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# A RARE LOOK INSIDE CUBAN SOCIETY: A NEW SURVEY OF CUBAN PUBLIC OPINION

## INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Cuba is one of the United States' nearest neighbors, but tight restrictions on the movement of information and people over the past 60 years means we know little about Cubans' opinions about their society. A new survey conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago provides a rare glimpse inside Cuban society to understand its citizens' daily experiences, their attitudes, and the goals they aspire to for themselves and their country.

After decades of economic sanctions and travel bans established by both countries during the Cold War, former U.S. President Barack Obama announced a normalization of diplomatic relations with Cuba in December 2014. The two countries have not had formal diplomatic relations since the U.S. Embassy in Havana and the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC, each closed in 1961, and these restrictions have meant that few Cubans have legally traveled to America, and few Americans have visited Cuba, over the past 60 years.

The nationally representative survey, conducted in the fall of 2016, reveals that Cubans are excited to see these restrictions come down. Most believe a normalization of diplomatic relations with the United States will be a positive change for Cuba. They are hopeful it will lead to expanded economic opportunities and a greater ability to visit the United States. Although generally positive about the impacts of normalizing relations with the United States, Cubans do express some concerns about the impact this openness will have on Cuban culture.

### Five Things You Should Know

About the NORC Poll on Cuban society

Among all Cuban adults...

- 1) Fifty-five percent say the normalization of relations between the governments in Cuba and the United States will be mostly good for Cuba.
- 2) Sixty-five percent say there should be more private ownership of business and industry, and 56 percent say they would like to start their own business over the next five years.
- 3) Many feel stuck in the current economic climate. Just 13 percent describe the economy as good and 46 percent say it's poor.
- 4) Fifty-one percent report that crime is a very serious problem. Poverty (41 percent), lack of internet access (41 percent), and corruption (38 percent) are also cited as serious issues.
- 5) Over half say they would like to move away from Cuba if given the chance. Of those, nearly 7 in 10 say they would want to go to the United States.

Cuban attitudes toward the economy, both present and future, are generally pessimistic. Although there is some private enterprise, Cuba's state-controlled economy means that the vast majority of sectors are owned and operated by the regime. Currently, few Cubans perceive their economy as excellent or good, and most say the situation has not changed recently. Most Cubans also believe the country's economic situation will either remain the same or deteriorate in coming years.

The survey also reveals that Cubans want to see fundamental changes to the economy, with a majority saying there should be more private enterprise, and many with a personal goal of owning their own business. Additionally, fully 95 percent prioritize a high level of economic growth as an important goal for the country, and more than two-thirds view competition in the marketplace as a positive force for this growth.

The flow of objective and unbiased news and information coming in and out of Cuba is limited, as private ownership of mass media is prohibited.<sup>1</sup> Although few Cubans access foreign media sources, the survey reveals access to be a consistent characteristic differentiating attitudes within the Cuban population. Those who access foreign media tend to be younger and more avid news consumers overall. In terms of their attitudes, they are more positive about the national economy and their personal financial situations. They are more likely to be critical of some aspects of Cuban society, for example saying pollution, unemployment, terrorism, access to medical care, and access to education are serious problems for Cuba. And Cubans who access foreign media are also more likely to set aspirational goals such as traveling abroad, starting their own business, and buying a car or home.

Funded and conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, the survey featured a national random route-sample of adults 18 years and older in Cuba and yielded in-person interviews of 840 adults with a main field period between October 3 and November 26, 2016.

Key findings from the poll include:

- Many Cubans feel stuck in the current economic climate. Overall, just 13 percent of Cubans describe the condition of the Cuban economy today as good or excellent, 35 percent say it is fair, and 46 percent say it's poor or very poor.
- Few Cubans think the economy is going to improve anytime soon. Three in 10 say the condition of the economy is going to get better over the next three years, 8 percent say it is going to get worse, and 47 percent say the economy will stay about the same.
- Cubans have a slightly more positive view of the state of their family's finances, though few anticipate improvement in the coming years. Eighteen percent of Cubans rate the current condition of their family's finances as good or excellent, 57 percent rate their finances as fair, and 24 percent rate their finances as poor or very poor. Nearly 6 in 10 expect their finances will stay the same in the future, and two-thirds say they haven't changed over the past three years.
- Crime is seen as the most serious issue facing Cuba today, with 51 percent of Cubans reporting that it is an extremely or very serious problem. Another 4 in 10 say that poverty (41 percent), lack of internet access (41 percent), and corruption (38 percent) are each serious issues in Cuba.
- In day-to-day life, many Cubans proceed with caution in placing trust in others and in expressing themselves publicly. Just 21 percent say they can always express themselves freely, while 76 percent say they must be careful in what they say sometimes.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/cuba#eea21f>

- Fifty-five percent of Cubans overall say the normalization of relations between the governments in Cuba and the United States will be mostly good for Cuba, while 3 percent say it will be mostly bad and 26 percent say it will have no impact. Thirteen percent aren't sure what impact the easing of diplomatic relations will have.
- Looking ahead, Cubans would like to see the government focus on economic growth and maintaining stability over the next 10 years. Fully 95 percent of Cubans say having a high level of economic growth is an extremely or very important goal. Nearly as many (87 percent) say it is very or extremely important that Cuba prioritize maintaining stability over the next 10 years.
- Roughly two-thirds of Cubans (65 percent) say there should be more private ownership of business and industry, while 29 percent say there should be more government ownership.
- Many Cubans have entrepreneurial goals; more than half (56 percent) say they would like to start their own business over the next five years.
- Sixty-eight percent see competition within the marketplace as positive because it stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas. One-quarter say competition is harmful and brings out the worst in people.
- More than 8 in 10 Cubans say tourism to Cuba should be expanded. Most believe expanded tourism will improve the country's economy and create more jobs. When it comes to potential downsides, more Cubans worry about the impact on the country's culture than worry about the impact on crime.
- Three years after Cuba eased some travel restrictions and eliminated the "white card" exit visa that required government permission to leave the country, 2 of 3 Cubans have a goal of traveling abroad in the next five years. Among those who want to travel, a large majority (81 percent) want to visit the United States.
- When it comes to other countries, Cubans are very positive about China and the United States but are more likely to feel negatively toward neighboring Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.
- Over half of Cubans say they would like to move away from Cuba if given the chance. Of those who would leave, nearly 7 in 10 say they would want to go to the United States. In a nationwide poll of American adults conducted in February 2017, 25 percent of Americans said they would move away from the United States if given the chance. Of those Americans that want to leave, none list Cuba as their preferred destination.
- Most Cubans get their news from state-owned television stations and newspapers, Cuban radio, and family or friends. Just 1 in 4 use foreign media sources. But, even controlling for other demographic and socioeconomic factors, those Cubans who access foreign media are more positive about the national economy and their personal financial situations, more likely to be critical of some aspects of Cuban society, and more likely to set aspirational goals such as traveling abroad, starting their own business, and buying a car or home.

## I. CUBAN ECONOMY

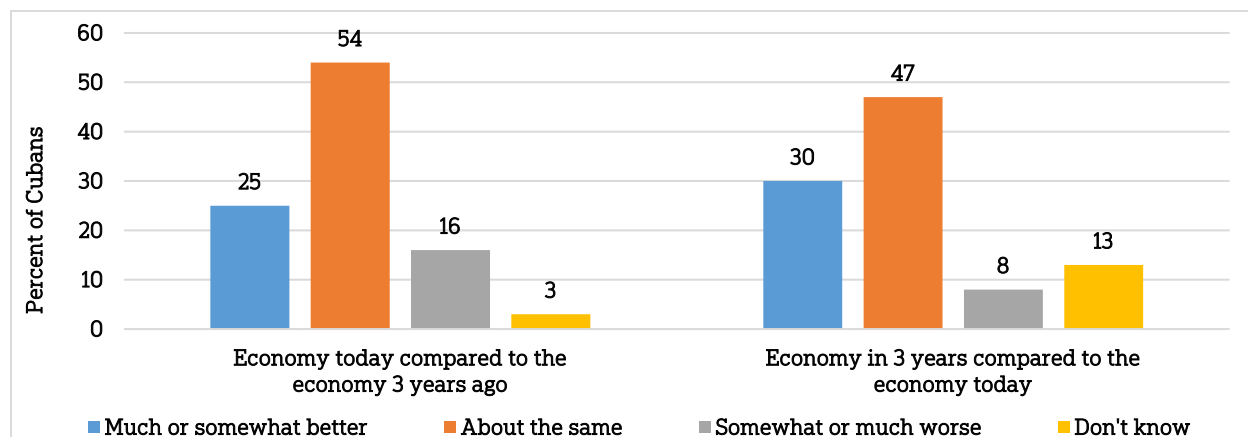
**Many Cubans feel stuck in the current economic climate; nearly half say the economy is in poor condition, most say it hasn't changed in the past three years, and few think it will improve in the coming years.**

Overall, just 13 percent of Cubans describe the condition of the Cuban economy today as good or excellent, 35 percent say it is fair, and 46 percent say it's poor or very poor. A majority of Cubans say not much has changed for the country economically over the past three years.

Older Cubans are about twice as likely as those in younger age cohorts to have a positive outlook on the current economy. Twenty-three percent of Cubans age 65 and older say the economy is excellent or good compared with 1 in 10 younger Cubans.

Furthermore, few Cubans think the economy is going to improve anytime soon. Three in 10 say the condition of the economy is going to get better over the next three years, 8 percent say it is going to get worse, and 47 percent say the economy will stay about the same.

**A majority of Cubans say the condition of the economy hasn't changed in the past three years.**

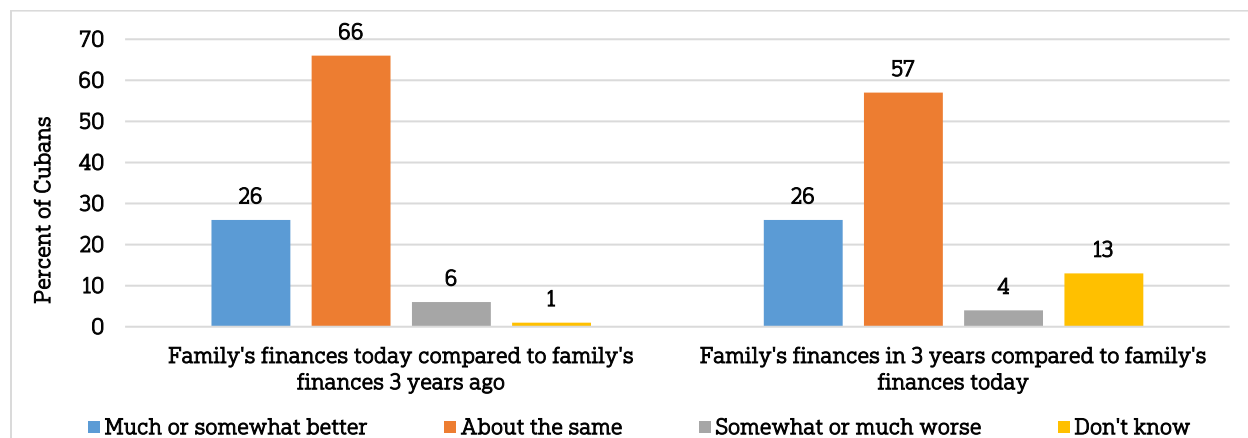


Questions: Compared to three years ago, would you say that the condition of this country's economy is better, worse, or about the same today as it was then?

Looking ahead three years from now, do you think the condition of this country's economy will be better, worse, or about the same then as it is today?

Cubans have a slightly more positive view of the current state of their family's finances, though few anticipate improvement in the coming years. Eighteen percent of Cubans rate the current condition of their family's finances as excellent or good, 57 percent rate their finances as fair, and 24 percent rate their finances as poor or very poor. Nearly 6 in 10 expect their finances will stay the same in the future, and two-thirds say they've stayed about the same over the past three years.

**Most Cubans don't anticipate change to their personal financial situation in the coming years.**



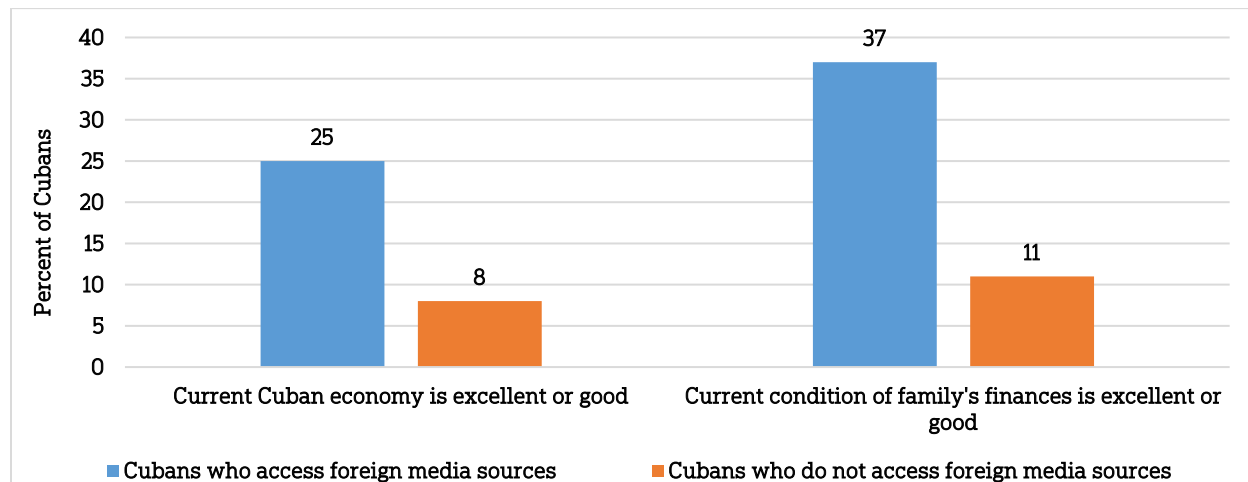
Questions: Compared to three years ago, would you say that the condition of your family's finances is better, worse, or about the same today as it was then?

Looking ahead three years from now, do you think the condition of your family's finances will be better, worse, or about the same then as it is today?

Even controlling for other demographic and socioeconomic factors, Cubans who access foreign media—such as foreign news sources, radio stations based outside of Cuba, or the internet—express a more positive outlook on the Cuban economy and their own finances than those who get their news only from Cuban television, newspapers, radio, or their family and friends.<sup>2</sup> Those who access foreign media are three times as likely as those who do not to say the current economy is excellent or good (25 percent vs. 8 percent), and nearly twice as likely to say the economy will be excellent or good three years from now (46 percent vs. 24 percent). When it comes to their personal finances, Cubans who access foreign media are nearly four times as likely as those who don't to say their current finances are excellent or good (37 percent vs. 11 percent), twice as likely to say their finances are much or somewhat better than they were three years ago (43 percent vs. 21 percent), and nearly twice as likely to say their future finances will be excellent or good (37 percent vs. 22 percent).

<sup>2</sup> Among Cubans interviewed, 224 said at least one of their main sources of news about what is going on in Cuba and in the world is either a foreign news source, radio stations based in other countries, or the internet; 616 said they do not get news from any one of these sources. Additional information can be found in the section, "Most Cubans get their news from state-owned television stations and newspapers, Cuban radio, and family or friends. Just 1 in 4 use foreign media sources."

**Cubans who access foreign media sources have a more positive outlook on the current state of the Cuban economy as well as on their family's finances.**

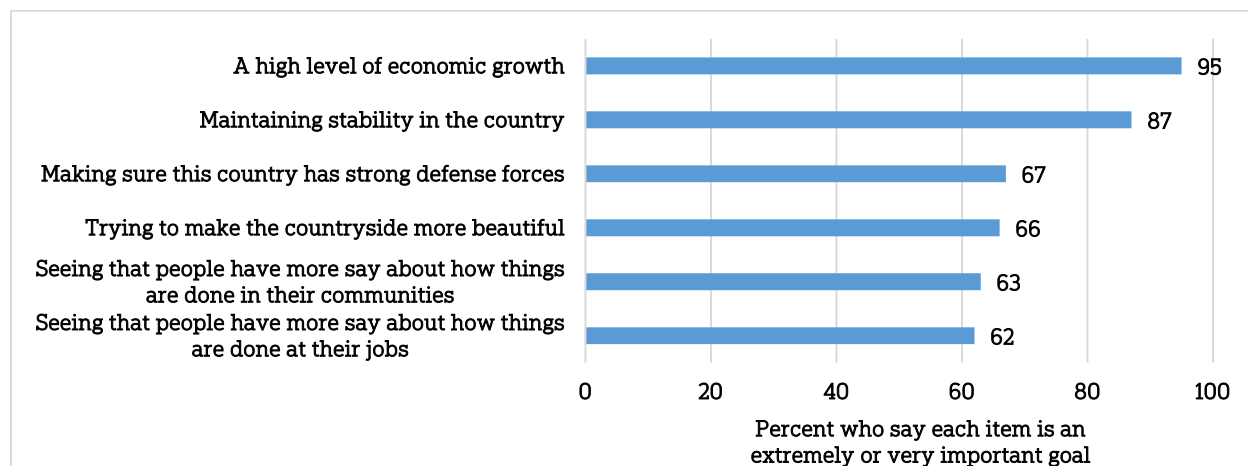


Questions: How would you rate the condition of this country's economy today? Is it excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor? How would you rate the condition of your family's finances today? Are they excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?

**More than 9 in 10 Cubans say economic growth is an important goal for the country. Nearly as many say maintaining stability in the country is important.**

Despite the sour economic view, just over half of Cubans (53 percent) say things in the country are headed in the right direction. Looking ahead, Cubans would like to see the government focus on economic growth and maintaining stability over the next 10 years. Fully 95 percent of Cubans say having a high level of economic growth is an extremely or very important goal. Nearly as many (87 percent) say it is very or extremely important that Cuba make it a goal to maintain stability in the country over the next 10 years. Two-thirds of Cubans say it is important that Cuba make sure it has a strong national defense. Another two-thirds say it is important that Cuba prioritize beautifying the countryside. Fewer, though still a majority, say it is very or extremely important for Cuba to make it a goal for people to have more to say in how things are done at their jobs (62 percent) or in their communities (63 percent).

**Achieving great economic growth is of utmost concern to most Cubans.**



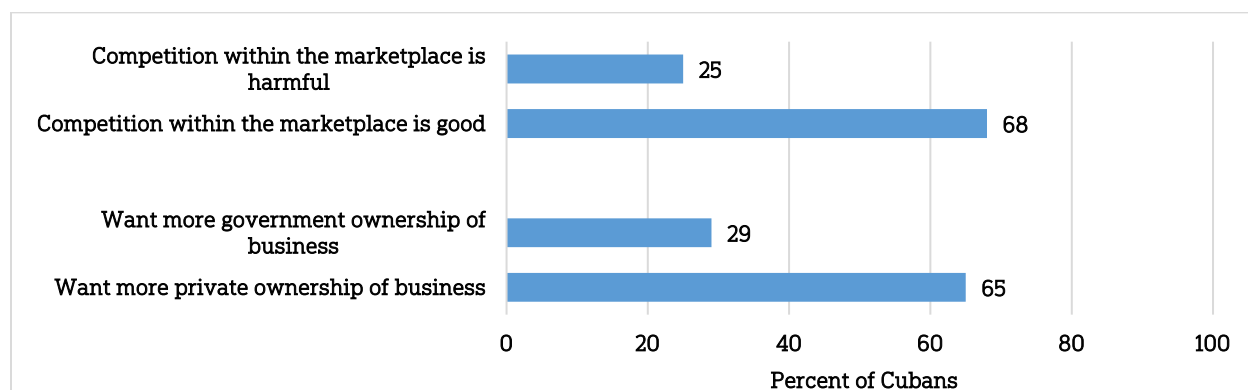
Question: People sometimes talk about what the goals of the country should be for the next 10 years. How important are each of the following goals to you personally?

Older Cubans are more likely than those who are younger to say national defense is an extremely or very important priority (76 percent of those age 65 or older vs. 62 percent of those age 18 to 29). Cubans who access foreign media sources are more likely than those who do not to say that it should be an extremely or very important priority for people to have more say in their work (71 percent vs. 59 percent).

**A majority of Cubans say there should be more private enterprise, and many have a personal goal of owning their own business.**

Roughly two-thirds of Cubans (65 percent) say there should be more private ownership of business and industry, while 29 percent say there should be more government ownership. Many Cubans have entrepreneurial goals themselves; more than half (56 percent) say they would like to start their own business over the next five years. Sixty-eight percent see competition within the marketplace as positive because it stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas. One-quarter say competition is harmful and brings out the worst in people.

**A majority of Cubans want a more capitalistic approach to the economy.**



Questions: Which comes closer to your view? Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas. Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people. Should there be more private ownership of business and industry, or should there be more government ownership of business and industry?

Younger Cubans are more open to the idea of increased private ownership of business (73 percent of those age 18 to 39 vs. 62 percent of those age 40-59, 52 percent of those age 60-64, and 61 percent of those age 65 or older). Those who access foreign sources of media (79 percent vs. 60 percent) are also more open to this idea.

Nearly half of all Cubans don't mind the economic inequality that exists in Cuba; they believe it incentivizes people to work harder. Forty-two percent say instead that incomes should be made more equal.

**The vast majority of Cubans would welcome more tourists to the country, seeing a net positive for the economy and for workers.**

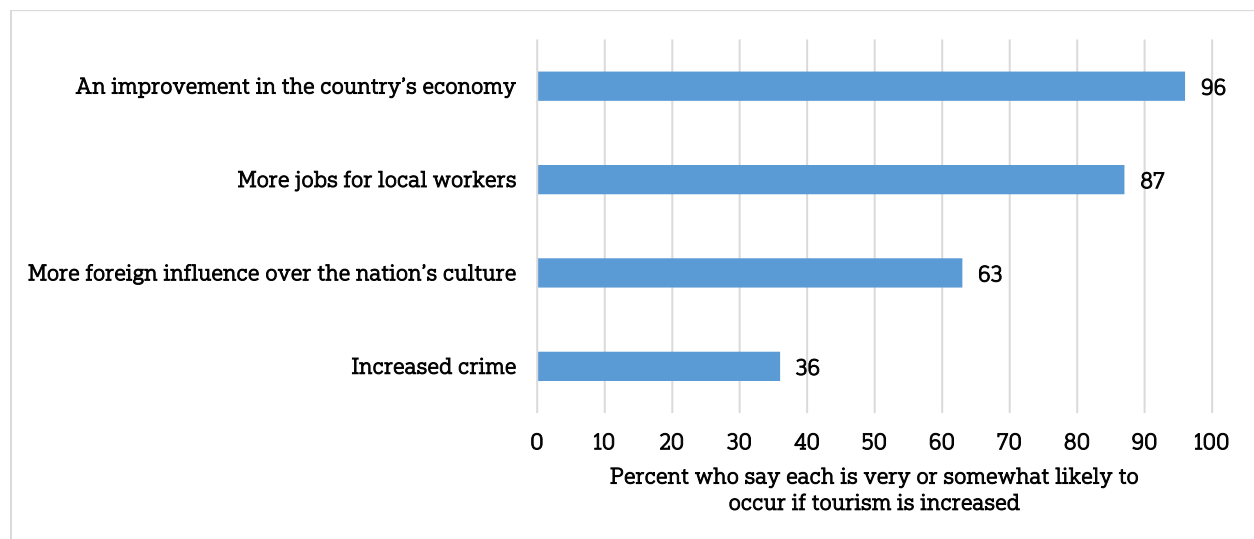
Eight in 10 Cubans say tourism to Cuba should be expanded. Most believe expanded tourism will improve the country's economy and create more jobs, and more worry it will impact Cuban culture than worry that it will increase crime.

Eighty-four percent of Cubans say Cuba should encourage more tourism, 3 percent say tourism should be limited, and 13 percent say tourism to the country shouldn't change.

Most Cubans believe an increase in tourism will be positive for the economy as a whole as well as for local workers. The vast majority of Cubans (96 percent) believe that it's very or somewhat likely that an increase in tourism will improve the country's economy. Eighty-seven percent say it's very or somewhat likely that increased tourism will create more jobs for local workers, 4 percent say it's somewhat or very unlikely, and 9 percent say it's neither likely nor unlikely that tourism will increase jobs.

When it comes to potential downsides, more Cubans worry about the impact on the country's culture than worry about the impact on crime. Sixty-three percent of Cubans say it is likely that tourism expansion in Cuba will result in more foreign influence over the nation's culture, while fewer, 36 percent, say it will increase crime.

**When it comes to expanding tourism, Cubans worry more about foreign influence over culture than about an increase in crime.**



**Question: If tourism in Cuba were expanded, how likely or unlikely would it be for each of the following to happen?**

Those who rely only on Cuban media or their family and friends for news about Cuba are less likely than those who use foreign media to say it's very or somewhat likely that an increase in tourism to Cuba will result in more jobs (85 percent vs. 92 percent), but also in more crime (31 percent vs. 52 percent) and greater foreign influence over culture (59 percent vs. 74 percent).

## II. CUBAN LIFE

**Over half of Cubans say they would like to move away from Cuba if given the chance. Of those who would leave, nearly 7 in 10 say they would want to go to the United States.**

If given the opportunity, 54 percent of Cubans say they would like to leave Cuba and live in another country. Those with family living abroad are more likely than those whose relatives all live in Cuba to want to move (64 percent vs. 37 percent). Younger Cubans are also more likely to want to move away, with 8 in 10 adults age 18-29 who would like to leave compared with 22 percent of those 65 and older.



Of those who would like to move away, 67 percent say they would most like to go to the United States to live. Another 11 percent say they would like to go to Spain, and 8 percent say they would like to go to Italy. Fewer than 6 percent say they would like to go to Canada (5 percent), France (2 percent), or Venezuela (1 percent). Five percent say they would go somewhere else.

For comparison, NORC asked the same question of American adults on a nationwide poll in February 2017.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-five percent of Americans said they would move away from the United States if given the chance. Of those that want to leave, none list Cuba as their preferred destination. Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and a variety of European and Nordic nations top the list of Americans' preferred destinations.

**Crime, poverty, and lack of internet access are most often seen by Cubans as serious problems facing the country today. Few see access to education or medical care as issues.**

With the high proportion of Cubans who would like to leave the country, it is not surprising that many Cubans do see some serious problems. Crime is seen as the most serious issue facing Cuba today, with about half (51 percent) of Cubans reporting that it is an extremely or very serious problem. Another 4 in 10 say that poverty (41 percent), lack of internet access (41 percent), and corruption (38 percent) are each serious issues in their country.

Unemployment is a more moderate concern to Cubans, with 29 percent seeing it as a serious problem. Younger Cubans, who have seen the youth unemployment rate rise from 3.5 percent in 2008 to 7.1 percent in 2014,<sup>4</sup> perceive unemployment to be a more serious problem than do older adults.

About 1 in 4 say pollution (26 percent) and drug abuse (25 percent) are extremely or very serious problems.

Few Cubans say that access to education (4 percent) or medical care (4 percent), both provided as public services by the Cuban government, are serious problems. Just 8 percent see terrorism as a serious issue.

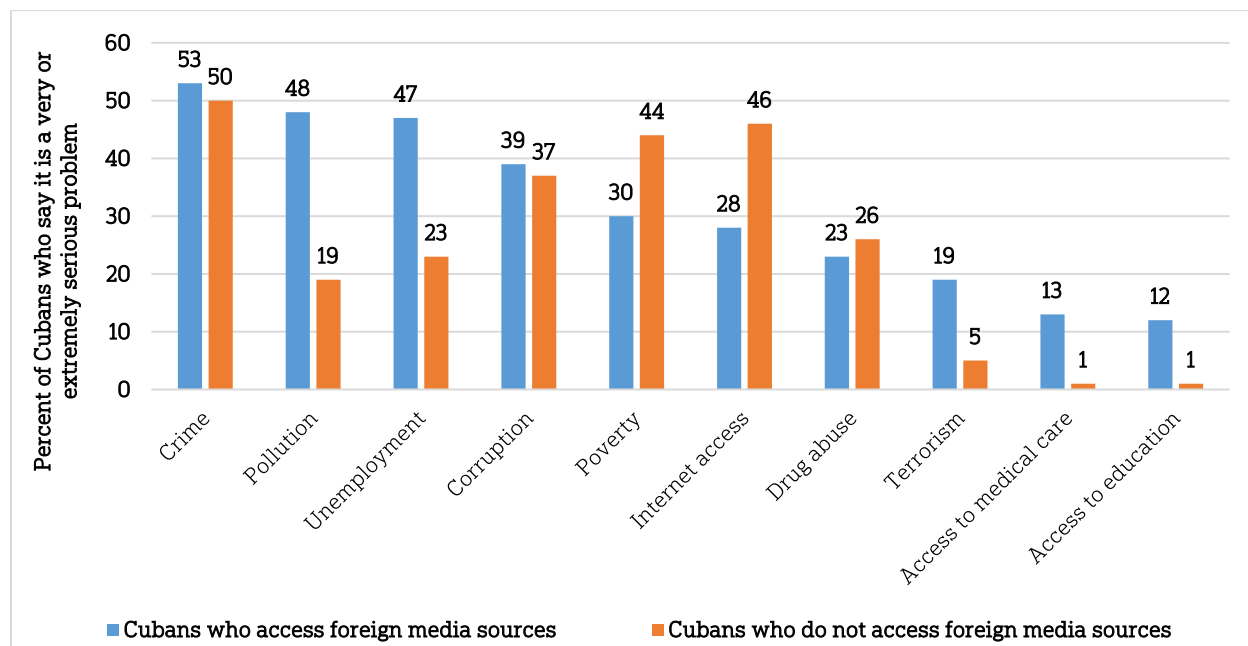
However, those who get news through foreign media sources view the severity of some problems differently than those who rely solely on Cuban media. Cubans who consume foreign media are less likely to see poverty and internet access as serious problems, but they perceive unemployment, pollution, terrorism, access to education, and access to medical care to be more serious issues than those who get news only from Cuban sources. Crime, corruption, and drug abuse are viewed similarly by both groups.

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<sup>3</sup> The following questions were included in the February 2017 AmeriSpeak Omnibus with data collected February 16-20, 2017 with 1,004 adults. "If you were given the opportunity, would you like to leave the United States and live in another country or not?" If answered "yes" the following open-ended question was asked, "In which country would you most like to go to live?"

<sup>4</sup> <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SLUEM1524ZSCUB>

**Cubans who access foreign media sources perceive many of the problems facing the country to be more serious.**



Question: How serious of a problem are each of the following in this country today? For each one, please tell me if it is an extremely serious problem, very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious of a problem. How about...?

**Few Cubans believe they have the freedom to express themselves openly, and many do not readily trust others.**

In day-to-day life, many Cubans proceed with caution in placing trust in others and in expressing themselves publicly. Just 21 percent of all Cubans say they can always express themselves freely, while 76 percent say they must be careful in what they say sometimes. Cuban concerns about free expression are similar to those of the Russian people. In The AP-NORC Center’s 2014 study of public opinion in Russia, 14 percent of Russians said people are generally free to say anything they want about politics, while 8 in 10 said they need to be at least somewhat cautious about what they say.<sup>5</sup>

By the same token, just 18 percent of Cubans say most people can be trusted, while 78 percent say you need to be careful in dealing with people. Trust is only slightly higher in the United States than in Cuba, with 3 in 10 Americans who responded in the 2014 General Social Survey saying that they can trust most people.<sup>6</sup> Another 65 percent of Americans say caution is usually necessary, and 5 percent say it depends on the situation.

<sup>5</sup> The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2015. Public Opinion in Russia: Russians’ Attitudes on Foreign Affairs and Social Issues. <http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/public-opinion-in-russia-russians-attitudes-on-foreign-affairs-and-social-issues.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> Smith, Tom W, Peter Marsden, Michael Hout, and Jibum Kim. General Social Surveys, 1972-2014 [machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, Tom W. Smith; Co-Principal Investigator, Peter V. Marsden; Co-Principal Investigator, Michael Hout; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. -NORC ed.- Chicago: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer and distributor]. Data accessed from the GSS Data Explorer website at [gssdataexplorer.norc.org](http://gssdataexplorer.norc.org).

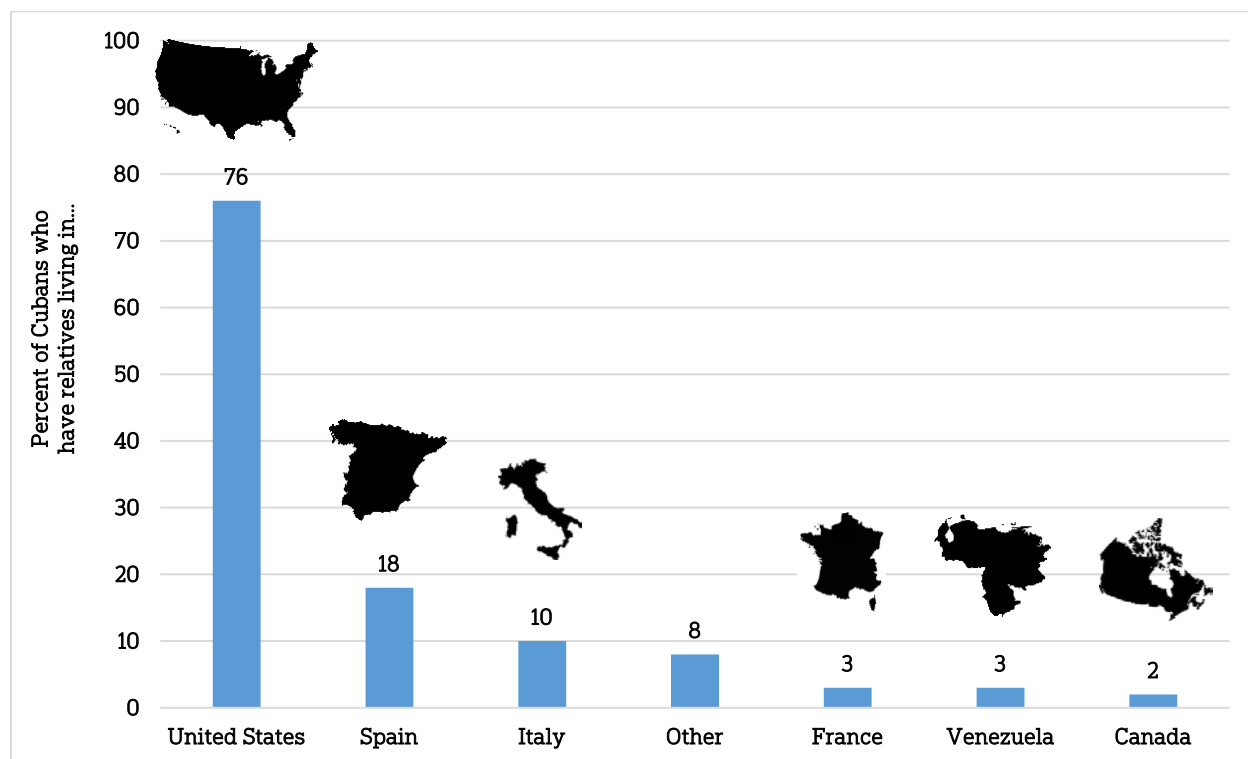
## Most Cubans have relatives living abroad. About half receive remittances from family or friends outside of Cuba.

In several waves of migration since the late 1950s, many Cubans have immigrated to other countries, including over 2 million people of Cuban origin currently residing in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, 64 percent of Cubans say they have relatives living abroad.

Of those with relatives in other countries, 3 in 4 (76 percent) have family members who live in the United States, fewer than 2 in 10 have family in Spain, and 1 in 10 have family in Italy. Fewer than 5 percent have relatives who live in Canada, France, or Venezuela. Eight percent have family members who live in other, non-specified countries.

Many Cubans with relatives abroad stay connected to them, with over half (55 percent) communicating with their relatives abroad at least once a month. Nearly half of all Cubans receive money from friends and family abroad, including half (53 percent) who get money from a sibling and a quarter (24 percent) who receive money from children.

### Three in 4 Cubans with relatives in other countries have family members who live in the United States.



Questions: Do you personally have family members living in another country right now or not? In which countries do you have family members living? Please select all that apply.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2015. 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_15\\_1YR\\_DP05&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_1YR_DP05&prodType=table)

## Two-thirds of Cubans would like to travel abroad in the near future, and over half would like to start their own business or purchase a car.

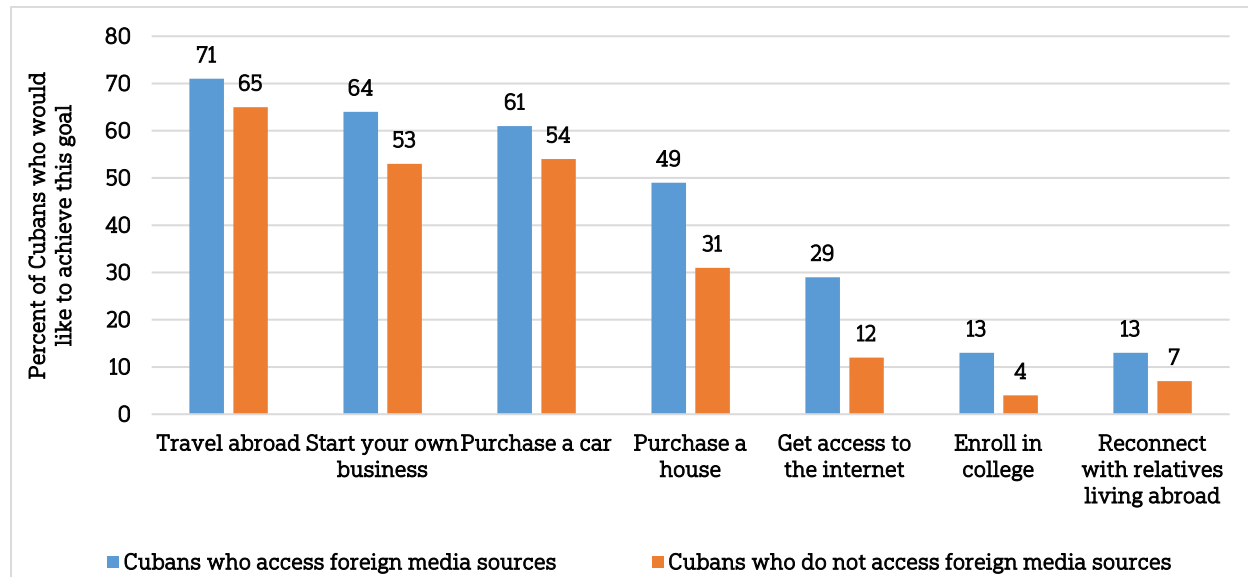
Three years after Cuba eased some travel restrictions and eliminated the “white card” exit visa that required government permission to leave the country even for a few days,<sup>8</sup> 2 of 3 Cubans have a goal of traveling abroad in the next five years. Cubans with family abroad, whether in the United States or elsewhere in the world, are much more likely to have travel as a goal than those with no family abroad (78 percent vs. 47 percent). Younger Cubans have a greater desire to travel, ranging from 86 percent of those age 18 to 29 to just 38 percent of those 65 and older.

Among those who want to travel, 81 percent want to visit the United States, 43 percent want to go to Spain, and 36 percent would like to visit Italy. Those with family in the United States are particularly likely to want to visit the country compared to those without (92 percent vs. 66 percent).

Beyond travel, the other goals that a majority of Cubans would like to achieve in the next five years are starting a business (56 percent) and purchasing a car (56 percent). Less common goals are purchasing a house (36 percent) and getting access to the internet (17 percent). Few have a goal to reconnect with relatives living abroad (9 percent) or enroll in college (7 percent). However, those with relatives in the United States are more likely to want to reconnect with family than those with family in Cuba only or in other non-U.S. countries (14 percent vs. 4 percent).

Those who get news from foreign media sources are more likely to hold many of these goals than those who rely on Cuban media alone.

### Cubans who get news from foreign media sources are more likely to say they want to achieve several goals for themselves or their family in the next five years.



Question: Thinking about the next five years, which of these goals, if any, would you like to achieve for you or your family?

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/10/cubans\\_given\\_freedom\\_to\\_leave.html](http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/10/cubans_given_freedom_to_leave.html)

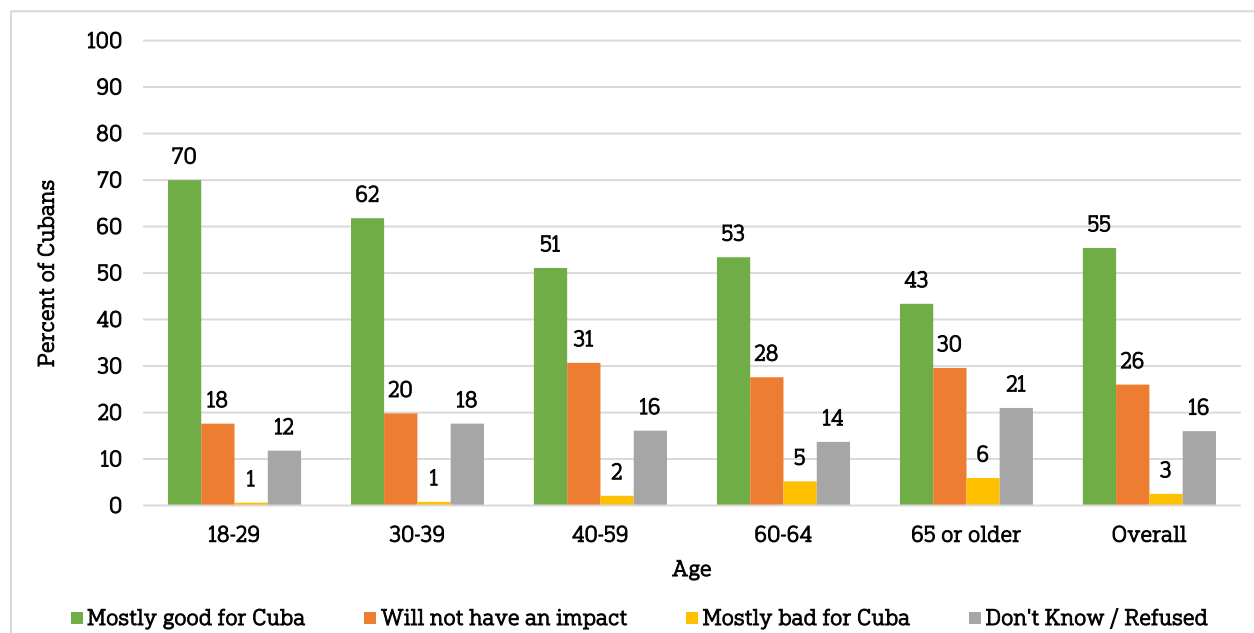
### III. CUBA-U.S. RELATIONS / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### A majority of Cubans say the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States will be good for Cuba.

Fifty-five percent of Cubans overall say the normalization of relations between the governments of Cuba and the United States will be mostly good for Cuba, while 3 percent say it will be mostly bad and 26 percent say it will have no impact. Thirteen percent aren't sure what impact the easing of diplomatic relations will have.

However, age has an impact on expectations around normalization. Seventy percent of Cubans age 18 to 29 say normalization will be mostly good for Cuba compared to just 43 percent of those 65 and older who say the same. No age group necessarily thinks normalization will be bad for the country, however, with fewer than 6 percent in any age group who think it will be bad. Older Cubans are simply more likely than younger Cubans to say normalization will either have no impact on the country or to say they do not know what the impact will be.

#### Younger Cubans are more optimistic about normalization with the United States than are older Cubans.



Question: Overall, do you think the normalization of relations between the governments in Cuba and the United States of America will be mostly good for Cuba, mostly bad for Cuba, or do you think it will not have much of an impact on Cuba?

Exposure to the internet also impacts opinions on normalization. Of those who say they have access to the internet, 63 percent say normalization of relations will be mostly good for Cuba compared to just 49 percent of Cubans with no access to the internet who say the same. As with age, this does not mean Cubans without internet access are more likely to say normalization will be bad for the country; just 3 percent of those without internet say normalization will be bad compared to 2 percent of those with internet access. They are simply more likely to say it will have no impact. Thirty-one percent of those with no internet access say there will be no impact in the future compared to 19 percent with internet access who agree, while 16 percent of those with internet access and 17 percent of those without internet access say they do not know what impact it will have.

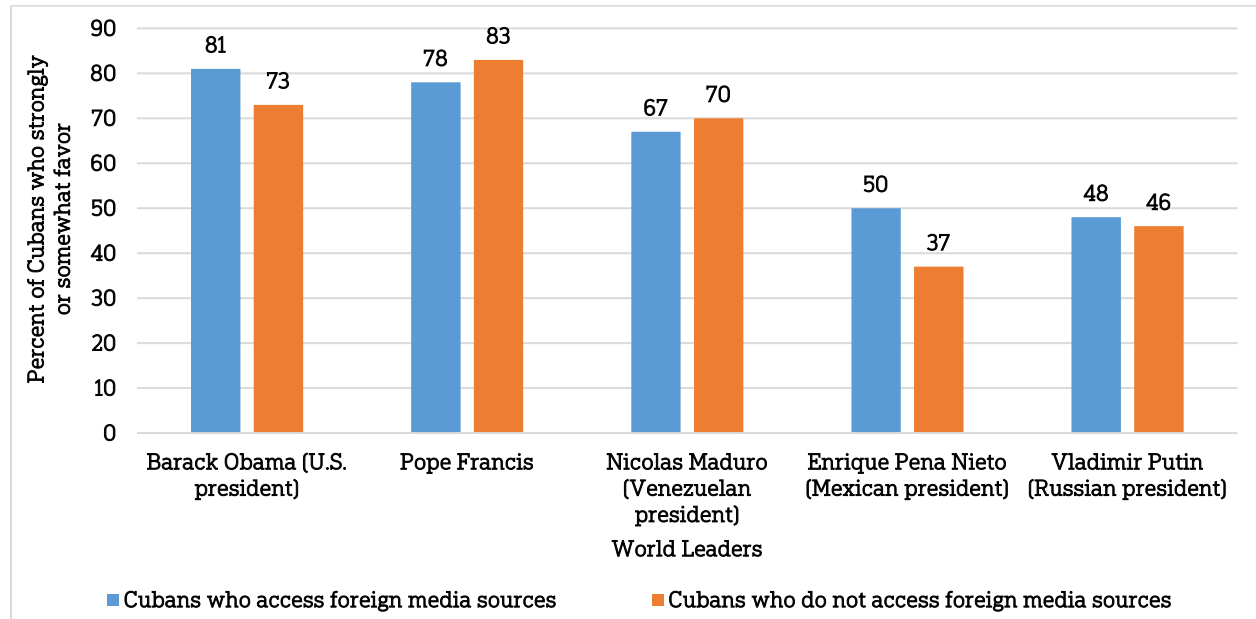
**Pope Francis, Barack Obama, and Nicolas Madura are popular figures among Cubans. The Catholic Church and United Nations are popular institutions.**

More than 8 in 10 Cubans say they have a favorable opinion of Pope Francis, and 75 percent share a favorable opinion of former U.S. President Barack Obama. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is liked by 69 percent of Cubans.

Less popular among Cubans are Russian President Vladimir Putin and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto. Forty-seven percent of Cubans say they have a favorable opinion of Putin, 16 percent have an unfavorable opinion, and 22 percent have neither a favorable nor unfavorable opinion of him. Thirteen percent say they have never heard of him. Forty percent of Cubans have a favorable opinion of Peña Nieto, 16 percent have an unfavorable opinion, and 25 percent have neither a favorable nor unfavorable opinion of him. Seventeen percent say they have never heard of Peña Nieto.

Use of foreign media—including foreign news sources, radio stations based outside of Cuba, and the internet—impacts Cubans' perceptions of some foreign leaders, but the impact varies by leader. Obama is viewed favorably by 73 percent who do not access foreign media and by 81 percent of those who do. Similarly, Peña Nieto is viewed favorably by 37 percent who do not access foreign media but by half of those who do. Putin is viewed slightly more favorably by those who access foreign media but by an insignificant margin of 2 percent. However, both the Pope and Madura are viewed slightly less favorably by those with access to foreign media than those who do not by 5 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

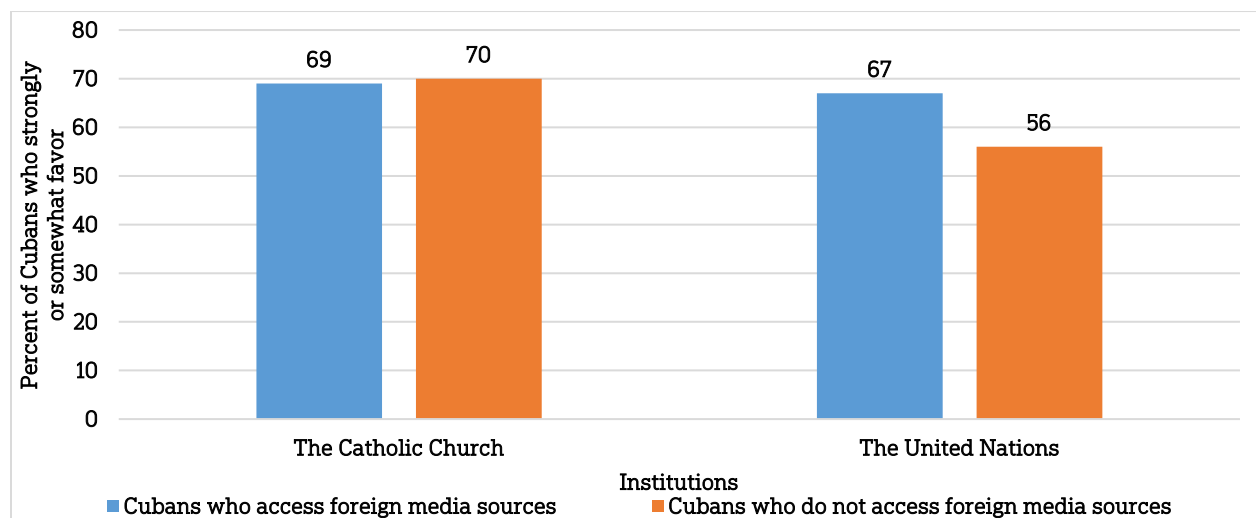
**Obama and Peña Nieto are viewed more positively by those with access to foreign media.**



Question: Please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or neither favorable nor unfavorable view of each of the following people and institutions?

Sixty-nine percent of Cubans have a favorable opinion of the Catholic Church, and 59 percent have a favorable opinion of the United Nations. While access to foreign media does not noticeably impact perceptions of the Catholic Church, those who use foreign media are 11 percent more likely to hold favorable opinions of the United Nations than those who do not access any foreign media sources.

**The United Nations is viewed more favorably by those with access to foreign media.**



Question: Please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or neither favorable nor unfavorable view of each of the following people and institutions?

**When it comes to other countries, Cubans are very positive about China and the United States but are more likely to feel negatively toward neighboring Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.**

China enjoys the strongest favorability rating among Cubans, with 85 percent saying they have a favorable opinion of China, while just 3 percent say they have an unfavorable opinion and 10 percent have neither a favorable nor unfavorable opinion.

The United States is not far behind China in terms of positive assessments by most Cubans. Seventy-seven percent have a favorable opinion of the United States, 4 percent have an unfavorable opinion, and 18 percent have neither a favorable nor unfavorable opinion.

Neighboring countries are viewed far less favorably overall. Just 24 percent of Cubans say they have a favorable opinion of Jamaica, 38 percent say they have an unfavorable opinion, and 26 percent say they have neither a favorable nor an unfavorable opinion. Thirty-one percent say they have a favorable opinion of the Dominican Republic, 23 percent say they have an unfavorable opinion, and 38 percent say they have neither a favorable nor an unfavorable opinion. Just 19 percent of Cubans say they have a favorable opinion of Haiti, 44 percent say they have an unfavorable opinion, and 27 percent say they have neither a favorable nor an unfavorable opinion.

About two-thirds of Cubans say they have a favorable opinion of Brazil (67 percent), Canada (66 percent), Russia (67 percent), and Germany (65 percent).

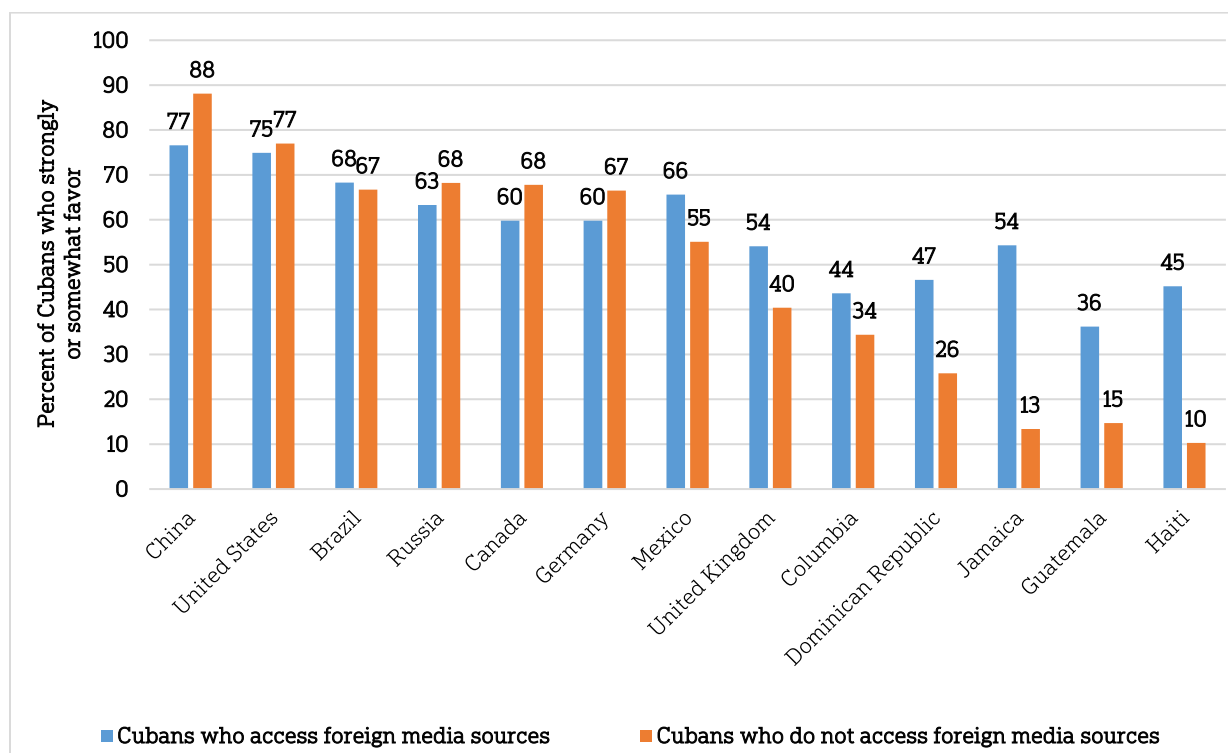
Of note, while Putin is among the least popular world leaders among Cubans, with less than half (47 percent) who say they have a favorable opinion of him, Russia as a country is rated among the more favorable countries by Cubans, with two-thirds saying they have a favorable opinion of Russia.

Fifty-eight percent say they have a favorable opinion of Mexico. Just under half (44 percent) say they have a favorable opinion of the United Kingdom. Similar to the views on Putin and Russia noted above, Cubans have a less favorable view of Peña Nieto (40 percent favorable) than of Mexico (58 percent favorable).

Few view South American countries in a favorable light; 37 percent of Cubans say they have a favorable opinion of Colombia, and 20 percent say they have a favorable opinion of Guatemala.

Notably, access to at least one source of foreign media (foreign news outlets, foreign radio, or the internet) has a significant impact on perceptions of certain countries. The biggest differences come with countries that have lower overall favorability ratings to begin with. Jamaica and Haiti are the two starkest examples of this trend. Among Cubans who access foreign media, 54 percent hold a favorable view of Jamaica compared to just 13 percent who do not access foreign media, a 41 percentage point discrepancy in opinion. For Haiti, 45 percent of Cubans who access foreign media hold a favorable view of the country compared to just 10 percent who do not access foreign media, a 35 point difference. This trend holds true, albeit to a lesser extent, for the Dominican Republic and Guatemala (both 21 point differences), United Kingdom (14 point difference), Mexico (11 point difference), and Columbia (10 point difference). Countries such as China, Russia, Canada, and Germany all enjoy slightly higher favorability ratings among Cubans who do not access foreign media but by smaller margins ranging from 5 to 11 percentage points. The difference in favorability assessments among those who do and do not access to foreign media is negligible when Cubans rate Brazil and the United States, which only differ between foreign and non-foreign media consumers by just 1 and 2 percentage points, respectively.

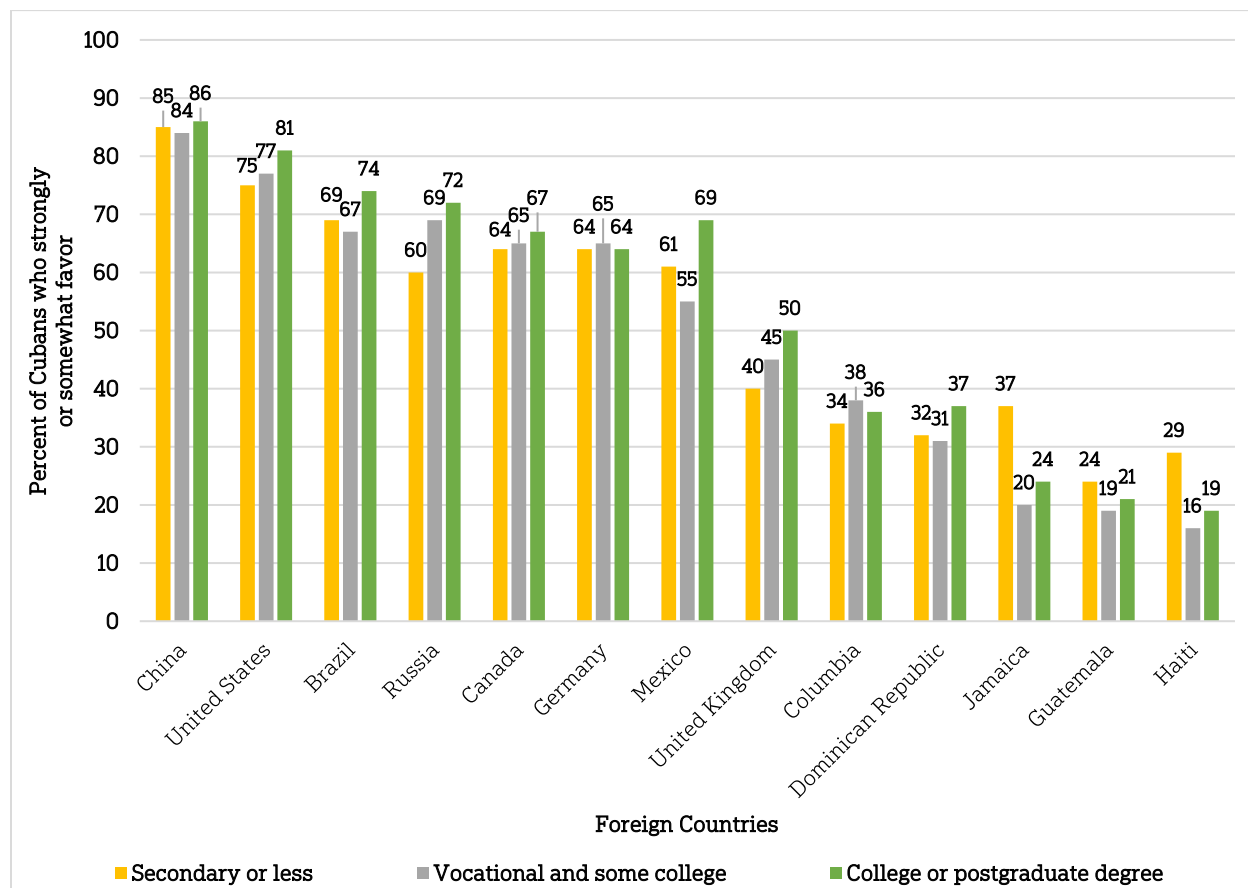


**Cubans who access foreign media are more positive about neighboring countries.**

**Question: For each of the following countries, please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or neither favorable nor unfavorable view of each of these countries?**

Though not as extreme as the differences related to access to foreign media, Cubans with different educational backgrounds vary in their opinions of certain foreign countries as well. Cubans of all educational backgrounds have relatively similar views of China, United States, Brazil, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Columbia, Dominican Republic, and Guatemala, which are all within 10 percent of having the same favorability levels between those with different educational backgrounds. However, Russia and Mexico are both viewed more favorably by college educated Cubans than by Cubans with less education. Seventy-two percent of Cubans with at least a college degree hold a favorable view of Russia compared to just 60 percent of those with a secondary education or less. Sixty-nine percent of those with a college degree or more view Mexico as favorable compared to 55 percent of those with a vocational degree or some college. In contrast, both Jamaica and Haiti are viewed more favorably by Cubans with less than a secondary education than by more educated Cubans. Thirty-seven percent of those with a secondary education or less say they have a favorable opinion of Jamaica compared to just 20 percent of those with a vocational degree or some college. Similarly, 29 percent of those with a secondary education or less hold a favorable view of Haiti, an outlook shared by just 16 percent of those with a vocational degree or some college.

**College educated Cubans hold more favorable views of Russia and Mexico and less favorable views of Jamaica and Haiti than those with lower education levels.**



Questions: For each of the following countries, please tell me if you have a favorable, unfavorable, or neither favorable nor unfavorable view of each of these countries?  
 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

**Most Cubans get their news from state-owned television stations and newspapers, Cuban radio, and family or friends. Just 1 in 4 use foreign media sources.**

The flow of objective and unbiased news and information coming in and out of Cuba is limited, as the Communist Party of Cuba controls all official media outlets throughout the country. Although few Cubans access foreign media sources, the survey reveals that access to be a consistent characteristic differentiating attitudes within the Cuban population.

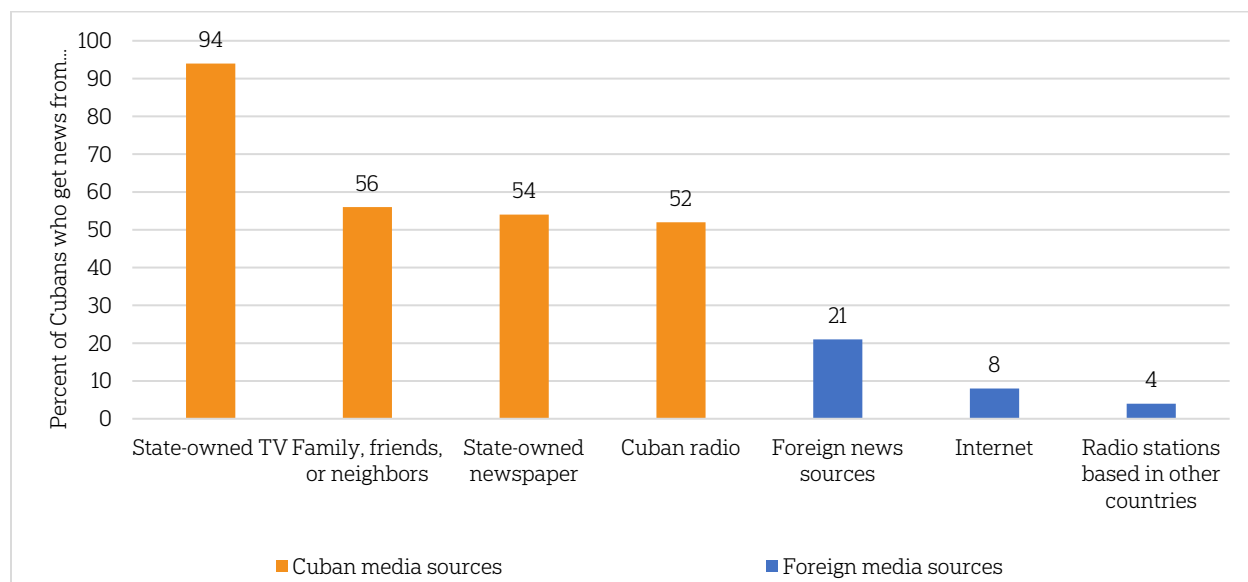
Cuba’s media landscape consists mostly of state-owned television stations, which nearly all Cubans (94 percent) say they use to get news about what’s going on in Cuba. Other Cuban-based media sources—state-owned newspapers, radio stations based in Cuba, and family, friends, or neighbors—are also popular. Three in 4 (74 percent) rely solely on Cuban-based media sources.

Just 1 in 4 (26 percent) get news from some type of foreign media, including foreign news outlets, radio stations based in other countries, and the internet.

Older Cubans tend to prefer traditional news sources. Adults age 65 and older are more likely than 18-29 year olds to use state-owned TV stations (97 percent vs. 92 percent), state-owned newspapers (58 percent vs. 44 percent), and Cuban radio (62 percent vs. 38 percent), but they use the internet for news at a rate nearly five times lower (3 percent vs. 14 percent).

Those who seek out foreign media sources are more avid news consumers overall, regardless of source. Cubans who get at least some news from foreign media sources are more likely than those who don't to use Cuban-based sources like state-owned newspapers (68 percent vs. 49 percent), Cuban radio (64 percent vs. 49 percent), and family or friends (69 percent vs. 52 percent). However, accessing foreign media does not impact the likelihood of watching state-owned TV stations, indicative of their widespread reach in Cuba.

**Nine in 10 Cubans get their news from state-owned television stations. Fewer than 1 in 10 get their news from the internet.**



**Question: What are your main sources of news about what is going on in this country and in the world? Please select all that apply.**

## ABOUT THE STUDY

### Methodology

This survey, funded by NORC at the University of Chicago, was conducted by NORC with fieldwork by GfK Latin America.

The poll was conducted in Spanish with in-person interviews of 840 adults. The survey featured a national random route-sample of adults 18 years and older in Cuba. Preliminary fieldwork was conducted between April 9 and April 24, 2016. Very minor changes were made to the instrument, and these interviews were retained. The main field period was October 3 through November 26, 2016. The sample coverage excluded several areas in Eastern Cuba (with about 15 percent of the national population) that were damaged by Hurricane Matthew, which occurred in October 2016 in the midst of the survey fieldwork.

At the first stage, the population was stratified into three groups, based on population size, for each of three different regions of the country (Western, Central, and Eastern). At the second stage, secondary sample units were randomly selected from a full list of settlement districts. At the third stage, a starting address point was assigned for each district. Within-household selection was based on the sex and gender quotas.

Interviewers selected and visited 4,623 addresses where they had a contact. Among those contacted, 29 percent responded. Including non-contacts, the cumulative response rate is 18 percent. The overall margin of error +/- 3.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level (including the design effect). Poststratification variables included age, sex, and urban or rural type of settlement. The data are weighted to reflect the Cuban population based on the 2012 Census.

All differences reported between subgroups of the Cuba population are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or lower) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling.

A comprehensive listing of all study questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on the NORC website: [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org).

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## **ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

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