

Chapter One

Introduction

When a small household restaurant selling pizza opened in the rural town of Tuta,¹ I was anxious to try it – the daily diet of rice and beans had exhausted its appeal. One afternoon I eschewed household responsibilities like helping my Cuban ‘father’ peel large numbers of tiny garlic cloves from the state market (Figure 1.1), to try what I hoped to be tourist-quality pizza. All the signs were promising – the ambience pleasant, freshly decorated, cool, the staff attentive, and the food on the menu listed not in national pesos but in hard currency (Cuban Convertible Dollars (CUCs), 1 CUC=24 pesos=£0.70 or \$1.10). I was disappointed. Although bigger and priced at 2 CUCs, the pizza resembled the doughy and tasteless version that sold on the street for 10 pesos, and, like the street pizza, it was made with substandard ingredients, at least according to my own standards of value. Rather than imported luxuries like those available in tourist restaurants in Havana (where hard currency prices are considerably higher), the components of my *napolitano con cebolla* (cheese and tomato pizza with onions) were bought from local sources. Soya oil replaced olive oil, coagulated; artificial cheese replaced mozzarella. There was no wine list.

Now I understand that what was for me a substandard dining experience is for most Tutaños a rare privilege. The long-term relationships forged during the 16 months I spent living in a Tutaño household (from 2005 to 2007 and again in 2011) have given me considerable insight into what it’s like to live with scarcity and uneven access (and not just on an intellectual level: I lost 20 lbs!). For most rural (and many urban) Cubans, the restaurant



Figure 1.1 A comparison of garlic available at the state market (left) and garlic I brought into Cuba from Costa Rica (right). Source: author.

encounter is rare. The infrequency of such occurrences is very likely the reason the state decided to allow a Tutaño family to open the *paladar*² in Tuta. Another had been closed down in the area several years before for illegally selling produce earmarked for the tourist industry – in this instance, lobster. *Paladares* are usually geared towards tourists, selling luxury food like lobster at market prices. Most are located in larger cities like Havana. Regardless of the currency in which they operate or their location, all *paladares* are expensive to Cubans as the ingredients for their dishes come from non-subsidized sources. Given the average daily (official) salary in Tuta of 10–20 pesos (about 0.45–0.75 CUCs or \$0.50–0.70),³ neither my Cuban ‘parents’⁴ nor many other Tutaños could afford to pay 2 CUCs for a pizza. Nor could people I know eat in a tourist restaurant in Havana, where prices are more closely aligned to those of the global market.

Besides those with political capital or remittances, most Cubans do not sit at the same table and share the same food as visitors to Cuba, though the luxuries of tourist life are evident to all. Inequalities of access cause separations between insiders and outsiders, rural and (some) urban dwellers, between people with more political capital and those with less, and between wealthier (and often whiter) residents with remittances and the poor majority who rely on peso salaries. The growing and visible arena outside state distribution networks is the outcome of recent openings of the Cuban economy – particularly the legalization of the US dollar in 1993 (converted to the CUC in November 2008), which now coexists with the domestic peso. While large cities like Havana are already globalized by tourist dollars and ‘objective’ market determinants, in rural towns like Tuta the vicissitudes of

world market prices and global patterns of consumption have only recently (re)entered the social psyche. There, eating at a *paladar* selling food in CUCs is a special event, experienced by an *increasingly visible* minority with access to hard currency. Consumer disparities have not always been so extreme, however. One estimate of the 2001 ratio of highest to lowest incomes is 1 : 70, compared to about 1 : 5 in the 1980s (Fabienke 2001: 65).

In this book, I argue that recent inequalities of access are differentially justified according to one's positioning vis-à-vis internal and external norms and practices or, put more simply, in relation to multiple forms of value. My decision to purchase pizza at a restaurant in Havana – which cost about 10 CUCs, along with another 10 for wine – is justifiable in terms of prices set by a global market combined with the fact that I receive a salary in hard currency from abroad. A functionary of the Cuban communist party might justify taking a larger share of national wealth because he or she works hard for Cuba and sacrifices more (in terms of time, etc.) than others. For a minority of privileged Tutaños, eating at the recently opened *paladar* may be justified because it represents the commercial culture of their envied relatives in Miami.⁵ Yet while this so-called 'global' consumer culture may be acceptable in everyday Tutaño life, it cannot be celebrated in open, public spaces. Unlike the tourist, the Tutaño eats behind the curtained windows at the *paladar* (which, one may note, is located far from the main street of town). Here, he or she may *relajar* (relax) in privacy with few fears that official or unofficial onlookers will talk about or sanction such an open act of consumerism.

The above forms of justification are associated with particular scales: the so-called global market, national norms and localized spheres of provisioning. The latter necessarily cut across both national and global economic spaces, and it is the purpose of this book to uncover how such nodes between the local and the global, and between the local and the national, are moralized in everyday life.

National spaces and the logics of food provisioning in Cuba differ markedly from those of the global market, simply because each entails different processes of valuation. My idea of a good pizza evaluated in terms of quality and price – common forms of value associated with liberal forms of globalization – contradicts the ideal of universal distribution within Cuba because, at least officially, such behaviour is associated with individualism and selfishness rather than national solidarity. While the liberal capitalist model is rationalized in terms of the maximization of individual preferences through the ever-encompassing price-profit matrix, the normative 'background' (Barnett *et al.* 2011: 66, in reference to Shove 2003) of economic practice in Cuba centres on a welfare or socialist economy justified in terms of 'non-economic' (Lee 2010: 282) values like the self-sacrifice and hard work it takes to produce collective property. Each political and moral economy is attached to particular values which, over time, become common or lived-in

models that guide rather than determine everyday economic life. In defining the terms of 'just' distribution or 'worthy' beneficiaries, each scheme of value (the so-called 'global' economy and the Cuban national economy) also represents a particular culture. Economic materialities do indeed cut across cultural ideas of justice for, as David Graeber has argued: 'What makes cultures different is not simply what they believe the world to be like, but what they feel one can justifiably demand from it' (Graeber 2001: 5).

In Tuta, economic realities are shaped by 'non-economic' values of collective property, hard work and self-sacrifice, which derive from the history of Cuba as a revolutionary nation. As I argue in chapter 2, these values emerged as a significant part of the revolutionary culture in Cuba well before it became a socialist country. Though such values or norms have real-life spatial and material effects within Cuba, they must increasingly coexist with liberal economic forms of value that traverse the protected borders of the nation state. There are, for example, two main material circuits of food in Cuba: those that move within the traditional state-subsidized sphere and those that move through the liberal market sphere. Domestic spaces for food *consumption* are officially separated from tourist spaces, just as spaces for the *exchange/distribution* of domestic goods are morally and practically detached from those in which imported, more expensive commodities flow. And spaces for the *production* of domestic products are officially separated from those for exports.

Revolutionary values are also implicated in the separation between privatized spaces for privileged consumption and public spaces where acts of provisioning should not contradict 'just' redistribution. Hidden arenas for more individualized consumption are increasingly important, however, as Tutaño families and neighbourhoods 'jump scale' (Smith 1984) from national provisioning spheres to more localized exchange networks. Because privileged Tutaño households – particularly whiter people whose families have left Cuba for Miami – are increasingly connected to outside capital, they may also jump scale in the opposite direction, for a large part of their consumption is met by remittances from, or relationships with, people beyond national borders. The politics of transnational networks increasingly competes with the territorial politics of Cuba as a redistributive nation, and the present task is to reveal how each of these political and moral economic spaces articulate with one another and with localized economic spaces through the 'constant (re)-negotiation of the economic and the non-economic' (Lee 2010: 282) in everyday life. I argue that the long-term values of Cuba as a revolutionary nation influence the way people perceive, spatialize and practise food provisioning in Tuta. As I found during fieldwork, national values, or what I term the moral economy of the Cuban nation (as opposed to moral economies of neoliberal globalization), were *more* influential in performing Tutaño economies than liberal ideas. Tutaño households entered into both state and market provisioning

spheres, but it was the former that provided the principal *moral foundation* for economic practices such as the consumption, exchange and cultivation of food.

Market openings in Cuba have led to the re-evaluation and reinforcement of national standards of value, according to which food and the land on which it is grown are forms of collective property. Processes of commodification were not always so morally charged in Cuba, however. Prior to 1959, Cuba resembled other Caribbean societies in its close links to outside commodities and modern consumer values. Memories of this period are still in the minds of some older Cubans I interviewed (see chapter 2), and present-day affiliations with people from the ‘outside’ (*afuera*) have in some cases allowed for the re-emergence of such forms of value. But since 1959 ‘food moralities’⁶ have been shaped by an inward-looking model of production and consumption, according to which hard work leads to the ‘just’ redistribution of collective property. Strengthened by historical codes and values, and concretized by their continuous re-enactment, the normative ideal of the national economy is based on the idea of food as an entitlement for all needy Cubans, a form of value not measured in terms of price. This moral economy must coexist with its counterpart, the liberal market, since the one cannot exist without a ‘countercyclic’ (Polanyi 1944) movement towards the other.

In what follows, I consider political economic values such as price alongside moral economic norms of community, as conceptualized in both state (Cuban) and market (neoliberal) terms. I argue that *all* political economic models, including those at the more liberal end of the spectrum, shape moral, material and spatial ideas of community. Indeed, political economic models may be compared to all other normative schemes associated with identity formation, working as both structure and process, continually in the making.

Political economies: re-connecting ‘is’ and ‘ought’

For it is not what *is* that makes us irascible and resentful, but the fact that it is not as it *ought* to be. (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel⁷)

As Gunnar Myrdal wrote in his important though oft-forgotten work: *The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory* (1953): ‘Political economy is a grandiose attempt to state in scientific terms what *ought* to be’ (Myrdal 1953: 57; my emphasis). Contrary to Myrdal’s nuanced account, most understandings of the economy ignore the moral and political foundations of economic models. For Andrew Sayer (2001), this neglect is partly a consequence of a scalar shift in conceptions of the economy from everyday relations based on trust – or the ‘Englishman’s word’⁸ – to anonymous dealings based on self-interest and utility:

As the social relations of economic activity became more functional, anonymous and attenuated and the new economics narrowed its focus to system mechanisms and exchange-value, questions of ... values ... were gradually expelled. As normative values were expelled from economic science, the scientific or rational content was expelled from descriptions of values, and they increasingly came to be regarded as subjective and emotive. These changes are evident in the vocabulary of political economy over the last three centuries, with a shift from the use of terms like 'virtue', 'vice', 'greed' and 'vanity' to more neutral terms like 'self-interest' (which, of course, can be defined in any way actors choose) and 'utility' that serve to remove economic actions and relationships from critical evaluation. (Sayer 2001: 703; my emphasis)

According to Sayer (2001), positive and normative – or what Hegel called 'is' and 'ought' – have become separated in modern understandings of economy. In most places of the world where neoliberalization prevails, the supra-human 'ought' is a theory of perfect markets and prices, a kind of 'virtualism' (Carrier and Miller 1998) that works as both a model *of* and a model *for* (Geertz 1973: 87–125) actual economic relations. In derivatives markets, for example, the 'virtual' value of an asset becomes actual profit when a number of buyers *trust* predictions of its future value.

This kind of performativity, according to which the 'ought' becomes 'is' through its re-enactment, is similar for the Cuban socialist model in which transcendental values, such as the idea of society comprised of 'new men' of socialism (see chapter 2), are also dialectically related to real-life outcomes. Like the theory of perfect markets, which continues as an 'ought' despite recurring global financial crises, the Cuban Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Cubano*, PCC) continues to re-develop old values in new contexts. Thus, while the legalization of hard currency marked a break from the socialist economic model, the latter has remained dominant in official circles. Officially, food (like healthcare and education) should be treated as an 'inalienable'⁹ or non-commodifiable public good, produced by and distributed to citizens according to the communist tenet: 'From each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs' (which has been significantly altered in recent years, see chapter 4). Accordingly, pesos embellished with pictures of revolutionary heroes are treated primarily as 'tokens'¹⁰ earned through hard work and exchanged for provisions which the state defines as necessary such as rice, beans and eggs. Yet this model stands in moral contrast to the growing hard-currency economy in Cuba, in which food of a higher quality than that provided by the state is treated as a *commodity* only accessible to a few and acquired through more individualized market transactions.

I argue in chapter 4 that the ideal moral economy in Cuba is now being reworked by President Raul Castro and his government. Not unlike recent calls for individualized 'responsibilization' in liberal capitalist countries, new economic plans in Cuba are aimed at lessening the burden of state redistribution by emphasizing workers' responsibility to produce collective



Figure 1.2 The state-subsidized market in Cuba (compare to the private farmers' market shown in Figures 1.3, 3.2 and 5.5). Source: author.

property (González Maicas 2012). President (Raul) Castro advocates a slow but progressive rationalization of the state workforce and a progressive change from universal rationing to a kind of means testing for benefits, similar to the neoliberalization of some countries in eastern Europe (see Stenning *et al.* 2010: 3–5, 175–80). Unlike eastern Europe of the 1990s, however, dominant values of the Cuban revolution – nation, self-sacrifice, hard work and collective property – are, at least at an official level, largely left unchanged.

In post-1990s Tuta, scarcities and daily hardships have blurred the boundaries between morality and opportunity, legality and necessity. Under these conditions, the moral and jural border between collective morality in the state sphere and entrepreneurial tactics for acquiring scarce commodities in the market sphere, has become more fluid. Scarcities combined with market openings have given rise to ambiguities at the local level between ‘is’ and ‘ought’. Such moral uncertainties allow Tutaños to find a space for inventing new rules to legitimate legally dubious activity. I outline such local rules explicitly in chapter 5, borrowing from an idea originally devised by anthropologist Janet Roitman (2005) in her account of the informal economy in the Chad Basin. Roitman’s reference to ‘licit-illegal’ (Roitman 2005: 204) or what I call illegally licit behaviour is appropriate for my own analysis of local tactics for acquiring scarce commodities, though for different reasons. While Roitman’s account of the way people legitimize otherwise illegal or immoral activities in Central Africa refers to the acts of deviants, in Tuta, illegally licit behaviour is necessary for most, if not all, Tutaños. Because of the frequent need to break legal rules, Tutaños must

find *moral* ways to resolve contradictions between state and market spheres of provisioning. Indeed, as I emphasize, Tutaños justify otherwise unacceptable economic practice by drawing from underlying values embedded in the history of Cuba as a revolutionary society.

Shifting scales of responsibility

Like the national moral economy in Cuba, which rests on ideas about the obligations and legitimate undertakings of state and citizens, everyday moral economies in Tuta are underpinned by obligations between a person and his or her extended family and/or neighbourhood. Indeed, while the *official* boundaries of community in Cuba are national borders, in Tuta ‘community’ is often limited to one’s *familiares* (extended family members). Despite cultural continuities, scales of affiliation and responsibility have changed significantly – from responsibilities and obligations between state and workers, legitimized in material terms by peso salaries exchanged for necessities, to those between families and workers, whose low salary in pesos must be augmented through legal or illegal market activity or gifts from people *afuera*. The state’s role as provider has changed from a somewhat trusted guardian to a distant other, epitomized by the designation ‘They’. As one Tutaño put it, ‘you must take what you can get from *Them*’.

A key moral dilemma in present-day Cuba is this jump in scale of provisioning from the nation to the locality, and it is a central issue explored in this book. Recent changes in the materialities and spatialities of food provisioning, from the state sphere to more localized (or transnational) exchanges with one’s (extended) family have caused a shift in responsibility from the nation to the family and/or neighbourhood. At the same time, more and more people are attached to family outside Cuba. In 2009, US President Barack Obama passed a law that increased the limit for remittances to \$3000 for every visit (from \$300 per quarter during the Bush era). With unlimited travel permissions (now, including travel *from* Cuba),¹¹ Cubans and Cuban-Americans may visit friends and acquaintances as well as immediate family members. There are no longer any weight restrictions on the amount of luggage that can be brought into Cuba. This has facilitated an influx of US commodities, and for some, a taste of modernity.

Network communities are partially replacing territorial communities in Cuba and elsewhere (see Miller 2011). Still, supranational connections have always influenced Cuban identities. A mythical Cuban hero like José Martí (see chapter 2) lived in the United States for over half his life, and since 1959 many Cubans have travelled with the military or, more recently, volunteered for medical ‘missions’. Others have simply left Cuba for a ‘better’ life in the United States or Europe. What makes present transnational relations between Cubans and their relatives living *afuera* different from these other

experiences is that they have created *increasingly visible* economic disparities between people linked to outside markets and people largely dependent on the state redistributive system. Indeed, as a consequence of the opening of the Cuban economy and ensuing inequalities, the historical dichotomy between revolutionary sympathizers and so-called individualistic ‘traitors’ (Whitehead 2007: 14) is perhaps more internalized now than at any time since the beginning of Fidel Castro’s revolution.

As the ratio between the highest and the lowest incomes in Cuba has shifted, so the state is no longer the primary provider for its citizens. Like other places, in Cuba globalization has partially ruptured what Nancy Fraser (2005, 2009) calls the ‘Westphalian’ sovereignty of the nation state.¹² Similar to processes of globalization elsewhere, public goods in Cuba are increasingly eclipsed by private commodities; redistributive justice and economic policies are no longer entirely under the remit of national economic controls. Wages in Cuba are so devalued in terms of the global market that they have largely lost their status as tokens that may be exchanged for necessary household provisions. The ideal political economy in Cuba, which hinges on concepts such as public goods and redistribution, is now at odds with alternative ways to provision for the household, some of which are connected to the global political economy. In these new circumstances, economic responsibilities for the local family (often met by extranational networks) must coexist with or even supersede moral or political responsibilities to the national ‘family’.

In Cuban terms, the dialectical relationship between national and local (/extranational) scales of responsibility is perhaps best reflected in the concept ‘*lucha*’ (struggle or fight, here I mostly use the latter translation), a common word and cultural construction that has already been identified in other studies of Cuba.¹³ Unlike most scholarly accounts of the concept, however, I argue that *lucha* has two separate often *opposing* connotations, which correspond nicely to the distinction between national values and local economic realities. In the national moral economy, *Lucha* (with a capital ‘L’) recalls the revolutionary ‘Fight’ against imperialist exploitation, mercenary selfishness and unjust ownership of national resources that have sparked revolutionary ideas in Cuban society at least since the late 19th century. As chapter 2 illustrates, it is necessary to consider such representations of the nation state since they become everyday tools for ‘social and political projects that underwrite discourse and performance... stress on one repertoire over another can affect the outcome of power struggles, opening up opportunities to one set of claimants, foreclosing them to another’ (Wolf 1999: 8).

In Cuba, the word ‘*Lucha*’ is a cultural conception tied to the historical ‘Fight’ of the Cuban nation against those who use (or have used) national wealth for mercenary purposes. In this cultural scheme, the national *Lucha* against such ‘traitors’ will lead to a just society, where food and other social

property is redistributed from the centre to workers who receive their just due according to their level of dedication to the revolutionary cause. Yet this version of *Lucha* has historically overshadowed other ideas about provisioning which emerge in local contexts, reflected, for example, in the positive memories some Tutaños have of consuming commodities from ‘the North’ (i.e. the United States). As Caroline Humphrey (1989) argued for the Janus-faced use of Soviet terminology by a Mongolian people in south-eastern Siberia, representations that are ‘uni-accentual’ within structures of power are made ‘multi-accentual’ by social actors within local contexts (Humphrey 1989: 145–6). In Cuba as in other contexts of nationalism, ‘[t]he more fixed the semiotic forms, the greater is the play of ambiguity and the more surprising are the possibilities for violating the code itself’ (Herzfeld 2005: 20). At more localized scales, where the boundaries of community may span the area of one’s neighbourhood as well as non-territorial relations with distant relatives, the word *lucha* has come to mean the daily ‘struggle’ or ‘fight’ to survive long-term scarcities that have characterized Cuban life since the early revolution, but especially since the 1990s when Cuba could no longer rely on barter terms of trade with the Soviet Union (see chapter 3). ‘[T]o utter “I am struggling” (*estoy luchando*) is to communicate in one verb the years-long efforts and defeats in small acts of life’ (Pertierra 2011: 81).

Moral and political differences between the national *Lucha* and the local ‘*lucha de provisiones*’ (fight for provisions) have not been overlooked by the Castro brothers and other top officials in the Cuban government. The latter criticize the ‘double morality’ (*doble moral*) of some Cubans: a so-called hypocritical switching that occurs when a person openly commends the ideals and values of the Revolution on one occasion, while engaging in economic acts to further his own ‘interests’ at another point in time (Suárez Salazar 2000: 245). Yet, as noted above, contradictions characterized by the *doble moral* concept, or the need to balance the requirements of national and everyday moral economies (*la Lucha* and *la lucha*), are an underlying factor of ordinary economic life in Cuba. While many Tutaños I met openly defended national goals to create and protect social property through work and dedication, most also felt the need to engage in ‘the fight for provisions’, often by breaking official rules by engaging in market transactions. Anthropologist Anna Cristina Pertierra has usefully referred to this as the ‘entrepreneurial-humility dialectic’ of Cuban life (Pertierra 2007: 146).

Even officials – the primary representatives of the state (Abrams 1988) – break formal rules in order to obtain commodities that are otherwise only available as public goods distributed through state channels. Indeed, just as there are spaces in-between state and market values, so there are interstices that complicate strictly Foucaultian views of Cuban governmentality. Such spaces in-between state and civil society are plainly illustrated by the words of one Tutaño who lamented how state managers’ morals had changed since the period of extreme scarcities in the early 1990s:

- A: There has been a change in values since the late 1980s. Now there is so much crime. People steal from the state or wherever and it doesn't seem to matter anymore. Before, no one stole. When they did, there was a moral outcry. Now people want good state jobs because they want to get things from the state. There are not as many restrictions as before.
- M: Why is that?
- A: Because the *jefes* [state bosses or managers] don't report anything. They take things also.

Crossovers in anthropology and geography II

This book responds to the need voiced in geography for empirical evidence to unravel the political potentialities of everyday spaces in-between top-down and bottom-up forces. In addition to anthropological theory and method, geographer Roger Lee's (2006) concept of 'ordinary economies' or more appropriately, 'ordinary economic geographies', will be essential for this project. As Lee argues (2006: 413), the economy 'is an integral part of everyday life, full of contradictions, ethical dilemmas and multiple values that inform the quotidian business of making a living. In short, it is ordinary'.

The added spatial dimension when 'ordinary economies' become 'ordinary economic *geographies*' adds to understandings of everyday value formation in economic anthropology since it points not only to multiple value systems but also to various spatial trajectories flowing within and without the borders of economic 'units'. Though the idea of 'coeval' relations of value is a cornerstone of economic anthropology (e.g. Gregory 1997), and though the spatialities of contradictory 'spheres' of value are central, if often implicit, to its theoretical history (e.g. Bohannan and Dalton 1962), the 'who' of such relations have usually been defined in terms of bounded economies/communities, such as the *Tiv Economy* (Bohannan and Bohannan 1968).¹⁴ In Nancy Fraser's (2009: 39) terms, the 'frame' of economic activity was largely determined by the social scientist, who maintained it by a strict dichotomy between traditional communities and outside economic forces.

As a result of the 1960s–1980s theoretical debate in anthropology between substantivism and formalism,¹⁵ more recent work in economic anthropology has overturned the dichotomy between non-market and market values, uncovering interrelations between different forms of value in everyday life (in traditional as well as modern societies) and revealing the importance of the market for non-market relations (e.g. of care) and vice versa.¹⁶ In the light of this literature, usually transferred to geography via Daniel Miller (who has not escaped criticism in some anthropological circles),¹⁷ Lee (2006: 413) uses the concept of 'ordinary economic geographies' to disclose

the moral and socio-political contradictions of everyday economic life. While adding to the range of sources in anthropology that interrogate multiple forms of value in everyday life, Lee's concept of ordinary economic geographies also uncovers the multiplicity of *spatial* trajectories that link (or do not link) inside and outside forces. Treating economic geographies as ordinary and full of contradictions not only allows the theorist to escape a unifying logic that sublimates one form of (political and moral) economy to another, but also frees economic activity and economic actors into a so-called 'heterospace' (Gibson-Graham 1996: 5) of diverse internal and external relations.

Much of this book provides evidence for such a perspective. Indeed, in a political sense, I view the Cuban economy as an open space, full of various possibilities. In an empirical sense, however, I do not ignore the performative role of economic models – that is, how normative designations of 'the economy' become 'lived-in models of the world' (James 2003: 57) that really do *matter* to people.¹⁸ In line with recent work in geography (e.g. Barnett *et al.* 2011), I argue that dominant economic norms of distributive justice in Cuba affect everyday commitments and guide economic decisions. Yet individuals and groups necessarily shift between dominant conceptions of value and their associated spatialities and others, including those underpinning the global market economy. While I am careful not to frame my argument in terms of any one particular unit (i.e. the national economy, the local community), in relating theory to practice, scale still matters. For the values circumscribing particular scales have historical and spatial continuity as they are adopted, altered or contested in everyday life. Thus it is often the case that

one scale – the world or global economy scale, or the national, state-building scale – 'really matters' when counter-poised to local struggles. ... This would be too closed, too close to a Foucaultian web of domination which fatally undermines agency if we were to forget that there is no set, unchallengeable hierarchy and that space *is* constructed from a relational mix of scales (Taylor 1999) in changing and challengeable scalar political opportunity structure (Tarrow 1998). ... But actions at some scales have more influence than others in some conditions, and some scales are less open to contestation than others. (North 2005: 225)

In Cuba, political economic (and moral) influences from without are 'contained' (North 2005: 224) at the national scale, for the state controls most places where commodities flow and redirects profits from outside market relations (from the tourist sector, for example) to national coffers (which are then, supposedly, redistributed justly). In Michel Callon and Bruno Latour's (1981) terms, the socialist government in Cuba, with all its human and non-human resources, has become a Leviathan that sets domestic food apart from the outside world of commodities. The discursive and material practice of 'enclaving' (Appadurai 1986: 22–6) in Cuba – or separating things out from the realm of commodities – is justified by the

transcendental notion of a future transition to a Cuban version of socialism. Professor of Cuban history, Antoni Kapcia (2000), associates this teleology with what he calls an ‘ideology of dissent’ or ‘*cubanía rebelde*’ (rebel Cuban-ness) that historically emerged in the face of outside imperialist interests, a trajectory I briefly trace in chapter 2.

The counter-discourse to *cubanía rebelde* – the neoliberal transition of Cuba – also ‘imposes its own space and time’ (Callon and Latour 1981: 286) by asserting a geographically and historically uniform path for economic liberalization. Both Leviathans are underpinned by the claim that economic activity within the border (the nation or the globe) will transform in uniform ways. Thus according to a neoliberal view, Cuba’s positioning within the North American ‘sphere of influence’ will inevitably lead to its integration into ‘the’ global consumer culture, unifying present incommensurables into the universal price mechanism. In an opposing scheme, Cuba (and perhaps others in the region) will inevitably follow the path of a socialist future, under an entirely different framework for distribution and justice, but unified by national borders (at least for now).¹⁹ Each moral and political economic framework is attached to a particular scale, and the scalar politics of each ‘claim[s] a privileged perspective’ (Gregory 1997: 18) that defines the parameters of ‘the economic’. Destabilizing state and market discourses opens up political possibilities simply because dominant economic logics such as the ‘right’ price for a commodity or the necessary ‘*perfeccionamiento*’ (advancement) of the socialist economy (Castro Ruz 2010) become historically and geographically contingent, rather than natural or immutable. Relations between a national politics of scale, associated with the view that food is an entitlement, and a global politics of scale tied to the idea of food as a commodity, are negotiated by ordinary people on the ground according to social positionings vis-à-vis inside and outside forces. Indeed, ordinary economic geographies in Tuta involve a multiplicity of capitalisms (Gibson-Graham 1996) and socialisms, with political potentialities that are not captured by stark binaries between state and market or ‘alternative’ and ‘mainstream’ systems of value.

Capitalist as well as socialist, economic as well as non-economic logics are reproduced within the ‘whole’ of economic life in Tuta. In this book, I relate empirical activity experienced, discussed and observed in Tuta to the various ‘wholes’ working within and between people, in which both sides of polemic debates play a part.

[D]istinctions [between individualism and collectivism] are numerous, fluid, flexible, running independently of each other, overlapping or intersecting; they are ... variably stressed according to the situation at hand, now coming to the fore and now receding. On the other side, we [moderns] think mostly in black and white, extending over a wide range clear either/or disjunctions and using a small number of rigid, thick boundaries defining solid entities. (Dumont 1986 [1983]: 253)



Figure 1.3 A scene from the *Mercado Agropecuario Campesino* (Free Farmers' Market) in Tuta. Source: author.

While many people still work for the collectivist state, most must also engage in individual pursuits like buying candy from CUC stores and selling it for slightly more in pesos. In the everyday *lucha* to find a balance between national and domestic needs and demands, it is, as one man put it, 'always important to have two jobs, one for the state and another on the side'. The job 'on the side' is usually legal or illegal petty trade in the limited market sphere, such as the sale of home-ground coffee, the coffee seeds having been 'smuggled'²⁰ from another municipality or province. Nonetheless, the ultimate source of such petty commodities often derives from the state sphere: a state worker or *jefe* 'grabs' (or 'steals'; this distinction is explained in chapter 5) goods from a state-led distributive institution and then sells them to an intermediary.

Even if one operates strictly within the law and purchases from official outlets (e.g. the Free Farmers' Market, Figure 1.3), it is still difficult for Cuban buyers to know whether vendors have met all the necessary legal requirements: 'When Elisabeth buys okra from vendors, who is to say whether the vendor has paid her monthly fee?' (Pertierra 2011: 137). Like anthropologists Norman Long and Paul Richardson (1978) argued for Peru, and as geographer Adrian Smith (2002) argued for Slovakia more recently, non-market practices in Cuba often support and reproduce capitalist relations. Nevertheless, I argue in the ethnographic chapters (3–6) that the various capitalisms in Tuta are *moralized* in terms of long-term values of Cuban nationalism (and, now, socialism) such as selflessness, struggle and familial solidarity.

Anthropologists have long argued that everyday shifts between different ‘spheres of exchange’ are always morally charged. While the spatial contours of such shifts have often been left out of anthropological accounts, geographers have only recently begun to use ethnographic material to consider shifting and heterogeneous economic logics in everyday life (e.g. Stenning *et al.* 2010). Here I draw from both disciplines to reveal how people in rural Cuba rationalize the practicalities of living within and between contradictory, though coeval, economic and discursive spaces. In accordance with recent work in geography (Leyshon *et al.* 2003; Williams 2005; Fuller *et al.* 2010), I counteract stark contrasts like that between neoliberalism and Cuban socialism, or between a ‘mainstream’ economy and an ‘alternative’ communitarian ideal, which obscure actually existing multiplicities in social, spatial and economic life. In accordance with anthropology, however, I recognize the empirical significance of such binaries (see also Samers and Pollard 2010: 49). Indeed, as we shall see, binary oppositions between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ in Cuba are used by officials and ordinary people alike to define outsiders *within* who, in the dualistic ideology of Cuban nationalism-socialism, conform too closely to the individualism of capitalist markets (see chapter 5). On the ground, ‘outside’ macroeconomic geographies often collide with ‘inside’ ‘spaces of political engagement’ (Jonas 2010: 21). This does not mean, however, that what we have come to see as ‘the economic’ is an apolitical phenomenon, a force that comes from nowhere.

The economy–culture relation

Economic concepts like capital, supply and demand and so on, are systematic elements that affect every place in very real material ways (Sayer 2001). But that this is so in our present era has more to do with the foundations of these principles in particular politico-cultural discourses, which have become empirically valid through their on-going performativity, than because of any economic determinism premised on their spatial and temporal inevitability. Like other forms of representation, there are two aspects of ‘the economic’: an empirical referent and its discursive association with the dominant cultural politics of late capitalist society, particularly the dominant vision of neoliberalization. For those striving for alternatives, it is unfortunate that ‘part of this [discursive] articulation [is to] quietly ... englobe the former function’ (Dresch 1976: 57).

Perhaps less unfortunate is the realization that ‘global’ neoliberalization has a particular genealogy (see Peck 2010) that prevents its uniform incorporation into *all* cultural worlds, including the dominant (and often oppressive) agenda in Cuba. Relations between this (macro)economy and place-based politics and cultures are therefore always historically and geographically contingent:

We do not have to flip from the dogma of the economy as determinant in the last instance to the dogma of culture going all the way down. There is no sense in making general pronouncements on their relative importance, since this is always an empirical question that will depend on the particular case in which it arises. (Sayer 2001: 705)

I argue in chapter 2 that the long-term opposition between socialist and/or nationalist values in Cuba and (neo)liberal values in the United States has, if anything, strengthened cultural 'spaces of dependence' (Cox 1998) within Cuban territory rather than annihilated them. As indicated above, appeals to social unity in Cuba often rest upon the identification of outsiders residing within the borders of the nation state, a situation that recalls anthropologist Anthony Cohen's argument that the 'social identity of a group may ... be contested *within* the group itself, on grounds related to the *cross-boundary* interaction' (2000: 1; emphasis in original). Thus Cubans who are seen as having too much money or too many luxury goods *without* making appropriate sacrifices for the benefit of the community face both official *and* unofficial demands to realign the economic balance between themselves and 'all' Cubans. Understanding such cultural norms is essential for scholars interested in the culture–economy relation, for as anthropologist Timothy Jenkins argues, '[o]fficial claims as to the nature of the world are part of the material to hand, with which, from an actor's perspective, to assert worth and to act in the present' (Jenkins 1994: 451).

In Tuta at least, most people do not participate in a community of 'common ends' (Young 1990: 229) like that upheld by the 'alternative-oppositional' (Fuller and Jonas 2003: 66) stance of the Cuban government. Many identify with people in their neighbourhoods in terms of collective imaginings of a better future and a shared sense of caring for others, often using cultural forms that derive from nationalism and/or socialism. The lack of political dogmatism at the local level – apart from official circles – is perhaps illustrative of the kind of 'heterogeneous unities' Iris Marion Young (1990: 236) referred to as part of her dismissal of binary political economic thought. Like Young, my aim is to 'explode the binar[ies]' (Gibson-Graham 1996: xxi) between culture and economy, state and market, socialism and capitalism.

Rarely does a visitor to Cuba have the kind of access that enables an understanding of the bigger picture that contains all these binaries and everything in-between. During all my visits to Cuba, excepting my time in Tuta, I have either stayed in tourist accommodation (such as *casa particulares*) let by wealthier Cubans who usually receive remittances, or else I have been compelled to lodge in official residences for foreign academics where the level of economic activity one is allowed to witness is highly restricted. My only gateway into rural society has been through the creation of a fictitious kinship relationship with my Cuban 'parents'. Thankfully, this relationship

was recognized both officially (through family visas) and unofficially (in the neighbourhood) as a valid form of belonging and habitation, for without such recognition I would have experienced very little ‘ordinary’ economic life in Cuba.

Positioning the ethnographer I: habitual and representational knowledge

Apart from interviews and the collection of life histories (as well as historical and discourse analysis, see below), the principal methodology used in this book is ethnography. While the word ‘ethnography’ is now used in loose terms, referring to a period of research that usually does not last for more than a few months, any period of time spent living in a different cultural world enriches the field of knowledge, allowing the researcher to take a reflexive stance and perhaps leave off some of her own cultural assumptions in the analysis that follows. Positioning the researcher in the cultural field thus

offers a dynamic, agentic model of identity construction where a person creates a possible identity for themselves in a particular context through their active positioning in relation to, or perhaps in opposition to, elements in their discursive cultural context. (Linehan and McCarthy 2001, cited by Barnett *et al.* 2011: 121)

While not ‘emplaced’ (Mansvelt 2005: 85) in the same way as the people under study, the ethnographer is ‘committed in the body’ (Jenkins 1994: 451) and so acquires the kind of knowledge – both habitual *and* representational – that is particularly useful for studies that highlight food scarcity and related hardships. I will take these two forms of knowledge in turn.

Habitual knowledge may be acquired through participation in communal activities such as preparing and eating food, watching television and contributing to conversations about particular programmes, cleaning the house and engaging in other forms of ‘work’ (reproductive work is recognized as ‘real’ work in Cuba), dancing and drinking rum – all of which were essential for this study. But understanding habitual behaviour goes deeper than daily tasks and shared social events; it also requires openness to making mistakes and learning from them. Such resolutions become apparent only after the ethnographer internalizes cultural ‘rules’ for behaviour that are often implicit. This is usually only possible after significant periods of time spent living in a household, loosely defined as any combination of people living under one roof. Thus as I learned, it was offensive to bring home food or drink for one’s own consumption without offering some to family members, it was considered ‘dangerous’ to spend time with certain people or to give

gifts of things like beer in certain places (see chapter 5), it was considered anti-social not to sit through the midday hour of soap operas, even if I thought it was a waste of time.

Such slight forms of information are often crucial, for when the ethnographer learns to act appropriately he or she may establish trusting relationships and perhaps gain access to social spaces (like informal exchanges) that illuminate more profound insights into daily life. For this reason, the ethnographer spends much time taking notes, perhaps summarizing them, periodically, into summary essays, as I did about once every few weeks whilst living in Tuta. The practice of note-taking, along with others like developing memory skills (I would recall 5–7 main topics of hour-long conversations, which later helped me remember details in between),²¹ creates a kaleidoscope of knowledge about the field site that may, as the metaphor implies, change over time. Though this vision is never (and never can be) complete, the pieces thus arranged can give the ethnographer increasing insight about what really ‘matters’ to the people with whom one lives.

While some may critique the value anthropologists place on habitual knowledge as ‘deliberately render[ing] their research subjects mute’ (Barnett *et al.* 2011: 78), most anthropologists take verbal ‘forms of justification’ (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006) very seriously indeed. By recording common forms of justification repeated by various people over an extended period of time, the ethnographic researcher may establish plausible if always *provisional* and *testable* (Jenkins 1994: 434) conclusions about the ways those people conceptualize and practice the ‘good life’:

As soon as the researcher can no longer base the validity of her affirmations on her stance of radical exteriority, the definitiveness of the description comes into question. In such cases the researcher is obliged, in her description, to adhere as closely as possible to the procedure the actors themselves use in establishing proof in a given situation; this approach entails paying careful attention to the diversity of forms of justification. (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006: 12)

Representational knowledge, such as justifying economic practice with words like ‘*lucha*’, may be as important as habitual knowledge. In places like Cuba, such political discourses are often incorporated – whether in earnest or in play – into everyday social exchanges. My ethnographic notes included such non-verbal mishaps as those listed above, but I also took note of the frequency of politically charged words or ideas and of the contexts in which they were used. The ethnographic context demanded that I compare everyday usages of expressions like ‘*lucha*’ or someone with or without ‘culture’ to their official and historical counterparts. I did so through the collection of histories, newspaper articles, policies and speeches, modes of data collection that will be evidenced in what follows. But it was ethnography that

allowed me to understand the relations (and contradictions) between discourse and practice, avoiding a kind of ‘militant anti-representationalis[m]’ (Holbraad 2004: 354) that ignores the ways political norms enter into the ‘world of concern’ (Sayer 2011).

Positioning the ethnographer II: food and the ‘politics of negotiation’

Given the embodied nature of experience and the workings out (or not) of difference and privilege through experiences like consuming food, the ethnographer becomes an important player in the very ‘politics of negotiation’ (Massey 2004, 2011 [2005]) he or she may be studying. Geographers of food have recently claimed that food is politically important because differential access to food is experienced as an embodied form of exclusion. Food is a special kind of object in both its commoditized and non-commoditized forms. As a commodity – something with an exchange value or price – it stands in stark contrast to other commodities like tablet computers. It is not only physiologically essential, but also a powerful symbol of social conditions such as ‘luxury and lack’ (Mansvelt 2005: 95), dependence and autonomy. As a non-alienable good, food may be used to define and (re-)create community. As such, food is an important lens through which socio-political relations may be studied:

Food stands in a different category from the ordinary commodities of economic exchange. It is an insistent human want, occurring regularly at short intervals, and shared by the whole community alike. ... [I]t is the mechanism by which food-getting habits are formed in the structure of each different culture that we have to analyze. (Richards 1932, cited in Wilson 2012: 278)

Consuming food, in particular, opens up connections and/or disconnections between the researcher’s own field of experience and that of the people with whom one interacts. As Ian Cook *et al.* (2010) argue, ‘foods link up with ideas, memories, sounds, visions, beliefs, past experiences, moods, worries and so on, all of which combine to become material – to become bodily, physical sensation’ (Cook *et al.* 2010: 113–14). Understanding such differences and multiplicities – in habitual *as well as* representational terms – allows the fieldworker to distinguish his or her own experiences and knowledges from those of the people encountered during fieldwork, and to reach normative or political conclusions.

A face-to-face politics is engendered by a meeting up of different life trajectories, positioned differentially in relation to ‘power geometries’ (Massey 1991) that separate privileged from underprivileged spaces of consumption, for example. Though my own spatial and moral positioning in rural Cuba

was far from that of the people with whom I lived, like them I had to shift from one trajectory to another, in terms of my *own* relation to inside and outside power geometries. And like my 'informants' (mostly friends), I was able to step into and out of different economic and moral roles according to the specific endo- and exo-relations brought about by the encounter. For instance, I shifted from being an ethnographer, tolerantly experiencing rural life with all its hardships, to being a tourist entering privileged spaces of consumption just like any other rich tourist in a poor country would. Indeed, this is how I justified it to myself! My own experiences as a tourist, attached to memories of other places and times, provided the economic and moral 'background' with which such a justification became reasonable. As a member of 'the' global consumer culture, I simply needed to satisfy culturally established needs – like decent pizza – through periodic trips to Havana.

Entering into tourist spaces counteracted the stoic stance of the ethnographer who is supposed to 'go native'. But this naive methodology, which assumes that people can simply re-localize themselves and their values to fit local understandings, later describing these to others through representation, reflects a flawed notion of an 'authentic' fieldwork experience. It is also related to a cultural belief in an objective 'truth' rather than multiple versions of shared experiences.

Geographers like Doreen Massey extol the 'radical contemporaneity' (Massey 2011 [2005]: 99) of multiple trajectories that link up (or do not link up) persons with different histories and ideas about the present and future, and with different spatial relations to phenomena like economic globalization. Anthropologists should surely appreciate her normative appeal to recognize the political nature of space as well as time, for ethnographic knowledge consists simply of 'potentially exclusive versions of the truth that together constitute the event' (Jenkins 1994: 443). Discrepancies between the ethnographers' own experiences and values and that of his or her informants are actually helpful in establishing Massey's politics of 'coexisting heterogeneity' (Massey 2011 [2005]: 9), though of course we cannot take this so far as to ignore power relations that work at scales beyond the individual.

The provisioning perspective

Cuba's changing economy, agroecology and society offer social scientists a unique opportunity to apply theories of responsibility, justice and value to everyday life. Starting from my own experiences in Cuba, which first came to light when I encountered separations between tourist and Cuban spheres of consumption, in this introductory chapter I have laid the foundations for the central methodological and theoretical premises of the book. Though it necessarily follows a linear scheme (from consumption to production), my

analysis is non-linear in its treatment of provisioning processes. I treat each provisioning process – production, exchange/distribution and consumption – as connected not only through shared cultural understandings of appropriate economic practice (Fine and Leopold 1993; Fine 2002; Narotzky 2005) but also through particular material networks maintained through Cuba's unique system of governance and power. I am particularly concerned with processes of commoditization, and to differences between different kinds of commodities (Crang *et al.* 2003: 448), identifying food as an object through which both commodified and non-commodified provisioning processes are morally embedded.

Similar to other anthropologically informed studies in geography, I treat de-commoditization as a counterpart to commoditization, and vice versa, a value relation that must be worked out in practice. Unlike some in the geographical tradition, however, I contest the idea that commoditization 'breaks down' the moral economy (Watts 1999: 310; for a critique, see Williams 2005), or that the political economy of commodities must always undermine forms of exchange that are more 'embedded' in moral economies. Indeed, I consider state and market theories of value, and their concomitant socialities, spatialities and materialities, as moral economies in their own right. If 'entanglements' and 'disentanglements' between persons and things are equally human (Callon 2005: 6), then the analytical use of concepts such as commodities should not precede considerations of the social relations through which they become represented, understood and treated (or not treated) as such. Like Clive Barnett, I start not from the commodity concept per se, 'the "software" of using and exchanging goods', but the 'socio-material "hardware" that supports such activity', or the 'systems of provisioning and background infrastructures that enable all these affective exchanges to go on' (Barnett *et al.* 2011: 66). Unlike a more commodity-centred approach, then, I emphasize processes of value formation that underpin the systems of provision approach (Fine and Leopold 1993; Fine 2002; Narotzky 2005), attempting to uncover the 'complex ways that power and interest can shape a provisioning chain' (Narotzky 2005: 83–5).

Outline of the chapters

As emphasized, the national moral economy that structures (rather than determines) systems of provisioning in Cuba stands in direct contrast to liberal economic thought, which treats food as a commodity accessible to anyone with enough hard cash, regardless of their moral standing. In chapter 2, I explain the contrast between the normative idea of food as an entitlement upheld by the Cuban nation state and the unlimited desires of consumer capitalism, and uncover how each creates normative links between consumer and community, citizen and nation state (or globe).

I relate the Cuban national moral economy to the historical and geographical context in which it developed, positioning Cuba as an alternative economic space vis-à-vis its ‘mainstream’: the United States. In this way, I assign a ‘home’ (Massey 2004: 427) to an otherwise contingent project of national unity in pre-socialist and socialist Cuba. In a similar, if less thorough, fashion I de-centre the mainstream model of (neo)liberalism by describing theorizations of value, materialities and moralities that situate this ‘project of scale-making’ (Tsing 2000: 347) in space and time.

The ethnographic chapters (chapters 3–6) associate these dominant models of state and market to the power geometries that emplace Tutaños unevenly in relation to such discourses and their spatialities. Like Katherine Neilson Rankin’s (2004) account of honour in a Nepalese market village, I show how people differentially positioned in the Cuban political economic system incorporate, contest or otherwise manipulate the cultural politics of the nation state in order to manoeuvre between market and non-market spaces, and how some cultural-economic practices, in turn, (re)create inequalities. In line with other work in moral geography, I am interested in changing ‘landscapes of care’²² in rural Cuba, particularly how people with various relations to inside and outside forces live through scalar shifts in economic responsibility while continuing to ‘domesticate’²³ dominant normative frameworks. For instance, I argue that while certain categories of persons, like Afro-Cubans, generally do not have access to remittances in hard currency or help from family members living *afuera* (few Afro-Cubans have enough money and/or political capital to leave Cuba), many Cubans of European descent do have such ‘scale capabilities’ (Swyngedouw 1997, cited in Rankin 2004: 65), which allow for more amenable permutations between state and market spaces.

In chapters 3 and 4, I use local narratives to reveal how consumers in Tuta position themselves in relation to the national collective. While Tutaños are increasingly uneasy about growing inequalities and scarcities, many continue to illustrate their moral commitment to revolutionary ideas and values. Chapter 3 centres on how the contradiction outlined in the previous chapter – between food as a public good in the state system and food as a private commodity in the market – affects the way ordinary people justify scarcities in Cuba. I start by briefly explaining actual divisions in food accessibility, particularly in terms of the distinction between an ideal model of national redistribution and more localized determinations of value and desire. A limited amount of basic necessities are provided to underprivileged Cubans through the Acopio (redistributive) system and at state-subsidized agricultural markets in pesos. Higher-quality imports and domestic products, some also produced by Cuba’s growing population of small farmers, are sold either at higher-priced agricultural markets, through petty traders at world market prices or in hard currency at domestic and tourist shops (also at world market prices). The rest of chapter 3 shows how Tutaños deal discursively with scarcities and inequalities of access. I argue

that local narratives of consumption draw from the scalar politics of the nation state, evident for example in Tutaños' particular use of irony. Local jokes about scarcity, which set the norms of the state against the difficult realities of post-1990s Cuba, do not entirely overturn socialist moralities relating person to community; indeed in some respects they maintain them. 'Lay normativities' (Sayer 2004) were also apparent in differentiations Tutaños made between what they wanted and what they 'liked', only using the latter in my presence so as to not seem 'interested' in receiving material gifts from me (a partial outsider with access to hard currency). In line with the oft-quoted adage of José Martí, 'The wine is sour, but it is *our* wine', I argue that narratives of scarcity and inequality in Tuta are tied to revolutionary ideas of the national collective.

Chapter 4 begins with a brief anthropological comparison, which reveals how values of redistribution and reciprocity coexist in Cuba as in other cultural contexts. I then argue that Tutaños create local counterparts to the state's version of communist redistribution and socialist reciprocity through consumer narratives of nourishment and hunger. Tutaños used the former word (*alimenta*) to indicate their two-way relationship with the state, which retains its distant role as provider for all those who sacrifice for the nation ('They must nourish us'). The word 'hunger' (*pasar hambre*) signifies just the opposite: a feeling of abandonment and redistributive injustice, which has been especially acute in the post-1990s period of scarcity ('They are letting us go hungry!'). Since the early 1990s, Tutaños have likely 'gone hungry' more than in any other period in revolutionary history. The present Cuban government claims that sacrifices are spread evenly and justly across the population and that collective benefits will accrue from market endeavours like tourism and taxes on private entrepreneurs. Indeed, as I argue, Raul Castro's economic reforms of 2011 do not overturn the communist redistribution of use values. Still, recent policies introduce new contradictions, as official discourse shifts from universal redistribution to a kind of reciprocity premised on what Young (2011: 11) calls a 'liability' or 'blame' model of economic responsibility.

Chapters 5 and 6 reveal how the moral economy in Cuba is shifting from the nation to neighbourhoods, households and individuals as Cuba opens its economy to domestic markets, tourism and privatized agriculture. On the ground, it is increasingly evident that market openings and continuities of political capital allow some people more access to the world of commodities than others. In chapter 5, I explain how inequalities allow for a scalar shift in communities of distribution and exchange, from the nation to the locality, though many people continue to justify appropriate economic practice in terms of the national moral economy. Political capital, tourism and the increasing number of workers employed '*por cuenta propia*' (literally, on one's own account; also called *particulares*) have escalated inequalities, redirecting the power of allocation from the state to individuals and

households. At the same time, revolutionary ideas of ‘culture’, ‘protection’ and levels of ‘interest’ are used to define and evaluate people differentially positioned within systems of power and privilege. Drawing from themes outlined in previous chapters, I explain how Tutaños determine culturally appropriate exchanges between *jefes* and their workers, *particulares* and their clients and foreigners (like myself) and ordinary Cubans. While yielding to the central power of the PCC, acceptable exchanges often stray into illegal spaces for provisioning. They are made illegally licit, or justified in social terms, if they conform to shared understandings of how far one should cross the line from common interests to instrumentality.

In the penultimate chapter, I ask whether the national moral economy is applicable to a sector that has long been the most questionable in the socialist system: small farmers. Over the past few decades, the official idea of the small ‘private’ farmer has shifted from a short-lived egoist who works for his or her own benefit (a Leninist view), to the preserver and producer of sovereign property (land and food, respectively) and the forerunner of Cuba’s agroecology movement. Though small farmers are in an economically advantageous position compared to most others in Cuban society, an official shift away from the industrial model occurred in the 1990s when the state initiated a political drive to cut imports of food and agrochemicals by distributing land in usufruct (use rights) to ‘worthy’ people. Like the categories of privileged people introduced in chapter 5, I argue that small farmers are both officially and socially evaluated according to how much they give back to their national and local communities. Formal controls include the creation of an alternative monetary system and special stores for small farmers, which prevent uneven access to luxuries otherwise available at hard currency stores. Social requirements include sharing produce, information and state-distributed bio-fertilizers. Despite such informal and formal rules for food production, it is clear that small farmers enter into market spaces, including the tourist market. Discrepancies between a national politics of redistribution and sustainability and a local politics of appropriate production and exchange are evident from my interviews, though, like the consumers discussed in chapters 3 and 4 and the traders discussed in chapter 5, farmers still justify their economic practices in terms of national values like collective property.

In the concluding chapter, I return to theoretical issues introduced in the first few chapters, again broadening the notion of ‘moral economy’ to incorporate both communitarian and liberal versions of community. I argue that moral economic projects to establish alternatives may be no better than their mainstream counterparts if they fail to ‘jump scale’ from top-down ideas of justice to the various scales in which everyday experiences are played out. Whether and how ‘alternative’ projects resist or counteract mainstream trends therefore depends on how successful they are at shifting from individual or local perspectives to wider normative and political economic relations, and back. I argue that projects to establish alternatives to mainstream economic



Figure 1.4 Two men walk down the road in Tuta. Source: author.

relations necessitate the creation of social collectivities with shared norms of environmental, social and economic justice. In this sense, the Cuban alternative is durable, for many Cubans still demonstrate a moral commitment to long-term ideas of national solidarity. This makes alternative provisioning systems in Cuba more formidable, if less extensive, than similar projects elsewhere. Relating theories of justice to observed practice, collected over an extended period of time, I aim to shift focus from transient prescriptions for Cuban transition to timeless concerns with redistributive justice, (in)equality, and the scope of community.

Notes

- 1 'Tuta' is a municipality of about 350km² with a population density of 141 inhabitants/km². Its primary agricultural products are citrus, sugar cane and dairy, though increasingly small-scale farming is also practised. At least during the period of fieldwork, there were no 'organoponicos' or state-owned organic gardens in the municipality. Tuta is divided into five *consejos populares* (juridical councils or what I call towns), the largest of which bears the same name. As with personal names, I have disguised the name of this town where a majority of my informants live. Given the political sensitivity of some of the following material – particularly within Cuba – I do not provide details of its location in visual form.
- 2 A *paladar* is a small 'family-run' restaurant in Cuba, legally permissible only if the owners pay high taxes (usually in hard currency) to the Cuban state. Passed in June 1994, Resolution No. 4 prohibited non-family members to work in *paladares*, though 'ordinary' people as well as officials turned a blind eye to such legal controls. In April 2011, the Cuban government legalized the employment of

non-family members in *paladares* and other small businesses for the first time since the 1960s. The shift between legal and illegal (or formal and informal) economic activity is a central subtheme of this book, and it continues despite recent openings of the economy.

- 3 All salary estimates are based on my latest period of ethnographic fieldwork in 2011. It is possible that the basic official salary has increased for some Cubans since then, given further legalizations of the private (service) sector; however, as indicated in chapter 4, all legal entrepreneurs must pay hefty taxes to the state.
- 4 I first met Clare and Jorge (pseudonyms) – my ‘parents’ – in 2002 and developed a long-term relationship that led to our co-habitation during the fieldwork period. Our fictitious kinship is and was as cultural and emotional as practical, for as I explain later, I obtained official permission to live in their household as a member of the family.
- 5 References to ‘Miami’ or ‘*afuera* (outside)’ encompass a wide variety of places where Cubans have emigrated, though most do live in Miami.
- 6 Mansvelt (2005: 96).
- 7 Cited by Dumont (1977: 108).
- 8 Hart (1986: 645).
- 9 Weiner (1992).
- 10 Holbraad (2000: 9).
- 11 In January 2013, Raul Castro eliminated the requirement that Cubans purchase an exit visa, an expensive and complicated system that prevented many so-called dissidents from leaving Cuba. Now a Cuban citizen may travel for up to 2 years abroad with their Cuban passport and an entry visa from the intended country of destination. The opening of foreign travel does not necessarily mean a mass exodus, however, since the average salary of 20–40 CUCs/month is not even enough to pay the increased fee for a Cuban passport (100 CUCs).
- 12 Fraser uses the term ‘Westphalian’ or ‘Keynesian-Westphalian’ to refer to the post-war inclination among ‘first world’ governments to treat economic rights and controls as matters internal to individual states. One example she gives (Fraser 2005: 1) is the Bretton Woods system, which separated out national economies for the purpose of maintaining functional international economic relations. Her idea of ‘Westphalian’ originates from the treaties of Westphalia of 1648 (also called the Peace of Westphalia), which ended the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) by ratifying the sovereignty of individual European states.
- 13 That is, Holgado Fernández (2000); Berg (2004: 48); Roland (2006: 156); Pertierra (2007: 3, 40–1, 2011: 75–106); Settle (2007: 15).
- 14 The Tiv (or Tivi) are an ethno-linguistic group of people of West Africa (Nigeria and Cameroon).
- 15 In his preface to Paul Bohannan and George Dalton’s classic volume, *Markets in Africa* (1962), Melville Herskovits argued against the kind of analysis which poses ‘the market’ as a homogenous social fact that applies to all societies in the same way. Instead, he claimed that societies with combinations of barter, ‘money-barter’ (or scrip) and money are different ‘in kind’ (rather than in degree) from societies with an all-encompassing market, in which economic transactions are carried out using a single ‘general purpose money’ (Herskovits 1962: 16). The formalist/substantivist debate that ensued in anthropology illustrated that

- Bohannan and Dalton's position was flawed as it was still based on the primitive/modern polemic. Economic anthropologists now use Bohannan and Dalton's ideas and those of earlier substantivists (especially Karl Polanyi) to show that even modern economies cannot be entirely explained by the market principle.
- 16 That is, Long and Richardson (1978); Gregory (1982, 1997); Hart (1986); Parry and Bloch (1989); Dilley (1992); Miller (1997, 2001); Graeber (2001); Gudeman (2008).
 - 17 For instance, Wendy James, retired Professor of Social Anthropology and Emeritus Fellow of the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Oxford, writes: 'Danny Miller has argued that the idea of consumption itself, with all the house decoration, food preparation, and shopping that goes into it, is a kind of ritual, imbued with morality and symbolism, even religious overtones, though some may still feel the need for an anchor in the basic facts of capitalism and the way it tends to promote inequalities. The consumer is king as long as he – or more usually she – has a full purse, but not everyone involved in the production of the goods we see in the supermarket has this power' (James 2003: 257).
 - 18 For an insightful discussion of the ways top-down norms really 'matter' to people see Sayer (2011).
 - 19 Following earlier anti-imperialist revolutionaries of the region, particularly the Venezuelan, Simón Bolívar (1783–1830), Cuban leaders have long had visions for a socialist form of Latin American (and Caribbean) unity. For some at least, this dream is approaching reality as countries like Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Nicaragua and Bolivia continue to develop the economic, social and political trade bloc appropriately named the Bolivarian Alliance for the (Peoples of Our) America (*Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*, ALBA). Formed by the late President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela in 2004, this emerging trade bloc is something to watch, particularly as ALBA has plans to introduce a new currency called the Sucre, which would allow for more autonomous trade and barter between member countries.
 - 20 At least during the fieldwork period, the transport of foodstuffs in bulk, especially goods monopolized by the state such as coffee, was prohibited on the island. In 2007, penalties for this offence were as severe as those for drug smuggling in other countries.
 - 21 Remembering is also key in politically charged contexts, such as Tuta, where interviewees do not feel comfortable being recorded.
 - 22 Read and Thelen (2007), cited in Stenning *et al.* (2010: 175).
 - 23 Stenning *et al.* (2010), in reference to Creed (1998).

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