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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Inching toward democratization? Comparing Cuba's National Assembly elections, 2018 and 2023

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ABSTRACT
May elections change a communist regime? From the rulers' perspective, mobilization should ensure high voter turnout and support to signal invincibility; high-visibility better-known national and provincial candidates should outperform local candidates; voters should believe that the government will improve the economy; generals-as-candidates should receive strong support. These are official reasons to persuade voters. The official leadership and media convey this perspective relentlessly. It worked for Cuba's 2018 but not for its 2023 election. Building on elections and regimes scholarship, this article analyses those two noncompetitive parliamentary elections, where only one party was lawful, and the number of candidates equalled the number of seats. The law clustered candidates in multimember districts; all won, but voters could cast nonconforming votes (blank, null, or selective). Between 2018 and 2023, turnout fell, nonconforming votes spiked, and electoral disaffection nationalized. Reported votes dropped significantly for generals, provincial governors, and provincial communist-party first-secretaries. Ministers associated with economic reforms performed better than other ministers, while Political Bureau leaders held their vote shares. Cuba inched toward democratization, through reform but not rupture.

Introduction

May elections change a communist regime? Cuban voters held some of their formally elected leaders accountable in their voting in National Assembly elections in 2018 and especially in 2023, even though these were consecutive noncompetitive single-party elections. Between these elections, turnout fell, nonconforming votes spiked, and electoral disaffection nationalized. Reported votes dropped significantly for generals, provincial governors, and provincial communist-party first-secretaries. Voting for ministers implied support for economic reforms, while Political Bureau leaders held their vote shares. This outcome suggests regime reform, not stasis, but also not rupture.

This article draws on the comparative scholarship on elections and regime change to explore how Cubans expressed their preferences in seemingly no-choice elections, deploying evidence to mitigate the biases in the formal electoral procedures. The 2018–2023 electoral changes were unprecedented in their magnitude. The key

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questions to understand how and why a noncompetitive election may speed up political change are:

As in other electoral autocracies including other communist regimes, did rulers produce electoral results that conveyed the ruling party's pretended invincibility to discourage and deter opposition? Did high name familiarity and media exposure help officially-preferred candidates, or render them targets for accountability? Did voters support their local "friends and neighbors" or, given top-down political mobilization, did they support the national and provincial leaders? Did provincial high officials perform better or worse than national and municipal candidates? Was there implicit economic voting, evident through punitive retrospective voting against ministers in charge of a badly-performing economy, or did voters back the economic ministers proposing reform, expecting outcomes to improve? Was there retrospective voting for or against the generals who ran for parliamentary deputy? And does this electorate lean toward regime stasis, reform, or rupture? Is Cuba inching toward democratization?

In late March 2023, President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez celebrated victory in the elections for the nation's parliament, the National Assembly of People's Power (*Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular* – ANPP), held on 26 March 2023. Political Bureau member Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla affirmed exuberantly that "nowhere on this planet is there an electoral system as well as electoral results such as these".[1] The foreign minister was correct. Nowhere on the planet is there an electoral system where only one political party is lawful, and the electoral law limits the number of candidates to equal the number of seats up for election, but most government and communist party high officials did not top the ticket.

Cuba's electoral law clusters candidates for parliamentary deputy in multimember districts, all candidates to be elected, but permitting voters to cast nonconforming votes: blank, null, or selectively for Candidate A but not for Candidate B. In 2023, the selective votes show that the president ranked 14th out of 32 candidates in Villa Clara province, while the foreign minister ranked 45th. out of 72 in Havana province.

The Argument

From the ruling party's perspective, the elections should feature massive turnout, signalling trust in the electoral system and the political regime's invincibility. Its high-visibility better-known national and provincial candidates should do well at all levels and should outperform local candidates, as has been the case in Vietnam and was in the former Soviet Union. Officials tell the voters that they should believe that the government will improve the economy, not blaming ministers for hard economic times. Generals-as-candidates should receive strong support in gratitude for their service. The official leadership and media thus seek to persuade voters; they convey this perspective relentlessly and continuously. Therefore, the results should show consistent support from election to election. This outcome was mostly true for Cuba's 2018 but not for its 2023 election.

The 2023 election revealed the limitations in voter support for the political establishment, although every candidate was declared elected to parliament. Those results reflect Cuba's crises during the preceding five years – an economy careening toward crisis, a severe Covid-19 pandemic impact, the rise of mass street protests, and heightened public repression. Between 2018 and 2023, voter turnout fell; and among voters, the nonconforming vote (blanks, null, and selective voting) spiked. Nonconforming

voting increased across the nation, even in hitherto most-supportive provinces, thereby nationalizing the expression of voter discontent for the first time. The political regime no longer looked invincible.

The 2018–2023 rise in the selective vote was statistically significant and adverse for generals, provincial Communist Party of Cuba (*Partido Comunista de Cuba* – PCC) first secretaries, and provincial governors – the key officials in direct governance. Many generals who ran for deputy received fair vote shares in 2018, but not in 2023; past the repressive episodes of the intervening years, most got among the lowest vote shares across the provinces. Provincial officials are proximately visible to the electorate, which may blame them for outcomes that they dislike. There was, however, no statistically significant difference in the selective vote for PCC Political Bureau and Council of Ministers members between 2018 and 2023; the votes for them did not demand regime change. These results implied a preference for regime reform – dismiss local bosses and avoid repression but keep the national leadership.

In 2018, name familiarity and media exposure assisted national and provincial candidates get good results, while in 2023 it helped to hold many of them accountable, lowering their vote shares. Voter support dropped somewhat from 2018 to 2023 for national civilian officials, but not as much as for the generals or the provincial officials. The 2018 election results showed that national and provincial officials who parachuted into electoral districts performed as well as locally-rooted candidates. In 2023, however, the local candidates – friends and neighbours – outperformed national or provincial officials in all but one province, significantly so in five of the fifteen provinces. Some evidence shows voting in 2023 in support of ministers associated with economic reform policies – this economic voting outcome was the only result consistent with official discourse.

Given outcomes that did not leave political leaders looking good, the claims of electoral fraud in the vote counting on election day seem unpersuasive. Nevertheless, the entire electoral system prior to the voting day was emphatically biased to favour incumbents and designed to impede free and fair competition.

The next section draws from the comparative politics of elections, including those in communist regimes. It formulates and elaborates six sets of hypotheses drawn from that scholarly literature. The third section describes Cuba's electoral law and practice, highlighting similarities and differences between the 2018 and 2023 elections, while the fourth summarizes the contextual changes between the 2018 and 2023 elections. The fifth section presents the evidence and interprets the results. The last section concludes.

Comparative theoretical framework, scope, and hypotheses

This work assesses whether categories of key officials – Political Bureau members, generals, provincial party first secretaries, and provincial governors – received more, less, or the same level of support in the 2018 and 2023 elections to ascertain whether they are being held accountable, hence whether Cuba is inching toward democratization. (There is no attempt to explain the variation in vote shares received by candidates in general.[2])

The voters are sending signals, muddled though they necessarily are in such a single-party election with no inter-candidate competition. The voting outcomes discern with noteworthy clarity. However, Cuba is no more than inching toward democratization because regime leaders remain free to ignore voter signals. Following

the 2018 election, they stonewalled reforms until major protests broke out in July 2021. Following the 2023 elections, they seemed paralyzed as they pondered potential economic reforms and continued to stonewall most political reforms. This article, therefore, focuses on the elections, not on subsequent regime responses or policies.

> *Hypothesis 1a* (H1a). Amidst economic and political crises, the PCC will ensure a turnout and support for its candidates as high as during earlier "non-crisis" times. To project invincibility, turnout should remain high and the same as in prior elections; the nonconforming (blank + null + selective) vote percentages should not rise. Hypothesis 1a is vulnerable to allegations of electoral fraud.

> *Hypothesis 1b* (H1b). The magnitude of the crises exceeds the regime's capacity to mobilize turnout and support for its candidates as in the past. Turnout should drop markedly; the non-conforming vote percentages should rise. Reported lower turnout and higher nonconformist votes also mitigates concerns regarding electoral fraud.

Ruling parties in authoritarian regimes often sponsor elections;[3] all communist regimes have done so, including China[4] and Vietnam[5] after the collapse of European communist regimes. Rulers seek sweeping victories because small margins may imply disapproval and vulnerability. Landslide victories, as Beatriz Magaloni[6] and Alberto Simpser[7] have argued, project an image of invincibility, discouraging challengers, and deferring democratization. Elections thus have a plebiscitary character, whereby support for the regime matters more than the vote for individual candidates.

> *Hypothesis 2a* (H2a). Name familiarity and high media exposure will increase the vote shares of well-known national and provincial candidates whose names appear frequently in official media. They should top the vote shares in their province.

> *Hypothesis 2b* (H2b). Name familiarity and high media exposure will remind voters of whom to hold responsible for the reasons of their disaffection. The vote shares of well-known national and provincial candidates with high media exposure will be lower. They should not rank in the top quarter of reported votes in their province.

In single-party elections with some albeit limited choice, candidate name recognition is likely to matter, but what is its effect? In their classic study of U.S. elections, Donald Stokes and Warren Miller[8] found that fewer than half of the eligible voters had read or heard anything about the congressional candidates in their district. The image of the candidate was almost barren of policy content, but name familiarity was decisive to obtain voter support. Media exposure facilitates this impact.[9] Alternatively, name familiarity, though necessary, is only the first step to establish a candidate's reputation. Alan Abramowitz[10] argued that candidate reputation mattered more; as he put it, "visibility does not … insure popularity." Name recognition might thus lead to either candidate affection or disaffection.

Cuban electoral law replicates a context of low information about candidates and their policy preferences. The law establishes an official information monopoly. Only an official entity and official media may provide candidate biographical information; candidate policy advocacy is prohibited. However, voters may vote selectively for some but not for all the candidates on the official slate; they may impute policy preferences to candidates based on private information, or they may rely on the available biographical information about each candidate. Crucially, provincial and especially national candidates appear in the official media frequently, thereby supplementing the information about them that is available to voters who otherwise have very little information on which to base their vote.

Hypothesis 3a (H3a). Locally rooted candidates, such as municipal assembly delegates, will out-perform national or provincial candidates because the voters support their friends and neighbors first; this is a variation on the name-recognition hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b). Locally rooted candidates are the politically-safest targets to register regime opposition in authoritarian systems. Voters will express their disaffection by voting against local candidates, while supporting national candidates to avoid retribution against their district.

Elections in single-party systems resemble multicandidate nonpartisan elections. In a section that he called "Friends and Neighbors, Again," V. O. Key assessed voting behaviour in South Carolina and Alabama in the 1940s noting that, in the absence of either well-organized politics or inter-party competition, given one-party political regimes in the region, localism would play a powerful role in the orientation of the voters' attitudes.[11] In research regarding Cuba's 1989 municipal election, based in part on survey research – the only such election study – voters reported that they backed candidates who were their friends and neighbours, good in the community, worked hard, and were interpersonally effective. They were not motivated to vote according to party affiliation.[12]

Alternatively, the Soviet Union's single-party system without inter-candidate competition allowed and counted blank and negative votes. Those very few who failed to win a majority of the votes reported, hence lost, were local candidates in small districts.[13] In Vietnam's single-party system, there are multicandidate national parliamentary elections. In the 2007 election, all centrally nominated candidates from the Communist Party, the government, the judiciary, and the President's Office were elected, but only 48 percent of locally nominated candidates were elected.[14] Such local candidates in those two communist regimes have been vulnerable to defeat.

Hypothesis 3c (H3c). High name-recognition provincial candidates will be held accountable, thus recording lower vote shares than national or local candidates.

Upon distinguishing between the national, provincial, and local levels, the "safer" expression of disaffection in authoritarian systems may be focused on the provincial leadership level, thereby still allowing voters to support their friends and neighbours as well as national candidates.

Hypothesis 4a (H4a). Civilian ministers responsible for economic policy will perform worst.

Hypothesis 4b (H4b). Voters will focus on their future expectations and support civilian ministers reputed for economic reform policies.

Cuba's economic circumstances were dire before the 2023 election. Economic voting rests on powerful cross-national evidence. Lewis-Beck argued that citizens react systematically to economic stimuli at the ballot box, as evident from their responses to macroeconomic trends.[15] Alesina and Roubini put it pithily: voters like growth and dislike inflation and respond to incumbents accordingly. Voters may discern between incumbents responsible for economic decline and incumbents who are undertaking policies to reverse that decline. Economic voting need not be focused retrospectively just on punishing badly-performing incumbents. Under longer term expectations, economic voting may increase support for incumbents linked to better expected future outcomes.[16]

Hypothesis 5a (H5a). Generals will be among the lower-ranked candidates for deputy, held accountable for repression.

Hypothesis 5b (H5b). Generals retained public support for their service and reputation for effectiveness during international wars.

There were severe acts of repression between the 2018 and 2023 elections, especially but not only in July 2021. In communist world comparisons, the Cuban government's repressive actions were not as harsh as the Soviet invasions of Hungary or Czechoslovakia or the order to shoot at Beijing's Tiananmen Square.[17] Repression in Cuba featured arrests and imprisonment, at times employing excessive force.

Repressive institutions differ worldwide. Is their purpose coup-proofing to defend against elite rivals or a military coup? Alternatively, is it maintaining internal order?[18] In Cuba, the armed forces have abstained from internal repression, leaving such tasks to Interior Ministry troops and the police.[19] Thus Domínguez argued: "The FAR's abstention from internal repression, its economic contributions engaged in the market economy albeit as a monopolist, and its provision of retirement options for its personnel has generated support for the institution."[20] The military's reputation for competence derived also from their effective performance in wars in Angola and Ethiopia from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s.

Hypothesis 6a. Suppose turnout and support for candidates remained comparably high in the 2018 and 2023 elections; national and provincial candidates topped reported vote shares in their provinces outperforming local candidates; and civilian ministers as well as generals obtained continuing high support, then regime continuity rather than reform or rupture is the most likely outcome. Democratization is deferred.

Hypothesis 6b. Suppose turnout dropped and the nonconforming vote rose between the 2018 and 2023 elections; the reported selective vote shares for national and provincial candidates fell; locally-rooted candidates outperformed national and provincial candidates; and support for civilian ministers and generals fell, then regime reform or, eventually, rupture become more likely.

Cuba's electoral law and practice

Cuba's Constitution and electoral law changed between the 2018 and 2023 elections. These are some continuities. In both, the constitution prescribed that only the PCC is lawful. The electoral law mandated that the number of candidates for parliamentary deputies must equal the number of seats up for election.[21] Candidates were grouped in districts with at least two candidates, but the number of candidates always equalled the number of seats, e.g. two-member districts elect two deputies. Voters had some choices. They could abstain from voting, vote blank, annul the ballot, or vote selectively for candidate A but not for candidate B.

Nominating committees whose members belonged to the officially sponsored mass organizations nominated all candidates and proposed them to the municipal assemblies for approval.[22] Individuals could not choose to run on their own, nor could other civil or political organizations nominate candidates. The electoral law prohibited candidates from drafting and publishing their own biographies (a prerogative of the nominating committees) and from expressing views supporting or opposing specific policies, nor could they advocate for one candidate over another.[23] Therefore, the ideological or policy views of most candidates remained unknown. The views of high government and communist party national officials were reported in the official media.

The electoral law subsidized the candidacies of national and provincial officials at the expense of locally rooted candidates. The latter were delegates to the municipal assembly who had been elected in prior multicandidate single-party local elections. The deputy election was their second election, for which they had prior experience. In contrast, national or provincial candidates for deputy never faced a multicandidate election, yet the law reserved at least 50 percent of the deputy candidacies for them.[24]

The communist party and the official media campaigned forcefully and systematically on behalf of the united vote (*el voto unido*), urging voters not to vote selectively but to support everyone on the ballot. No candidate for deputy has ever lost since citizens began to vote for them in the early 1990s; defeat would occur if a candidate were to receive fewer than fifty percent of the valid votes reported, which exclude blank and null votes from the count. The explicit purpose of the united vote is plebiscitary, that is, a supermajority should demonstrate support for the political regime, not just specific candidates.[25]

Two changes between 2018 and 2023 are pertinent. Until the 2018 election, the province's top administrative official was the president of the provincial assembly, whom voters had elected directly to that assembly. For the 2023 election, governors replaced such presidents. The President of the Republic nominated the governor, whom the province's municipal assembly delegates ratified, that is, voters had no direct role in selecting the governor. The data for this analysis are for the votes cast for provincial assembly presidents in 2018 and provincial governors in 2023 in the election for National Assembly deputy, given that there are no provincial elections for governors.

The greater comparative obstacle is that the number of National Assembly seats was cut from 606 in 2018 to 470 in 2023. Massive redistricting took place within each province, rendering impossible a comparison by district between the two elections; the size and shape of each district changed. This article thus relies on provinces as the focus of analysis.

Electoral data and its uses

The National Electoral Council manages the electoral process.[26] Its website functions sporadically; the data have been copied onto the posted 2018 and 2023 data bases. It publishes official results but provides no independent access to the ballots and permits no independent audits. Only the reported outcomes of the election are available. The data for local candidates (*delegados*) are complete for 2023 but there may be some underreporting for the 2018 election. The published 2018 data for the province of Ciego de Ávila are incomplete but suffice for this article's analysis.

Independent observers have questioned the accuracy of the electoral data, observed irregularities in several districts, and raised alarm about electoral fraud. There is a highly professional report for the 2023 elections, notwithstanding the official obstacles to such observations.[27] Its strongest fraud allegation pertains to the size of the electoral turnout; there is also concern regarding the reporting of blank and null ballots. Official responses in the state media denied all allegations, provided some explanations, corrected some earlier published results, but did not permit their independent verification.[28] Hence, references will be to votes "reported" to avoid the word "cast." Independent observers did not focus on the selective vote.

This article reports trends regarding turnout, blank, null, and selective votes. It shows a sharp drop in reported turnout from 2018 to 2023; if there was fraud, 2023

turnout should have been higher. It also shows a rise in the blank and null vote from 2018 to 2023; if there was fraud in counting them, 2023 blank and null vote should have been lower. However, this article's analysis focuses principally on the selective vote, which shows the poor rank order of many leading officials at the national and provincial levels, thereby mitigating concern regarding electoral fraud in reporting the outcomes. If there had been fraud in the count, rulers would have performed better, but they did not.

The single-party context, the political mobilization by the PCC, its affiliated mass organizations, and the media (all radio and television and all print newspapers are government owned and operated), and the lack of public opinion data (official entities conduct surveys but do not release their findings), render it impossible to distinguish between a sincere vote – the voter supports the candidate or the entire slate – and the mobilized vote that results from persuasion, inducements, coercion, or simply fear. These factors vary across provinces and local contexts, rendering suspect straight comparisons of votes reported for individual candidates across the nation. The interaction between the electoral law and the PCC mobilization makes the mobilization-resisting selective vote per province the most reliable voter measure.

Even if fraud may not have created problems in vote counting, the election met no commonly accepted standards of freedom or fairness. The authoritarian-regime electoral law ensured that all candidates would be elected.

The analysis proceeds as if Cuba had counted its selective votes (excluding blank and null) according to open list proportional representation (OLPR). The unit for vote counting is the province, as is common under OLPR. There is only the PCC list; voters may vote for just one or more than one candidate on the list (the selective vote) or for all the candidates (the united vote). In OLPR systems such as in Finland, Latvia and Brazil, the number of votes each candidate receives is the sole determinant of which candidates occupy the seats won by a list.[29] This approach also generates a rank order of candidates in each Cuban province, as in OLPR systems. That becomes the metric for inter-candidate comparisons within each province. Results are reported by how the vote shares of the respective candidates rank. All t-tests reported focus on the selective-vote results of these quasi-OLPR candidacies.

This approach accounts well for differential provincial contexts, controlling for different mobilization situations in different provinces, and permitting comparisons between candidates directly to each other in each province. It also facilitates attention to individual candidates. Thus, a candidate who runs in Havana province (the epicenter of selective voting) may receive fewer votes than a candidate who runs in Province B, where Province B either favours official candidates or its voters are more subject to official mobilization. The candidate in Havana may, however, rank higher in that province than does the candidate in Province B; in this case, the candidate in Havana will be deemed as having performed better.

The context preceding the elections

The officially-reported annual rate of change in gross domestic product in constant prices was unimpressive in the four years before the 2018 election but better than in the four years before the 2023 election: 1.0 percent in 2014, 4.4 percent in 2015, 1.8 percent in 2016, and 1.8 percent in 2017 versus –0.2 percent in 2019, –10.9 percent in 2020, 0.1 percent in 2021 and 1.8 percent in 2022.

Moreover, setting the consumer price index to equal 100 in 1999, Cuba's inflation rate was 87 in January 2014 and 91 in December 2017, that is, slight deflation. It reached 109 in December 2020 and skyrocketed to 276 in January 2023 in advance of the March election. Cubans shifted from price stability and tepid growth before the 2018 election to high inflation and worse growth results before the 2023 election. Inflation continued to rise in 2023.[30] Product shortages became widespread.

In April 2021, the Eighth PCC Congress adopted no significant changes in the political system, renewed some of its top leadership, pledged to speed up the glacial pace of economic reform, but it did not change much before the summer of that year..

Then, two crises exploded. On 21 June 2021, several poorly-maintained electric power generators collapsed, inducing frequent and prolonged blackouts amidst the summer heat waves, shutting down many economic activities. (Blackouts continued through 2023 and thereafter.) Moreover, Cuba's previously outstanding public health system temporarily collapsed. From 11 June to 11 July 2021, Covid-19 infections quintupled and remained at an extremely elevated level – among the world's worst – for the next three months.[31]

On 11 July 2021, widespread street protests broke out in many cities and most provinces for the first time since the 1960s (and, in Havana, first time since the 1990s); the focus was economic shortages and high inflation. The government arrested thousands, while sentencing hundreds to many years in prison.[32] Smaller protests continued to break out from time to time in cities and towns across the country in 2021 and the years that have followed.

The findings and their interpretation

Invincible or vulnerable?

Did Cuba's officialdom project its invincibility by generating turnout rates as high as in the past while discouraging nonconforming votes (Table 1)? Electoral turnout had been consistently above 95 percent since direct deputy elections began in the 1990s. The election in 2008 exemplified it. Turnout was extremely high while the nonconforming vote (the sum of blank, null, and selective votes) held at 13 percent. Turnout dropped and the nonconforming vote rose ever since, but the sharpest drop in turnout and rise among nonconformers took place from the 2018 to the 2023 election. Hypothesis 1a is rejected, and hypothesis 1b is confirmed: the regime's capacity to replicate its past electoral accomplishments plummeted. The united vote – the PCCs key goal – dropped to 49 percent of the electoral registry for the first time ever.

Table 1. National election votes as percent of reported voters.

	Turnout	Blank + Null	Selective	Nonconforming
2008	97	5	9	13
2013	91	6	18	23
2018	86	6	19	24
2023	76	10	28	38

Note: Turnout as percent of registered voters. Nonconforming vote = blank + null + selective. Blank + Null, Selective, and Nonconforming vote: each is as percent of reported voters. My calculations.
Source: Consejo Electoral Nacional, various years, published results.

These broad trends were unprecedented in over three decades of authoritarian elections in Cuba. Significant emigration in the aftermath of the 2020–2022 pandemic may have included people who, if they had stayed, might have increased the size of the selective vote or the size of the abstention. National PCC leaders hinted in public that they had noted the downshift in turnout. They did not, however, lay out a programme of policy changes or other responses to the election results, and they have not commented publicly about the selective vote or individual candidates who performed markedly less well. That kept the official focus on the challenge that the results in Table 1 indicate, namely, official mobilization to turn out the vote had become much less effective.

Candidate visibility: political bureau affection or disaffection?

What were the results for the most nationally visible candidates? Table 2 presents information for the nation's elite, namely, deputy candidates who were also members of the PCC's Political Bureau, generals, or ministers. All Political Bureau members were candidates for deputy, but only a subset of generals and ministers appeared on ballots. The highest media exposure is for Political Bureau members. If high exposure were to increase support (H2a) or increase the likelihood of holding officials accountable (H2b), Political Bureau members should all be in either the top (H2a) or the bottom quarters (H2b). Neither is the case in both elections. Although the results for Political Bureau members were slightly better in 2018, the difference between their 2018 and 2023 results was not statistically significant. Political Bureau members are nearly randomly scattered across the spectrum in both elections. Both H2a and H2b fail. (Ministers and generals are discussed later.) The Political Bureau as a whole was neither triumphant nor rejected.

National, provincial, or local candidate performance

How did national, provincial, and local candidacy performances compare? Table 3 presents outcomes for the fifteen provinces, from west to east. National and provincial candidacies include Political Bureau members, ministers, generals, and other national officials and their equivalents in the provinces. However, local district delegates are the only candidates to have won a prior multicandidate election as delegates to their

Table 2. Election outcomes by role and ranking quarter: political bureau, generals, ministers.

	1st 2018	1st 2023	2nd 2018	2nd 2023	3rd 2018	3rd 2023	4th 2018	4th 2023	N 2018	N 2023
PoliticalBureau	3	5	4	4	6	2	2	3	15	14
Generals	3	1	6	2	4	4	5	4	18	11
Ministers	3	4	10	1	9	5	6	3	28	13
N	9	10	20	5	19	11	13	8	61	38

Note: My calculations. All at 95% confidence levels. Some individuals with two or three roles appear in more than one row. **t-tests (two-tailed) not statistically significant:** In 2018, between Political Bureau members, generals, and ministers; between the 2018 and 2023 Political Bureau members; between the 2018 and 2023 Council of Ministers members. **t-tests (two-tailed) statistically significant**: Generals 2018, mean = 88.46, SD = 5.2151, N = 18; Generals 2023, mean = 82.43, SD = 4.7818, N = 11. Degrees of freedom = 27, t = 3.1127, 95% confidence level, **P = 0.0044**.
Source: Consejo Electoral Nacional (Resultados finales del proceso de elecciones nacionales).

Table 3. Election outcomes by provinces (west to east): national, provincial, and local candidacies.

	National and provincial candidates 2018	National and provincial candidates 2023	Local district delegates 2018	Local district delegates 2023
Slight advantage, not statistically significant	Pinar del Río La Habana Mayabeque Villa Clara Cienfuegos La Tunas Santiago Guantánamo	Artemisa	Artemisa Matanzas Sancti Spíritus Ciego de Ávila Camagüey Holguín Granma	Pinar del Río La Habana Matanzas Villa Clara Cienfuegos Ciego de Ávila Holguín Santiago Guantánamo
Some significant advantage $P < .10$				Mayabeque Camagüey Sancti Spíritus
Significant advantage $P < .05$				
Higher significant advantage $P < .02$				Las Tunas Granma

Note: My calculations. All at 95% confidence levels. **t-tests (two-tailed) not statistically significant**: National and provincial candidacies versus local district delegates in every province in 2018 and 2023, except in 2023 in five provinces. **t-tests (two-tailed) statistically significant**, 2023 national and provincial candidacies versus local district delegates in: **Mayabeque**, delegates mean = 86.9627, SD = 3.5678, $N = 11$; others mean = 84.2283, SD = 3.8802, $N = 12$. Degrees of freedom = 21, $t = 1.7540$, **$P = 0.0940$. Sancti Spíritus**, delegates mean = 87.1827, SD = 5.0004, $N = 11$; others mean = 82.6522, SD = 4.2762, N = 9. Degrees of freedom = 18, $t = 2.1481$, **$P = 0.0456$**. **Camagüey**, delegates mean = 87.1539, SD = 7.7945, $N = 16$; others mean = 82.8779, SD = 6.8942, $N = 19$. Degrees of freedom = 33, $t = 1.7234$, **$P = 0.0942$**. **Las Tunas**, delegates mean = 89.4900, SD = 3.7335, $N = 8$; others mean = 85.5729, SD = 3.0624, $N = 14$. Degrees of freedom = 20, $t = 2.6680$, **$P = 0.0148$. Granma,** delegates mean = 89.2524, SD = 3.7228, $N = 17$; others mean = 86.1635, SD = 3.7228, $N = 17$. Degrees of freedom = 32, $t = 2.5454$, **$P = 0.0159$**.

Source**:** Consejo Electoral Nacional (Resultados finales del proceso de elecciones nacionales).

respective municipal assemblies. These delegates most closely approximate V. O. Key's "friends and neighbors."[33]

In 2018, none of the voting differences between local delegates and national and provincial candidates was statistically significant. National and provincial candidates had a slight advantage in eight provinces, while the local candidates had a slight edge in seven provinces. The 2023 results differed. Local candidates outperformed national and provincial candidates in every province but Artemisa. The localist preference was statistically significant in five of the fifteen provinces, most so in two eastern provinces. In 2018, the results did not distinguish between H3a and H3b – performance was about the same for all types of candidates across the provinces. In 2023, local delegate superior performance in 2023 was consistent with H3a while H3b failed; H2a was weakened because national visibility did not gain affection, while H2b received some support because the higher-visibility national and provincial candidates encountered more disaffection.

Across the nation, in 2018 seventeen national or provincial candidates and eleven local candidates were reported with 95 percent of the votes or more. The former included President Raúl Castro, one provincial PCC first secretary, and three presidents of the provincial assemblies. The latter included three presidents of the municipal assemblies. In 2023, only four candidates had reported votes above 95 percent. All four were local delegates.

Consider two provincial contexts in 2023. In Guantánamo province, the localist advantage was not statistically significant but four of the reportedly most-voted

candidates were local delegates, while the reportedly least-voted candidate in the entire province was its PCC first secretary. In Camagüey province, where the localist advantage was statistically significant, four of the five reportedly most-voted candidates were local delegates while the reportedly least-voted candidate was also the province's PCC first secretary. These results illustrate the shift from indeterminacy in 2018 to the clearer distinction in 2023.

Disaffection rising in the provinces

The most challenging jobs in Cuba's political system are the top political (first PCC secretaries) and administrative (assembly presidents; governors) posts in each of the fifteen provinces, that is, thirty officials (see Table 4). In neither election were the differences between first secretaries and governors statistically significant, and in 2018 the distribution was nearly random.

The 2023 results differed. Only three first secretaries and governors (versus eleven in 2018) performed in the top quarter in their respective provinces while twenty out of thirty scored in the bottom half of the results. Only Pinar del Río province had a

Table 4. Governing the provinces (west to east): voting preferences for first party secretaries and governors.

	2018 1st Quarter	2023 1st Quarter	2018 2nd Quarter	2023 2nd Quarter	2018 3rd Quarter	2023 3rd Quarter	2018 4th Quarter	2023 4th Quarter
Pinar del Río	Sec	Sec Gov			Pre			
Artemisa				Gov	Pre		Sec	Sec
La Habana	Sec		Pre			Gov		Sec
Mayabeque	Sec				Pre			Sec Gov
Matanzas	Pre				Sec	Sec Gov		
Villa Clara		Sec			Sec		Pre	Gov
Cienfuegos	Pre			Sec Gov			Sec	
Sancti Spíritus				Gov	Sec Pre	Sec		
Ciego de Ávila					Sec	Sec Gov	Pre	
Camagüey	Sec Pre							Sec Gov
Las Tunas	Pre					Gov	Sec	Sec
Holguín			Pre			Gov	Sec	Sec
Granma	Pre		Sec	Sec		Gov		
Santiago	Sec			Sec			Pre	Gov
Guantánamo	Sec		Pre	Gov				Sec
N	11	3	4	7	8	9	7	11
First Secretaries	6	2	1	3	4	3	4	7
Governors/ Presidents	5	1	3	4	4	6	3	4

Note: Sec = First Secretary in each province, Communist Party of Cuba. Gov = Governor of province, only 2023. Pre = President of the Provincial Assembly, only 2018. My calculations. All at 95% confidence levels. **t-tests (two-tailed) not statistically significant:** In 2018, between first secretaries and assembly presidents, or in 2023 between first secretaries and governors. **t-tests (two-tailed) statistically significant**: First secretaries 2018, mean = 89.0613, SD = 5.5715, $N = 15$; first secretaries 2023, mean = 82.6247, SD = 8.0066, $N = 15$. Degrees of freedom = 28, $t = 2.5557$, **P = 0.0163**. Assembly presidents 2018 mean = 89.4727, SD = 4.3691, $N = 15$; Governors 2023, mean = 83.6053, SD 4.3862, $N = 15$. Degrees of freedom = 28, $t = 3.6705$, **P = 0.0010**. Source: Consejo Electoral Nacional (Resultados finales del proceso de elecciones nacionales).

well-regarded first secretary and governor, whereas Mayabeque and Camagüey province reported the lowest support for both.

The reported vote for both first secretaries and assembly presidents/governors plummeted between 2018 and 2023; both differences were statistically significant, markedly so for assembly presidents/governors (Table 4). The 2023 voters also scored different officials differently; there was no random fury or praise. There was assessment. For example, the first secretary in Villa Clara ranked in the top quarter but its governor ranked in the bottom quarter. Similarly albeit less dramatic, the governors of Artemisa and Guantánamo had better outcomes, in contrast to their first secretaries who ranked in the bottom quarter. In Santiago province, the first secretary clearly outperformed the governor; the latter was the province's least-voted deputy candidate.

In 2018, these findings did not support H3c, that is, provincial high officials were not singled out for retribution; a third performed at the top. Also in 2018, these results implied that high-visibility provincial candidates could do well (H2a). The story differed in 2023. These findings support H3c while also providing support for H2b: provincial high officials had high name recognition in their provinces and, as a category, they were held accountable for poor work, more so than national or local candidates. Voters rewarded some and chastised others in the same province.

Economic voting

How did ministers perform (see Table 2)? There were no statistically significant differences in the performances of ministers between 2018 and 2023, though ministers performed slightly worse in 2023. Nor were there significant differences between ministers, generals, and Political Bureau members in 2018, or in 2023 between ministers and Political Bureau members. Voters were not making such distinctions between elite members.

In 2018, reportedly in the top quarter were President Raúl Castro and incoming president Miguel Díaz-Canel, highlighting regime continuity, neither associated with economic reform at that time. Nevertheless, voters' discontent with economic performance was clearer with the ministers in the bottom quarter: the czar for economic reform, which had stalled, and the ministers for transportation, construction, and internal trade, plus science and technology and higher education. Public transportation, housing, and retail access were all poorly performing instances of government performance.

In 2023, scoring comfortably in the top quarter was the reportedly most-voted candidate for the entire Political Bureau and the Council of Ministers, namely, Prime Minister Manuel Marrero, whose public image had become a promoter of economic reform and openings to medium – and small-firm private producers. Also in the top quarter was Economy Minister Alejandro Gil, whose public image at the time was as the chief implementor of economic reform policies. Gil outperformed veteran hardliner Commander of the Revolution Ramiro Valdés (ranking in the second quarter): they ran in the same province, providing the closest match between exponents of change and stasis. Two of the four deputy prime ministers, who shared economic responsibilities and ran for office, joined Marrero and Gil in the top quarter. (Of the eight bottom-half performing ministers, two deputy prime ministers had economic responsibilities.)

In short, in 2018 voters were not rocking the system, but there is some evidence of retrospective economic accountability with key economic ministers among the reportedly least voted. In 2023, voters were more likely to support ministers seen as proponents of economic reform. They were not held responsible for low economic growth or high inflation and, thus, were not punished for the bad economy. Instead, economy-focused voters may have held expectations that these economic ministers worked for a better future. Lower reported votes for malperfoming economic ministers in 2018 supports H4a while higher reported votes for reform-minded economic ministers in 2023 support H4b.

Military candidacies

In 2018, there were no statistically significant differences between generals, ministers, and Political Bureau members but, as noted at Table 2, there was a marked statistically significant drop in the reported vote for generals between 2018 and 2023; no other elite segment suffered a similar drop.

Moreover, in 2023 generals performed less well than the civilians on the Political Bureau and the ministers who were candidates. There were 19 distinct civilians among the ministers and Political Bureau members who were candidates for deputy, that is, counting individuals stripped of multiple roles. Eleven generals were candidates for deputy who, for this purpose, are not counted among the ministers or the Political Bureau members. Thus, the difference between elite military and elite civilians is statistically significant ($P < .05$), with generals underperforming. These findings support H5a, rejecting H5b.

For example, in 2023 eighty-year-old Army Corps General, Minister of the Armed Forces, and Political Bureau member Álvaro López Miera scored in the bottom quarter in Havana province; he appears three times in the bottom quarter in Table 2 as a Political Bureau member, a minister, and a general. Division General Roberto Legrá, deputy minister and chief of the armed forces general staff, joined him in the bottom quarter along with two other division generals. Interior Minister Division General Lázaro Álvarez Casas scored in the third quarter.

Among military candidates, however, military rank or task was unrelated to votes reported. Cuba has three army corps generals, one each in the top quarter, the second quarter, and the bottom quarter. Cuba also fields three armies whose chiefs were respectively in the second quarter, the third quarter, and the bottom quarter.

The support that the armed forces may have garnered in years past from their defense of the homeland, their performance in overseas wars, or other service to the nation no longer generated as much electoral support. Their uniform, rightly or wrongly, associated them with repression, consistent with H5a.

Patterns and cautions

Broad themes emerge from interprovincial aggregate-data trends (see Table 5). There is a relationship, albeit not strong, between turnouts in the 2018 and 2023 parliamentary elections (Table 5, top row). The correlation is not stronger because of the discontinuities between the two elections, namely, the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic crises, the repression that rose in 2020, climaxed in July 2021, and continued in 2022-2023, the freer-felt context about how to cast a nonconforming vote in 2023, and the redistricting and reductions of the number of deputies to be elected.

Table 5. Correlations: 2018 and 2023 deputy elections, and 2022 referendum.

Correlation variables	Pearson "r"	Degrees of Freedom	Significance level
Turnout 2018, 2023	0.45	14	.10
BlankNull, Selective 2018	0.31	14	None
BlankNull, Selective 2023	0.33	14	None
Turnout, Nonconf 2023	−0.16	14	None
Nonconf 2023, Yes 2022,E	0.18	14	None
Nonconf 2023, Yes 2022,V	−0.07	14	None
Nonconforming,2018,2023	0.70	14	.01

Note: Correlations are Pearson r. My calculations. Turnout: Voters as percent of registered voters. BlankNull: Sum of blank and null votes. Selective: Voters who did not support the united list but did not vote blank or null. Nonconf: Nonconforming voter = BlankNull + Selective. Yes: Voted yes on 2022 Families Code referendum. E: entire electorate. V: voters only.
Source: Consejo Electoral Nacional (Resultados finales del proceso de elecciones nacionales).

The elections expressed two types of discontent, namely, systemic versus loyal opposition. The systemic opposition objects to the electoral system in its totality (blank and null votes). The loyal opposition accepts the electoral system but votes selectively between candidates. Both are types of nonconforming voting because they both express opposition at the polls, but the form of expression of disaffection differs. There is a positive albeit statistically insignificant relationship between the blank plus null votes and the selective votes in both the 2018 and 2023 elections (Table 5, second and third rows).

A different systemic opposition spiked in 2023, namely, the marked decline in turnout, which had evolved over the years but dropped sharply in 2023 (Table 1). There is no relationship between turnout and the nonconforming vote in 2023 (see Table 5, row four), though offering a hint that officialdom benefits slightly from higher turnout. People who reject the system thoroughly do not show up at the polls at all.

The nonconforming vote was unrelated to social policy preferences regarding sexual orientation and gender issues (Table 5, rows five and six). In September 2022, Cuba held a referendum on the new Families Code, a complex and comprehensive new legislation. The political contention in the run-up to the referendum focused on same-sex relations, namely, marriage, adoption of children, assisted reproduction, and transgender issues. The Roman Catholic Bishops and the Baptists, among the communities of faith, opposed the referendum publicly and vigorously. As a proportion of the valid votes reported, excluding blank and null votes as well as abstentions, the referendum passed. As a percentage of the electorate, however, the "yes" vote was only 47 percent, with the highest "yes" percentage in any province only at 53 percent of the electorate. However, the correlations between the 2023 nonconforming vote and the 2022 "yes" vote are insignificant both as a percentage of the electorate and as a percentage of the voters.

Holguín province (Cuba's third largest province by registered voters) provides clues to these changing patterns. In 2018, Holguin supported officialdom; its reported nonconformist vote was the fifth lowest among the fifteen provinces. In contrast, in 2022 the Families Code worst outcome was in Holguín, with the yes vote down to 38 percent of the electorate. In 2023, Holguin's nonconformist vote settled at barely below the national average – not as supportive of officialdom as in 2018, not as distant as in 2022.

Finally, there is a strong statistically significant correlation between the nonconforming vote in 2018 and 2023, indicating that a core loyal opposition vote jelled during the Díaz-Canel presidency.

Table 6. Rise in nonconforming vote, 2018–2023, by province (west to east).

Provinces	Percent increase in nonconforming vote
Pinar del Río	10.15
Artemisa	9.80
La Habana	8.81
Mayabeque	12.00
Matanzas	8.42
Villa Clara	11.15
Cienfuegos	9.42
Sancti Spíritus	12.95
Ciego de Ávila	11.20
Camagüey	9.75
Las Tunas	11.32
Holguín	13.58
Granma	14.47
Santiago	13.40
Guantánamo	11.04
Isla Juventud	3.41
TOTAL	10.91

Note: My calculations.
Source: Consejo Nacional Electoral, 2018, 2023.

The shift in the percent of voters reported as nonconforming in the 2018 and 2023 elections, by province, appears in Table 6. The eastern provinces (Holguín, Granma, and Santiago) reported the largest increases in the percentages of nonconforming votes; in 2018, these had been among the political regime's strongest supporters. Therefore, political disaffection nationalized between the two parliamentary elections.

In both years, Havana reported the largest percentage of nonconforming votes. In 2018, the ratio between Havana and the province with fewest nonconforming votes was 1.82; in 2023, that ratio narrowed to 1.27. This nationalization of discontent also helps to explain the broad disaffection with both provincial governors and PCC first secretaries (Table 4) across the provinces as well as the statistical significance of the preference for local over provincial and national candidates in four of the central and eastern provinces (Table 3).

Conclusions

Cuba's 2018 National Assembly election supported political regime continuity. That election and its predecessors had buttressed the regime and demonstrated its invincible power, consistent with patterns long-existing among authoritarian regimes.[34] Turnout had dropped from 2013 to 2018 but it had remained high, while the proportion of non-conforming votes remained unchanged between 2013 and 2018. In 2018, Political Bureau members did not overpopulate the lower rungs of reported voting. Ministers and generals also received substantial support; no significant intra-elite differences appeared. National and provincial candidates performed about as well as local candidates. Eleven out of the thirty top provincial officials scored in the top quarter, while only seven were in the bottom quarter. The main manifestation of discontent was economic voting against ministers held responsible for poor economic performance.

The 2023 results were different. Contrary to the expectation from the comparative literature that the turnout and voting results should portray the regime as invincible (H1a), this election demonstrated that the magnitude of the crises exceeded the

regime's capacities to mobilize turnout and support for its candidates as in the past (H1b supported). Turnout fell markedly, exceeding past patterns.

Contrary to the expectation of some scholars that name familiarity and high media exposure would increase the vote shares of well-known national and provincial candidates (H2a), in 2023 many national and provincial candidates were among the reportedly lower-voted (H2b supported).

Consistent with the prospect that locally rooted candidates, evoking V. O. Key's pioneering research, would outperform national or provincial candidates because the voters support their friends and neighbours first, in 2023 local deputy candidates outperformed national and provincial candidacies in every province but one (H3a supported).

Provincial officials (governors and provincial first secretaries), especially, were held accountable; their vote shares were lower than those of other candidates (H3c supported). The drop in support for political and administrative provincial officials was highly statistically significant and a break with the past.

However, the results for high visibility national candidates were mixed, some with excellent results while others ranked in the bottom quarter; H2b paints with too broad a brush. Instead, H3a and H3c address this election's outcomes better: the triumph of the localist candidates, the holding of provincial officials accountable, while national candidates in the Political Bureau and Council of Ministers experienced insignificant declines in reported votes.

Contrary to the comparative politics scholarship that, given a crisis economy, civilian ministers responsible for economic policy would perform worst (H4a), in 2023 those economic policy ministers associated with economic reform were among the reportedly most-voted; retrospective punishment did not fall on them – voters expected them to change future economic policies.

And contrary to the theme in past scholarship regarding the Cuban military that generals would retain public support (H5b), most of those officers were among the reportedly lowest-voted (H5a supported). The drop in the reported support for generals was among the most statistically significant changes between 2018 and 2023.[35]

Three types of voting behaviour had become established by 2023: abstention as systemic opposition; blank plus null votes also as systemic opposition, and selective voting as a loyal opposition that accepts the electoral law but does not vote for the united slate. Cross-election turnout patterns had yet to consolidate, however.

The strongest new pattern emerging from the 2018 to the 2023 election is a consolidation and nationalization of the nonconforming vote. While Havana led the nonconforming vote in both elections, the gaps in nonconforming votes between Havana and the eastern provinces, evident in 2018, had narrowed markedly by 2023.

Cuba's 2018 and 2023 parliamentary elections featured many authoritarian impediments to the exercise of democratic politics, as had been the case for decades. Opposition parties were banned. Candidates were not allowed to compete against each other, draft their own biographies, or campaign advocating for policies and specific candidacies. The rules subsidized national and provincial candidacies at the expense of local candidates. Systematic political mobilization, in support of the united vote for the official slate, attempted to curb abstention and blank, null, or selective voting. Neither was a fair election, far from democratic, but the 2023 election was Cuba's first since the 1940s to permit and demonstrate the rise of disaffection across the nation, even as the political regime's leaders proclaimed their victory yet again.

From the ruling party's perspective, the 2023 election outcome was not good, with H6b supported. The drop in turnout signalled an erosion of trust and a political regime vulnerability. Nonconforming votes spiked and electoral disaffection nationalized. Its high visibility better-known national and provincial candidates failed to outperform local candidates, indicating outcomes worse than those that long sustained communist party rule in Vietnam or the former Soviet Union. Provincial governors and provincial PCC first secretaries had results significantly poorer than in 2018, with some ranking last in their province. Generals performed badly, having lost the military's shine from victory in war and competence in management. Official political mobilization no longer ensured election outcomes. From 2018 to 2023, for the first time in the history of such elections, Cubans held some of their officials accountable and thus inched forward toward democratization.

The silver lining for the political establishment was that its economic reformers, for the most part, did well, and its Political Bureau members, for the most part, held onto their reported vote shares. This implies an electorate that is still willing to try reform rather than rupture within the regime. Official discourse also claims to back limited economic reforms, notwithstanding a very slow pace of implementation, while retaining an unchanged political regime. From 2018 to 2023 the electorate seemed to support opening the economy, eschewing calling military forces onto the street, and replacing provincial cadres wholesale. The future of this political regime may depend on the leadership's willingness hear its voters and do this.

Notes

1. Puig Meneses, "Trabajar de una manera."
2. For an attempt to do that for the 2013 election, see Fonseca Galvis and Superti, "Who Wins."
3. Gandhi and Lust-Okar, "Elections under Authoritarianism"; Miller, "Elections, Information, and Policy Responsiveness in Autocratic Regimes"; Blaydes, "Who Votes in Authoritarian Elections and Why."
4. Shi, "Voting and Nonvoting in China."
5. Malesky and Schuler, "Paint-by-numbers"; Malesky and Schuler, "The Single Party's Dictator Dilemma."
6. Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy*, 15.
7. See also Simpser, *Why Governments and Parties*.
8. Stokes and Miller, "Party Government," 540, 543.
9. Bartels, "Messages Received."
10. Abramowitz, "Name Familiarity," 684.
11. Key, *Southern Politics*, 132, 141.
12. Dilla, González Núñez, and Vicentelli, *Participación Popular*, 69–73.
13. Gilison, "Soviet Elections."
14. Malesky and Schuler, "Paint-by-numbers"; Malesky and Schuler, "The Single Party's Dictator Dilemma."
15. Lewis-Beck, *Economics and Elections*, 30.
16. Alesina and Roubini, *Political Cycles*.
17. Heilman, *China's Political System*, 251–252.
18. Greitens, *Dictators and their Secret Police*.
19. Tedesco, "De militares a gerentes."
20. Domínguez, "Cuban Military and Politics," 24.
21. *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba, 1992,* article 92; *2019*, article 192
22. *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba, 1992*, article 92; *2019*, articles 152 and 153
23. *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba, 1992*, article 98, *2019*, articles 85e and 85f
24. *Gaceta Oficial de la República de Cuba, 1992*, articles 87 and 93, *2019*, article 193
25. Cruz Suárez, "Un voto unido"; Palmares Calderón, "Votar unidos."
26. Consejo Electoral Nacional, "Resultados finales."

27. *Informe de observación electoral ciudadana.*
28. En Vivo, "Informan resultados finales."
29. Wall, "Open List Proportional Representation," 4.
30. Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, *CEPALSTAT*; Antón Rodríguez, "Economía cubana cerró 2022."
31. World Health Organization, *Global Health Observatory. Cuba.*
32. Fiscalía General de la República, "Fiscalía General."
33. Key, *Southern Politics.*
34. Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," 351.
35. I am the scholar whose past hypothesizing is not supported by these findings regarding the military.

Notes on contributor

Jorge I. Domínguez, retired, was a professor of Government at Harvard University, during 1972–2018, where he also served as the first vice–provost for international affairs and director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. He has published articles and books on Latin American comparative and international politics, with specialities in Mexico and Cuba.

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