Cuba

Defining a Democracy:
Is Cuba a Contender?

By Sophia Weeks
Cuba and Democracy

• “This,” he said, “is real democracy’ [...] Because the people are with us in the revolution and are willing to die with us in the defense of the revolution.”

*Taken from Fidel’s speech on the eve of the Cuban Revolution (Andres Oppenheimer, Castro's Final Hour).
Structural Factors “Necessary” for Democracy

I. Socioeconomic Development
   - GDP, life expectancy, literacy, personal dignity, safety, etc

II. Economic Crisis
   - Severe drop in GDP

III. International Factors
   - Outside pressures to democratize

Diamond, Linz & Lipset, Democracy in Developing Countries
Socioeconomic Development

• Literacy Rates: 99.8%
• Life expectancy: 78.5 yrs
• GDP/per capita: 51\textsuperscript{st} out of 182
• HDI above most LA democracies
• One of lowest crime rates in LA

2008 HDI Report
Economic Crisis

- Imports fell from $8.1 billion to $2.2 billion in 3 years
- Salaries dropped by 50%
- 1/3 of labor force unemployed
- Cuba lacked everyday necessities

Perez-Lopez, The Cuban Economy in the Age of Hemispheric Integration.
International Factors

- Growing trend towards democracy, esp. in LA
- End of the Cold War and fall of Communism
- US embargo
- International human rights orgs
- Cuban expatriates in Miami
So,
Why is Cuba Not a Democracy?
Fidel Castro

- Cuba’s Hero
- Solidarity
- Consolidation
- Socialist Benefits
- Fidel’s Use of Structural Factors
"To oppose Fidel meant to oppose national sovereignty, [...] to oppose national sovereignty was to deny the very meaning of life.” Jorge Dominguez