the overall quality of life, 71 percent saw not much change, 15 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, some questions were asked in relation to self-employment and joint venture employment. Only 25 percent of the respondents had engaged in self-employment and, of them, 60 percent had done it illegally. These figures 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. Of course, if the survey had included workers in agricultural cooperatives, then the proportion of private sector employment is likely to increase substantially. Since cooperatives are known to be an important black market source, this also means a substantial expansion of the number of people who are defying the law.

The results on the reasons for becoming self-employed are most telling: 51 percent consider it more profitable than other types of employment; 31 percent resort to it as a way to survive; 26 percent give a non-economic motivation—you feel freer of government control. In a reflection of Cubans' lack of fa-

miliarity with the issue of taxation, 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, the main reason given as an advantage, by 68 percent of respondents, is that you can obtain more of the goods to meet your daily needs, with 44 percent mentioning earning dollars and 41 percent meeting foreigners and solving problems. Only 20 percent mentioned job opportunities; survival more than a career seems to be in the mind of contemporary Cubans. 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. 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. Contrary to claims made by Canada, the European Union and, now, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, foreign private investors are perceived by these respondents as an extension of the regime's repressive apparatus.

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 *Guantanamera* and the failure of the United Nations 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, were in Cuba during the Pope's visit. A plurality of respondents, 47 percent, felt that the visit benefited the Church and the people, while the second largest cluster of responses, with 24 percent, felt that it also helped the regime's image. Only a small proportion, 11 percent, felt that only the regime benefited. In terms of the visit's impact on freedom of expression, the majority, 54 percent, felt that it increased it, while there was doubt on its duration, with 56 and 9 percent, respectively, feeling that it was temporary or will not last.

As to the reaction from non-Catholics and regime supporters, the overwhelming majority of the first, 74 percent, expressed approval, while 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.

Respondents were asked to rank their reaction to some of the messages brought by the Pope in terms of whether they thought they will have lasting value or not. The responses are listed in rank order according to the improbability of their having lasting value, which was the overwhelming choice of the majority of respondents in all cases (Table 1). That is, the majority was rather skeptical that the messages sent by the Pope in his various homilies and public statements will prevail.

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

Table 1.

Message	Improbability of Lasting
Freedom of association	92
Freedom of assembly	92
Freedom of expression	91
Abandon the practice of abortion	81
You should tell the truth	76
You should not have fear	76
Children should be allowed to have a religious education	70
The world should open to Cuba	58

also perceived as highly improbable because it will require a lessening of regime control.

Finally, the message that is perceived by respondents as most likely to perdure, although still with a majority negative response, is that the world open to Cuba. And, this is precisely what has happened. This was the only message of interest to the regime and, in what they called the “depopification” period, the regime blocked all the other messages, while focusing their propaganda on this last one. In the end, this message is also unlikely to perdure 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 initially gullible are finally awakening to the fact that 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 *Guantanamo*, it reveals the indifference of the population to these matters. Only 40 percent of the respondents had seen it. The movie 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 depart would enjoy seeing this critique of a regime they dislike, but less than half went to see it. And 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.

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 re-

sponses reflect the great divide in Cuban public opinion between regime sympathizers and opponents. An overwhelming 88 percent of regime supporters were perceived as happy with that decision, while 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, 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 did not find out.

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. The pervasive nature of the repression is evidenced by the presence respondents felt 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 perceived it through the acts of repudiation against others and in the restrictions in access to education if you are associated with an opposition stance by regime authorities. 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.

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. Table 2 lists the various behaviors, and the two columns register the answers for the two groups in percentages.

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 and 6 percent openly demonstrate their solidarity. Although some join in the per-

Table 2.

Behavior	General Population	Regime Supporters
Openly demonstrate their solidarity (or rejection for regime supporters)	06	(26)
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

secution 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, 26 percent openly demonstrate rejection of the victims, 20 criticize them, and 32 join in the persecution. Nevertheless, a significant 23 percent are considered by the respondents to stay in their homes and not get involved.

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 out about a series of news events. An overwhelming majority of the respondents have access to radio (97 percent) and TV (96 percent) in their homes. With regard to the workplace, there are few receivers available, 15 percent for radios and 7 percent for television.

The majority of respondents, 55 percent, report no interest in using either means for news. Only 12 percent report listening to news through radio and 35 percent through TV. Further, 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. 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 Martí. It should be taken into account when designing programs.

Radio Martí is the most popular radio station with the respondents, with 58 percent listenership among respondents. And, when the data was segregated according to number of hours of daily listening, the Radio Martí advantage became even greater. The two closest overseas stations from Miami are La Cubanísima and CMQ Radio, with 10 percent each; Radio Mambí 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 Martí 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 España and the BBC obtaining 6 and 5 percent respectively. In other words, even if overall listening to news in radio has a low priority among respondents, they overwhelmingly prefer Radio Martí over other overseas sources.

The situation is quite different in the case of TV Martí. Only 13 percent of the respondents reported watching it and of them 89 percent watched it at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. The main reason was insurmountable—96 percent of the respondents just could not pick the signal in their home TV sets. The best reception among signals of foreign networks was reported for Univisión, with 7 percent. These signals are picked up with home made antennas from TV satellite services offered by hotels to their guests.

As to written media, the most significant finding is that a majority of respondents did not read local newspapers, 55 percent, or foreign publications, 60 percent. In the later case, 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 percentage that responded to each source of information is given in Table 3.

There are some variations in the use of international media between those living in Havana and outside. This is a logical result in view of the fact that regime

Table 3.

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 U.S.-Cuba migratory agreements	64	32	02	09
The popular riots at the Malecón	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 the "13 of March" tugboat	18	60	02	43

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.

Some observations on how Cubans receive information can be made based on the survey results. News about 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 is the greatest in relation to events that interest the population directly. 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: (1) international sources of information, such as Radio Martí, are essential for Cubans to have access to information the Cuban government wishes to downplay; (2) 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 de-

veloped; and (3) family phone calls is the most underdeveloped means of ensuring the diffusion of information within Cuba.

On this last point, only a majority of respondents communicated by telephone at all with relatives abroad, with 41 percent reporting no telephone communications. This may reflect that many of the respondents did not have any close relatives abroad or that they did not have close relations. An overwhelming majority of the telephone 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

DISSIDENCE

The new arrivals were 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.

The respondents indicated 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. 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 United States (3 percent), and U.S. policy towards Cuba (1 percent). International support for Cuba, the future of dissidents, and nationalism all get only 1 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. With regard to the most important issues, the priority given to political changes increase to 54 percent, while economic changes decline to 32 percent. The other issues are given low, single-digit priority.

When asked frontally whether or not they consider themselves dissidents, a small majority of 51 percent answered in the affirmative. Yet, when asked whether they knew dissidents, 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 Martha 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 other results. For example, 65 percent of the responses to the question of 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 who responded that they were 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.) 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 keeping opposition organization at the lowest possible level.

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 do not reflect this new important development.

A similar comment can be made in relation to the results regarding dissident leaders. Not one of these leaders was recognized by a majority of respondents, and the "Four" were included in the list. It is certain that that situation has changed significantly as a result of their trial. Finally, the responses 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.

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 respondents' 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 U.S. Federal agencies against them. These individuals have developed avoidance mechanisms in Cuba to stay out of trouble and these personal ques-

tions could make them feel uneasy. For example, the experience with Radio Martí surveys revealed that one of the fears expressed by those interviewed was that, shall there be a change in U.S. policy towards Cuba, the Immigration and Naturalization Service 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 United States. 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.

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 (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution). The remaining organizations elicited no responses or lower digits. Eighty-one percent reported attending meetings of such organizations more than a year ago. 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. 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, reflecting the fact that the CDRs are the most pervasive instrument of repression of the regime, being active at the block level.

The final set of questions under this section aimed at determining the relevancy of the labor movement. A significant majority, 69 percent of the respondents, said they did not belong to the labor confederation.

An overwhelming majority of 97 percent considered that belonging to a union did not bring any benefits to the workers. This is really a sad commentary on the futility of a labor organization.

On the emerging movement of independent labor unions, a majority of 61 percent did not know whether that will be of any help for workers seeking a political change, while 34 percent thought that it could help. A significant majority of 79 percent thought that the official labor confederation, the CTC, was unlikely to help bring a political change and only a minuscule 2 percent thought that could happen. An overwhelming majority of 96 percent did not know any independent labor leader. 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.

RANKING REGIME LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Respondents were asked to rank a menu of selected regime leaders and organizations. They were asked to indicate the most hated, loved, respected and feared for each. Table 4 reports the results; 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.

Table 4.

Regime Leader	(-) Index	(+) Index	Unknown
Fidel Castro	93	04	01
Raúl Castro	93	02	01
Juan Escalona	82	03	07
Roberto Robaina	81	03	03
Ricardo Alarcón	78	10	03
Abelardo Colomé	76	03	12
Ulises Rosales del Toro	71	03	16
Osmany Cienfuegos	71	08	11
José Machado Ventura	66	04	20
Carlos Lage	64	19	07
Ramón Balaguer	63	05	21
José Luis Rodríguez	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. It should be recognized, of course, that their behavior during the final days of the regime could significantly change these perceptions.

- Fidel and Raúl 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's. 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 Alarcón, 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 Colomé, as Minister of Interior, is likely to enhance his negative ratings by associating 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 repres-

sive 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.³
- José 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.
- Ramón 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, as he is a background figure.
- José Luis Rodríguez, 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, Rodríguez may eventually be dismissed like Robaina.

As can be appreciated, the present regime leadership has such high negative ratings and such low positive

3. Cienfuegos was "liberated" from his post on August 30, 1999. No new duties were announced for him at the time and no reason given for his dismissal.

ratings that it is 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. In Table 5, only two ratings are given, the negative index and the positive index. The negative index consolidates most hated and most feared responses, while the positive index incorporates most loved and most respected. To summarize the responses in Table 5:

- 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), Raúl'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)—also obtain also highly negative ratings.
- The political agencies—the legislature (72) and the local governments (66)—receive very negative ratings, although the latter, 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.

Table 5.

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

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.

TOURISM AND *JINETERAS*

The survey also assessed 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 326,000 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 contributing 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 respects. 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 re-

sponse of the Cuban population regarding this emerging industry.

The majority of the respondents, 54 percent, perceived a favorable popular reaction toward foreign tourists, 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. The most popular nationalities of foreign tourists 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. 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.

As to the advantages in being a foreigner in Cuba, a significant majority of 88 percent of the responses consider that they enjoy more rights than nationals. A plurality of 48 percent linked it to the easily available sexual tourism, while 37 percent felt the attraction was the low costs of 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.

With regard to the problems facing tourists, 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. For Cubans, tourists are exposed to the same problems they face, although with less intensity: crime and corruption and repression, if they make a mistake of threading in forbidden territory.

Moving to the reactions of Cubans to the preferential treatment enjoyed by tourists, a significant majority

of 85 percent resent it; 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. 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 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.

Turning to the more emotionally loaded issue of the *jineteras*, a significant majority of respondents, 80 percent, indicated to have known *jineteras*. A significant majority of 74 percent reported knowing more than ten *jineteras*, 11 percent knew from five to ten, 10 percent between two and five and 6 percent reported knowing only one. 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.

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 about the *jineteras*. The responses to several questions are consolidated in Table 6. The different reactions reveal 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 sympathetic 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 U.S. embargo for this unpleasant outcome.

Table 6.

Reaction	Respondents (percent)	Regime Opponents (percent)	Regime Supporters (percent)
Extreme hostility	01	01	46
Contempt but not 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 FUTURE

To explore perceptions of the future, respondents 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.

An overwhelming majority, 88 percent, are convinced that both, economic and political, changes are necessary. This majority is convinced 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.

Confirming the views expressed in a previous section of the survey about the regime leadership, 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.

As a possible explanation for the prevailing catatonic state of Cuban political dynamics, when asked the same question about the dissidence leadership, an overwhelming 75 percent answered they did not know. In this case, there were more mentions of individual leaders having such potential, with Vladimiro Roca rating number one with 13 percent and Gustavo Arcos with 12, and three, Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, Oswaldo Payá and Martha Beatriz Roque obtaining 5 percent each. 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, René Gómez Manzano and Félix Bonné Carcassés. And Oscar Elías 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, 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. 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. Were the economic situation in Cuba 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) than non-whites (20 percent). The results reveal that those outside Havana are more likely to go back if the economic situation improves. The response changes when the question posed is: If Cuba were to establish a democratic government, but were to retain its economic problems, would you return to the island? Confirming that those who leave Cuba are more motivated by lack of freedom and repression, a much smaller proportion of 32 percent said they are not likely to go back while 37 percent stated that it was probable or highly probable that they would return. 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 in the island, their relatives were still likely to want to migrate to the United States. The "don't 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.

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 U.S. offer was attractive to Cubans and what was their opinion with respect to a national dialogue among all stakeholders in the future of Cuba.

Responding 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 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 regarding system 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. 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, respondents reveal an overwhelming rejection of lack of liberty and fear of repression (85 percent); lack of sincerity in personal

relationships (61 percent); corruption and privileges of regime leaders (59 percent); lack of food and privileges for foreigners (58 percent each); lack of transportation (48 percent) and of religious freedom (46 percent); and 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 discomforts. 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.

When asked whether they favored retaining some of the changes introduced by the revolution, 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, 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.

As to what events would have to happen for real changes to occur, 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 would trigger the desired changes and an insignificant 7 percent consider that lifting the U.S. embargo would result in real changes. This reflects that the respon-

dents, 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, 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 U.S. Government released, over the signature of President Clinton, a message to the Cuban people detailing the support the United States was prepared to provide for a democratic transition. The full document was broadcast over Radio Martí several times 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; and Ricardo Alarcón, the president of the legislature, spent several evenings challenging the document page by page over national television networks.

Despite such extensive and high level coverage, an overwhelming majority of respondents (84 percent) had not heard anyone talk about this document. The survey results regarding this question 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 United States Government.

Analyzing in more detail the responses reported by those who had heard about it, we find 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 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 on whether the United States would deliver the actual amount of US\$8 billion. Only one percent of regime opponents are reported to have questioned the level of financing resources mentioned, while 32 percent of regime supporters are reported to have thought it was doubtful it could reach such high levels.

A majority of respondents (53 percent) perceive that Cubans accept the condition placed by the United States 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 that explains the low percentage of approval reported and the high rate of don't know answers (39 percent).

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. While 58 percent favor such dialogue, 15 percent oppose it.