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# Just One in Four Urban Cubans Satisfied With Personal Freedoms

But they are more likely to describe Cuban people as "equalitarian" than "democratic"

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## GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

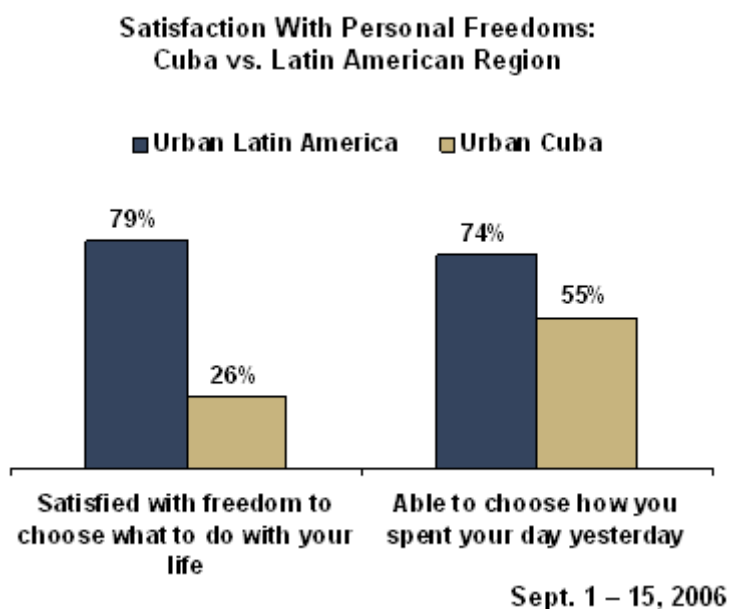
PRINCETON, NJ -- Cuban President Fidel Castro's illness has generated much speculation about possible social and political changes after his death. Castro's brother, Raul, has been Cuba's acting president since late July and would succeed his brother if Fidel does not recover. Nevertheless, preparations for the transition of political power appear to be underway.

Results from the recent Gallup Poll of Cuba, conducted with 1,000 residents of Havana and Santiago (see Survey Methods) portray a populace that is profoundly unhappy with its lack of personal freedom. However, the data also suggest that any changes are likely to take place within the existing political system.

## Cubans Split on Leadership, but Want More Freedom

When asked about the country's current leadership, urban Cubans were split fairly evenly: 49% said they approve, while 39% disapproved, and 13% did not offer a response.

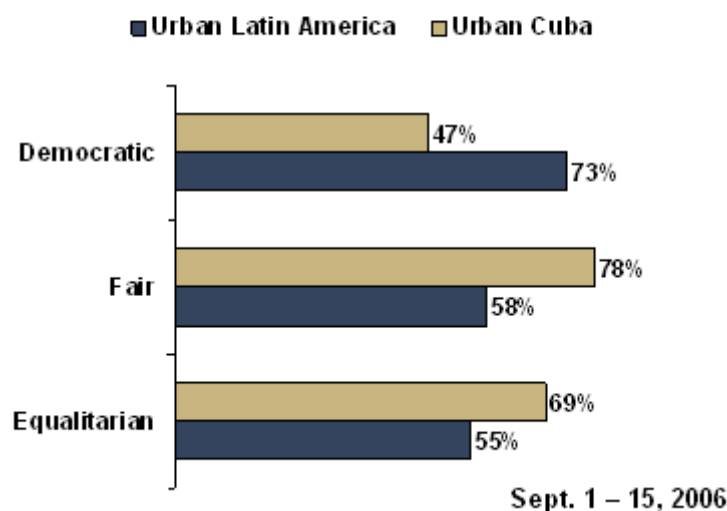
However, they were far more unified in their dissatisfaction with their level of personal freedom. Only one in four Cuban respondents (26%) said they are satisfied with their freedom to choose what to do with their lives, easily the lowest figure in Gallup database of more than 100 countries. The Cuban figure stands in stark contrast to the regional result of 79% across urban residents of 20 Latin American countries. A more specific question on whether respondents were able to choose how they spent their time the day prior to the interview also produced a significant, though less extreme, difference.



Though they want more freedom, the majority of Cuban respondents, having been born in Castro's era, appear to have internalized the socialist values of the regime he established after the 1959 revolution. Asked whether a series of adjectives describe the Cuban people, respondents were much more likely to say Cubans are "fair" (78%) and "equalitarian" (69%) than they were to say Cubans are "democratic" (47%).

### Personal Traits: Cuba vs. Latin American Region

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



### U.S. Leadership Disliked, Though Many See U.S. as Ideal Trade Partner

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

Their desire for the economic activity that would result from increased trade does not, however, imply that Cubans are warming toward U.S.-style democracy or foreign policy. Just 14% of respondents said they approve of U.S. leadership, significantly lower even than the regional finding of 25% for all of Latin America. In line with their ideological stance, Cuban respondents were far more likely to say they approve of the leadership in leftist nations with mixed economies: 58% approve of Brazil's leadership, 59% approve of China's leadership, and 56% approve of Venezuela's leadership.

### Survey Methods

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

For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum error attributable to sampling and other random effects is  $\pm 3$  percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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**SOURCE:** Gallup <https://news.gallup.com/poll/25915/just-one-four-urban-cubans-satisfied-personal-freedoms.aspx>

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