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Latin Americans Approve of U.S. Re-establishing Diplomatic Ties with Cuba

*But Publics Have Mixed Views of Cuba
and Little Confidence in Raul Castro*

BY Jacob Poushter

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About This Report

This report assesses Latin American public opinion about Cuba, Cuban President Raul Castro and U.S.-Cuba relations. It is based on 6,000 face-to-face interviews in six Latin American countries with adults 18 and older conducted from April 6 to May 8, 2015. For more details, see survey methodology and topline results.

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Latin Americans Approve of U.S. Re-establishing Diplomatic Ties with Cuba

But Publics Have Mixed Views of Cuba and Little Confidence in Raul Castro

As the United States formally re-establishes diplomatic ties with Cuba, a new Pew Research Center survey shows that people in Latin American nations approve of this action and support the U.S. ending its long-standing trade embargo against the island nation. And many Latin Americans surveyed say they expect that Cuba will become more democratic over the next several years. However, overall views of Cuba across the six countries are mixed, and there is little confidence in Cuban President Raul Castro's ability to handle international affairs.

These are among the main findings of a new Pew Research survey, conducted in six Latin American nations (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela) among 6,000 respondents from April 6 to May 8, 2015. A new survey report on U.S. attitudes toward Cuba is available [here](#).

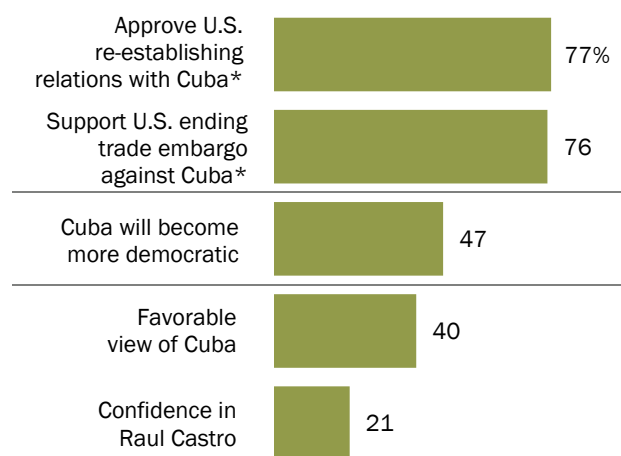
Support in Latin America for Ending Embargo

Across the Latin American countries surveyed, there is robust approval for the U.S. re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. Overall, a median of 77% across five Latin American countries share this view.¹

The highest support for the U.S. restoring diplomatic ties with Cuba comes from Chile (79% approve), Argentina (78%) and Venezuela (77%). But two-thirds in Brazil and more than half in

Latin Americans Approve of U.S.-Cuba Thaw, but Low Confidence in Castro

Median across six Latin American countries



* Results for Peru not included due to an administrative error during the fielding period.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12v, Q25g, Q138, Q139 & Q140.

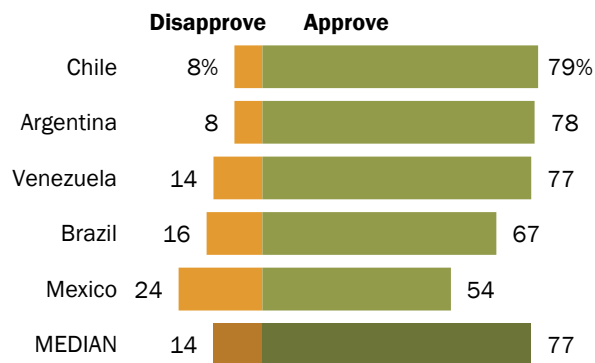
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¹ Results for Peru on Q138 and Q139 were excluded due to an administrative error during the fielding period.

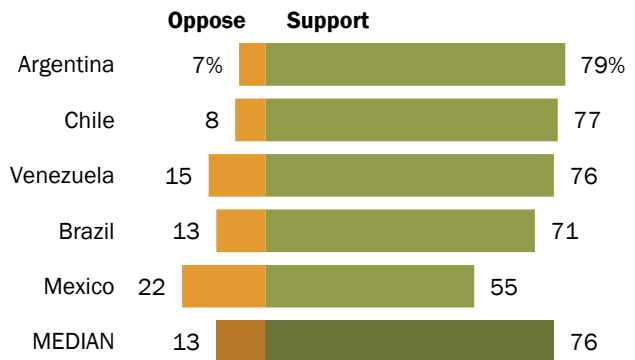
Mexico (54%) also approve of this step by the U.S. to re-establish ties, which have been severed for more than 50 years.

Latin Americans Express Strong Support for U.S. Restoring Relations with Cuba and Ending Trade Embargo

Overall, do you ___ of the U.S. re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba?



Would you ___ the U.S. ending its trade embargo against Cuba, which would allow U.S. companies to do business in Cuba and Cuban companies to do business in the U.S.?



Note: Results for Peru not included due to administrative error.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q138 & Q139.

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People in Latin America also strongly support the U.S. ending its trade embargo against Cuba, which U.S. President Barack Obama [has pledged to do](#), but would need congressional approval to move forward. Overall, a median of 76% across five Latin American countries support the lifting of the embargo, while only 13% oppose such an action.

Support for the U.S. removing the embargo, as with re-establishing diplomatic ties, is strongest in Argentina (79%), Chile (77%) and Venezuela (76%). Majorities of Brazilians (71%) and Mexicans (55%) also endorse the ending of the embargo, which would allow U.S. companies to do business in Cuba and Cuban companies to seek profit in the U.S.

Latin Americans with higher incomes² are more supportive of ending the embargo compared with lower-income respondents. For example, 82% of high-income Argentines support the U.S. ending the trade embargo against Cuba, while only 66% of those with a lower income agree. There are also significant differences by income level in Brazil (higher-income is 10 percentage points greater), Mexico (+10) and Chile (+9) on this question. These differences associated with income also similarly extend to approval of restoration of diplomatic ties with the U.S.

Greater Support among Higher-Income People in Latin American Countries for Ending Trade Embargo against Cuba

Support the U.S. ending its trade embargo against Cuba

	Lower income	Higher income	Diff
	%	%	
Argentina	66	82	+16
Brazil	66	76	+10
Mexico	51	61	+10
Chile	73	82	+9

Note: Results for Peru not included due to administrative error. Results for Venezuela not included due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q139.

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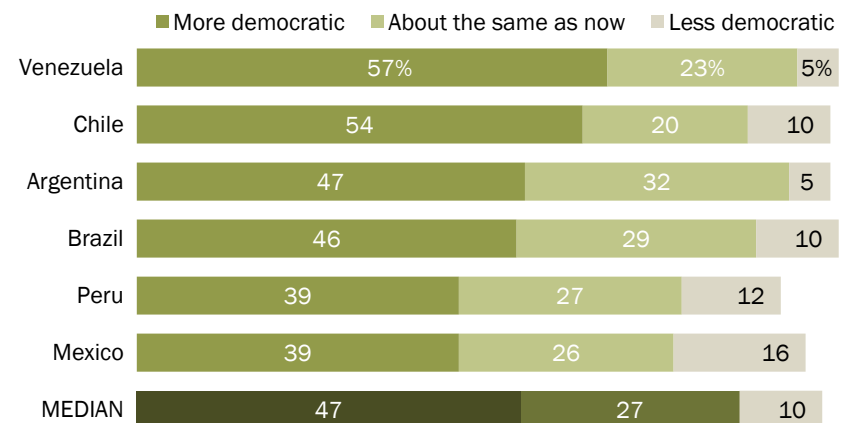
Many Latin Americans Say Cuba Will Become More Democratic in Future

Overall, a plurality of Latin Americans surveyed say that in the next few years, they expect Cuba to become more democratic. Across the six countries, a median of 47% say this. A median of 27% say Cuba will remain about as democratic as it is now, while only one-in-ten say Cuba will be less democratic in the future.

Venezuelans and Chileans are the most confident Cuba will become freer, while Peruvians and Mexicans express a bit more skepticism about this prospect.

Optimism in Democratic Future for Cuba

Over the next several years, do you think Cuba will become ...



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q140.

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² Income categorization based on income levels that are higher and lower than the median household income within each country.

Tepid Favorable Ratings for Cuba in Latin America

Despite clear support for an end to the U.S. embargo and re-establishment of diplomatic relations, Latin Americans are divided on their overall opinion of Cuba. Across the six countries surveyed, a median of 40% have a favorable view of the Caribbean nation, but 44% hold an unfavorable view.

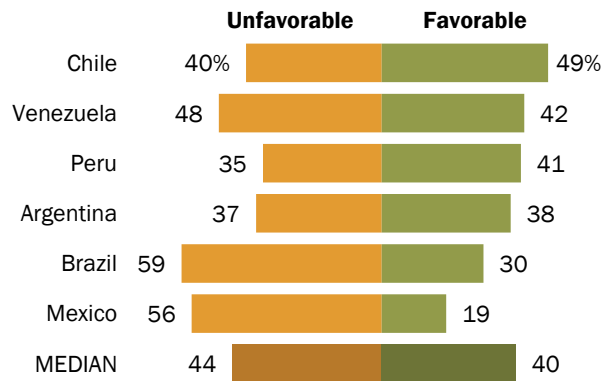
Overall support for Cuba is strongest in Chile, the only country where a plurality has a positive view. In Venezuela, 42% have a favorable opinion of Cuba, similar to the 37% who held this view in 2014.

Opinions of Cuba vary sharply by ideological self-identification in Venezuela. Those Venezuelans who place themselves on the left side of the ideological spectrum are much more likely to have a favorable view of Cuba (79%) than those who place themselves on the right side of the spectrum (25%).

Brazilians and Mexicans are the harshest in their ratings of Cuba, with majorities in each country holding an unfavorable opinion.

Latin Americans Divided on Cuba

Views of Cuba

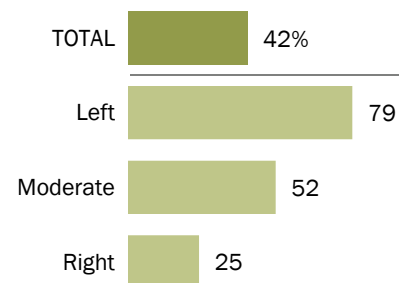


Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12v.

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Stark Differences by Ideology in Venezuelans' View of Cuba

Venezuelans with a favorable view of Cuba



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12v.

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Latin Americans Have Little Confidence in Raul Castro

More than half in every country surveyed have little or no confidence in Cuban President Raul Castro's ability to handle international affairs. Overall, a median of 62% across the six countries say this, while only 21% have confidence in the Cuban leader.

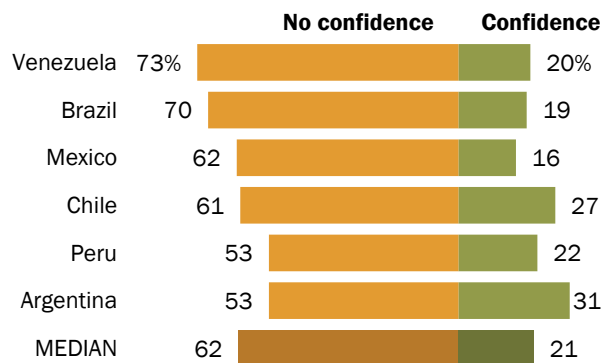
Lack of confidence is most pronounced in Venezuela (73% no confidence) and Brazil (70%). In Venezuela, those on the ideological right are far more likely to have no confidence in Castro (89%) compared with those on the left (40% no confidence vs. 57% confidence). But in no country surveyed do more than a third of the public have confidence in the younger Castro brother.

In 2007, opinion of then-leader Fidel Castro's impact on Cuba was more mixed. When asked, all things considered, whether Fidel Castro had been good or bad for Cuba, 39% of Argentines said he had been good, while 27% thought he had been bad. Peruvians were split (38% good, 33% bad).

In contrast, 61% of Mexicans and 46% of Chileans thought the older Castro was a detriment to Cuba. Meanwhile, 66% of Americans thought Fidel was bad for the island nation.

No Confidence in Castro

Confidence in Cuban President Raul Castro to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q25g.

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Methodology

About the Pew Research Center's Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey

Results for the survey are based on face-to-face interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The results are based on national samples, unless otherwise noted. More details about our international survey methodology and country-specific sample designs are available on our [website](#).

For more detailed information on survey methods for this report, see here:

http://www.pewglobal.org/international-survey-methodology/?year_select=2015

For more general information on international survey research, see here:

<http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/international-survey-research/>

Topline Results

Pew Research Center
Spring 2015 survey
July 21, 2015 Release

Methodological notes:

- Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see Methodology section and our [international survey methods database](#).
- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline “total” columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.
- Not all questions included in the Spring 2015 survey are presented in this topline. Omitted questions have either been previously released or will be released in future reports.

		Q12v. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of ____? v. Cuba					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Argentina	Spring, 2015	6	32	26	11	25	100
Brazil	Spring, 2015	3	27	38	21	11	100
Chile	Spring, 2015	9	40	32	8	10	100
Mexico	Spring, 2015	2	17	30	26	25	100
Peru	Spring, 2015	8	33	23	12	24	100
Venezuela	Spring, 2015	13	29	17	31	9	100
	Spring, 2014	14	23	19	38	7	100

		Q25g. For each, tell me how much confidence you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs — a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence or no confidence at all. g. Cuban President Raul Castro					
		A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Not too much confidence	No confidence at all	DK/Refused	Total
Argentina	Spring, 2015	7	24	24	29	16	100
Brazil	Spring, 2015	3	16	25	45	11	100
Chile	Spring, 2015	5	22	32	29	11	100
Mexico	Spring, 2015	4	12	25	37	21	100
Peru	Spring, 2015	3	19	26	27	25	100
Venezuela	Spring, 2015	7	13	21	52	6	100

		Q138. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the United States re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba?			
		Approve	Disapprove	DK/Refused	Total
Argentina	Spring, 2015	78	8	14	100
Brazil	Spring, 2015	67	16	17	100
Chile	Spring, 2015	79	8	13	100
Mexico	Spring, 2015	54	24	22	100
Venezuela	Spring, 2015	77	14	8	100

In 2015, results for Peru not included due to administrative error.

		Q139. And, would you support or oppose the U.S. ending its trade embargo against Cuba, which would allow U.S. companies to do business in Cuba and Cuban companies to do business in the U.S.?			
		Support	Oppose	DK/Refused	Total
Argentina	Spring, 2015	79	7	15	100
Brazil	Spring, 2015	71	13	16	100
Chile	Spring, 2015	77	8	15	100
Mexico	Spring, 2015	55	22	22	100
Venezuela	Spring, 2015	76	15	9	100

In 2015, results for Peru not included due to administrative error.

		Q140. Over the next several years, do you think Cuba will become more democratic, less democratic or will it be about the same as it is now?				
		More democratic	Less democratic	About the same as now	DK/Refused	Total
Argentina	Spring, 2015	47	5	32	16	100
Brazil	Spring, 2015	46	10	29	15	100
Chile	Spring, 2015	54	10	20	16	100
Mexico	Spring, 2015	39	16	26	19	100
Peru	Spring, 2015	39	12	27	21	100
Venezuela	Spring, 2015	57	5	23	15	100